



NICOLA GREEN
THE DANCE OF COLOUR

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FLOWERS

DAVID A. BAILEY

UNITING THE COLOURS OF CARNIVAL IN RIO

Going to a Nicola Green exhibition is an experience that delves the visitor into a fusion of drawing, portraiture, photography and new media. I first met Green in 2007 at the Venice Biennale. Since then I have visited her studio many times. As well as seeing her work, I watched her artistic practice evolve together with the detailed research that contextualises it. Over the last two years Green has focused on the meaning of mixed race identity through the lens of Carnival in Rio. In the resulting images we see elements of her previous work, most notably her *In Seven Days...* series, which explores questions of performance, the body, iconography, representation and race within 21st century portraiture.

The Dance of Colour presents two new bodies of work, *Carnival Beat* and *Bate Bola*. This is the latest chapter in her wider narrative on identity, which Green has been exploring over the last ten years, and will continue to do so. This is a personal exploration, stemming from Green's realisation when her children were born that their life experience, being of mixed heritage, could be very different to her own.

Throughout this exhibition, the artist presents Carnival as a symbol of hope. The playfulness Green uses to make her work here reflects the freedom of expression at Carnival; although there is no denying that she wants us to consider this freedom in deeper terms - the subversion of power and of cultural, racial, sexual and gender identity.

Carnival Beat is a series of highly constructed fragmented artworks that dissect the original photographic portraits, which were taken during multiple trips to Carnival and Latin America, providing a closer look at identity. What makes the work unique is not simply this process of fragmentation and reconstruction, but the layering of photography and hand-painting and the juxtaposition of different materials, which are used as backdrops. She uses commonplace domestic textiles such as tablecloths and vinyl as well as high end fabrics and wallpapers and draws together print, hand-painting and collage. There is a complexity in each of the images that seduces the viewer, forcing them to examine

the pose, gesture and surrounding context of the sitter in each frame.

The works rely heavily on the narrative process of fragmentation. Fragmentation in performance, in its most basic form, means to divide up a performance phase and re-order the pieces of the routine. Green applies this to her own visual artistic process.

The *Carnival Beat* series seen together is a visual cornucopia. The mixed media layering serves as a metaphor for the complexity of cultural identity, exemplified by the fact that the sitter is centred visually within a frame layered by colour and symbols, as well as historical colonial references. *Carnival African Block* immediately strikes the viewer by the casual ease of the sitter framed by a mid-shot, punctuated by colour, faceless/silhouetted. Yet compare this work with *Carnival, Dream* where the sitter has a more upright pose. It is at this point we realise that the faceless/silhouetted nature of the work operates as a visual veneer or motif that represents the concept of the mask, a popular theme at Carnival.

Carnival is about the mask and masking; the genre of masquerade are all in play. On the one hand the series is about the nature of cultural identity, but in another sense we can also see it as a contemporary art dialogue with West African studio based photography and the faceless African print sculpture work of Yinka Shonibare.

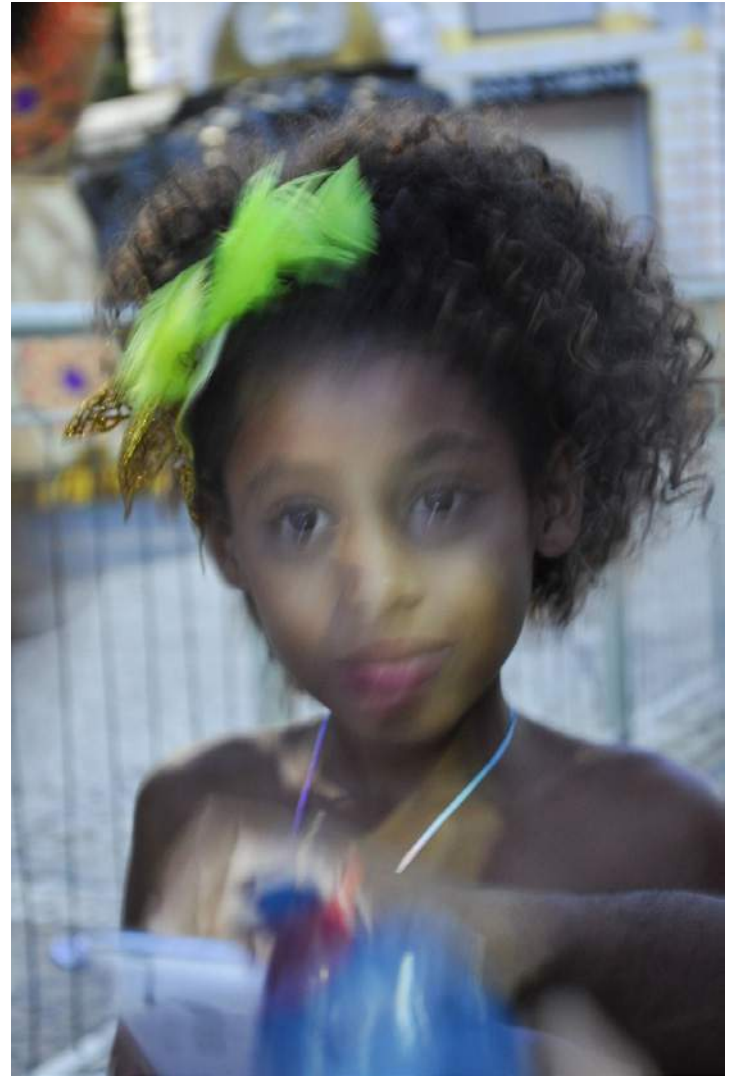
Carnival in Rio conjures up popular imagery of exoticism, the diasporic Las Vegas, alongside the fear of violence from gang warfare. In the series *Bate Bola* we begin to see Green dig much deeper into this popular imagery with a focused exploration. Yet this favela-born expression continues unacknowledged by the mass media.

Bate Bola means 'hit the ball' in Portuguese, which here describes the visual loudness of people adorning themselves as flamboyant clown dandies during Carnival. In this series, Green creates a carnival community that is not exotic or threatening but a complex historicised phenomenon that has roots and legacies that date back hundreds of years.

In Green's *Carnival Beat* series, the emphasis is on the faceless silhouette set against a shifting variety of different backdrops. The *Bate Bola* works, in contrast, bring to the foreground a complex set of symbols referencing the history of the clown image from Tudor England to Japanese iconography. Just as in her *Carnival Beat* series, the sitter is centred within the frame – however, the subject is not faceless/silhouetted but detailed and expressive. Green creates a different reaction in the viewer to her *Bate Bola* works simply by letting us engage with the specific personality of the sitter. And we would not be conscious of this reaction without *Carnival Beat* and *Bate Bola* being exhibited in the same room.

