



Rashiyah Elanga, Sean-Kierre Lyons, Amaka Madumere – **Pray 4 Homes**

A quiet, lingering air of superstition seeps from the paintings, textile sculptures, and short film gathered under the name “Pray 4 Homes,” uniting the artists Sean-Kierre Lyons, Amaka Madumere, and Rashiyah Elanga on the basis of their mutual refusal to incorporate harm-free, utopic realms. The trio wagers abject humour with the chimeric, the morbid, and the folkloric in order to thwart the limits of space. How else should a Swarovski waterlily stay afloat? Revising afrofuturist aesthetics through an afropessimist lens, Pray 4 Homes is unafraid to invoke narratives of forced displacement and racialised bodily objectification, so long as it may also dream of something other.

Lyons’ plush, golliwog-like figurines—caricaturesque and doe-eyed with carmine lips spread into doltish smiles and deep frowns—consider new, reflexive means of dictating Blackness through the reclamation of the image of the Black other as it has, and continues to be, disseminated as a taxidermied, demi-human cartoon. Madumere, like Lyons, limns an exaggerated image of the Black non-representational self. Her spectres’ long, ghoulish faces feign merriment as colour spills from their eye sockets. One of the beings even wears a blue crown. How it came to be in his possession is untold. Perhaps he bestowed it upon himself? Who cares.

Elanga’s video tells the story of the *hommes nénuphars* (waterlily men), a pond-dwelling people who are expelled from their home and forced to traipse across an uncanny, distended city landscape before happening upon the gates of the Swarovski Garden, where they seek refuge. Goldfish swim laps in the watery sky and the *hommes nénuphars* (all played by the artist herself) dance and smile as they marvel at their newfound sanctuary.

The gaudy aesthetic veneer applied to Elanga’s film—a complement to the formal quality of Lyons’ sculptures—does not eclipse the work’s allegorical core, which tethers well to Madumere’s paintings. In fact, the aporia of Pray 4 Homes makes a case for the expression of meditations on the immediate and historic Black experience by way of contradiction and new world-building.

by Olamiju Fajemisin

Open by appointment  
contact : [info@cherishhhh.ch](mailto:info@cherishhhh.ch)  
Route de Saint-Georges 51, 1213 Petit-Lancy  
[www.cherishhhh.ch](http://www.cherishhhh.ch)