



NJIDEKA AKUNYILI CROSBY

THE PREDECESSORS

When Njideka Akunyili (b.1983) left Lagos for the U.S. at age 16 she detoured from her initial plan to be a doctor to pursue painting and fulfill the urge to tell another side of Nigeria's story. "America has a lot of people talking about how Nigeria doesn't," she says. "Often people have a singular view about Nigeria and Africa. But problems of misrepresentation happen when people tell your story for you." To posit a pronounced, but hybridized voice she fuses painting, drawing, collage and the use of transfers – a typically Western printing process that involves transferring ink from photographs using solvent. Akunyili Crosby builds up the transfer images of popular culture to reference traditional African textiles, creating quilt-like pieces that speak to post-colonial identities and traditions being pieced together. Her first paintings navigated the domestic landscape of life with her new American husband and intimate scenes of their wedding and home. The *Predecessors* mines deeper into Akunyili Crosby's past, collecting portraits of her Nigerian family in a range of domestic settings. This exhibition will unite this seminal series for the first time, bringing together individual pieces from London, Johannesburg, New York and Los Angeles to celebrate a formative body in an artist's rapidly emerging voice.