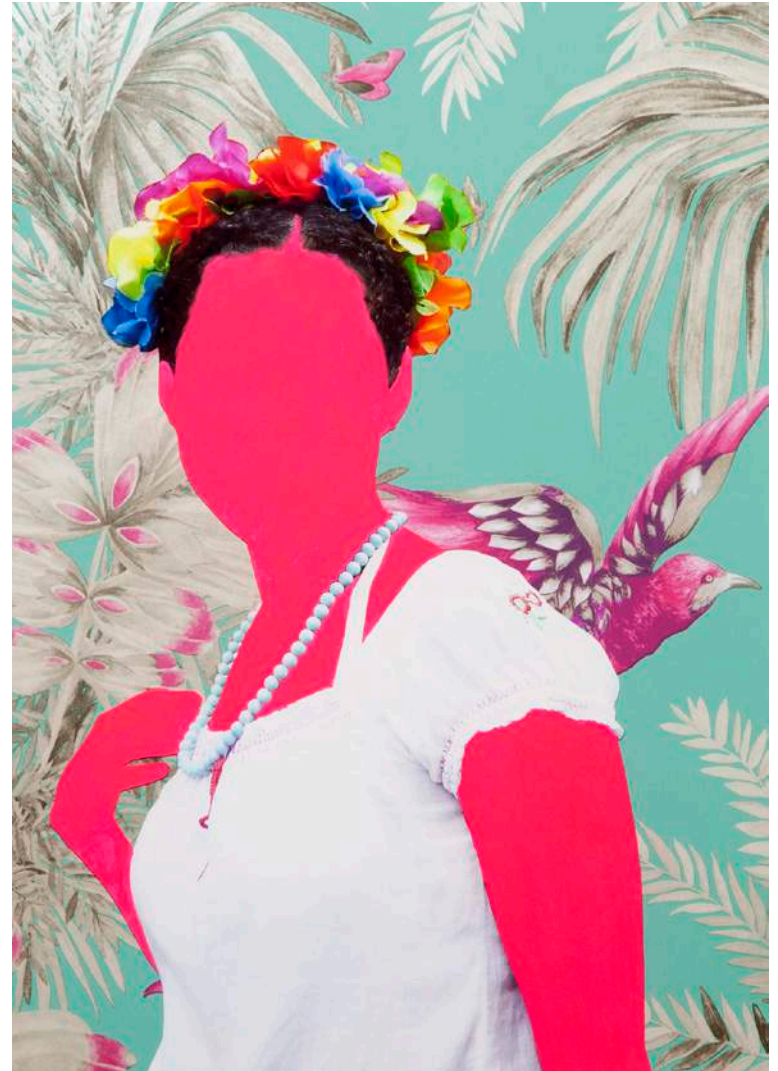
The Dance of Colour has at its centre a shifting narrative that defies to be fixed —with one foot firmly planted in the portrait tradition and the other always thrust forward, testing, questioning and experimenting. Green's work cannot be confined by a single category or as a cliché, but lived as a working philosophy which breaths freshness and vigour into all of her many endeavours as an artist.

Future, 2015
Print on polypropylene canvas
118.9 x 84.1 cm
46 3/4 x 33 1/8 in



CARNIVAL
BEAT

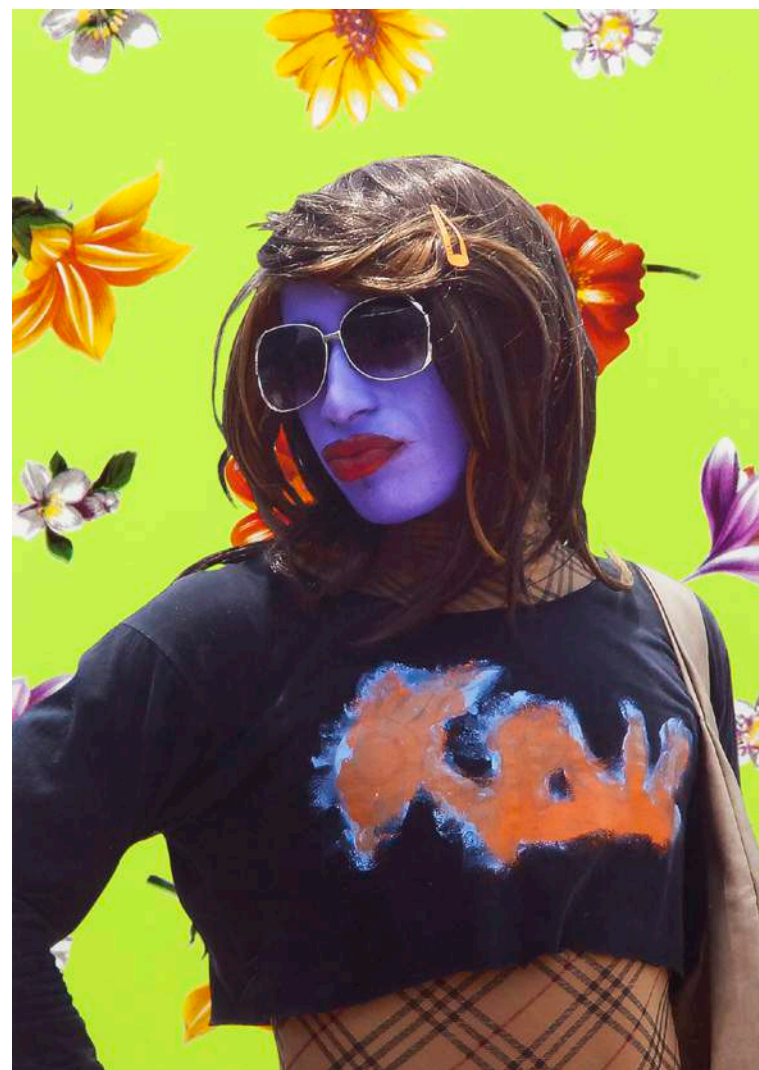
Carnival, Frida, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Matthew Williamson
'Birds of Paradise' wallpaper) on 308gsm Hahnemühle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Long Feather, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Arrowhead vinyl print)
on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



