

An abstract painting of a human face in profile, facing right. The face is rendered in warm, earthy tones of orange and brown, with blue and purple highlights. The background is a deep, textured blue. The overall style is expressive and modern.

**SOLA OLULODE
PAUL MAJEK**

**IN
HEAVENLY
BLUE**

curated by **Wunika Mukan**

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Pacers Gallery is proud to present *In Heavenly Blue*, the homecoming exhibition of Paul Majek and Sola Olulode. The exhibition centers on their exploration of the color blue as a conduit of love and memory. In their work, as in Nigerian tradition, blue certifies its power to summon emotion and elicit the depths of intimacy. Paul Majek's paintings ebb dreamily between dimensions with the color blue facilitating the tide. Sola Oluode's indigos arouse a sense of familiarity, as they linger in tender, romantic moments. The two UK based artists draw upon their ancestry in their practices and in coming "home" to Nigeria, they reconnect knowledge frayed by time and migration.

Paul Majek takes his own blue-hued lucid dreaming as a point of departure to probe the materiality of liminal spaces in his practice. As his painting title *Blues behind closed eyes* (2021) alludes, he takes interest in what may be "bubbling beneath the surface" of his consciousness. Painting in oil, acrylic and charcoal on wood panels or canvas, Paul recreates the defined terrain of the subliminal. He recontextualizes woodgrain as a liquid form and imprints Nigerian symbols to support a sense of transparency in his figures and ethereality of imagined spaces. His gentle yet ghostly visual language renders his work "soft and easy to enter", allowing his paintings to serve as permeable passageways between dreams, death and rebirth. In this selection of work, he references archival family photos of people and spaces only partially known to him. He approaches the archive as its own autonomous language in order to traverse the perforated landscapes of memory, love, generational dialogue, and spirituality.

Sola Olulode's work in this exhibition explores Black Queer romance, centering each work on two central figures locked in a moment of tenderness. Employing a range of media including ink, dye, batik, oil bar and pastels, her selection of paintings and monoprints delight themselves in uncompromising sweetness. Sola turns to the Nigerian practice of *adire*, a traditional form of batik resist dyeing, in her works on canvas. Reconstructing the practice in the UK, she uses cassava paste to outline preliminary forms on the canvas. She then submerges her canvas into deep indigo dyes, setting an emotive mood for the lovers who are often pictured in a moonlit embrace. She returns to her figures to selectively layer in color to give them form and dimension. This process of "soaking an aspect of [her] identity" into the work, coalesces the intersections of her own identity and highlights the ubiquitous nature of (and desire for) loving exchange.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

IN
HEAVENLY
BLUE



YAWOA FOUNDATION

LONDON, UK



**SOLA
OLULODE**

SOLA OLULODE

Born 1996, UK.

Brixton-based British-Nigerian artist Sola Olulode's dreamy queer visions explore embodiments of British Black Womxn and Non-Binary Folx. Working with various mediums of natural dyeing, batik, wax, ink, pastel, oil bar, and impasto she develops textural canvases that explore the fluidities of identities. Drawing inspiration from lived experience, friends, and cultural reference points to centre Black Queer Womxn, Olulode emphasises the integral need of representation and celebration of queer intimacies.

Her utopian scenes celebrate relationships that transcend crude notions of queer sexuality, her figures exemplify the warm embrace of queer love, a temporal space to bathe in memories of intimacies abundant with scenes of profoundly deep tender connections. Envisaging a world reflective of the celebration of her own identities Olulode brings to life representation and visibility of Black Queer lived experiences. Her figures represent multifaceted complex individuals and the energy they hold in their bodies, relishing in a boundless temporality of self-validation and joy.

IN HEAVENLY BLUE



A Cuddle, 2021

Monoprint and Ink on Paper
23 x 33 inches | 58.4 x 83.3 cm



A Cuddle, 2021 detail.



The little Things, 2021

Monoprint and Ink on Paper
33 x 23 inches | 83.3 x 58.4 cm



The little Things, 2021 detail.



Home in Your Arms, 2021

Monoprint on paper

16 x 23 inches | 40.6 x 58.4 cm



Home in Your Arms, 2021 detail.



Peck, 2021

Monoprint on paper

16 x 23 inches | 40.6 x 58.4 cm



Peck, 2021 detail.



