

Interview with Dallas-Based Artist Jeremiah Onifadé: Maintaining the Childhood Artistic Spirit

2020/11/23

ELISE HUFF

Behind every piece of work from 33-year-old artist, Jeremiah Onifadé is a story. Born in Kaduna, Nigeria, Jeremiah's artwork is largely inspired by the human condition and his experiences growing up. His art showcases the interconnectivity between human emotions, memories, feelings, reactions, actions, and experiences. Interweaving the concept of human energy and space, Jeremiah's figurative works tell a unique story that beams with vibrant colors and shapes.

Jeremiah sat down to discuss his most recent exhibition opening, as well as his upcoming 2021 exhibition at SITE131. He offered great insight into his own experiences, as well as future opportunities for students who would like to become more involved in the local arts community.

EH: *Could you please tell us a little bit about your background and describe the experiences that have influenced you as an artist?*

JO: I'm a Nigerian-American visual artist whose works explore the human emotion and how it affects our immediate society. This was influenced by my experience while growing up in Kaduna, Nigeria.

EH: *What is your favorite artwork you have created and why have you specifically selected that work to be your favorite?*

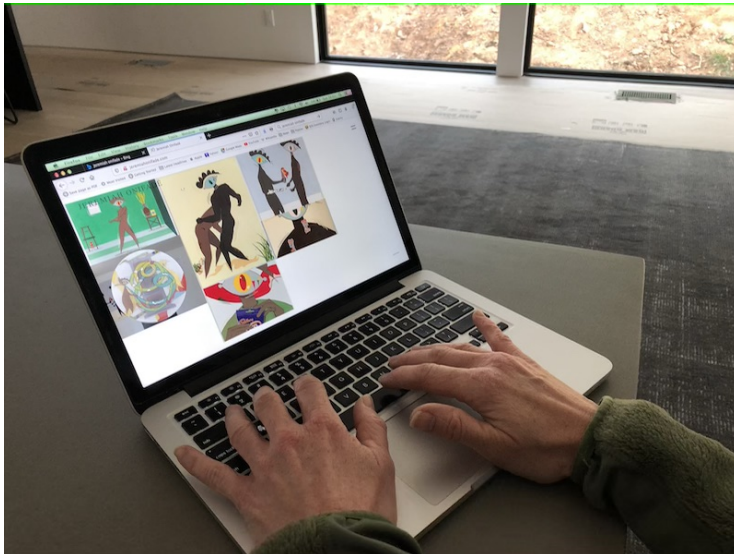


Photo credit: Elise Huff

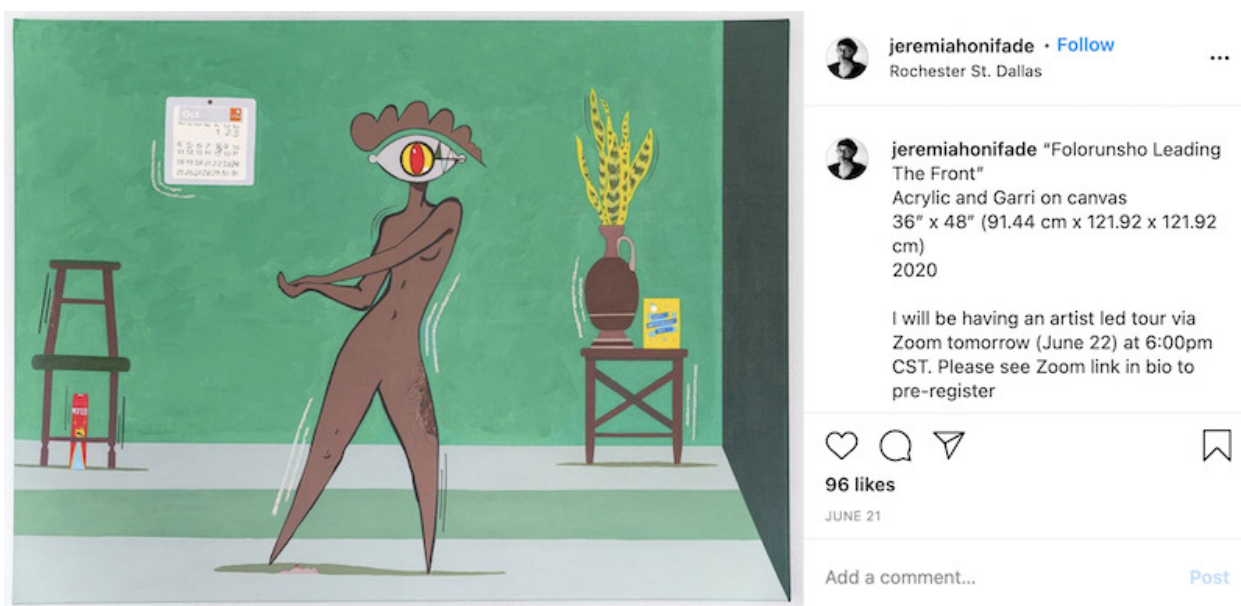
JO: I'm attached to all my works in form of relationships so I don't have a favorite however I'm mostly attracted to anyone I'm actively working on. Currently, I'm working on a painting that's about crude oil in a community that doesn't benefit from its socio-economic gains.

EH: *Your most recent exhibition, Blue Dot, received a great response from the Dallas community. Could you tell us a little more about it — from your inspiration, to the execution during the pandemic, to what you hoped people gained from attending?*

JO: Blue Dot was a temporary house installation up for 96-Hours straight within the gentrified part of Dallas. The goal was to bring to the attention of people the differences existing within our communities. It was intended to show

back in March but we went through great difficulty trying to push it out due to the uncertainty of COVID. Getting a City permit for it was also another rough patch. However, I was able to successfully show it in June and have people within and out of Bonton attend at different hours of the day and night. It brought a different perspective to people's minds on how communities should be seen.

EH: *In the future, do you have any plans for exhibitions where students would be able to attend and engage with your artwork?*



JO: I have various projects in mind, some of them require intellectual engagement where students and attendees are able to have an objective dialogue with the subject matter. In January 2021, I'll have a show at Site 131 Gallery for which I hope to invite students to a walkthrough lecture. Also, my plan is to have more engaging exhibitions in the future which students can enjoy.

EH: *Do you have any advice for someone in their early career who would like to become an artist?*

JO: I think what I'd like to tell them is to always keep that unblemished childhood artistic spirit close to their heart.

To read more about the work of Jeremiah Onifadé and to view more information about past or upcoming exhibitions, please visit his website or follow him on Instagram.

Stay tuned for his January 2021 exhibition at SITE131, where students are welcome to see his art firsthand, as well as experience artist talks, and more.