

Soft Opening, *Press Release*

Ebun Sodipo,
7 March–26 April, 2025
6 Minerva Street
London, E2 9EH



Ebun Sodipo
Le Vampire, 2025
Mylar, digital prints, resin, acrylic
103.3 × 73.3 × 5.1 cm

In *An Ominous Presence*, Ebun Sodipo presents her largest works to-date, with a suite of new collages that offer a re-framing of both social and art history. Traversing ideas of horror, the end of the world, death, fear, mystery, mythology, the gothic, ghostliness and the unknown, these unsettling new works extend the artist's exploration of the idea that the trans woman represents a threat of danger and destruction. Titling the exhibition after a collage that includes the phrase "I'm an ominous presence the shape of a girl", Sodipo prefigures an atmosphere of uneasiness among the works, reverberating with a sense of foreboding which the trans woman emanates in the world.

In this body of work, unsettling and often disquieting images of figures, architecture, doors, ruins, fire, nature and religious symbology combine to generate a ghostly non-presence that pervades the space between them. Arranging images across a reflective metallic surface and encasing them in a thick layer of clear resin, Sodipo immortalises the characters, phrases and scenes that she assembles. While the glimmer and shine of her materials offers an allegory for the aesthetic expressions of transformation, Sodipo deliberately obscures self-reflection and stacks her images to complicate their clarity, their translucency enabling their contents to merge and generate new meanings.

In *Infinite Economic Growth*, a still from the television series *American Horror Story* appears alongside Fenrir, a wolf figure from Norse mythology thought to signal the oncoming of doomsday; while in *Sometimes*, images of American actress Cicely Tyson and Nigerian performer Area Scatter are both captured while speaking, telling — or prophesying. *Le Vampire* centres around a still of American musician Aaliyah, a blueprint for modern Black femininity, playing the role of a vampire queen in the movie *Queen of the Damned* (2002). In *What if Laure Was / A Black Goddess Come to Earth*, the largest diptych in the exhibition, Sodipo envisions the figure and life of Laure, the Black maid that appears in French impressionist painter Edouard Manet's infamous work *Olympia* (1863) as well as a number of other works, through a queer lens. The proposal of this vision of history is to resist a heterosexual world-making and understanding of the past. As such, in *An Ominous Presence*, Sodipo considers how endings — the decline of neoliberal capitalism, an Afro-pessimist ending of the symbolic world order and an undoing of heteronormative ideals have been portended within visual culture and prefigured or imagined by the Black trans woman. Incorporating these references from historic and contemporary visual culture, *An Ominous Presence* posits that queerness could be capable of dismantling entrenched heteropatriarchal systems of belief.

Ebun Sodipo

Ebun Sodipo's (b.1993, London, UK) work has recently been included in exhibitions held at g39, Cardiff; Southwark Park Galleries, London; Site Gallery, Sheffield and Collective, Edinburgh as part of Jerwood Survey III (2024); Soft Opening at Paul Soto, Los Angeles; (2024, solo); CCA Derry~Londonderry: The Centre for Contemporary Art, Derry (2024); Inter.pblc, Copenhagen (2024, solo); Phillida Reid, London (2024); Hannah Barry Gallery, London (2024); Hauser & Wirth, Somerset (2024); Neven, London (2024); VITRINE, Basel (2023, solo); VO Curations, London (2023, solo); Goldsmiths CCA, London (2022, solo); VISUAL Centre for Contemporary Art, Carlow (2022); FACT, Liverpool (2022) and The Block Museum of Art, Evanston (2021) among others. The artist has performed at venues including the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2025); Performance Art Museum, Los Angeles (2024); Edinburgh Arts Festival, Edinburgh (2024); Le Guess Who Festival, The Netherlands (2023); Live Collision International Festival at Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2023); Juf, Madrid (2023); Bergen Kunsthall, Norway (2022); Turner Contemporary, Margate (2022); Camden Arts Centre, London (2021); Frieze Art Fair, London (2021); South London Gallery, London (2020) and Auto Italia, London (2019).