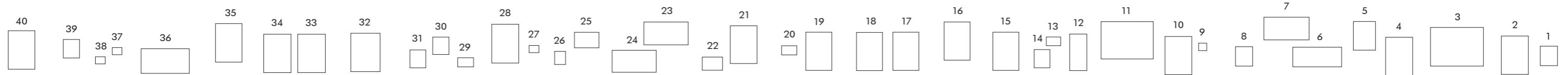


Toyin Ojih Odutola

A Countervailing Theory

Exit

Entrance



- 1 *Establishing the Plot*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
- 2 *This Is How You Were Made; Final Stages*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
- 3 *Acclimation and Placement*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Diptych
- 4 *Introductions: Early Embodiment (Koba)*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
- 5 *Placements: Memory Exercise*, 2019
Pastel and chalk on board
Diptych
- 6 *Mating Ritual*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
Triptych
Collection of Gina and Stuart Peterson,
promised gift to the Metropolitan Museum of Art
- 7 *Courtship*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Collection of Gina and Stuart Peterson
- 8 *Semblance of Certainty*, 2019
Charcoal and pastel on board
Khakshour/Freeman Collection
- 9 *This Is How You Were Born*, 2019
Charcoal and pastel on board
Collection of Elise and Andrew Brownstein.
Courtesy of Barbara Schwartz and Lianne Sheplar
- 10 *Unsupervised Education*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel

- 11 *Training for Compatibility*, 2019–20
Charcoal and pastel on linen over Dibond panel
- 12 *First Signs, First Development, First Weapon*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
Diptych
- 13 *To See and To Know; Future Lovers*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
Private Collection
- 14 *A Parting Gift; Hers and Hers, Only*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
- 15 *Suspicious Left Behind*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Beth Rudin DeWoody
- 16 *Waiting on Assignments*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Collection Iris and Adam Singer
- 17 *Routine Inspection*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Harry G. David
- 18 *Routine Inspection II*, 2019–20
Charcoal and pastel on linen over Dibond panel
- 19 *To Be Chosen and Not Known*, 2019–20
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Private Collection, UAE
- 20 *Farewells*, 2019
Charcoal and pastel on board
Private Collection

- 21 *To the Next Outpost*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Collection of Michael Sobel
- 22 *Rest Stop*, 2019
Charcoal and pastel on board
Khakshour/Freeman Collection
- 23 *An Understanding: A Lesson in Listening*, 2020
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
- 24 *Accepting Impermanence*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Private Collection
- 25 *Imitation Lesson; Her Shadowed Influence*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
- 26 *Vocabulary*, 2019
Charcoal and pastel on board
Kemal Has Cingillioglu and Tala Cingillioglu
- 27 *Untitled (Study)*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
Private Collection, Munich, Germany
- 28 *The Ruling Class (Eshu)*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Collection of Andy Song
- 29 *A Forbidden Impulse*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
Private Collection, London
- 30 *Call and Response*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board

- 31 *Inciting Incident*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on board
- 32 *Altered Landscape*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Hudgins Family
- 33 *Tribunal*, 2020
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
- 34 *Summons; To Witness One's Own*, 2019–20
Charcoal and pastel on linen over Dibond panel
- 35 *The Empress's Guard*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
- 36 *Trial of One Wrongfully Accused*, 2020
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
- 37 *A Considered Choice*, 2019
Charcoal and pastel on board
Private Collection; Courtesy of Adam Green Art Advisory
- 38 *Consequences Unforeseen*, 2019
Charcoal and pastel on board
- 39 *Children of the Century; Twin Sister and Brother*, 2019
Pastel on board
- 40 *Parable Rock, Riyom, Nigeria, c. 2200 BC*, 2019
Charcoal, pastel and chalk on linen over Dibond panel
Collection of Andre Sakhai

Unless otherwise stated, all works are courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Peter Adjaye
Ceremonies Within, 2020
Three-part soundscape, 20 min.
© Peter Adjaye, courtesy of Music for Architecture Ltd

Toyin Ojih Odutola

A Countervailing Theory

barbican

For her first UK exhibition, Nigerian-American artist Toyin Ojih Odutola presents an epic cycle of forty new drawings along the sweeping wall of The Curve. Together, these works reveal an imagined ancient myth conceived by the artist. Ojih Odutola's work is concerned with drawing as a process of storytelling. She weaves speculative tales, which question familiar histories and pose alternative realities.

Set within a surreal landscape inspired by the rock formations of Plateau State in central Nigeria, the works depict a fictional prehistoric civilisation, dominated by female rulers and served by male labourers. Each community is forbidden from forging sexual or emotional relationships outside of their own gender. Drawing on an eclectic range of sources, from ancient history to popular culture, the artist considers these new power dynamics and the consequences of their transgression.