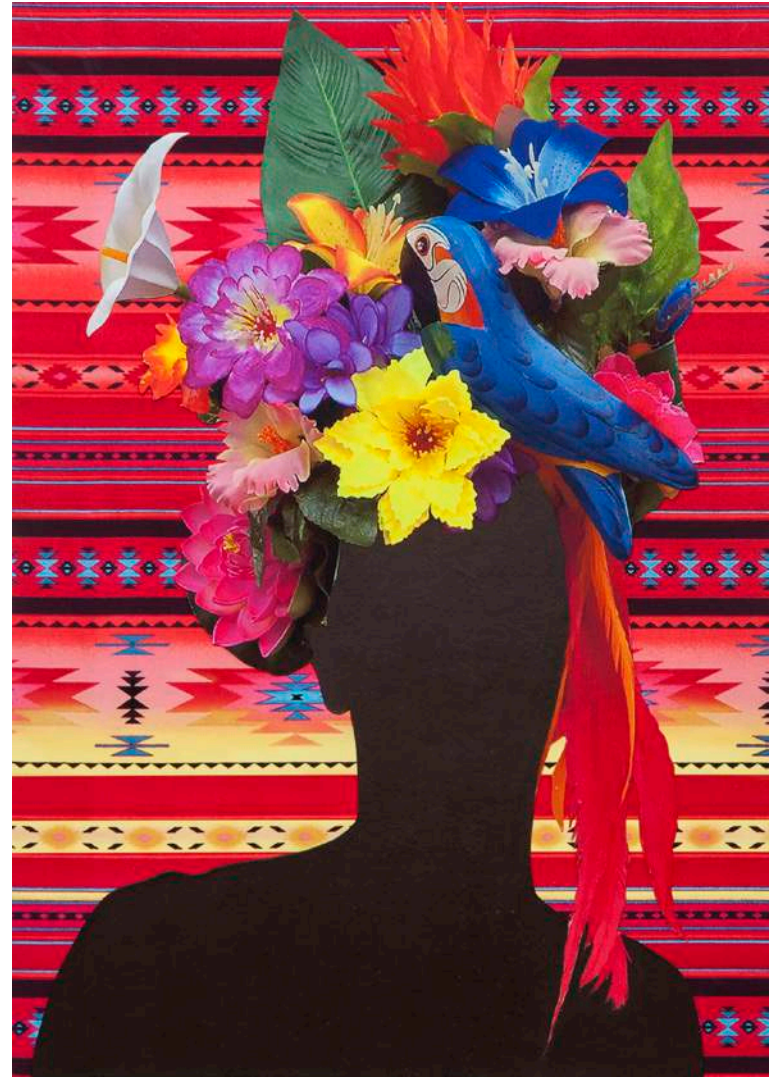
Carnival, Hibiscus Beat, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Hibiscus Flower vinyl print) on
308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



