



Benji Reid, *Moebius II*, 2020. Giclée Print, 100 x 100 cm. Edition of 8 plus 2 artist's proofs (#1/8)
 Courtesy the Artist and October Gallery, London.

Benji Reid

Laugh at Gravity

3rd September – 9th October 2021

Laugh at Gravity is **Benji Reid**'s first solo exhibition at October Gallery. This highly anticipated exhibition will take place simultaneously with Photo London 2021, where October Gallery's presentation will include new works by Benji Reid.

Benji Reid considers himself a Choreo-Photolist, a term he coined to encapsulate his unique practice where theatricality, choreography and photography meet in the image. His breathtaking photographs, comprised primarily of self-portraits in incredible, anti-gravitational poses with a medley of props, draws the audience into a different dimension. In the hyper-realities he presents, the subject is liberated by acts of the artist's imagination. Whether exploring life as an outsider, issues surrounding mental health, or complexities of fatherhood, Reid makes the audience part of the discussion. Each perfectly poised portrait, set against vivid backdrops and adorned with fantastical objects, addresses the world we live in. Everyday objects like a paddle, a sparkler, or a stool transform and transport the subject into an alternative reality which offers protection and liberation.

Reid was shortlisted for the Wellcome Photography Prize 2020 and received the award for the Mental Health (single image) category for his work *Holding onto Daddy* (2016).

In 2020, Reid expanded his practice, developing a wide range of photographic projects. This included the ten-part series ALL CAPS, a tribute to the late hip-hop icon MF DOOM, made in collaboration with Liam Hopkins of Lazerian Studio.

In a year of awakening to social and racial inequalities, the artist continued to create poignant works using, as he describes, “the body in space [which] has always been my weapon of choice, my voice...the aim is to create without boundaries, slipping from the Black dreamscape to the political.”

Large-scale reproductions of Benji Reid's works were displayed at The National Football Museum, Manchester, as part of the 50 Windows of Creativity project. The aim of this project was to encourage the people of Manchester to explore art around the city during the 2020 lockdown.

Benji Reid began his creative career as a performer and creative director, and over the past 30 years he has become an award-winning and senior contributor to Black physical theatre. Merging his performance success with photography, Reid began producing images in 2012.

Notes to Editors

Benji Reid (Born 1966, Manchester, UK. Lives and works in Manchester.)

Works by the artist have been shown in MoCADA (Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts), New York, as part of the 2019 exhibition *Styles of Resistance: From the Corner to the Catwalk*. Reid's first solo show *A Thousand Words* was exhibited at Contact Theatre, Manchester, in 2016. Reid's work was exhibited in *Get Up, Stand Up Now*, curated by Zak Ové, at Somerset House, London, 2019. Reid was featured on the cover of *Trebuchet 8: Contemporary Surrealism* issue. His work is in the collection of the Harn Museum of Art, Florida, USA. In 2020, October Gallery presented Reid's work as part of the group exhibition *Atmospheres: Artists of the Transvanguard*.

Reid's work is part of the exhibition *Sorry, Neither*, at The Naughton Gallery at Queens, Belfast (May – July 2021). This exhibition, which focuses on Afrofuturism, explores the intersection between Black culture, technology, liberation, mysticism, and the imagination.

In 2019, October Gallery presented works by Benji Reid at AKA (Also Known As Africa) and at Investec Cape Town and 1-54 London (2020). Reid's work was also exhibited in the 2021 digital editions of Frieze New York and 1-54 New York. Reid's work *Mercurial Child* (2019) was selected for the announcement of Frieze Viewing Room New York 2021, published online by *frieze* magazine.

Benji Reid: Laugh at Gravity will be accompanied by an exhibition catalogue.

For additional press images and credits please see here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3mgbivg0am769en/AAAkN0I9enRp3iMFgzPPaRg_a?dl=0

Exhibition:	<i>Benji Reid: Laugh at Gravity</i>
Dates:	3 rd September – 9 th October 2021
Private View:	2 nd September 2021
Venue:	October Gallery 24 Old Gloucester Street London WC1N 3AL 020 7242 7367
Telephone:	020 7242 7367
Opening hours:	Tuesday – Saturday 12.30 - 5.30pm
Admission:	Free
Website:	www.octobergallery.co.uk
Email:	press@octobergallery.co.uk or paige@octobergallery.co.uk
Nearest tubes:	Holborn/Russell Square
Buses:	19, 25, 38, 55, 168 and 188
Press contact:	Paige Ashley - 020 7242 7367
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