

PRESS RELEASE

CHIBUIKE UZOMA: *TO KICK A STONE*



19 JANUARY – 25 FEBRUARY 2023

PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY, 6 – 8 PM

Simon Lee Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Chibuike Uzoma, whose multidisciplinary practice spans painting, photography, drawing, text, and video. Titled *To Kick a Stone*, this show explores pictorial illusion and the agency of the viewer. Presented alongside a sound piece by João Orecchia and a film work by Edward Owens, the exhibition will run from 19 January to 25 February 2023.

Comprising colourful, abstruse portraiture against stark black and white backgrounds, the paintings in *To Kick a Stone* are deeply suggestive, but ultimately formalist explorations of shape and composition. Functioning as prompts, the paintings play on our proclivity to anthropomorphise and personify images. Probing the relationship between pictorial illusion, individual shapes and complete images, Uzoma's new works are often bordered with lettering that doubles as a compositional element and an evocative detail for viewers to delve into.

Central to this body of work are the philosophical implications of Roland Barthes' 1967 essay *The Death of The Author*, which rejected the idea that a work of art should be analysed in relation to the artist's intent and personal history; instead proposing that meaning is activated by the viewer. As such, these works are deeply collaborative. Whilst Uzoma is primarily focused on the peculiarities of painting, it is his understanding that audiences will bring varied cultural references and perspectives to the works, synergistically developing narratives that evolve from moment to moment, with viewer to viewer.

NOTES TO EDITORS**About Chibulke Uzoma**

Chibuike Uzoma (b. 1992, Port Harcourt, Nigeria) is a multidisciplinary artist working with photography, painting, drawing, and text, currently living and working in New Haven, Connecticut. Uzoma received a BFA from the University of Benin and an MFA from Yale University School of Art. His work is included in the public collections of Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norway; Didi Museum, Lagos, Nigeria and Fotohof Salzburg, Austria. Recent exhibitions include Pace, New York, NY (2021); Lyles & King, New York, NY (2021); Everard Read, Cape Town, South Africa (2019); Florida Museum of Photographic Arts, Florida, FL (2019); Circa Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa (2017); D-Contemporary Gallery, London, UK (2017). Uzoma's first solo exhibition in the UK will be held at Simon Lee Gallery, London, in January 2023.

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Chibuike Uzoma, *Mother, Mother..., Times Have Changed*, 2022. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 213.36 x 152.4 cm (84 x 60 in).

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact: Jennifer@simonleegallery.com