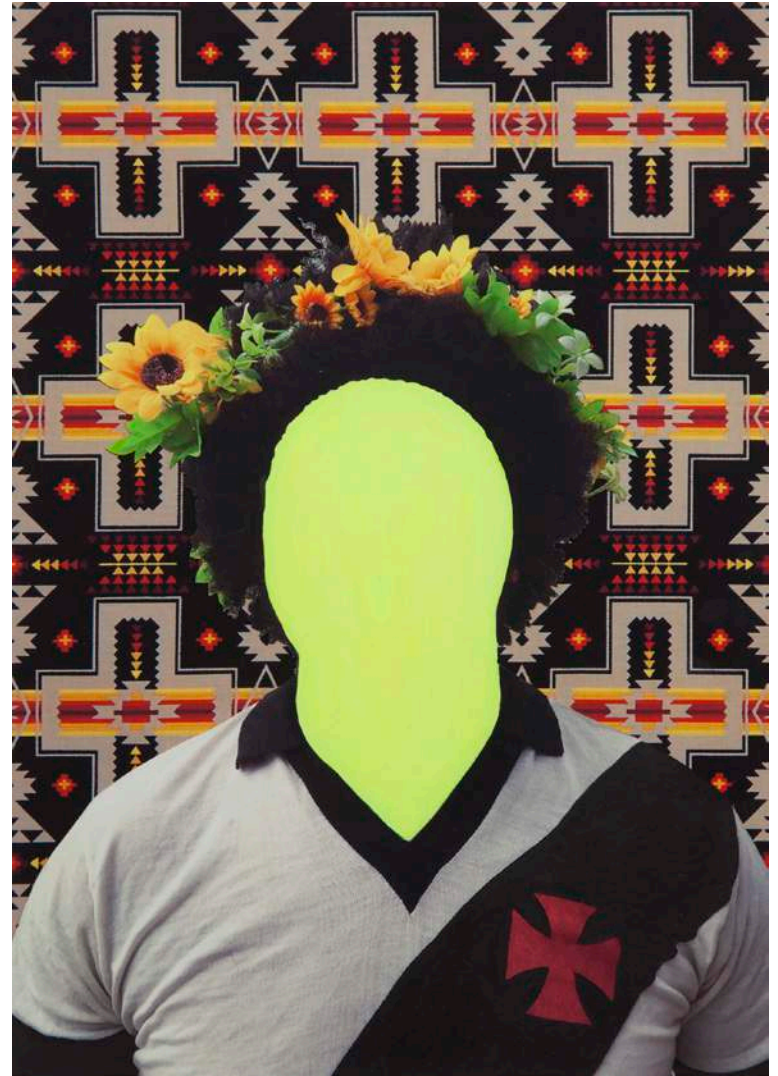
Carnival, Voadora, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with African Wax fabric) on 308gsm
Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Glória, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Dancing Bear print) on 308gsm
Hahnemühle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Native Sun, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Native Blanket print)
on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



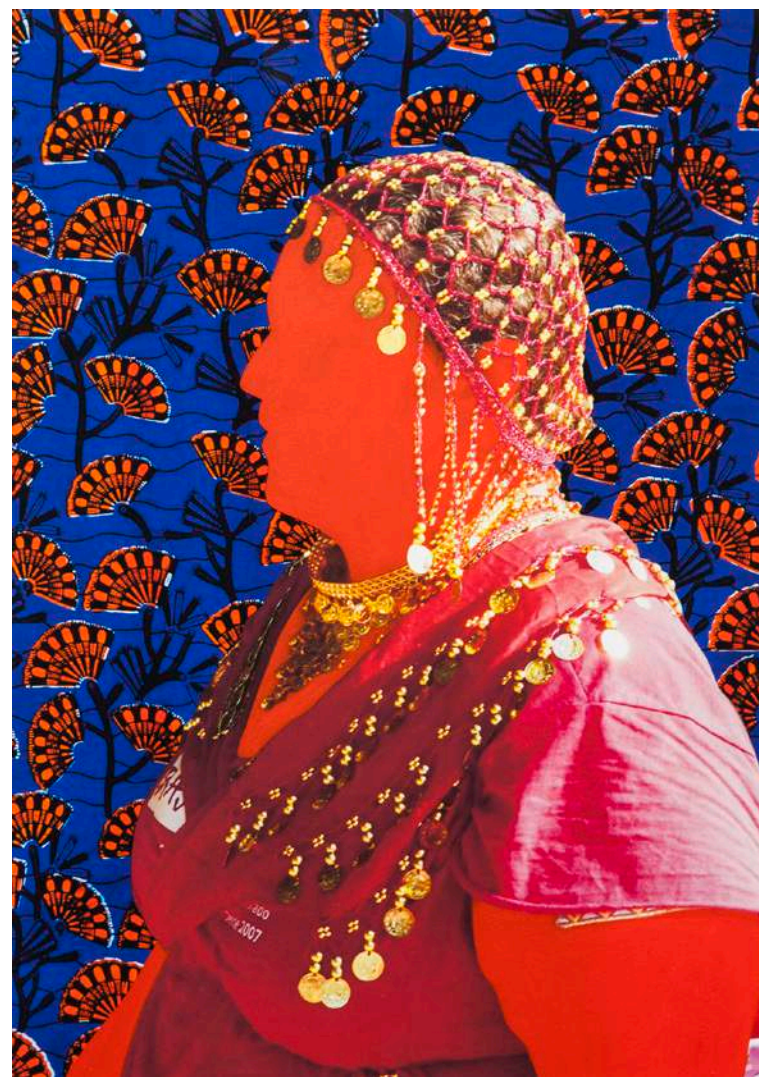
Carnival, Habanera, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Matthew Williamson 'Habanera'
wallpaper) on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Lace Party, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Golden Lace vinyl &
fluorescent card) on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Royal Fan, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with African Fan print) on
308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



