

Paris, July 6th, 2020

**PRESS RELEASE
JEAN-FRANÇOIS PRAT PRIZE 2020 – 9th EDITION**

2020 SHORT LISTED ARTISTS:

- KEI IMAZU
- TOYIN OJIH ODUTOLA
- TOREY TORNTHON

**THE NAME OF THE PRIZEWINNING ARTIST WILL BE RELEASED OCTOBER 1ST, 2020,
RIGHT AFTER THE JURY SESSION**

PUBLIC EXHIBITION : OCTOBER 2nd – NOVEMBER 14th, 2020

(Every Saturdays, through on line reservation at :

<http://www.bredinpratfoundation.org/en/visit-the-exhibitions/>)

The Bredin Prat Foundation for Contemporary Art invites the three short listed artists of the Jean-François Prat Prize 2020: Kei Imazu, Toyin Ojih Odula and Torey Thornton, to present their works in a group exhibition. This annual event is the main international prize for contemporary art dedicated to painting, in France.

This new edition of the Prize, whose president of the jury is Marie-Claude Beaud, director of the New National Museum of Monaco (NMNM) former founding director of the Cartier Foundation (Paris) and Mudam (Luxemburg), has chosen two African-American artists and a Japanese artist.

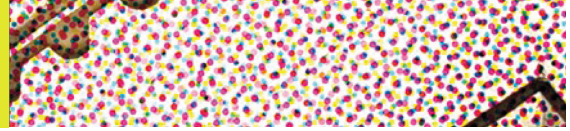
Decided before recent racial events in the United States, the selection offers another look at African-American art, with the benefit of a decade of emergence and a universalist approach, but is not limited to this cultural contribution: for the first time, the Japanese contemporary art scene has been investigated.

Born in Nigeria and living in the United States, Toyin Ojih Odutola imagines a world where being black is the norm. She invites us to look at the social representation of an imagined black upper class, at the intersection of the criteria of race, identity, sexuality and gender.

Torey Thornton's work pushes the boundaries of the painting (including collages, drawings, found objects), without any determinism of expression linked to its skin color. His cryptic "tableaux" where abstract territories and figurative languages dialogue are based on a solid mastery of the history of art and constitute visual enigmas.

In the fight against forgetfulness and indifference to images, Kei Imazu nurtures a fascination for disorder, in charge of expressing the violence and fragmentation of the world and of raising awareness on the deterioration of his visual heritage.

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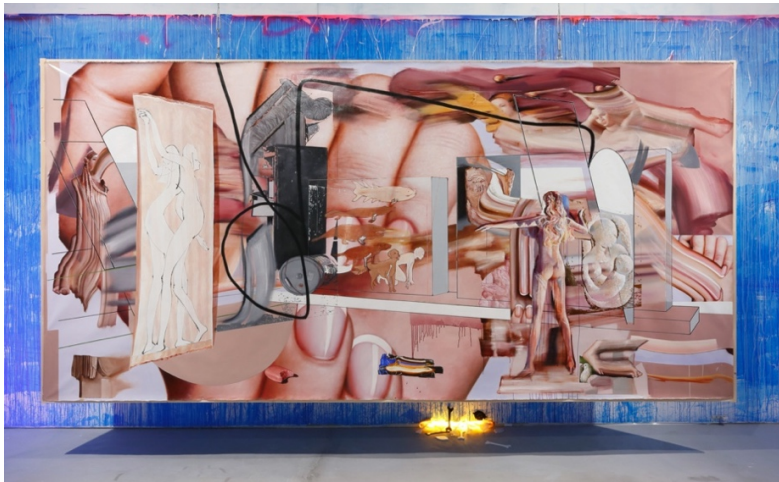
KEI IMAZU



© Courtesy of the artist

Kei Imazu's compositions, teeming with lots of visual fragments, intermingle references both to the past and to the present in complex sets of images made more or less visible and legible.

