

NINO MIER GALLERY

LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA

ESIRI ERHERIENE-ESSI



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THE BLACK PRESIDENT

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi (b.1982, London; lives and works in Amsterdam) constructs figurative paintings that draw on compositions found in the vintage, vernacular photography of the 20th century African diaspora. In her transformation of archival snapshots into large scale paintings, Erheriene-Essi re-imagines scenes of everyday communion, levity, and political struggle with a technicolor glow.

Erheriene-Essi prefers painting with bold, thick brushstrokes focused on augmenting highlights and shadows, and with tonalities pushed to saturated extremes. The bright colors in her paintings, in part, work against the racism of early photographic technologies that caught a smaller range of darker tones, thus unable to adequately capture black skin on film. Xerox transfers – sometimes washed with acetone – embed images onto walls and backgrounds that juxtapose scenes from other eras with the primary figures of the compositions. Her use of glue transfer brings a hyperreal, poster-like potency and immediacy to t-shirt designs and wall hangings.

Sometimes Erheriene-Essi's family members or prominent historical figures surface alongside the unknown people in her works, but not always. However, she understands her subjects as her mothers, grandmothers, and friends. Her figures are her ancestors: the project at large functions as an archive of Black life and history.

Esiri Erheriene-Essi (b.1982, London; lives and works in Amsterdam) received an MFA from University of East London. She has had solo shows at Maruani Mercier, Knokke; Galerie Ron Mandos, Amsterdam; and Museum Arnhem, Arnhem. In 2019, she was nominated for the Prix de Rome, one of the Netherlands' most prestigious art awards. She is also included in 'Tomorrow is a Different Day – Collection 1980-Now' currently at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, among many other group exhibitions worldwide.

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SELECTED WORKS

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi
The Remembrance, 2022
Oil, ink, and xerox transfer on linen
70 7/8 x 70 7/8 in
180 x 180 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi
The Tourists, 2022
Oil, ink, and xerox transfer on linen
59 1/8 x 78 3/4 in
150 x 200 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi
From a Land Where Other People Live, 2021
Oil, ink, and xerox transfer on linen
61 1/8 x 78 3/4 in
155 x 200 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi
The Intermission, 2022
Oil, ink, and xerox transfer on linen
59 1/8 x 92 1/2 in
150 x 235 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi
The End of the Beginning, 2022
Oil, ink, and xerox transfer on linen
61 3/4 x 87 3/8 in
157 x 222 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi

Not All Who Wander Are Lost, 2022

Oil, acrylic, ink, and xerox transfer on linen

81 1/2 x 81 7/8 in

207 x 208 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi
Joetha, 2022
Oil and ink on linen
31 1/2 x 23 5/8 in
80 x 60 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi

*When you're smart enough to know what you know, what you
don't know, and who you should listen to, 2022*

Oil and ink on linen

55 1/8 x 74 3/4 in

140 x 190 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi

Ticket to Ride, 2015

Oil, ink and xerox transfer on linen

53 1/8 x 66 7/8 in

135 x 170 cm

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Esiri Erheriene-Essi

The Day Trippers, 2021

Oil paint, acrylic ink, and collage via xerox transfers

59 1/8 x 59 1/8 in

150 x 150 cm

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INSTALLATION VIEWS

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Installation view of Esiri Erheriene-Essi's
Rememory
(July 23 - August 27, 2022)
Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

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Installation view of Esiri Erheriene-Essi's
FILLING THE GAPS OF HISTORY WITH COLOUR
(March 9 - July 8 2021)
Maruani Mercier Knokke, BE

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Installation view of Esiri Erheriene-Essi's
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JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture

JULY 2022

Esiri Erheriene-Essi is Exploring our “Rememory”

By Evan Pricco



Esiri Erheriene-Essi’s paintings drop in on time. They don’t give the exact date, but in a show of her works, you feel like a time-traveller and you are placed into a time of celebration and family, friends and memories of times that were both special but mundane. It could be a birthday party for a cousin, a weekend to the sea, or just friends gathered for a portrait. She paints a memory that is not identified but understood, a fact that she captures in calling her new show Rememory, on view now at Nino Mier in Los Angeles.

The UK-born and Amsterdam-based Nigerian painter starts her show with a quote: *I was talking about time. It’s so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it’s not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it’s gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don’t think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened.* —Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, p. 88

As the gallery notes, “The exhibition is titled after a neologism coined in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, and refers to crystallized, replayed images culled either from an individual’s memories, or from the collective consciousness of their community.” The portraits she paints document the Black diaspora experiences of what appears to be the 1970s and 1980s, where she creates painting, xerox transfer, and collage through found photographs. It’s a stunning portrayal, personal and universal, documentarian and nearly fantastical. —*Evan Pricco*

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HypeArt

APRIL 2022

Esiri Erheriene-Essi Spotlights the Vibrancy of Black Domestic Life in New Print

By Shawn Ghassemitari



Esiri Erheriene-Essi is a British artist whose mixed media paintings depict Black family life between the 1950s-80s. History is of particular interest to her as she repurposes archival photographs to reassess the individual and shared memories of society.

The Amsterdam-based artist has worked with Avant Arte on a limited-edition screenprint, titled *And All of My Friends Were There*. As her first ever print, Erheriene-Essi depicts several Black women socializing amidst a vibrant scene made of the artist's signature washed-out application of paint. Upon closer inspection, the artwork reveals a multitude of photographic references — from images of Muhammad Ali to scenes of domestic Black life — juxtaposed to showcase “the greatness of these people who are just living their lives,” the artist said in a statement.

And All of My Friends Were There is a 13-color screenprint with eight of the layers hand-painted by the artist. The artwork is printed on 300gsm Somerset Satin White paper and is available to purchase via Avant Arte for \$1,101 USD.

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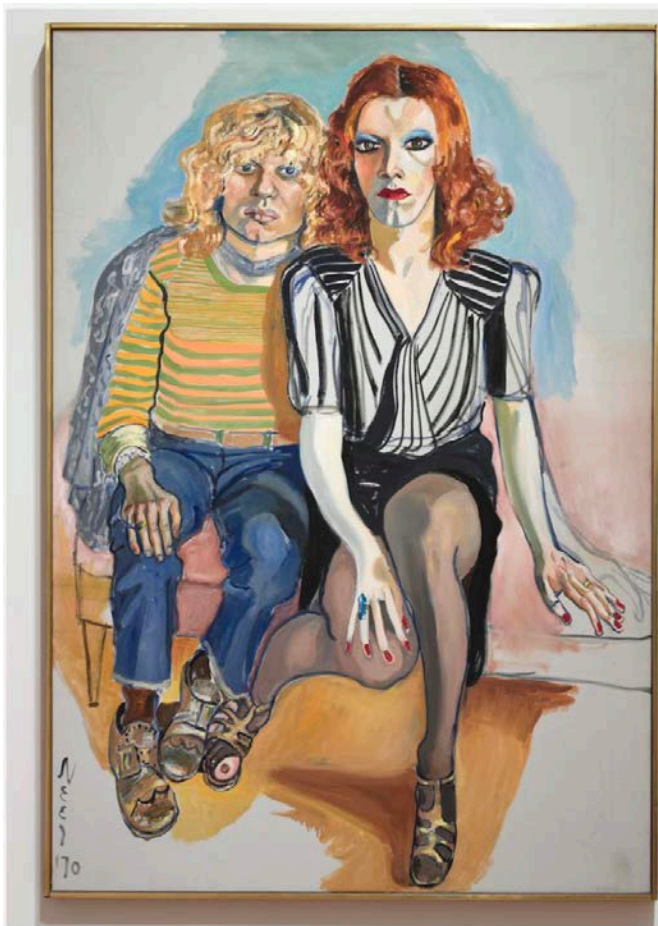
JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture

MARCH 2022

Esiri Erheriene-Essi: Why I Love Alice Neel

By Staff



In our Spring 2022 quarterly, we have an extensive survey and conversation about the exhibition, Alice Neel: People Come First, at the de Young Museum in San Francisco opening March 12, 2022. In conjunction with the feature, we asked a few contemporary artists about the influence of Neel, as both a portrait painter and that influence today as figuration as once again become a central focal point of contemporary art.