The title of the exhibition, *A Countervailing Theory*, references the idea (often used in politics and economics) of countering an existing power with an equal force. The story that unfolds in the gallery delves into the complex implications of 'flipping the script', challenging ideas of colonial history and predefined gender roles. Executed in pastel, charcoal and chalk, the series is hung in a wandering rhythm along the ninety-metre span of The Curve, so that it reads like a life-size cinematic storyboard or graphic novel – two recurrent sources of inspiration for the artist. Each of the works act as an individual episode within an overarching narrative, encouraging the viewer to piece together the fragments of the story for themselves.

Ghanaian-British conceptual sound artist Peter Adjaye has responded to Ojih Odutola's drawings with an immersive soundscape titled *Ceremonies Within*, which evocatively builds upon the references within her work and evolves throughout the gallery. This richly layered

composition features diverse sounds including classical strings, electronics, natural elements including wind and water, and West African instruments, such as ogene (double bells), okpola (a woodblock) and igba (a cylinder drum). Together, the drawings and soundscape draw the viewer into a fantastical, sensorial landscape.

Ojih Odutola views her practice as an investigation, intensely engaging with the process of mark-making to explore its potential to create new meaning. Working exclusively with drawing materials and often on a monumental scale, the artist plays with the grand tradition of portrait painting by elevating the medium of drawing. Ojih Odutola's works show a persistent attention to the texture of skin, achieving extraordinary luminous effects through her distinctive techniques of building and blending mediums. The topography of the flesh, as well as that of the changing natural environment in this new series, conveys the nuanced histories and emotional experiences of her subjects.

Please do not touch the artwork.

Please ensure young children are accompanied at all times.

The exhibition has been commissioned by the Barbican, London.

Supported by Arts Council England and Jack Shainman Gallery.

The exhibition is produced in collaboration with Kunsten Museum of Modern Art in Aalborg, Denmark, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, US.

Catalogue and Poster

A fully illustrated catalogue to accompany the installation *Toyin Ojih Odutola: A Countervailing Theory* is available to purchase. Featuring a newly commissioned text by author Zadie Smith and an interview with the artist by exhibition curator Lotte Johnson, this title is the eleventh in a publication series by Barbican Art Gallery that focuses on the Curve exhibition programme.

Buy the catalogue in the Barbican Shop on Level G and in the Art Gallery Shop on Level 4 or online at barbican.org.uk/shop for £12.

A poster for the exhibition is also available in the Barbican shops and online for £5.

Soundscape and Vinyl Album

A limited edition vinyl album of the exhibition soundscape composed by artist Peter Adjaye, *Ceremonies Within*, released on Music for Architecture Records/The Vinyl Factory, is available to buy in the Barbican shops and online.

Events

Please visit barbican.org.uk/ToyinOjihOdutola for online events, activities and to read more about *A Countervailing Theory*.

Learning Resource

A free online resource highlighting key themes and questions raised by the exhibition is available to support school & family visits. See website for more details.

Acknowledgements

Associate Curator: Lotte Johnson
Curatorial Assistant: Charlotte Flint
Artistic Director: Leonora Thomson
Head of Visual Arts: Jane Alison

Gallery Production

Peter Sutton
Margaret Liley
Bruce Stracy
Angus Sanders-Dunnachie
and Barbican Art Gallery technicians

Communications and Marketing

Elise Bell
Lily Booth
Gwen Ellis
Michelle Evans
David Lally
Daisy Robinson-Smyth
Jemima Yong

Special thanks to Toyin Ojih Odutola as well as

Peter Adjaye, Joeonna Bellorado-Samuels, Maria Carroll, Michael Cohen, Katrina Crookall, Josie Dick, Rita Duarte, Emelia Gatley, Erin J Gilbert, Dr Franca Ikuenobe, Sharon Kent, Julie Kim, Anna Kristensen, Zak Kyes, Arthur Lewis & Hau Nguyen, Alice Lobb, The New Yorker, Adedotun Odutola, Adeola Odutola, Kourtney Odutola, Nelene Ojih Odutola & Dr J Ade Odutola, Ruth Phaneuf, Dr Leigh Raiford, Calvin Reedy, Anahi Saravia Herrera, Jack Shainman, Rob Smith, Zadie Smith, Lam Thuy Vo, Bill Tratchet, Matthew Turner, Rachel Williams, Lynette Yiadom-Bookye and Suzanne Zhang.



The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND