

Joy Labinjo

Born in 1994, United Kingdom Lives and works in London, UK

Joy Labinjo makes large-scale paintings featuring portraits of relatives, friends and people she has discovered in family albums. Drawing on **her personal experiences of growing up in the UK with British-Nigerian heritage**, Labinjo explores the relationship between **identity, race and culture**.

Born in Dagenham, Essex, Labinjo lived there until the age of ten when her family – she has two younger brothers; her mother is an English teacher, her father a biochemist – moved to Stevenage, Hertfordshire, for a greener life and better schools.

“I’d always doodled and made paper dolls and the like but it wasn’t until GCSE that art got serious. Until then it was assumed I’d be a lawyer or doctor or engineer.” Much of her work builds on her British-Nigerian heritage: **she has used a family photo album as inspiration for warm, emotionally arresting depictions of people at home doing ordinary things. The original photos were often poor quality, taken before she was born, of people she’d never known.**

“We see through the pandemic, life is hard for people, and it is art, TV, online theatre, films, that get people through. From a book cover to a cereal box to TV shows, to the adverts between the TV shows to the music we listen to. I don’t think people realise how important art is.

“When I’m painting I feel happy and alive,” Labinjo adds fervently. “Sometimes I’m not present. If you call my name, I’m not there. That feeling of being transported somewhere else – that’s when I know I’ve hit the mark.”



Born in west Africa in 1843, the Egbado princess was sold into slavery in a neighbouring African state, rescued by a British naval captain and became goddaughter to Queen Victoria.

Sarah Forbes Bonetta' (2020)



BREAKFAST WITH VIOLET AND ADAM, 2020.
oil. 150 x 200 x 4 cm.



Bride to Be (2019)



FAMILY PORTRAIT,
2019

Oil on canvas

150 x 200 cm



A CELEBRATION OF SORTS , 2019

Oil on Canvas

200 x 150 cm



IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN HOME, 2020

Oil on canvas

180 x 200 cm



JENNY AND LOUIS, 2020

Oil on canvas

180 x 200 cm



LADY FROM LIVERPOOL, 2020

Oil on canvas

200 x 180 cm