

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Joseph Aina (b. 1996) is a Nigerian-British artist who lives in London but also works in Nigeria and Berlin. He received a degree in Law and Psychology from the University of Kent (2018). He then took a year out to develop his portfolio and pursue a Graduate Diploma at the Royal College of Art (RCA) where he graduated with an MA in Painting in 2022. After graduation, he moved to Nigeria for a residency to focus on expanding the fundamental elements of his practice.

He has taken part in group exhibitions such as *Layered Textures*, DADA Gallery, London (2023), *Things Left Unsaid*, Affinity Gallery, Lagos (2023), *Buffer*, Guts Gallery, London (2022), *Patterns of Identity*, Prior Art Space, Barcelona (2022), *The Life of Us*, Prior Art Space, Berlin (2022), *Pin Board*, Changing Room, London (2022); and solo exhibitions, *Looking For a Saviour*, Prior Art Space, Berlin (2022) and *The Movement Within*, Berntson Bhattacharjee Gallery, London (2023). He is the recipient of the Student Scholarship Award at the RCA and was shortlisted for the Valerie Beston Award by Artist Trust in 2022 and the ACS (Artists' Collecting Society) Studio Prize, 2023. He is the most recent artist-in-residence at the Vannucci Artist Residency, Umbria, Italy.

ARTIST STATEMENT

On my way to the residency in Umbria, I spent time in Rome and while I was there I picked up ten books by renaissance artists from the street market. I was immediately drawn to their depiction of clouds and the heavens, many of which looked very similar to the scenery I was seeing every day. When I began to create this body of work, they inspired me to focus on the division between the sky and horizon often seen in my work.

The residency being only 6 weeks meant I was unable to rely on the heavy application of paint that is synonymous with my style of painting. Instead, I decided to explore and experiment with my use of colour and the interplay with the background layers.

I started each painting with a brown undertone, followed by layers of colour that explode from the canvas; a similar approach that many renaissance painters used. With a smooth surface to work on, I was able to manipulate the oil paint in a way that reflects the emulsion of colours I see in the sky as the sun journeys west to set; a fitting representation of my experience living on a hill so close to the clouds, able to observe the nature of light and its movement throughout the day.

Much of my abstract work is built around landscapes and the peace that is found in nature. Both my residencies in Nigeria earlier in the year and now in Italy, helped me take time out of my studio practice to develop a deep understanding of the sceneries that influence my work.