We recently spoke with Amsterdam-based painter Esiri Erheriene-Essi on how Neel influenced her work. Erheriene-Essi reconstructs and reimagines in her storytelling, a painter who takes the mundane moments of everyday life and makes them profound.

“I am obsessed with Alice Neel; I think painting is a magical medium and Alice to be one of the most magical painters to have existed. Maybe because she was a woman in a male dominated art world. Maybe it’s because in the time she was painting figuratively, and portraits nonetheless, abstract expressionism was all the rage, then pop art and then minimal art. One trend after the other and yet she ignored them all as she was obsessed with

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people and so figurative painting were her passion. That taught me a lot, fads come and go but obsessions are to be trusted and it just so happens that painting people is my obsession too.

“Alice taught me to paint – I devoured her paintings through books (I own every book out there on her) and in person when lucky enough to see them in various exhibitions across the world. I don’t know why I feel so intensely about Neel’s paintings, if I’m honest. Her brushstrokes are sublime of course, that goes without saying. A lot of the time the people in her paintings stare out at you with haunting eyes from the past, and engage with you, the viewer, in the present. They don’t just watch you in a passive way, they silently encourage you to engage with and encounter them. There is a physical connection that Neel has so deftly concocted, like a magician who weaves a picture vivid enough that you can not only see but also feel her and the sitters’ vibrations. When I look at her paintings I can never get close enough to them, I look at the people who she found important enough to paint – her children, fellow artists such as Faith Ringgold and Benny Andrews in THAT amazing striped chair, or anonymous people in and around her neighbourhood that equally captured her attention. When you compare the known and unknown people that she painted, there is no sense of hierarchy.

“Neel was obsessed with paint and depicting the people in her life over the decades, and that is what I love. Also, the way she paints hands are amazing, when I mess up in my own paintings I always go grab a Alice Neel book and see how she managed to solve the age old question of ‘how to paint hands and feet in a passable way’. Alice’s gnarly hands are the most beautiful in the entire history of art.”

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STEDELIJK STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 2021

In the Artist's words: **Barricade**

By Esiri Erheriene-Essi



Barricade (2014) 165 x 200 cm, oil, ink and xerox transfer on canvas

This painting depicts five girls dressed in their pink school uniform during a moment of ‘contemplation’. Their gazes are fixed on something out of sight of the viewer and where they are in the world, what they are looking at and reflecting on, I do not know. I found the source image online on the microblogging and social media site Tumblr without any information attached. I was immediately attracted to these, to me, anonymous young girls – eyes fixed on something, unbothered by the camera – which the viewer now replaces. Without knowing their place of origin, whether situated in the past or the present, it opened up an interestingly complex, diverse and contrasting multitude of meanings to me.

“These schoolgirls became ambiguous negotiators of an open-ended narrative – along with the viewer, I can only speculate as to where they are from, maybe my motherland Nigeria or England where I was born or possibly, they are from here in The Netherlands or from Suriname. They could be the children of migrants who unwillingly left their homes or of people who were asked to come and rebuild a Europe in ruins after World War II. Perhaps they are daughters of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Dora Nkem Akunyili or the niece of Ama Ata Aidoo. I wondered what captured their attention, are they thinking about what they are going to eat for dinner that evening, or perhaps the grades they would get on their favourite subjects at school, or are they thinking about their favourite musicians,

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or maybe dreaming about the people they have crushes on? We do not know, these girls however, standing eyes transfixed on different points are not thinking about us speculating about who they are.

I borrowed the title 'Barricade' from the song of the same name by the American post-punk rock band Interpol (who I was listening a lot to when making this painting), which lyrically measures out the distance or obstructions between people who should be closer.

The background of xerox transferred photos consists of images I had saved over cinema, philosophy and feature images of Civil Rights protests in 1960s America; a portrait of the French West Indian psychiatrist and political philosopher Frantz Fanon; scenes from the French 1967 neo-noir film *Le Samouraï* directed by Jean-Pierre Melville, a film I love which starred Martiniquan actress and model Cathy Rosier. Alongside images of a woman from the Caribbean standing outside of her flat in South London in 1960s England showing off racist graffiti from the white neo-Nazi neighbours who were trying to intimidate Black people into leaving the country. We can also see mugshots of members of the US Black Panther Party, British fashion model Naomi Campbell in the early noughties, Malcolm X shortly after his assassination in 1965, a photo of Ruby Bridges (first African-American child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana during the New Orleans school desegregation) walking to school under armed guard in 1960. As well as images taken by white American photographer Eliot Elisofon, of a Yoruba woman in 1959 in Nigeria proudly holding her 'Ibeji' which is the Yoruba word for twins, it translates as 'double birth' and 'the inseparable two' and is the name of the Orisha spirit of twins in the Yoruba religion.

This painting derives from my obsession with encoding/decoding and merging images together that might have no relationship prior but when placed together take on multiple new meanings. Combining the images collected in my archive that relate to art history, cinema, cultural studies, media theory and mixing the personal, the mundane and the political, is my way to counterbalance the white gaze with my gaze as a Black woman, with how I see the world and manoeuvre within it. Barricade was made shortly after encountering the works of African American painter Kerry James Marshall at his brilliant retrospective at Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (M HKA) in 2013/2014, where for the first time in my life I saw rooms and rooms filled with paintings of Black people that had no relation to trauma or slavery. It was a life changing moment in my life having that kind of visual representation in art and on the train back to Amsterdam I made a promise to myself to champion Black stories through painting. I wanted to shape narratives and create paintings that provide room for people to interact with histories and accounts that are often overlooked. I hoped the paintings would invite everyone in, but made from the Black gaze especially for people from the Black African diaspora to come in, stay awhile and see themselves taking up space on otherwise white walls."

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The logo for MutualArt, featuring the letters 'M' and 'A' in white squares on a dark background, followed by the word 'MutualArt' in a white serif font.

SEPTEMBER 2021

Esiri Erheriene-Essi: The Future Isn't What it Used to Be

Following her breakthrough exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam after being nominated for the Prix de Rome in 2019 (the oldest and most prestigious award in the Netherlands for artists under the age of 40), Esiri Erheriene-Essi, the London-born but Amsterdam-based artist, made her name as one of the most promising emerging painters of her generation.

After completing a two-year residency at Amsterdam's post graduated institute De Ateliers, Erheriene-Essi developed a highly personal approach to her work, concentrating on large-scale figurative paintings that give prominence to images of Black people, by exploring the untold, often unknown and forgotten or even neglected narratives of members from the African diaspora.

