

# BERGGRUEN

GALLERY

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**ODILI DONALD ODITA**  
**Climate Change**

**October 14 – November 13, 2021**

Berggruen Gallery is pleased to present *Odili Donald Odita: Climate Change*, an exhibition of recent paintings by Nigerian American artist Odili Donald Odita. This show marks Odita's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The show will be on view from October 14 through November 13, 2021. The gallery will host a reception for the artist on Thursday, October 14, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

Odili Donald Odita is an abstract painter who employs shape and color to explore personal, historical, and socio-political landscapes. Born in Enugu, Nigeria, and raised in Columbus, Ohio, the artist is inspired by his cultural identities and the contrasts they present. He is well known for his large-scale works that interlock complex geometries with distinct and vibrant colors. Odita weaves together formal expressions rooted in Modernism and African textile patterning to questions of personal identity and societal meaning-making. Through the freedom of abstraction, Odita creates a visual language to explore the myriad of complexities the world faces today.

Odita's forms go beyond the predictable. The striking diagonals and slants that bisect his canvases break through classic abstract perspectives and create their own distinct, visual landscapes. The artist often establishes balance through a strong central dividing line, then subtly disrupts any steadiness by making edged and unexpected spaces. For *Climate Change*, Odita directs his attention towards the imminent natural tensions our world faces today and recognizes a conversation of extremes and dualities that extends beyond weather patterns. In his eponymous painting *Climate Change*, he expresses volatility through a series of uneven vertical patterning and jagged lines that push beyond the canvas. The bold color segments simultaneously meet and diverge, creating a perspectival painting that is both in motion and static. Noticeably striking, the painting forebodes a sense of complexity, threat, and longing for hope and creates a strong visual space worthy of critical contemplation.

For Odita, color is an agent for the senses. He is intuitive in his color selections and chooses them carefully, with design, to express thought and emotion. The artist is acutely aware of physiological responses associated with different hues and thinks critically about the assumed associations a color may hold. With this awareness, Odita deliberately hand mixes his paints and notes, "I cannot make a color twice – it can only appear to be the same – this is important to me because it highlights the specificity of differences that exist in the world of people and things." In *Climate Change*, Odita chose colors that contain both lightness and darkness within them, expressing the nuances of light present in every tone.

In addition to Odita's striking canvas works, *Climate Change* exhibits the artist's newer practice of using wood-panel supports for his paintings, rather than exclusively canvas. Odita questions how materials impact our perceptions of what is natural and what is created. The triangular shapes in *The Secret* blend with the wood paneling surface, leveling the acrylic with the natural grain. In *Burning*, Odita keenly elevates the extremes of the burnt orange color by painting on wood panel, and placing the subject matter of the work in dialogue with its materiality. Throughout *Climate Change*, the artist employs abstraction to unpack binary thinking and understand the interconnectedness of our state of being. Odita's practice works within complexity, bridging materials and temperaments to create room for new expanses to arise.

Odita was born in Enugu, Nigeria in 1966. He earned his Bachelor of Arts with Distinction from Ohio State University in 1988 and his Masters of Fine Arts from Bennington College in 1990. Odita has exhibited widely in museums and institutions, both nationally and internationally, including Savannah College of Art and Design; Yerba Buena Center for

10 HAWTHORNE STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94105  
TEL 415 781 4629  
INFO@BERGGRUEN.COM  
BERGGRUEN.COM

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the Arts, San Francisco; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC; Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AK, and Princeton University Art Museum, NJ. His installations are on view throughout the country and in 2007, his installation *Give Me Shelter* was featured prominently in the 52nd Venice Biennale exhibition *Think with the Senses, Feel with the Mind* curated by Robert Storr. His work belongs to numerous museum collections, including the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Pérez Art Museum, Miami, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Studio Museum in Harlem. Odita lives and works in Philadelphia.

*Odili Donald Odita: Climate Change*, October 14 – November 13, 2021. On view at 10 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Images and previews are available upon request. For all inquiries, please contact the gallery by phone (415) 781-4629 or by email [info@berggruen.com](mailto:info@berggruen.com).

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