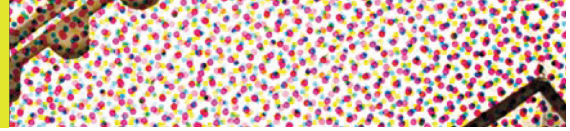
Iconoclasm, ecology, fragile bodies, dilapidated buildings ... Between instability and fragility, representation and almost abstraction, the artist offers a kind of esoteric reading of the world and the human condition in which references to culture and the disorders of the world are mixed together.



Swoon, 2018 © Kei Imazu, courtesy of Yamamoto Gendai

Like an archaeologist, she unearths fragments of images, borrowed from literature, philosophy or the history of Eastern and Western art, from the meanders of the Internet, which she associates with advertising, personal photos or emoticons.

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Lying Warrior, 2016 © Kei Imazu, courtesy of Yamamoto Gendai

Heir to the surrealists and a practice of collage, she assembles these visual fragments on screen, by affinities or formal tensions and without hierarchy. Then, using Photoshop, she distorts the patterns by erasing, dissolving or resizing.

These digital collages are then transferred to canvas and painted in acrylic; a return to painting which allows her to give flesh to the smooth and impoverished visuals of the Internet and to give sense to the proliferation of images.

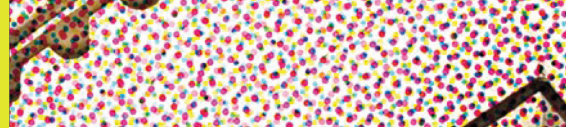
Conscious of the way in which the visible is released today, in the form of multiple and chaotic flows, she creates works stuck by their hyper complexity and their sensitive power; hybrid and exploded images that excite the retina and destabilize the gaze.

Three works from different periods will be exhibited as part of the 2020 edition of the Jean-François Prat Prize:



Red List, 2015 © Kei Imazu, courtesy of Anomaly

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In a diptych entitled *Red List* (2015), which title refers to the red list drawn up by ICOM listing cultural property in danger, Kei Imazu juxtaposed fragments of works of art in danger looted, sold or illegally exported. Colors and shapes have been distorted in order to highlight the vulnerability of the images.

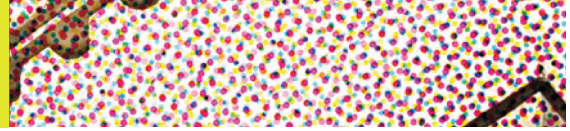
Thus, a Syrian statuette in ivory of the Tambourine player is confronted with stolen then found paintings as *Olympia* by Magritte, *The Holy Family* by Hendrick van den Broeck, or *The last Supper* by Philome Obin, a work that escaped the 2010 earthquake in Port au Prince (Haiti).



Black Eyes, 2016 © Kei Imazu, courtesy of Anomaly

In a virtuoso composition titled *Black Eyes* (2016), fragments of images relating to the fragility of bodies and structures of oppression are mixed together, mingling with, among others, references to paintings by Bronzino, *Le Grand verre* by Marcel Duchamp or slaves in the pyramids of Egypt.

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Kancil and Crocodiles, 2020 © Kei Imazu, courtesy of Anomaly

The most recent work, *Kancil and Crocodiles* (2020), depicts the head of his young child supported by two hands, while a dynamic bestiary invades the canvas. By drawing his references from manga (*The Firebird* by Osamu Tezuka) but also from stories for Japanese and Indonesian children, Imazu evokes the imagination of childhood and translates his questions relating to the double culture of her son.

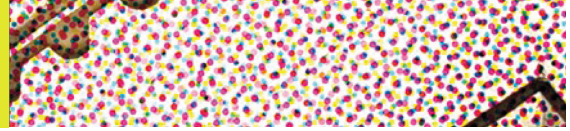
Kei IMAZU – Mini Bio

Born in 1980 in Yamaguchi, Japan, Kei Imazu lives and works in Bandung, Indonesia. She is represented by the ANOMALY gallery in Tokyo.

