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modern-day Renaissance Man, British-Nigerian artist Adébayo Bolaji has experience both on screen and stage, before and behind the curtain; he is a thinker and poet – frequently posting his musings online for his followers to consider; and an artist, effortlessly breaching the gap between painting and sculpture, and blurring the lines between his personal life and a shared, creative persona presented to us, the viewer. Since working with BEERS, he and the gallery have spread his work to a slew of collections worldwide, including South Africa, the US, and of course, throughout London.

For his first solo with the gallery, Bolaji presents 'THE POWER AND THE PAUSE' (OR 'THE PAUSE'), a series of brand-new works that unravel like individual characters or short stories within

a greater context that operate to tell a greater narrative. The works consider the strength and complications that arise from periods of cessation. Certainly as a result of happenings in 2020, the world has experienced a global halt or interruption unprecedented in modern times; but on a microcosmic level, each of us – creators and otherwise – have also experienced the ramifications of this abscondment from daily life. But when viewed from an alternate angle, how can this period become fruitful? In spiritual teachings, the breathing pause is a space of clarity, oneness, revitalization. Across many religions and cultural traditions, the concept of 'stepping out' of the real world is seen as beneficial; a closeness to transcendence. How can an artist translate such a period, with its myriad emotions, complex political and social effects, and indiscriminate and severe consequences, into something powerful, productive? Bolaji does exactly that, and in the process, challenges notions of control and power, personal strength and weakness, and the illusory and very, very real occurrences resulting from a prolonged period of suspended animation – on intimate and global scales?

# T H E P O W E R & T H E P A U S E A d é b a y o B o l a j i

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PREVIEW: SATURDAY 17 APRIL (1-5PM)  
EXHIBITION 18 APRIL - 22 MAY 2021

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Duro (2021)

Acrylic, oil pastel and crayon on cotton canvas 100 x 100 cm

# A D É B A Y O B O L A J I



Photo courtesy of Brynley Davies

**A** débayo Bolaji is a multi-disciplinary artist living and working in London, England. At the centre of his practice is the dialogue of change and the focus of the individual within a connecting society whether that be anthropological, religious, historical or popular culture. The use of the vibrant and metaphorical language, is a crucial element in his work, helping to narrate a different story within each painting allowing for the viewer to take an active role in the works. Bolaji has exhibited internationally in London and Zurich, with artist residencies in New York and Margate, including an Artist Residency with Yinka Shonibare MBE Guest Projects.

**A** DÉBAYO BOLAJI (b. 1983, London) lives and works in London and graduated from the Central School of Speech and Drama. Solo exhibitions include: 'Between Two Worlds', Galerie Kremers, Berlin (2020); 'Topia: A Reinvention of the Self', Serena Morton Gallery, London (2019); 'Babel', Galerie Proarta, Zurich (2019) and 'Rituals of Colour', Public Gallery, London (2018). Group Exhibitions include: 'Optimistic: The Power of Now', Serena Morton Gallery, London (2018) and 'New Contemporary V Old', Galerie Proarta, Zurich (2017). Fairs include: Future Fairs Online, BEERS London (2020); art KARLSRUHE, Galerie Proarta (2020). Bolaji is a multidisciplinary artist who has also trained as a Lawyer, Actor and Writer. Bolaji has a forthcoming solo exhibition with BEERS London opening on Saturday 17 April (1-5pm).