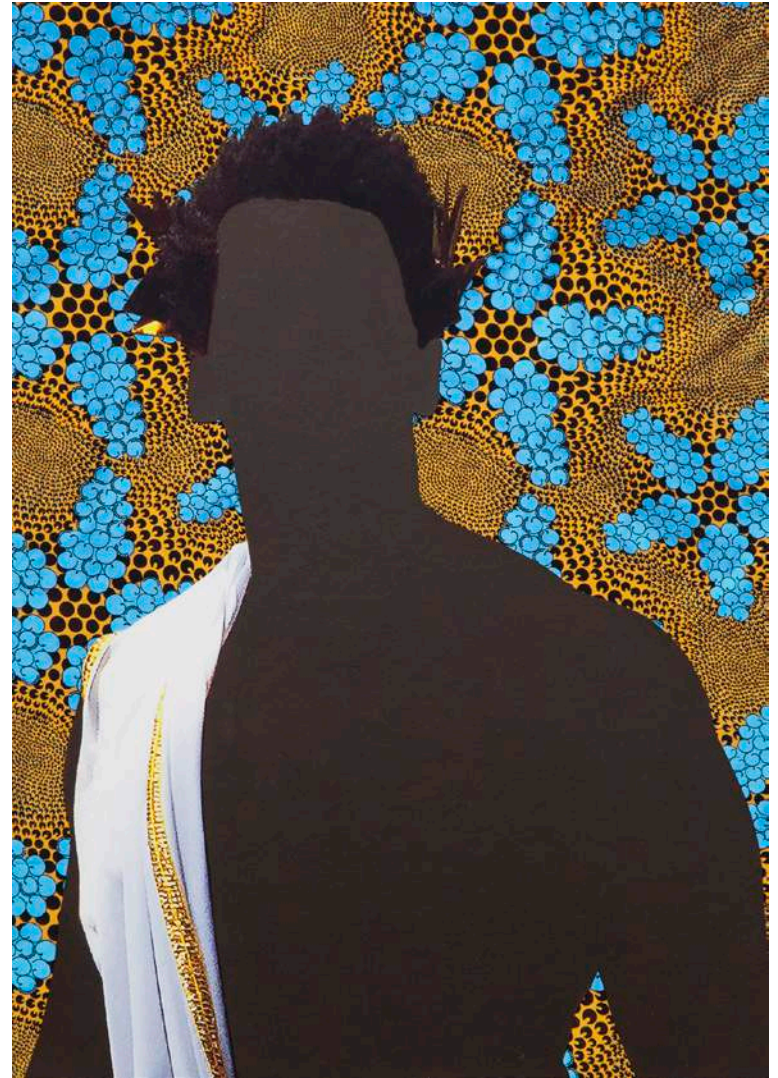
Carnival, Axe Axe, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Kola Fruit print) on 308gsm
Hahnemühle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



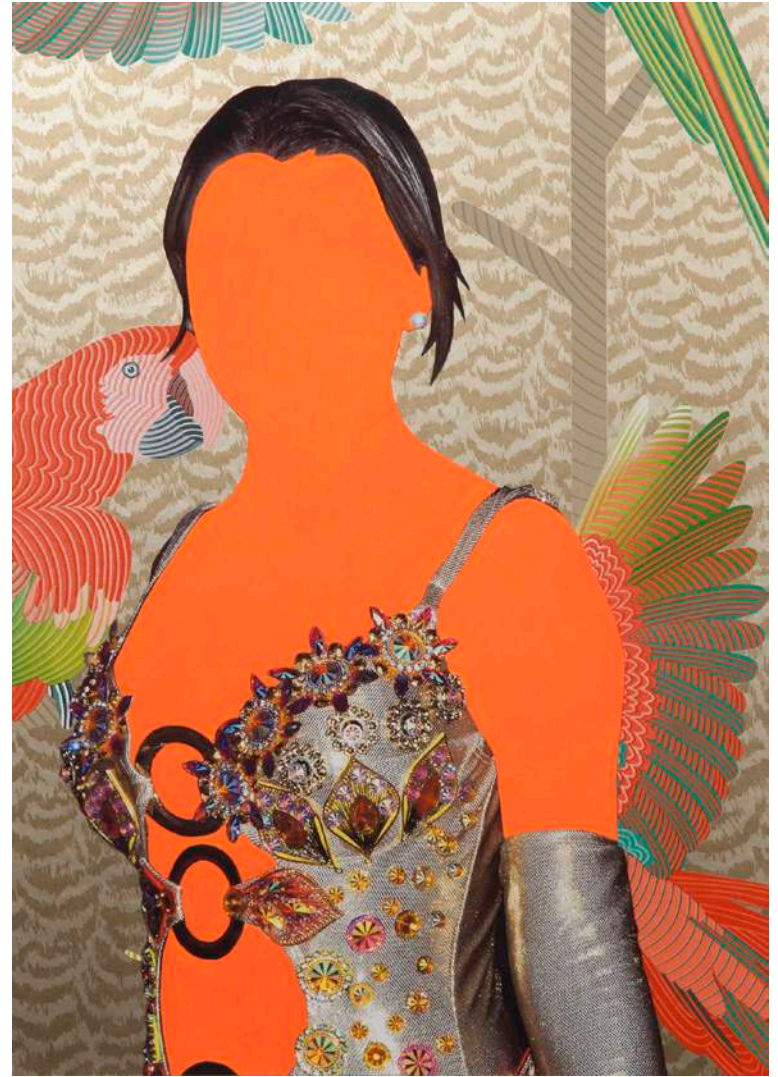
Carnival, African Block, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with African Wax print) on 308gsm
Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Grape Party, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with African Premier Grape Party print)
on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



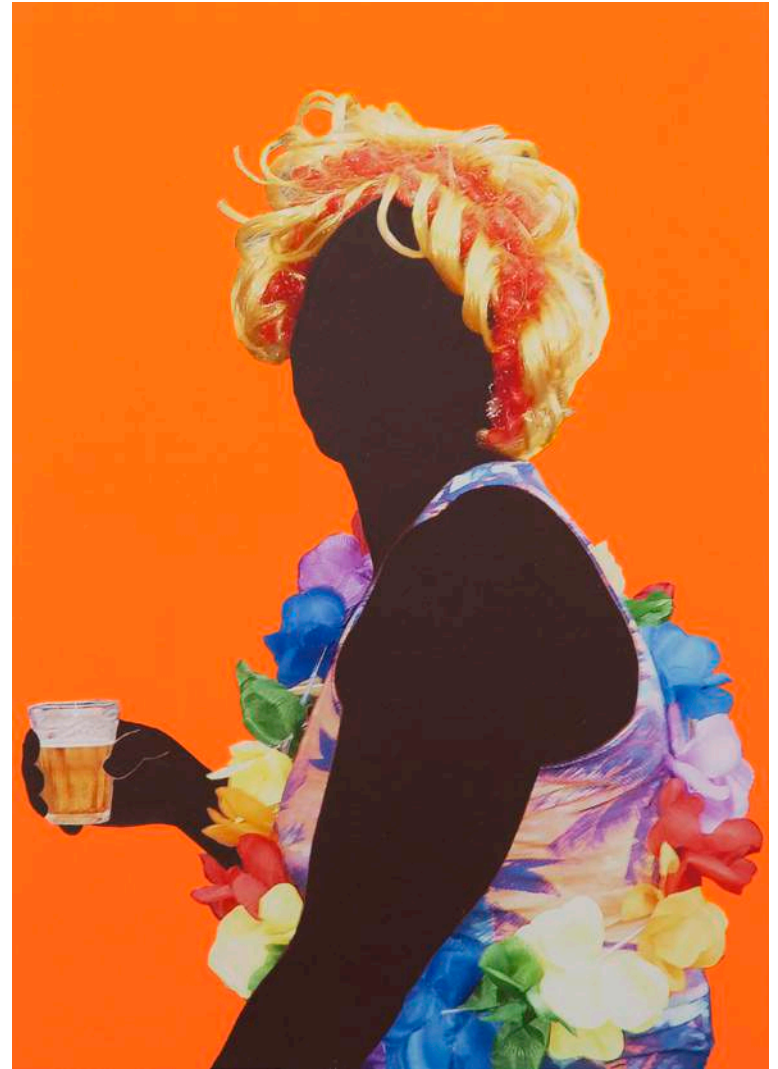
Carnival, Arini Tribe, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Matthew Williamson
'Arini' wallpaper) on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