As a British born Nigerian, the artist is drawn to and analyses images of Black life that she sources largely from national and private archives from around the world as well as images from popular culture (past and present), from newspapers and other media outlets. Erheriene-Essi transfers these images to her canvases where she uses them to create settings and contexts for her painted images, which are of a more private character. Based on amateur photographs from the artist's collection of others (often discarded) family albums, anonymous people become the heroes and protagonists of her stories. The scenes depicted are often everyday moments of individuals and families living their normal lives as Erheriene-Essi is interested in producing images centred on Blackness occupying multiplex spaces in myriad ways, mundane as (well as) political. Providing room for both contemplation and difference - where the anger, fear, and ambivalence of the past, present and future, is not denied but also not allowed to stand alone as representation of Blackness, but rather, as it does in our lives, coexist with joy, hope and the ordinary.

Through collaging the past and the present, the public with the domestic, the remembered and the disregarded she acknowledges just how fragmented and circumstantial history is. In sharing these intimate glimpses and through this selecting, deconstructing and reformulating of the source photographs through painting, Erheriene-Essi invites the viewer to connect with the figures in ambiguous yet completely present and familiar ways.

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JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture

MARCH 2021

I Am Here Because You Were There: A Studio Visit With Esiri Erheriene-Essi

By Staff

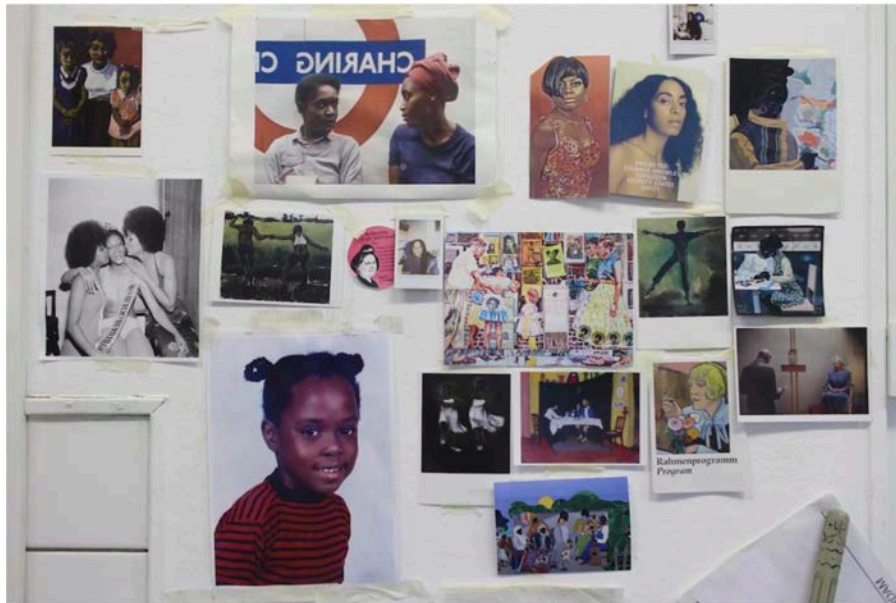


The lockdowns, quarantines, and social distancing informed so many new bodies of work that were created in the past year. For some, the pandemic triggered the exploration of the feelings or imagery related to aloneness and melancholy, while others resorted to celebrating the moments of closeness in order to push through this tough period. It turns out that our friend, Esiri Erheriene-Essi, was one of those people that looked into the past in order to be able to deal with the present and await, a hopefully brighter future. And those works will be presented at her fifth solo show with Ron Mandos Gallery in Amsterdam, *I Am Here Because You Were There*, which will be on view starting March 6, 2021. ”

For 3 months I couldn't paint as I was afraid to leave my house,” the artist we've featured in our Spring 2020 issue and on Radio Juxtapoz, told us when we've visited her studio recently. “I was anxious all the time and all I wanted to do was huddle down with my family in London at my mother's house, but I couldn't for obvious reasons.” Unable to go to the studio or use her tools of the trade, she continued adding to her archive of Black vernacular photos she's been building since 2016 with photographs from online auctions, but this time with a more focused approach. “I loved looking at people enjoying themselves in groups unaware of keeping a 2-meter distance rule and I got nostalgic for and escaped into these narratives from a bygone era,” she told us about the particular type of photographs that were resonating with her. So once some of the life routines were restored and she was back in her studio, all she wanted to do was celebrate the people in those images and make paintings that recorded everyday stories and ordinary moments. Over the course of 10 months or so, Erheriene-Essi painted 11 new works that are focusing on this particular subject.

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And even most of her work is about reimagining the stories and memories of unknown people, *The Birthday Party* (2021), 150 x 200 cm, oil, ink, and Xerox transfer on linen, is an exception to this rule and adding a new perspective to an already incredible story. “The painting depicts a smiling woman celebrating her birthday huddled in a group hug with some friends who grin out at the viewer, with one guest wearing a pink Arsenal Football Club hat, the one holding the cake, being none other than a laughing Steve Biko,” the artist told us. The party took place in 1969 in Durban, South Africa, and the source image is from the personal photo album of Lindiwe Edith Gumede Baloyi, the smiling birthday girl in the image everyone had gathered to celebrate. Previously unpublished, the photo was made available to the public by Lindiwe’s nephew, historian, and librarian Mwelela Cele, and the artist stumbled across it via Twitter in September 2020, on the 43rd anniversary of Biko’s death by the hands of apartheid police officers.

“What first drew me to the image is how the viewer gets to see a private, relaxed everyday side of such a famous activist. The joy that emanates from the wide-open grins are infectious and this image is how I want to remember him, a friend who steals his friend’s birthday cake for a photo opportunity, alongside the public life of being an activist of The Black Consciousness Movement,” Erheriene-Essi reveals the importance of showing the “in-between” moments of both ordinary and extraordinary people. “I am very thankful to have been granted permission from Lindiwe’s nephew, Mwelela Cele, to use the original photo as a source for this painting,” she concluded.

“Championing and chronicling black experiences by exploring untold, often forgotten and even neglected narratives of people from the African diaspora through painting as speculative history writing, collaging the past and the present—acknowledging just how fragmented and circumstantial history is,” London-born artist explained to us the idea behind the new images which are portraying the somewhat alternate reality of times past. Through her practice, the artist is continuously filling the historic gap by telling the everyday stories of people that unjustly remained voiceless. and undocumented. Capable of mixing authentic Instamatic photographs with some of the personal experiences or memories, historic events, as well as contemporary culture elements, Erheriene-Essi is celebrating the regular lives of regular people through the captivating thick, gloopy oil paintings. “I want to give the spotlight to these people, I want to celebrate them because I really think that if it wasn’t for all of these people doing what they did in all of these different parts of the world, I couldn’t be here doing what I’m doing now, living my dream to fruition,” the artist told us in our 2020 interview. Borrowing the title from a quote by Stuart McPhail Hall, a Jamaican-born British Marxist sociologist, cultural theorist, and political activist, *I Am Here Because You Were There* is a more focused continuation of the artist’s ongoing pursuits.

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ART PLUGGED™

MARCH 2021

Esiri Erheriene-Essi: Artists Inside The Industry

By Verity Babbs



Portrait artist Esiri Erheriene-Essi's depiction of skin is masterful: her figures glow as if in the dappled light of the Impressionists.