Restful, 2021

Monoprint on paper

33 x 23 inches | 83.3 x 58.4 cm



Restful, 2021 detail.



So Close, 2021

Monoprint on paper

33 x 23 inches | 83.3 x 58.4 cm



So Close, 2021 detail.



Exchanging Tenderness, 2021

Indigo, Batik and Oil on Canvas
30 x 30 inches | 76.2 x 76.2 cm



Exchanging Tenderness, 2021



In Moonlight I, 2021

Indigo, batik and Oil on Canvas

48 x 48 inches | 121.9 x 121.9 cm



In Moonlight I, 2021 detail.



In Moonlight II, 2021

Indigo, Batik, Pigment, Pastel, Oil Pastel & Collage on Canvas
48 x 48 inches | 121.9 x 121.9 cm



In Moonlight II, 2021 detail.



In Moonlight III, 2021

Indigo, Batik, Oil, Oil Pastel on Canvas
48 x 48 inches | 121.9 x 121.9 cm



In Moonlight III, 2021 detail.



Your Face On Mine, 2021

Indigo, Batik, Oil Pastel and Oil on Canvas
38 x 38 inches | 96.5 x 96.5 cm



Your Face on Mine, 2021 detail.



In The Centre Of The Moon, 2021

Indigo, Batik, Oil Pastel and Oil on Canvas
38 x 38 inches | 91.4 x 91.4 cm



In The Centre Of The Moon, 2021 detail.

A portrait of Paul Majek, a young Black man with a slight smile, wearing a black bucket hat, a white t-shirt, and black overalls. He is sitting in a room with a bookshelf in the background. The text 'LONDON, UK' is overlaid at the top in white, and 'PAUL MAJEK' is overlaid at the bottom left in white.

LONDON, UK

**PAUL
MAJEK**

PAUL MAJEK

Born 2000, Nigeria.

Paul Majek's paintings on wood are about family and shadow figures in blue spaces, the work evokes dream-like emotions of peace and reminiscence. He uses the subject matter of family archives intertwined with recollections of my immediate environment. It's important that his paintings work with the autonomy of transparency and softness, this is translated through the wood - its grain, charcoal, acrylic and oil paints. An amalgamation of found images, family archives and imagined spaces, he questions transparency and its relation to honesty, love and truth.

The concealing, layering, opacity of blues and browns, somehow becomes freedom and liberation. To abstain is to love. He wants to remain in the defined unknown - this abstraction is funnelled through the figuration in his work. The process of ruminations and divinations, time travelling through the fluidity of fiction and history. When spirits commune.

