



The Movement Within  
14 - 30 September 2023

Berntson Bhattacharjee is pleased to present *The Movement Within*, a solo exhibition of new artworks by Joseph Aina, a Nigerian-British artist working between London, Nigeria and Berlin, who graduated from London's Royal College of Art in 2022.

The exhibition features new works made by Aina, which explore the intricacies of human nature interlaced within the fabric of contemporary society, specifically connecting identity and race to its role in popular culture. Employing a multi-layered approach, he uses rich layers of paint to create compositions infused with the rich patina of history and a deep sense of vitality.

Aina's body of work for *The Movement Within* marks a pivotal juncture in his artistic journey, where he delves into the recesses of his psyche, guided by the rhythms of the natural world. This series showcases a transition from urban-inspired imagery to an exploration of rural landscapes, guided by an anchored consciousness of his body's movement through the dimensions of time and space. Previously focused on street symbols and media, Aina has found new inspiration from the natural world, articulating his physical engagement with the environments he traverses, as well as his body's intricate role in the development of his practice.

These textural abstract paintings serve as tangible expressions of his exploration of the landscapes that envelope him, encapsulating both the physical and emotional voyage he undertakes when immersing himself in the outdoors. The exhibition serves as a microcosm of Aina's ever-evolving artistic narrative, one that navigates the interplay of luminescence and obscurity, while exploring the dynamics of motion and spatial interaction.

This series exemplifies Aina's quest to unravel life's profound mysteries by turning to natural settings as a metaphorical canvas to depict the voyage of existence. Through the works, he recalls experiences of traversing shadowy enclaves and picturesque clearings, as well as the act of pausing and staying still in his body while connecting with his physical surroundings. Aina's acute awareness of his own movements in harmony with his surroundings has profoundly shaped his artistic perspective.

Through this body of work, Aina embarks on a profound exploration of the very essence of movement. He investigates not only his physical journey through diverse environments and his nuanced interaction with spaces, but also contemplates the integral role of movement in the development of his practice. Aina recognizes movement as not just a physical act but a catalyst for growth in his artistic expression. Through this exploration of movement, Aina transcends the boundaries of traditional artistry, offering a unique insight into the profound relationship between an artist, their surroundings, and the transformative power of movement within the creative process.

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He further delves into the essence of painting itself, discerning it as movement of material across a receptive surface. With each brushstroke, he orchestrates a symphony of colours and textures, coaxing forth emotions and narratives from the blank expanse. His exploration of this dynamic interplay between the artist's hand and the evolving canvas reveals answers to his artistic explorations, revealing that painting is not merely a static image but a living, breathing entity brought to life with movement. Through an exploration of framing, using the canvas edges as a colourful extension of the paintings, he has created a metaphor for the boundaries of our souls confined within our bodies—our physical vessels serving as envelopes for our psyches.

*Continuously persevere, push through resistance, seek paths of least resistance, find ease, eradicate disease, freeze time, remember a moment when you were pleased, and stay there in this movement.*

### About the artist

Joseph Aina (born 1996) is a Nigerian-British artist working between London, Nigeria and Berlin. After receiving a degree in Law and Psychology from the University of Kent in 2018, Aina attended the Royal College of Art in London and graduated in 2022 with an MA in painting.

Aina's first solo exhibition, *Look for a Saviour*, was held at Prior Art Space, Berlin in 2022. Recent group exhibitions include; *Buffer* (2022), Guts Gallery, London; *Patterns of Identity* (2022), Prior Art Space, Barcelona; *The Life of Us* (2022), Prior Art Space, Barcelona; *Pin Board* (2022), Changing Room, London. He is a recipient of a Student Scholarship from the Royal College of Art (2022) and was shortlisted for the Valerie Beston Award (2022).

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