The artist translates found vintage photographs into glorious technicolour, reminding us that the people of the past didn't exist in a distant monochrome reality, but lived, breathed, and existed fully. The "magic" of painting, as Erheriene-Essi calls it, brings her characters to life.

In an exclusive interview with Art Plugged, Esiri discusses the influence of the African Diaspora, "passion and delusion", and never finishing a painting.

Q: First things first, why do you do what you do?

A: Because Lucian Freud's brushstrokes bewitched me at an impressionable age and I think painting is the most magical thing. So I spend my days moving squishy pigment around on canvas and I love it.

Q: What is your inspiration?

A: The black African diaspora, vintage photographs and German expressionistic painting.

Q: What is your creative process when you're creating?

A: My creative process always begins with a photo I've seen that I can't get out of my head. In his book *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes tells this anecdote of seeing a photo of Napoleon's brother Jerome and he went into a trance over it and couldn't get over how he was looking into eyes that had looked at Napoleon.

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The people that capture my attention aren't as famous as Napoleon's brother but they unleash that same feeling of amazement within me and this propels me into the studio to paint them. So, I start with a photo that I edit in photoshop. Then in the studio I make a sketch with acrylic ink which allows me to block in the colours in one sitting and the underpainting is dry within an hour which is faster than thin washes of oil.

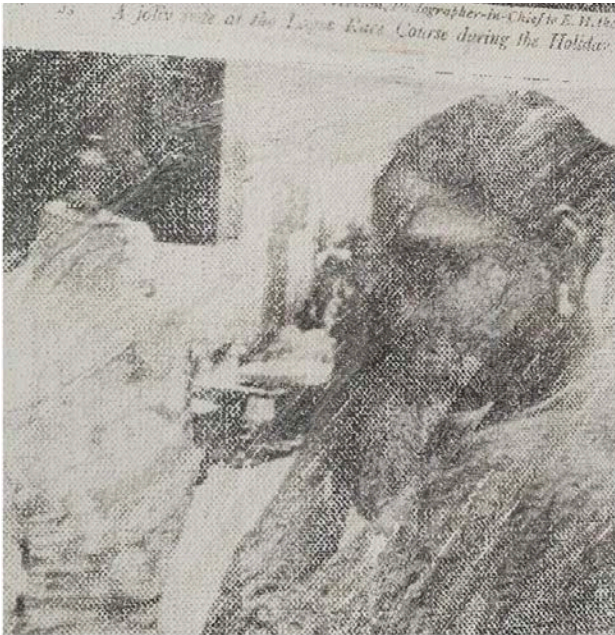
I then decide whether or not to add xerox transfers which can take anywhere between a day or a week to add on, and then I start painting with oil paint. I work in layers and intuitively collaborate with the source image in bringing out the painting. I can do this since I spend so much time, both working with and thinking about the image before I get to this moment – intuition is fundamentally rooted in the prep work.

Q: Which is your preferred surface for working on?

A: I love working on canvas. For the last year I've been working on pre stretched linen on aluminium frames and they are perfect.

Q: What would you say is an integral part to the work of an Artist?

A: Questioning and probing the world that we live in. Using imagination to not show how the world is, but rather showing alternate realities of how the world could and, maybe even, should be.



Q: What is the reason behind your use of history, memories and old imagery in your work?

A: That comes from the fact that I'm a British born Nigerian and the lack of proper history education at secondary school. For Black History Month every year my class learned of American Slavery, African American Civil Rights history and that black people turned up out of the blue to Britain in the 1950s after World War II.

And at home I'd learn of a different history of the Urhobo people, ancient Nigerian mythology and the history of my family – many whom I'd never met but my parents would show me photographs of my grandparents and great-grandparents and I found it fascinating. The older I got the more I started searching beyond the sanitised white canonical narratives within history and started incorporating the often overlooked, and ignored histories of black people from the African diaspora. Because I wanted to explore the quiet richness and experiences within our stories. I use old colour photographs as they show various histories through diverse personal lenses and because of the racial bias that is inherent to the technology of colour photography which was engineered for white skin.

Q: How do you know when a piece is finished?

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A: I've never finished a painting in my life, I just stop before I ruin it.

Q: What is your favourite piece from your collection?

A: I don't have one I have a few. A painting called 'Riders on the Storm' from 2008 that I made when I was at art school, it was supposed to be an underpainting but I guess I only could have ruined it if I had continued to work on it. Another one is a painting called 'The Usual Suspects' from 2014 that is based on an image from my favourite photograph by Gordon Parks. I painted it right after seeing a retrospective of Kerry James Marshall in Antwerp and it is one of my most favourite things I've ever painted. Another favourite is a painting from last year called 'Luster's Pink Original' of a dinner party. I love the way the figures look and how the xerox transfers works in relation to the painted surfaces. Everyone glows.



Q: How did you feel when you did your first solo exhibition?

A: I was so nervous that I threw up. It was in a small space in Rotterdam and I took over 2 floors with work made over a two-year period. I'd only ever been in group exhibitions at that point and I was nervous that I had to carry the whole thing. Ideas I found funny in the privacy of my studio were up on the walls ready to be seen and I was afraid it wouldn't translate well and I'd be ridiculed.

The exhibition was called 'I don't like Nostalgia, unless it's mine' and when it opened and I got a beer in me I was super proud and felt extremely lucky to have been given an opportunity to show my work. And when people and a museum bought work from the show I felt that I was no longer an interloper but a proper artist with something to say.

Q: What is the most rewarding thing for you about being a part of the Art Industry?

A: That I get to rebalance the lack of proper representation in the art world. I grew up not seeing myself or people like me on the white walls of museums and galleries and now I get to fill those same spaces with paintings of black people.

I get really touched when people take the time to get in contact with me to tell me they've enjoyed my paintings in an exhibition and have gone back several times and brought friends and family just because they could see paintings that they could relate to and see themselves in.

I never had that experience growing up and that is a big reason why I started making art – to make what I couldn't see – and to read these messages from strangers just fills me with so much love. Once I had the privilege of meeting a group of young kids at an exhibition of mine, they were blown away by the fact that for the first time they saw images that could have been a part of their lives in a museum and I could not help myself but to cry when I heard this. I'm not sure if this really has anything to do with that which makes art an industry but it's the most rewarding aspect of being an artist for me.

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Q: Is there anything that worries you about how social media is affecting the promotion of artists?

A: Not really. If anything social media has opened up the playing field and brought much needed diversity to the art world.

There are of course people that are more into the aesthetics of being an artist and the superficial side of getting likes and followers, but I've discovered so many artists via Instagram that are all over the world and I love that I get to see shows in NYC or Johannesburg or Lagos or Accra from the click of a finger.

Q: In your opinion, do you have any advice for artists on how to manage their social media image? Or does it even need managing?

A: I wouldn't know. I just post images of my work either finished or work in progress or my kid sleeping through a trip to my exhibition just because I like sharing my process. I don't know how to manage personas.

Q: Do you have any advice for artists starting and don't know where to begin?

A: Passion and delusion are half of it. I never knew how to become an artist I just wanted to paint and I just applied for anything that would mean I get to paint for a bit – such as art school, funded artist residencies etc and 12 years later I'm still plugging away. So maybe the advice is to not give up, take risks and trust yourself. And to not think that you have to be too selective, sure be critical when you think about what you show where or who is paying for what but I have seen people turn down perfectly good opportunities, thinking that it is beneath them and now they don't get any offers at all.