Her work has benefited from solo exhibitions at the Museum Haus Kasuya in Kanagawa, the ANOMALY gallery in Tokyo and the Roh Projects gallery in Jakarta. It has been shown in numerous group exhibitions, notably at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo.

His works are part of the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, as well as the Museum Haus Kasuya in Kanagawa.

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TOYIN OJIH ODUTOLA



Toyin Ojih Odutola © by Brian Lowry - Courtesy of W Magazine

Known primarily for her portraits, which explore the limits of representation and deal with the complexity of identity, Toyin Ojih Odutola focuses on the socio-political construction of skin color. She seeks to represent race and the concept of blackness as a social marker, including in a traditionally invisible elite.

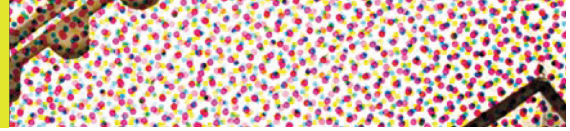
Her works are mainly combinations of pastels, charcoal, pencil on paper and ballpoint pen.

Toyin Ojih Odutola draws on her experience as a black woman living in the southern United States but born in Nigeria.



My Country Has No Name, 2013
© The artist, courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery, NY

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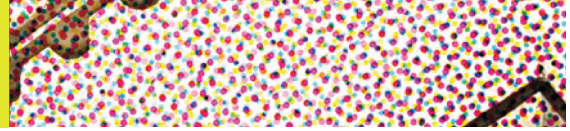
In her first self-portraits from the *All These Garlands Prove Nothing* series made in 2013, she studies the issue of black skin as geographic terrain. It evokes a broader story of how one can accept oneself over time. Oduola focuses on the face and creates complex lines. Inspired by former sculptors from Ifé (Yoruba region of southwestern Nigeria where her parents come from), she recognizes: *"I always thought that the portrait was an opportunity to make marks. I never considered the portrait to be that of the model"*.



Paris Apartment, 2016-17
© The artist. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.

She continues this exploration of the self-portrait in *Paris Apartment* from 2016-2017, depicting a woman with dark brown skin, seated in an elegant interior, and looking at the viewer in a patterned top and precious jewelry: *"All the marks on the face, the blouse or the decor are somehow equal. The eye moves smoothly from the material to the fabric and the face."* The artist views the marking as earth through which the eyes pass, not as a flat, dull surface. The self-portrait, according to the artist, is *"the reinforcement of what we think is the real self, or what we want to portray. I wanted to capture myself. I desperately wanted to create images of subjects with which I could identify myself. I wanted the darkest of black to be full of light, not in contrast or in comparison, but a lightness which is in itself, which is an inextricable part of it."*

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The Treatment 6, 2015

© The artist. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.

In the 2015 *Treatment Series*, she portrays well-known white men such as Tom Cruise, Prince Charles, Leonardo Di Caprio and Picasso, removing their whiteness. About this series, she explains: *"I wanted to approach blackness as a subject - not men, but blackness itself - and how it negates or devalues a subject, at least in our Western construction. Then the idea came to me to represent famous white men. "*



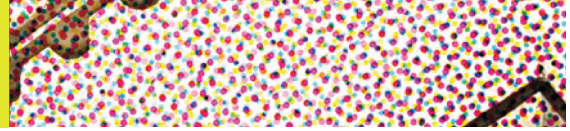
The Firm, 2017-18

© The artist. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.

In his recent works, the artist often starts from an imaginary story. She develops a colorful epic family in which questions of race and class are shown in scenes including lush interiors and landscapes, as in *The Firm* drawn in 2017. She imagines two Nigerian aristocratic families united by marriage of their male heirs. It is both a story about a very affluent social class but also a transgressive tale, since homosexuality is illegal in Nigeria. She dedicates several drawings to the collection of works of art of the gay couple who lives surrounded by objects and paintings and who exhibits his collection in famous art places in the USA.

Through this iconic series of his work, Odutola changes the representation of black people, hitherto assigned to the working and middle classes by contemporary African American painting, and makes visible a black upper class.

