

ARCHIVES

[April 2018 \[11\]](#)
[March 2018 \[9\]](#)
[February 2018 \[8\]](#)
[January 2018 \[9\]](#)
[December 2017 \[3\]](#)
[November 2017 \[8\]](#)
[October 2017 \[7\]](#)
[September 2017 \[2\]](#)
[August 2017 \[5\]](#)
[July 2017 \[3\]](#)
[June 2017 \[8\]](#)
[May 2017 \[8\]](#)
[April 2017 \[7\]](#)
[March 2017 \[13\]](#)
[February 2017 \[16\]](#)
[January 2017 \[3\]](#)
[December 2016 \[10\]](#)
[November 2016 \[8\]](#)
[October 2016 \[8\]](#)
[September 2016 \[4\]](#)
[August 2016 \[8\]](#)
[July 2016 \[4\]](#)
[June 2016 \[9\]](#)
[May 2016 \[11\]](#)
[April 2016 \[10\]](#)
[March 2016 \[13\]](#)
[February 2016 \[15\]](#)
[January 2016 \[13\]](#)
[December 2015 \[21\]](#)
[November 2015 \[19\]](#)
[October 2015 \[21\]](#)
[September 2015 \[15\]](#)
[August 2015 \[16\]](#)
[July 2015 \[20\]](#)
[June 2015 \[19\]](#)
[May 2015 \[13\]](#)
[April 2015 \[15\]](#)
[March 2015 \[20\]](#)
[February 2015 \[16\]](#)
[January 2015 \[14\]](#)
[December 2014 \[14\]](#)
[November 2014 \[21\]](#)
[October 2014 \[15\]](#)
[September 2014 \[22\]](#)
[August 2014 \[27\]](#)
[July 2014 \[31\]](#)
[June 2014 \[31\]](#)
[May 2014 \[31\]](#)
[April 2014 \[29\]](#)
[March 2014 \[35\]](#)
[February 2014 \[32\]](#)
[January 2014 \[22\]](#)
[December 2013 \[29\]](#)
[November 2013 \[27\]](#)
[October 2013 \[25\]](#)
[September 2013 \[22\]](#)
[August 2013 \[27\]](#)

ARTIST INTERVIEW: ADELAIDE DAMOAH

10th April 2018 in [Interviews](#) by Cass Art



Adelaide Damoah is a British artist of Ghanaian descent whose earlier work combined African and Western influences while highlighting social issues. A founding member of the BBFA (Black British Female Artists Collective), her current practice involves using her body as a “living paintbrush” to paint or print onto various surfaces. We caught up with Adelaide to find out more about her practice...

Hi Adelaide, central to your practice is the use of your body as a 'living paintbrush'. Tell us about your choice of paint.

I love the texture, look and feel of oil paint, so at first, I used just that. Initially, I used only permanent alizarin crimson by [Winsor and Newton](#) or [Michael Harding](#). I chose this colour because I wanted to get something that reminded me of tissue and blood and I felt that this colour was most consistent in getting across the feeling that I wanted. It's probably not sensible to use oil paint on skin! As a consequence, I now use [water mixable oil paint](#) by Winsor and Newton. It's much easier to wash off and less irritating to the skin. I adore the vibrancy of Michael Harding alizarin crimson too and I have some of his oils.

For my last performance I used Winsor and Newton Artisan water mixable ultramarine blue. It looked very shiny, beautiful and dark against my skin. Against the white canvas it was a perfect shade of ultramarine. I wanted something as close to Yves Klein's blue as possible.