I once said yes to make a few paintings for a themed exhibition because I trusted the sincerity of the curator in relation to the framework of the exhibition. It was in a library and my works were hanging on butt ugly partition walls but you know what, the exhibition was great and on another one of these walls, that were pathetic excuses compared to museum walls, there was some paintings of Marlene Dumas.

Q: What would you say is the best way of getting your art noticed in the age of the internet?

A: Instagram is pretty good if you're savvy with the tags. I've found a lot of artists I'd never heard of by accident just by using certain tags that I was interested in such as 'vernacular photography' or 'Kerry James Marshall' and artwork stumbled onto my feed which I then went and followed. There is so much stuff out in the world so it's luck that makes us stop for a moment to take notice of something.



Q: Are there any places where you feel Art and Technology really shouldn't overlap?

A: The two are constantly overlapping and I think that at times it's a good thing, it means institutions are not the only gatekeepers of art and there are more diverse representations available on various platforms.

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Although at the same time, problems can arise when technology is used as a substitute for things such as community. We can use our current situation with the corona lockdown as an example – I am teaching at an art academy and we are using technology to keep up with the teaching online.

Sure, it is great that we can stay in contact with the students and support them as good as possible, but on the other hand it is not a full worthy replacement. The job gets done but nothing can replace face to face contact and the experiencing of art in person.

<https://www.instagram.com/esiri.essi/>

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OCTOBER 2020

Repainting History in Color

By Jackie Mansky

The earliest colored photographs were fragile black-and-white daguerreotypes, hand-painted with a watercolor technique. The task was laborious, not to mention risky, because the plates were so easily damaged. But the result, a cross between painting and photograph, gave the 19th-century pictures a new level of verisimilitude.

Today, London-born and Amsterdam-based painter Esiri Erheriene-Essi pursues a different sort of visual fidelity when she transforms archival mid-century snapshots of the African diaspora through oil paint and often xerox transfer, a graphic technique she uses to layer images onto the background of her pieces.

Erheriene-Essi's vibrant scenes pull insight out of everyday life—whether it's an afternoon outing or a birthday crowd gathered round a table featuring a cake piled high with candles. Reconstructing these “quiet histories” in lush technicolor and unmistakable patterns, she opens up her source material and challenges the way the past is remembered.

History, Erheriene-Essi writes on her website, is the means through which “we build our identities and our knowledge, frame our references, question our aspirations and form our points of view.” But representations of everyday Black life are so often removed from its telling.

As “part of an initiative, long overdue” to document Black experience, the Metropolitan Museum of Art recently showcased 150 studio portraits of African Americans taken in the 1940s and '50s. That 2018 exhibition revealed not only what was able to be uncovered in auctions and flea markets, but also what had been lost to time and neglect. Visitors entering the show were solicited to help in a crowd-sourcing effort to identify the many unidentified sitters and photographers, who, if they are still alive, are in their 80s and 90s now.

There's more to what Erheriene-Essi does, though, than show the moment as it was photographed. Stripped of their original context, displaying anonymous photographs such as those at the Met addresses the need for representation, but often reflects personal moments in a historical vacuum. As an interpreter of the source images she collects, Erheriene-Essi is free to bring out personalities and suggest larger historical arcs in the paintings, such as those she developed for last year's Prix De Rome (Netherlands), the country's most prestigious art award, for which she was a nominee.

Lavished with dimension and detail, the resulting series, *The Inheritance* (or *Familiar Strangers*), includes recognizable markers of the larger political and cultural forces of the day that would have seeped into the lives of her subjects—a “Free Angela Davis” pin in one scene, a nod to MLK's Poor People's Campaign in another.

As Erheriene-Essi explains on her website, interpreting these anonymous photographs (which date from the 1950s to 1980s) as art gives her the opportunity to “re-imagine more humane and liberating narratives than what has gone before, and perhaps slightly change our reading of history in the process.”

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By building bridges between the photographs she collects, the era they were taken in, and how she sees them today, Erheriene-Essi seeks to get closer to historical reality. But to do this also requires taking corrective measures to the medium of photography itself.

Erheriene-Essi, whose parents are from Nigeria, has spoken at length about how the photo technology of the period she uses as source material was intentionally set up to flatten and remove nuance from Black skin. That's because Kodak's "Shirley" cards—named after the Kodak employee used as the standard model—made it so that photo labs calibrated skin tones, shadows, and light during the printing process to Shirley's ivory-white skin color. For decades, color film was intentionally designed for light-skinned people. (Concordia University professor Lorna Roth showed it took until the 1960s and '70s for Kodak to begin to fix its color photography bias when it came to skin with more melanin.)

A century after hand-colored daguerreotypes were needed, Erheriene-Essi's work makes a compelling case for why the mid-20th century, with all its technological gains, still requires the corrective hand of an artist to make these vernacular images of Black life—her "familiar strangers," as she calls them—more recognizable.

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JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture

MARCH 2020

A Most Present Future

By Sasha Bogojev



Erheriene-Essi in her studio, courtesy of Juxtapoz

It's impossible to feel indifferent to the tasty work of London-born and Amsterdam-based painter Esiri Erheriene-Essi. And I specifically say, "tasty," because the first thing that whets your appetite is the mouth-watering, tangy, gummy bear palette. She will then intrigue with familiar visuals of everyday people doing everyday things, teasing your perception with thick, textured surfaces marked by bold, gesture-based visual language.

Through a body of work developed over the last decade, Esiri aims to fill the gaps of a universal narrative that has often been overlooked by history. Dedicating her practice to subjects who play crucial roles embodying racial inclusion and justice, Esiri paints mostly large-scale figures of people of color worldwide. With portrayals of the most mundane of daily activities once reserved in our collective recorded history as predominantly white stories, Esiri recreates the past the way it actually looked.

Just weeks after her latest pieces were exhibited at the iconic Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam as a part of the Prix de Rome award ceremony, we talked with Esiri about the concept of her work, maternity, hoarding, and time traveling.

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Luster's Pink Original, Oil, ink, xerox transfer on linen, 53.1" x 68.9", 2016

Sasha Bogojev: I wanted to start with the Prix de Rome award show at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. How did that come to be, and what did it mean for you?

Esiri Erheriene-Essi: The Prix de Rome came through an old tutor of mine from a residency called De Ateliers. I went there around 2007-2009, and Ronald Ophuis, a Dutch painter, was a guest tutor at the time. He's been following my work over the last 12 years, and when the Prix De Rome asked him to nominate two artists, I became one of his two choices. He just emailed me, I think, on the first of January this year and said, "I'm nominating you as my preference. Could you just give a proposal for a plan of what you would do?"

Then I was contacted by the Mondriaan Fund to tell me about an exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, and that I should submit a proposal. My son was five or six months old at the time, so I made the proposal on the phone while I was holding him. Within a day, I made a quick decision, my dream exhibition.

How did you feel about your chances of getting in?

I submitted it and didn't think anything more of it. I just did it as a favor to Ronald Ophuis. I had been telling him that painters never get anywhere, but was, like, "It's really nice that he thinks of me and of my work in that esteem, so I will do it for him."

I got the phone call in April to say that I was one of the last four, and then I had five months, starting from May, to make a whole new body of work.

While having a six-month-old?