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First Touch, 2019

© The artist. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.

The project Odutola is presenting as part of the Prix Prat 2020 revolves around three works, including two new creations, produced especially for the Jean-François Prat Prize.

First Touch, made in 2019, is a drawing in chalk and charcoal on canvas. It is a monochrome fictional narrative. A discovery of rock paintings in Algeria, a story from another time when a matriarchal society would have lived.

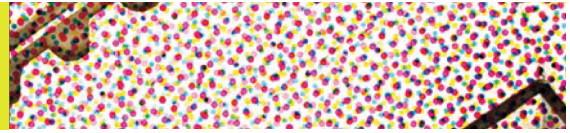
Toyin OJIH ODUTOLA – Mini Bio

Born in 1985 in Nigeria, she left Africa with her family at the age of 5. Then, her father taught at the University of Berkeley, then in Alabama in Huntsville (at the A&M Black University). She starts drawing constantly from 9 years old. A high school teacher spots her talent and introduces her to the work of artists like Kara Walker and Kerry James Marshall. She joined the California College of Arts in San Francisco from which she graduated with an MFA in painting and drawing in 2012. She now lives in New York and has been represented since 2011 by the Jack Shainman gallery in New York.

Her work has been widely shown in solo exhibitions, this year at the Barbican Center in London and at the National Gallery (Washington DC) in 2019-2020 or at the Whitney Museum (New York) in 2017.

Ojih Odutola has participated in several group exhibitions including "Disguise: Masks and Global African Art", Brooklyn Museum (2015), "Ballpoint Pen Drawing Since 1950", Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum (2013), "Fore", Studio Museum in Harlem (2012), "The Moment for Ink", Chinese Cultural Center, San Francisco (2013) and "The Progress of Love", Menil Collection, Houston (2012).

Her works are part of important museum collections, including the Birmingham Museum of Art, AL and the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.



TOREY THORNTON



Torey Thornton working at their Brooklyn studio. © Courtesy Ike Ideani

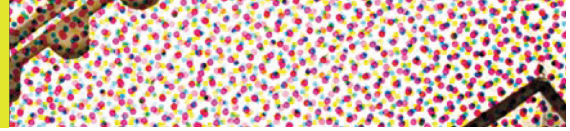
Torey Thornton pushes the boundaries of the painting (**format**, color, choice of materials) and rejects its usual support, the canvas, to prefer various materials such as paper, cardboard or wood panels that offer textures with richer possibilities, on which spray or acrylic paint is used as well as glued objects. Found objects are incorporated into the surface of the work, forming strange patchworks.

Thornton says *"I've always been interested in collages. I started to work with found objects that I found interesting and which added a certain texture to my work... It's like a break, a break in the painting."*

Torey Thornton focuses their¹ work on the universal questions raised by painting and for their part, goes besides the black question, which is not their subject as an artist. *"When you are a black artist, people expect a certain thing, which maybe I'm working against. (...) I respect artists who deal with racial and societal subjects wholeheartedly. David Hammons has already killed it in that area, why should I coattail him? I have other concerns and things to say. "*

¹ Thornton prefers to be referred to using non-binary pronouns.

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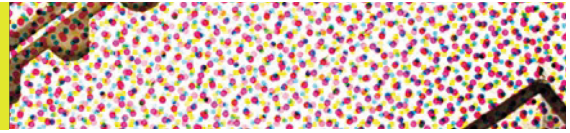


Dear Clifford, Don't You Want a Home, 2016 © The artist. Courtesy the artist and Modern Art, London.

The **motifs** borrow both from colorfield painting (American movement of the 1940s and 1950s whose style is characterized by large flat areas of juxtaposed colors), from rock painting, whose abstract works evoke animal or plant forms, from American pop or heraldry, in a mixture of cryptic signs. Mastering the history of art and the balance between flat areas and signs, Thornton's paintings are anything but simple or even childish.

Torey Thornton's enigma paintings look like a visual dialogue between figurative languages and abstract territories. Thus, they foster our viewer interrogation and aim to disturb our perception: what do we see? The almost random shapes are a way to play with our visual assumptions, to blur the lines between the familiar and the unknown. *"What appears to be a ripe lemon for one will be a deflated basketball for the other. These readings are both accurate,"* said Thornton.

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First, After I saw Elvis Look At Me And Imagined Him Looking To Andy, 2014–15 © The artist. Courtesy the artist and Modern Art, London.

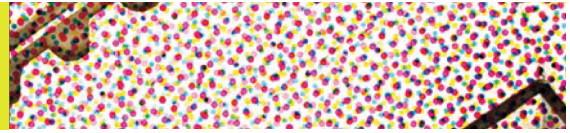
Enigmatic and malicious titles like *First I saw Elvis Look at Me and Imagined Him Looking to Andy* or *Glory Whole*, contribute to the creation of riddle “tableaux”. Thornton's painting does not seek to solve the proposed enigmas, but to involve the viewer into the works, by making him think about the meaning of these, never given, titles. Their work is a gateway, a field of possibilities, the meaning of which is left unresolved, uncertain.

The four works that Torey Thornton presents for the Prix Jean-François Prat 2020 reflect the multiple facets of his work.



I against I, Surgically Removed Organs Left In I Against I, Creative Asphyxia, Intellectual Asphyxia, Romantic Asphyxia Painting, 2017 © The artist. Courtesy the artist and Essex Street, New York.

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Whole Glory, 2014 -2019 © Torey Thornton. Courtesy the artist & Modern Art, London

Torey Thornton's paintings push the boundaries of the painting creating a deliberate ambiguity up to the sculpture.

Whole Glory is a piece of cardboard, collected by the artist from the street, and then attached to a thick wood panel that has been drilled with a hole, part of which is covered with some splashes of glue. The use of word games, homonyms and linguistic twists creates tension and lightness and enhances the poverty of the material.

Torey THORNTON* - Mini bio

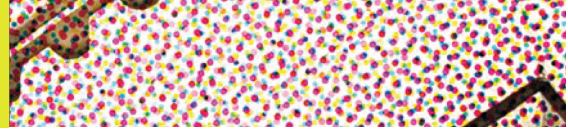
Torey Thornton, born in 1990, live and work in Brooklyn.

Torey Thornton's work has been presented in solo exhibitions at Modern Art in London, Essex Street (NY), at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, and in group exhibitions at the 2017 Whitney Biennial (NY), at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, at the Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama and at Studio Harlem in New York.

Their work is part of institutional collections at the Whitney Museum (NY), Albright-Knox Gallery (NY), Rubell Museum (Miami) and at the Louis Vuitton Foundation (Paris).

* Thornton prefers to be referred to using non-binary pronouns.

PRIX JEAN-FRANÇOIS PRAT



EDITION 2020

INDIVIDUAL PRESS VISITS

By request, September 16-30th, 2020,
Hosted by Frédéric Brière, executive director of the Bredin Prat Foundation
at 53, quai d'Orsay 75007 Paris

PRIZEWINNER ARTIST ANNOUNCEMENT
THURSDAY OCTOBER 1st, 2020, 8 pm
At 53 QUAI D'ORSAY 75007 PARIS

SUPPORTING CURATOR PRESENTING THE ARTISTS TO THE JURY OF THE PRIZE

- Florian Gaîté, philosopher and art critic, based in Paris (for Kei Imazu)
- Zoé Whitley, director of London based Chisenhale Gallery, (for Toyin Ojih Odutola)
- Taylor Le Melle, independent curator and author, based in London (for Torey Thornton)

ARTISTIC SELECTION COMMITTEE 2020

- Marie-Aline Prat, art historian and art collector
- Anaël Pigeat, art critic and editor at large of *The Art Newspaper France*
- Odile Burlaux, curator at the Musée d'art Moderne de Paris
- Frédéric Brière, executive director of the Bredin Prat Foundation
- Frédéric Bonnet, art critic and independent curator

THE JEAN-FRANCOIS PRAT PRIZE

To celebrate the memory of Jean-François Prat, who died on 26 March 2011, and who was a contemporary art enthusiast, the partners of the law firm Bredin Prat, which he co-founded, and his family, decided to pay tribute to his name by creating in 2012 a new contemporary art prize.