July 2013 [33]
 June 2013 [15]
 May 2013 [13]
 April 2013 [12]
 March 2013 [14]
 February 2013 [12]
 January 2013 [7]
 December 2012 [13]
 November 2012 [15]
 October 2012 [23]
 September 2012 [3]
 August 2012 [2]
 July 2012 [2]
 June 2012 [5]
 May 2012 [1]
 April 2012 [2]
 March 2012 [0]
 February 2012 [3]

RECENT ARTICLES



ART PRIZE
 Call for Entries:
 Derwent Art Prize
 2018
 23rd April 2018



The Art Student's
 Survival Guide to
 Degree Shows &
 Assessments
 23rd April 2018



Student Interview:
 RCA Cass
 Scholarship
 17th April 2018



**ARTIST
 INTERVIEW:
 SARAH WIMPERIS
 WINS THE CASS
 ART
 WATERCOLOUR
 PRIZE AT THE RI
 CHMOND ANNUAL
 EXHIBITION**
 13th April 2018



The Different Types
 of Winsor &
 Newton Canvas
 12th April 2018

Tweets by @CASSART



Your work begins with a performance during which you create imprints of your body on a blank canvas. You then take these imprints back to your studio and work into them in a number of different ways. Can you tell us a bit more about this process?

The public performance I do is different to the work I make in my studio in that once the performance is complete, the piece is done and I do not work on it any more. The piece is the evidence that the performance happened - along with photographic and video documentation. Before the performance, I cover myself in barrier cream and then oil paint privately. I have an assistant to make sure that I am fully covered. I use a large roll of canvas - for my last performance, one canvas was around 6 metres by 2 metres. This is laid out on the floor in front of the audience, ready for my arrival. When I walk out in front of the audience, I observe them first - which I will explain later, and then instinctively press and roll myself on the canvas from one side of it to the other. After that, I pause and write on the canvas.

I have always written on my work. Sometimes I just write whatever comes to mind. Other times the writing is more deliberate. In the summer of 2016 I interviewed Sokari Douglas Camp for my YouTube series Art Discussion. We sat and talked after the interview and she looked at some images of my work. She told me to baptise the work with the language of my parents. After that, I started writing in my parents' language on the work.



Late in 2016, I went to Ghana. While there, I discovered a beautiful photo of my grandmother as a baby, being held by her mother. The photo was taken in 1920! Instinctively, I knew I had to use it in my work. I took a photo of it with my phone and using image transfer techniques to get the image onto the work back in the studio. I use a soft gel matte medium by Golden. I print the image using my inkjet onto a sheet of transparency film - making sure to print on the rough side. From there, I paint the part of the canvas I want the image to appear on with the gel medium, wait a few seconds and then carefully place the transparency on to the gel medium - image side down. You have to place it very firmly with a bit of pressure. After a few seconds, you peel it back and the image should be on the canvas. I like this technique but it's not perfect. Some bits of the image won't transfer- which is exactly what I want for this particular image.

old. It has also been passed through multiple different technologies to get onto the canvas, so it should look distressed in some way.

I keep working a painting until I am satisfied with the look and feel of it. This can take months. I work a lot with 24 carat gold leaf and sometimes use epoxy resin to finish a work. The process for finishing paintings with resin is so easy these days. I just mix and pour. I usually have to make a tray to contain the resin so that it doesn't drip off the work- and that is the most time consuming part. The resin takes six hours to cure, so I usually leave it overnight.



As a self-taught artist, tell us about the birth and evolution of your practice, focusing on the way in which you developed your techniques and therefore your style.

I developed my techniques by trying lots of different things and a lot of practice. I made a lot of mistakes, read a lot of books and took an online drawing course with a teacher from the School of Visual Arts in New York. For the first 10 years of my life as an artist I thought I was a figurative painter, so I taught myself as best I could to paint in that way. I read voraciously about artists I liked like Frida Kahlo and Da Vinci. I used what I learned about their way of working to develop my own style. From Frida, I learned about being authentic and from Da Vinci, I learned about proportion. I have always used writing in my drawings and paintings since I was a child. That is something that has stayed and developed into something that has more prominence in my work.

I have been interviewing artists since 2011. The relationships I have developed as a consequence have sometimes directly influenced the evolution of my practice. The first body prints I did were very daunting. Gallerist Christian Sulger-Buel told me that the earlier pieces looked like I was afraid of my own body and afraid to make the work. He was right. I was not pressing myself fully into the surfaces I was working on. After that, I threw myself in and didn't hold back.



Performing in front of an audience must be hugely daunting, especially if you're clothed in nothing but paint! firstly, how does the audience tend to react to your performance, and secondly, how important is the presence

Two questions
4.8 ★★★★★
Google
Customer Reviews

the creation of your work?

It's funny, men and women have vastly differing reactions to the performance. Women tend to be concerned about my well being, while being fascinated by the process and report feeling empowered. For example, when I performed at UNFOLD in October 2017, a lady came to me after and asked, very seriously, if I was OK. She wanted to know first, if I was really naked, and second, if I felt exposed or afraid. She said at the start, when she realised that I might be nude, she felt afraid and exposed for me. Once she realised that I was in fact fine and that I was in the moment and totally unconcerned, she relaxed and was able to experience the performance and all of the emotions she felt as a result. She said she felt empowered. A man approached me and said I must have "very large balls" to have the guts to do such a thing! He was fascinated with why I was doing it and what inspired me to do it. An art world person who is a friend of a friend of mine told her (I am paraphrasing) that he was expecting to see a "titillating performance" and was quite excited by the prospect. When he experienced what actually happened he said he was "disappointed because somehow she managed to desexualise the whole thing and turn it into high art!"

The audience is essential for the performance because I feed their energy into what I am doing. Before I start, I look them over and listen to any sounds and note any expressions that I can see. Their energy directs me. When I stop making the body prints, I pause again and listen. I then start to write what I am thinking, feeling and hearing directly on to the surface. So in the end, the evidence of the performance contains my reaction to the audience. The audience is a part of the performance. They don't realise this until they inspect the evidence after I am gone.



You're a member of the Black British Female Artist Collective, something that you will be delivering a talk on at our Islington store on 11th April. Can you give us an insight into the type of things that you will be talking about?

Being in this collective has been like having a support system and a platform. It has given us access to opportunities we may not have been able to access individually - I will talk about some of those. There are so many wonderful things about being in a collective. I'll be talking openly about my personal experience. The good bits and the not so good bits. The potential pitfalls and how to avoid them, and anything else the audience wants to know.

What else have you got in the pipeline for 2018?



I have just returned from a fantastic residency/group show in Morocco which was facilitated by the BBFA Collective. I have a solo show coming up towards the end of the year and a group show with the BBFA Collective.

Feeling inspired?

Attend the talk at our Islington store on 11th April - [click here for more info](#).

See more of Adelaide's work at adelaidedamoahart.com.

Adelaide interviews visual artists for her Youtube channel. The videos form a series called Art Discussion. First started in 2011 as blog interviews, the series seeks to discover how artists overcome their biggest challenges, achieve their biggest successes and aims to give advice to artists at the start of their careers. Subscribe to her [YouTube channel here](#).

Image credits:

Top image: Adelaide Damoah live performance. UNFOLD Space. Image courtesy of Jennifer Moyes

Images 2-4: Adelaide's studio. Image courtesy of the artist.

Image 5: Adelaide Damoah live performance. UNFOLD Space. Image courtesy of Jennifer Moyes

Image 6: Adelaide at work in her studio. Image courtesy of the artist.

[VIEW ALL BRANDS](#)

QUESTIONS? SPEAK TO OUR FRIENDLY TEAM ON +44 (0)20 7619 2601

CASS ART

- Manifesto
- Shops
- Blog
- Workshops
- Careers
- Press
- About Us
- Students
- Art & Design Tutors

SHOPPING

- My Account
- Order Tracking
- International Delivery
- Gift Vouchers
- Refer a Friend
- Sign Up
- Product Index
- Brands
- Buying Guides

CUSTOMER SERVICES

- Contact us
- FAQs
- Delivery UK & International
- Returns & Refunds
- Sitemap
- Price Guarantee
- Affiliates

NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP

Sign up to our newsletter

No Spam, just great offers and news!



All price discounts versus RRP are made against the United Kingdom Recommended Retail Price (RRP)

© 2018 Cass Art. Cass Art is the trading name of Art-Line Limited, a company registered in England and Wales with a company number 1799472

Cass Art, Cass Art London and the Cass Art logo are trade marks and trade names of Art-Line Limited.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Cookie Policy](#) | eCommerce by blubolt