Yes. As you know, in trying to come to my studio, I've not been working so much. This kind of forced me to really work, and I was really shitting myself actually. There were a few times where I was going to call them up and say, "I don't think I can do it. I don't know how I would be as an artist now while being a mother. I can't dedicate my 100% anymore, all of my time. I don't know if I can do it, and thank you, but I'm going to pull out." I nearly did that twice but then I just sucked it up. My mum was like, "Nope!" My husband said that we'd make it happen because it was such a good opportunity. I went back to painting and somehow, I don't know how, three days a week, I was in the studio and managed to make eleven paintings in four-and-a-half months.

Wow, that is impressive! How much did your process change because of the circumstances, and were you conscious of that?

I think I became a bit more structured, a bit more efficient with my time. I've also been a painter who paints quickly, but I'm always trying to take my time, trying to give a painting at least two weeks to a month. Now I'm just like, "Yeah, fuck it."

It's like, I've got from 9:00 am until 6:00 pm. Those are the hours, and that's what I could do. There were some paintings that I did, three of them that I managed to do in one day. The rest of them, I had to take some time, because I have to sketch and do Xerox transferring. It's the Xerox transferring that takes the most time

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I Was There When It Happened, Oil, ink, and xerox transfer on linen, 51" x 51", 2019

I think I can see that looking at your technique, in the bold gestures and thick layers of paint. Have you always painted like that?

My favorite painter, when I first started at around 17 or 18 years old, was Lucian Freud. He's the one who got me into painting, and I loved his really thick painting, and the fact that when you were far away from the painting, it looked like just a face, like a boring painting of the face or a figure. Then, when you get up close, it was all of these abstract patterns and different worlds going on. I just kind of developed on my own, but all of my favorite painters are from the London School.

Was there ever, let's say, a "smoother period" in your painting?

I tried to, but I don't really have a refined way of painting. It's normally more emotion and energy-based. Even though I tried to be refined, the only time I could do that is if I paint super thinly. But I've never been really interested in it, more like I put my music on—and I go!

I'm not really thinking about it. I've looked at my older paintings and, in some, it's obvious they're done by me, but they all look quite different, as well. They still have the same thick, gloopy appearance.



The Pseudo Sacrifice, Oil and ink on canvas, 53.1" x 78.7" 2019

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How difficult is it, relying so much on those gestures and work around mistakes? I'm guessing they do occasionally happen.

Mistakes are all over the place. What I have in my mind or before I paint is totally changed with the painting. As I've gotten older and more used to painting, I think I've become much more open to the fact that I can't control it. Before, I wanted to control it always, but I can't. I just kind of go with it and I don't panic as much. I just go with the flow and instinct. That's why each painting, the way that it's painted, is always different.

Does it ever happen that, at the end, it just doesn't work?

It happens quite a lot, but I try to struggle through it. There hasn't been one where I've quit, because I've gotten more confident that I can figure it out at some point. For the Prix de Rome, I don't know if you remember, there was a painting of the woman holding a child, looking back with the dresses. Her face, the woman's face looking back, that one took me nearly two weeks. Sometimes it's a mutual dance and sometimes it's a fight.

Were you always doing figures? Was that always your thing?

I started off doing only portraits, so that's how I learned. I was literally just doing portraits the whole time. Then I moved to the Netherlands in 2007, and I stopped doing them so much and started using more reference photos, photos that I found. Then it was mostly full figures. I went through a lynching phase, so I was doing lots of different things.

How do you find and select the reference photos?

They come from everywhere. I buy old JET magazines, the old African-American magazines from the '50s and '60s. They're mostly in black and white, but the cover is in color. I collect and buy them online on eBay, on Etsy, just different online auctions; and I buy Polaroids and Instamatic photos as well. I just buy them or save them from different online archives.



Keep Your Eyes Peeled, Oil, ink, and xerox transfer on linen, 78.7" x 94.5", 2016

So, do you select the ones you buy according to the image or the story behind it?

It's mostly surface, it's mostly aesthetic. It's in the pose, how it looks, and the memory it triggers. Most of the time, it's like I don't really know why I select it. It's just something I like about it, then I will just buy or save it. Then I take it to the studio to find out why I'm intrigued by it and what I can act on.

When you say memory, how do photos of strangers connect with your personal experiences?

I'm from England, from London, but my parents are from Nigeria. A lot of times, when I was a kid, I was always looking at our family photos of my grandparents and their parents. That's how I learned about who I was, why I had these photos of people who I've never met. Then I would make up stories about them and attach narratives, just

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imagining who they were, what I got from them. That kind of spread out to other things, and even if there was no relation, I was always trying to figure out who these people were. I was just intrigued and curious by them. That was just the starting point; then it would go from there.

Do you ever research the stories behind those photos and try to recreate them?

No, because there's no information the majority of the time, especially with the photos I've recently saved in the last two, three years. There are not really things I can go and retrieve. There's just this one photo that's either been thrown away or sold. Sometimes there's a little note about who's in the photo or what time, but not much else.

Speaking of old photos, the first time we met, you told me about a color calibration thing with old Kodak films?

I was buying lots of magazines from the '50s and photos from the '60s, and I would always notice, especially looking at black skin, that it was super dark and super flat. I was Googling Kodak and black skin, and came across loads of articles about Kodak technology being actually quite racist because it wasn't at all adapted for black skin.

It was geared for white skin. Everything depicted was super flat and super dark. I found it quite interesting that, even with a simple thing as a camera, we were kind of erased in that sense. I wanted to play with that and use that predominantly, just to see what I could do, to see how I could bring out colors within.



Rituals, Oil on Canvas, 66.9" x 53.1", 2018

Do you know when that technology changed?

In the mid-'80s, but only because, I think, a chocolate and a furniture company got really annoyed and petitioned Kodak to change it due to the way their brown furniture or brown chocolate sweets were looking. That's the only reason it was changed.

Is there a certain emotion or atmosphere you try to convey with your work?

I'm just really interested in a lot of these silent, quiet histories. I spent a lot of time going to museums as a kid, and I see the whole history of Western art and all of these portraits that are signs of people being alive, and I didn't really feel connected 100% because there were not people that looked like me.

When I look at these photos, it's a way of me having that same feeling in the museum, of all these people who come before me. I want to give the spotlight to these people, I want to celebrate them because I really think that if it wasn't for all of these people doing what they did in all of these different parts of the world, I couldn't be here doing what I'm doing now, living my dream to fruition.

It's the greatness of these people who are just living their lives, regardless of all of the turmoil that's going on around them.

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And by greatness, you don't mean grand achievements?

No. It's just them living. I mean, I collect images from the end of the 18th century, up until the '80s. I'm just thinking of all of the times, especially in the Civil Rights Movement in the US, the UK and Nigeria, those three countries. They're just getting on and doing what they have to do.

There are all of these great, famous photos of protests. But I wanted to celebrate the people who are protesting quietly. What happens when they leave the protest? When they go home and live their lives, what does that look like? These are things that I'm intrigued about and that's what I'm trying to celebrate.



Stop Me If You Think You've Heard This One Before, Oil, Ink and Xerox on canvas, 65" x 78.7" , 2015

To some extent, it feels like you're filling the gaps of a historical narrative that's been kind of a "saving" for certain types of people.

I think that's important. We're in 2020 and there are other voices that come to the table and kind of fill in the gaps, because there's a lot of gaps. There's a lot of discrepancies in contemporary history, especially in the West. Not all voices and not all narratives are being told.

