

Chris Ofili: *Joyful Sorrow*

Victoria Miro Venice, 26 October–14 December 2024

David Zwirner Paris, 14 October–30 November 2024



Chris Ofili, *Othello - Reflection*, 2018–2024

© Chris Ofili. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro.

***Joyful Sorrow* is a two-site exhibition in Paris and Venice of the acclaimed British painter Chris Ofili's newest body of work that continues his exploration of Shakespeare's Othello. The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication in collaboration with poet and writer Jason Allen-Paisant.**

Renowned for his rich, multilayered paintings, Ofili here expands his engagement with William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* (1603–04). The transmuting colours and forms of the watercolours and paintings in this joint exhibition and book reflect the complex interiority of the character Othello – his vulnerabilities and his joyful sorrows. The artist also considers these works, which investigate ideas of authenticity, meaning, and selfhood, to be partly self-portraits. In encountering these repeated representations of Othello, as viewers and readers, we are asked to consider metamorphosis, love, the bearing of outside influences on our inner selves, and the force we exercise on the world.

Published on the occasion of this two-site exhibition staged by David Zwirner Paris and Victoria Miro Venice, the publication *Joyful Sorrow* includes a text from Ofili's studio and a selection of poems by Jason Allen-Paisant from his 2023 collection *Self-Portrait as Othello*.

Chris Ofili explores the intersection of desire, identity, and representation in his work, which merges abstraction and figuration; vibrant, symbolic, and often mysterious, his paintings and works on paper incorporate a range of aesthetic and cultural sources. Solo exhibitions of his work have been presented at venues including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (2017–2019); National Gallery, London (2017); New Museum, New York (2014–2015); The Arts Club of Chicago (2010); Tate Britain, London (2010 and 2005); Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2006); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2005); and Serpentine Gallery, London (1998). Ofili represented Britain in the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003 and won the Turner Prize in 1998. He lives and works in Trinidad.

Jason Allen-Paisant is a scholar, an award-winning poet, and a writer. His work explores how Afro-diasporic artists and communities shape their futures through embodied philosophies, focusing on the intersections of poetry and philosophy. His debut poetry collection, *Thinking with Trees*, won the 2022 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature. His second book, *Self-Portrait as Othello*, has earned significant accolades, including the 2023 Forward Prize for Best Collection and the T.S. Eliot Prize. He is a professor of critical theory and creative writing at the University of Manchester.

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