IN HEAVENLY BLUE



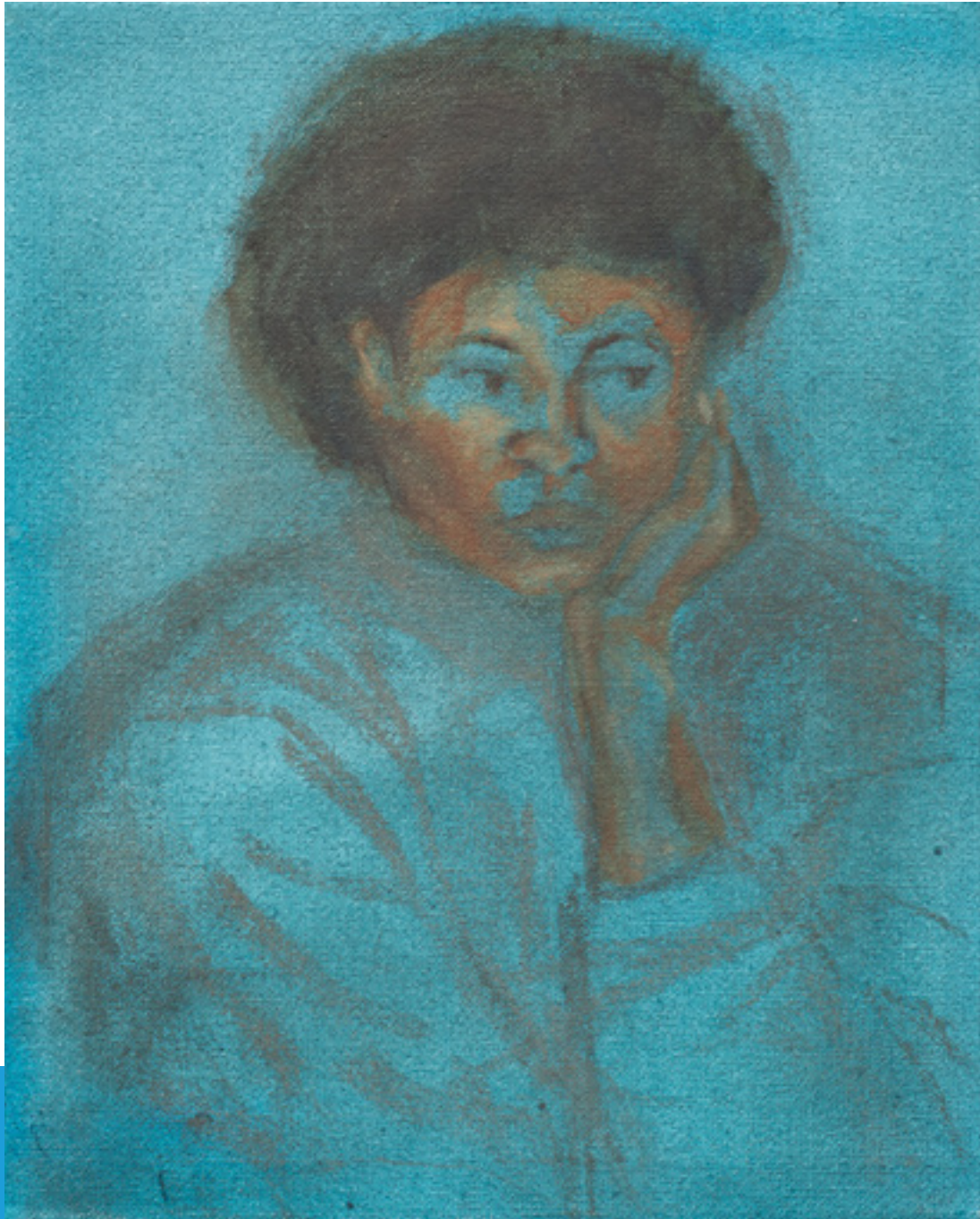
Blues behind closed eyes, 2021

Oil, Acrylic and Charcoal on Wood Panel

31.9 x 47.6 inches | 81 x 121 cm



Blues behind closed eyes, 2021 detail.



Caroline blues, 2021

Oil, Acrylic Paint and Charcoal on Canvas
12.2 x 10 inches | 31 x 25.5 cm



Caroline blues, 2021 detail.



Held, 2021

Screen Print on Acrylic MDF board
23.6 x 14.8 inches | 60 x 37.5 cm



Held, 2021 detail.



I lost my heart's....ease, 2021

Oil, Acrylic and Charcoal on Wood Panel
42 x 32.3 inches | 107 x 82 cm



I lost my heart's....ease, 2021 detail.



Mother and child, 2019

Oil on Canvas Board

33.5 x 23.6 inches | 85 x 60 cm



Mother and child, 2019 detail.



The Unknown, 2020

Oil and Acrylic Paint/Charcoal on Wood
49.2 x 37.8 inches | 124 x 96 cm



The Unknown, 2020 detail.



Untitled, 2019

Oil, Acrylic Paint and Charcoal on Paper
23.6 x 17.7 inches | 60 x 45 cm



Untitled, 2020 detail.



Who are you?, 2021

Oil, Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas Board
20.1 x 16.1 inches | 51 x 41 cm



Who are you?, 2021 detail.

PACERS GALLERY

ABOUT

Based in Lagos, Nigeria, Pacers Gallery champions bright emerging talent in contemporary art. Founded in 2020 by Wunika Mukan, Pacers gallery is uniquely positioned to support its roster of artists to grow into the next stage of their careers. The gallery's curatorial practice draws from virtual platforms to identify and select its artists, bridging the gap of accessibility for international and local artists and audiences. Offering exciting opportunities to exhibit and engage critically in global discourse, Pacers Gallery is dedicated to expanding artist visibility and providing space for innovation, exploration and immersive exchange.

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