Sometimes I can go in and re-edit, but then I'm just drawing from what has been around and trying to think about alternative histories and alternative ways that people have been living, and kind of present that—see how that relates to now and how that will relate to the future.

Did you ever use your own personal family photos?

I have used my own family photos, and my family photos are in some of the paintings, but I use them as a base. I think, going forward, I have quite a lot that I want to use, I just wasn't as comfortable before. There's a really cool image of me and my father, my aunt and cousins, when I was, like, one, in Lagos, Nigeria, for my birthday party, and I'm crying. I finally got a good copy of it because I think it was somewhere in London.

Does it feel different building a narrative around something personal, more familiar?

No, because there is still a distance there, and even though I know that's my father, he looks totally different to how I knew him when I was growing up and how I know him now. There is this kind of distance, and the same with my aunt and cousins. It's like, there is a time, of course, but there's a distance to it that I can go in and still play around with. Of course, maybe I never saw myself that way? It's just another baby, but it just so happens that it's me. I think I have more license about what I put in than if it was some other random person. I think I could go a bit more crazy with images that I know. When it's not, I think I'm more hesitant to go too crazy with suggestive images.

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The Backfire Effect, Oil and ink on linen, 49.2" x 78.7", 2017

I read somewhere, I think the biography on your website, that you see history not as something that has passed, but as something we carry within. Can you elaborate a bit about that?

I was reading James Baldwin a couple of years ago, and I was thinking about all the things he was talking about in the '40s, '50s and '60s, and how it still relates to now. How history is this forcible power that is all around us. It's in our names, it's in our language, it's everywhere. It's there and it does no good to just ignore it—where we come from, and where we are now, and where we're going. There are always things that I can relate to. I'm just really intrigued by that, and that's how I look at history—as this thing that's always within us and everywhere, and something that we can never get away from.

And, in what way do you think such an approach informs your work?

I go in there and I can kind of play with history. The people that are in these images, I can take them on a time-traveling adventure. I can bring in someone from the '70s and then imagine it as originating from the '50s. Bring in references from 2020 and kind of go back and forward with everything. It still relates to now.

Do you remember when you developed that concept?

I think the bigger shift was when I moved from London to here. In London, I was making comic paintings based off of photos I had taken of me and my friends. We would go to bars or pubs and I'd be taking photos of them vomiting, then I'd be making drawings and paintings of that. I wanted to document modern life, that's what I wanted to do. When I moved here, I didn't have them anymore, nor did I have the energy of London!

Your art is becoming more and more known here in Holland. What is it like in the rest of Europe, internationally, and in the United States? Have you shown around much?

I haven't shown in London pretty much since I left, so that's a long time. I would like to go back and show there because I think there'll be quite a great link. Same with the States. I will finally go and show at the Armory Show, so I'm going to be taking some new paintings there too.

I'm curious to hear how the work will be received there.

That will be a good gauge, just to see how it goes. I get a lot of comments from people here, especially the Americans who ask, "Are you American?" When I tell them I'm not, they're like, "Oh, because this looks very familiar. It's very American." I always explain that there are images from America, images from Nigeria and images from England."

As an informational tool, do you ever give context around your work when you have exhibitions, as in where the images are from?

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The devil works hard, but gentrification works harder, Oil, ink, and xerox transfer on linen, 60.2" x 60.2", 2019

I think maybe I should do that. Well, not should, but it would be nice to do that in the future. But normally no, because I take all of these references from different places and I want people to connect without me kind of imparting my intentions. One hundred percent. I don't want to block people and close them off at the bat.

If people ask me and inquire and where the image comes from, of course, I would let them know, and then maybe they can do some digging. I just always leave little clues, sometimes in the titles, sometimes in the images themselves. Then I leave it up to people to kind of go and dig in.

Esiri Erheriene-Essi will be exhibiting with Ron Mandos Gallery at the Armory Show in New York, March 5, 2020–March 8, 2020.

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Metropolis M

MARCH 2014

Studio Visit: Esiri Erheriene-Essi

By Floor van Luijk

The paintings of Esiri Erheriene-Essi are bursting with color, confronting and uncanny. She started off painting comics of her friends as degenerate youths, partying, doing drugs and puking. Nowadays her canvases combine historical references using text, painting and printed imagery. Juxtaposing President Kennedy, comics and happy families with Victorian porn and Nazi officers, she twists the historical narrative while exercising the viewer's ability to associate.

Esiri currently has her first museum show *Don't Support the Greedy* in the Arnhem Museum. Metropolis M visited her at her studio, a big empty store building in Amsterdam-Zuid, to talk about her work.

–Floor van Luijk

When you make a new work, where do you start?

–Esiri Erheriene-Essi

“Most commonly, I will see an image on the internet, or while reading a newspaper or magazine. I collected images for the past six years and have an archive of at least three external hard drives that I can use. Once an image sticks with me, I bring it to the studio, work it in Photoshop a bit, and start painting. Then I start teaming things together. With *You Would Know* (2011), I blew up a film still of Judy Garland and started painting it. The image on its own wouldn't be interesting, so I just took the text from a book that was lying around, which happened to be a Black Panther activist biography. Later I also combined Garland with texts about feminism. By putting Garland and this activist side by side people got a little confused by their perception of the historical narrative, and it opened a dialogue. People started to ask me questions about whether or not she was actually into civil rights, and I was like, well, maybe? Why not! Actually she has been a great gay icon, that didn't really matter to me at first. For me it's more about remixing, mashing things up, putting them back together.”

–Floor van Luijk

How do you select your subjects, what do you want to provoke in the viewer?

–Esiri Erheriene-Essi

“I really like history and I want to show things from the historical narrative that are not widely known or seen. I want to give people an overload of information, not to suffocate but to get them to dig deeper and make up their own viewpoints. I often use sugary sweet colors, that attract people's attention, like an ice-cream that you want to eat, that's all really jolly on the surface, but when you take a step back you see something that is not so jolly and sweet, but a bit dark.”

–Floor van Luijk

Why painting?

Esiri Erheriene-Essi

“First, I'm obsessed by the physicality of painting, that it's messy, that it gets stinky. For me, painting also gives a certain freedom. It is not about documenting the world anymore. It also isn't holy, it isn't going to save anyone's life, people can be touched by it though. I use the canvas like a spotlight, to shine light on some things. I always get obsessed with certain topics, like The Supremes, feminism or the assassination of President Kennedy. In painting I can intermix everything and play around with it. Another thing I like about painting is the silence and non-linearity, even though there is a lot of information, you can still make your own assumptions, you are the one taking direction.”

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–Floor van Luijk

Most of the stuff you put in your paintings seems to be of the postwar period, the 50's, 60's and 70's, why?

–Esiri Erheriene-Essi

“That period fascinates me, there were so many shifts taking place, so many voices that were suppressed for so long and were finally able to speak. My obsession for lynching scenes was born out of reading a contemporary newspaper story though, and in those four years I found out about lynching in many time periods. My paintings show contemporary imagery, but also go back even to Victorian times.”

–Floor van Luijk

Why wouldn't you use more recent material?

–Esiri Erheriene-Essi

“I like to keep a certain distance. First I painted lynching scenes because I was horrified by them, they were very emotional. I gradually moved away from the lynching to painting the crowds around them, that gave it some distance. It made me understand the importance of using imagery from the past. When something is fresh, like imagery from the war in Iraq, you can't really read it, it's too emotional. In that case you can't really play around with it.”