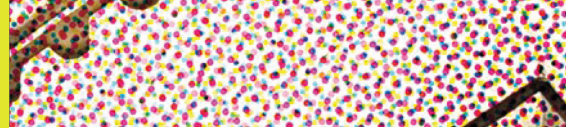
Each year, an expert committee, made up of key figures from the world of art, pre-selects eight artists and shortlists three finalists, from among whom the winning artist is selected. Then, following the vote by the jury (80% of art connoisseurs' partners of Bredin Prat, and 20% of artworld figures) the person chairing the Prize presents the award to the winning artist at an evening event bringing together guests from the art world, business and the press.

The Prize consists of an award of €20,000 for the winner and €2,000 for each of the other two shortlisted artists, as well as the publication of a catalogue presenting the work of the three selected artists and a two-month exhibition of a selection of their paintings at the premises of the Bredin Prat Foundation for Contemporary Art, which organizes the Prize.

The winning artists of the previous editions of the Jean-François Prat Prize are Miryam Haddad in 2019, Nicolas Roggy in 2018, Avery Singer in 2017, Janis Avotins in 2016, Raphaëlle Ricol in 2015, Zander Blom in 2014, Matt Saunders in 2013 and Farah Atassi in 2012.

In the past, the Prize has been chaired by Centre Pompidou – MNAM museum director Bernard Blistène (2019), collector and serial digital entrepreneur Marc Simoncini (2018), former Centre Pompidou curator-at-large Florence Derieux (2017), artist Bertrand Lavier (2016), curator of the Pinault Collection Caroline Bourgeois (2015), President of the Society of Friends of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris Christian Langlois-Meurrine (2014), director of the FIAC contemporary art fair Jennifer Flay (2013) and former Culture Minister Jean-Jacques Aillagon (2012).

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THE BREDIN PRAT FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Created in 2017, the purpose of the Bredin Prat Foundation for Contemporary Art is to support and promote contemporary artistic creation by establishing a new contemporary art collection focusing on what makes a “tableau”: paintings and photographic works, and through the annual Jean-François Prat Prize. Awarded each year to a French or foreign artist, the Jean-François Prat Prize is the international radar searching new emerging artists in painting worldwide.

The Foundation hosts free access public tours to this collection and to annual exhibitions of the Jean-François Prat Prize shortlisted artists at its premises on the Quai d’Orsay in Paris (originally the premises of the formerly French State-owned tobacco company Seita), as well as permanent access through its websites.

The Bredin Prat Foundation, a French non-profit entity serving a general public interest, is fully in line with the culture and the values of the law firm Bredin Prat characterized by innovation and creativity.

THE BREDIN PRAT LAW FIRM

Founded in 1966, Bredin Prat’s practice areas include Corporate Law (Mergers and Acquisitions, Private Equity, Capital Markets), Litigation and White-Collar Crime issues, Competition and EU Law, Arbitration, Tax, Employment, Financing, Restructuring and Insolvency, Tech and Public Law.

With offices in Paris and Brussels, the firm now has some 180 lawyers, including 45 partners, committed to the highest standards of excellence, to advise the firm’s French and international clients in complex or sensitive transactions or contentious matters. Cross-border matters today represent more than two-thirds of the firm’s work.

Press contact : Aurélie SIMON (+33 1 44 35 35 35 / aureliesimon@bredinprat.com)

To get the best-detailed information about the Jean-Francois Prat Prize, please check on line:

www.prixjeanfrancoisprat.com/en/ or <http://www.bredinpratfoundation.org/en/>



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