–Floor van Luijk

You're a black woman, a lot of your work is about race issues and feminism, is it autobiographical in a way?

–Esiri Erheriene-Essi

“In a way every work is autobiographical. I grew up in London, there nobody cares where you are from, and I was just making comics about my friends getting drunk and puking. When I moved to Amsterdam I started to think more about my background. My parents are from Nigeria, so half of my culture is Nigerian and half of my culture is English, so it's another juxtaposition there, that's what makes me. My work isn't really about me though. Issues like race are relevant, even though the dialogue shifted from blacks to Muslims after 9/11, the same ideology is behind it. History mispronounced sounds like hysterical, I stole that quote from John Baldessari because I think that is really where my work is about.”

Floor van Luijk

Your show in Arnhem ends in September, what are you doing next?

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–Esiri Erheriene-Essi

“I’ve been working very hard for the Arnhem show, so now I need to take some time to do research. I’m starting a lot of new work that has nothing to do with either The Supremes, Judy Garland, or the Kennedys. I’m also preparing for a show I’ll have in my gallery Ron Mandos in the near future.”

Floor van Luijk is an Intern at Metropolis M

Esiri Erheriene-Essi Studied Media Studies and Fine Art at the University of East London, graduated from the Ateliers in 2009 and won the Koninklijke Prijs voor Vrije schilderkunst that same year. In 2011 she was nominated for the Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst Prijs.

Arnhem Museum

Dont Support the Greedy

18 april t/m 7 september

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CV

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ESIRI ERHERIENE-ESSI

Born 1982 in London, England
Lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

EDUCATION

2009 Post-graduate Institute, De Ateliers, Amsterdam, NL
2006 MA (with merit) Fine Art, University of East London, London, UK
2004 BA (Hons) Media Studies, University of East London, London, UK
2001 (foundation) Camberwell College of Art, London, UK

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022 *Rememory*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
2021 *The Future Isn't What It Used to Be*, MARUANI MERCIER, Knokke, BE
I am here because you were there, Galerie Ron Mandos, Amsterdam, NL
2018 *The dogs bark, but the caravan goes on*, Galerie Ron Mandos, Amsterdam, NL
2015 *The Usual Suspects*, Galerie Ron Mandos, Amsterdam, NL
2014 *Don't Support the Greedy*, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, NL
2011 *PERFORMANCE*, Galerie Ron Mandos, Amsterdam, NL
2009 *I Don't Like Nostalgia Unless it's Mine*, Galerie Ron Mandos, Rotterdam, NL
2008 *Test*, De Ateliers, Amsterdam, NL

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 *When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting*, Zeltz MOCAA, Cape Town, ZA
Greatest Source of My Longing, Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin, DE
What It Could Be, Stony Islands Arts Bank, Chicago, IL, US
Realism from 1900 to the present, Museum MORE, Gorssel, NL
Prophecy, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, UK
Primal beast to smoking croissant, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Schiedam, NL
Contemporary Perspectives, Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht, NL
2021 *Tomorrow is a Different Day - 1980 – Now*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, NL
Trailblazers: 150th Anniversary of the Royal Award for Modern Painting,
Royal Palace, Amsterdam, NL
The Roaring Twenties, Museum Kraneburgh, Bergen, NL

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All Eyes, AkzoNobel Art Collection, Amsterdam, NL

- 2020 *The Pearl*, Ramp Gallery, London, UK
The Armory Show, Galerie Ron Mandos booth, New York, NY, US
Realism Nu, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Schiedam, NL
ME: An Exhibition of Contemporary Self-Portraiture, High Line Nine, New York, NY, US
Empathy / No human is an island, Museum Ijsselstein, Ijsselstein, NL
- 2019 *Prix de Rome 2019*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, NL
Your Voice Matters, Museum Arnhem (De Kerk), Arnhem, NL
- 2018 *De Kersentuin (4)*, KunstRAI, Amsterdam, NL
Common Ground, AkzoNobel Art Foundation, Amsterdam, NL
LekArt Festival, Shared Ground, Culemborg, NL
- 2017 *ZOALS JIJ EN IK (LIKE YOU AND ME)*, Art Chapel, Amsterdam, NL
What's New, Acquisitions, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, NL
- 2016 *What We Have Overlooked*, Framer Framed, Amsterdam, NL
ROEMERS DRIELING (III), De Nieuwe Bibliotheek Almere, Almere, NL
ROEMERS DRIELING (II), Bibliotheek Den Haag, The Hague, NL
Roemers Drieling in Nieuwspoot, International Press Centre Nieuwspoot, The Hague, NL
- 2015 *Parallel Stories - The Whistleblower and the Dreamcatcher*, Museumnacht Artiet Amicitiae, Amsterdam, NL
ROEMERS DRIELING, Centrum voor Beeldende Kunst, Amsterdam, NL
ZIJ WAS EENS... TETEM Kunstruimte, Enschede, NL
- 2014 *'Levenslang', het criminele brein ontleed*, museum Het Dolhuys, Haarlem, NL
- 2013 *Jättekatastrof*, Mitt Möllan, Malmö, SE
- 2012 *Open Studio*, Nordisk Kunstnarsenter Dalsåsen, Dale, NO
Big Show 7, Silas Marder Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY, US
- 2011 *De Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst Prijs 2011*, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, NL
What's New 2, Acquisitions, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, NL
- 2010 *VOLTA6*, Galerie Ron Mandos booth, Basel, CH
What's New, Acquisitions, Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, NL
Art Rotterdam, Galerie Ron Mandos booth, Rotterdam, NL
- 2009 *Offspring*, De Ateliers, Amsterdam, NL
- 2007 *Art in Mind*, The Brick Lane Gallery, London, UK
Disposable Fetish, Bow Arts Trust, London, UK

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2006 *Memory & the Stream of Time*, APT Gallery, London, UK
Final Exhibition, UEL MA Fine Art, London, UK
Student Show, UEL AVA, London, UK

2005 *Works on Paper*, RK Burk Gallery, London, UK
End of year show, UEL AVA, London, UK

RESIDENCIES & AWARDS

2019 (Nominee & Children's Jury winner) Prix de Rome, NL
Mondriaan Fonds, (Investment project Artist), NL

2017 Development Budget, Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst, NL

2016 Werkbijdrage Bewezen Talent, Mondriaan Fonds, NL

2013 Mondriaan Fonds, (Investment project Artist), NL
Nordic Kunstnarsenter Dalsåsen, Dale, Norway (residency)

2012 Nordic Kunstnarsenter Dalsåsen, Dale, Norway (residency)
Fonds BKVB, (Work Budget), NL

2011 Fonds BKVB, (Work Budget), NL
(Nominee) De Volkskrant Beeldende Kunst Prijs 2011, NL

2010 Starter Stipendium, Fonds BKVB, NL

2009 Koninklijke Prijs voor Vrije Schilderkunst, Amsterdam, NL

COLLECTIONS

Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, NL
Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of The Netherlands, Den Haag, NL
Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Schiedam, NL
The Scott Newman Art Collection, US
21C Museum Hotels, US
The Collection of Beth Rudin DeWoody, US
Mana Contemporary, Chicago, US
AkzoNobel Art Foundation, Amsterdam, NL
Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, NL
Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, NL,
Robert & Renee Drake Collection, Wassenaar, NL
Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (ICA), Miami, US