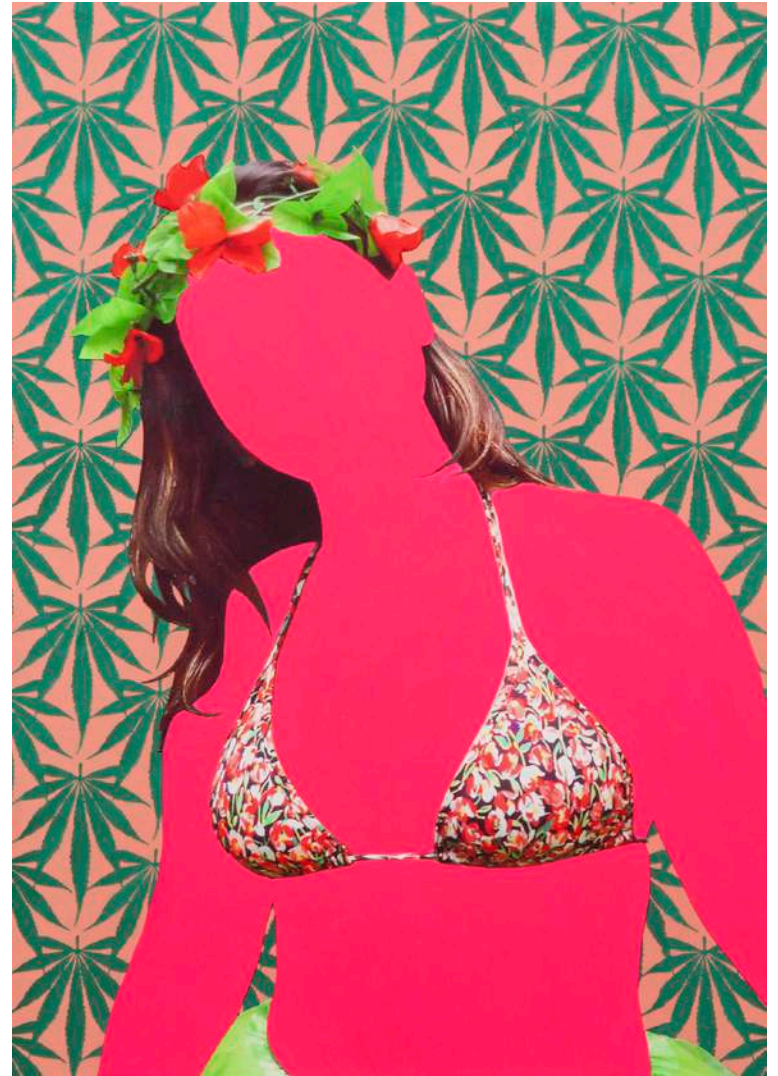
Carnival, Blues, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with mirrored card) on 308gsm
Hahnemühle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Sunset, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Fluorescent card) on 308gsm
Hahnemühle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Puck, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Stabroek Market,
Georgetown print) on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



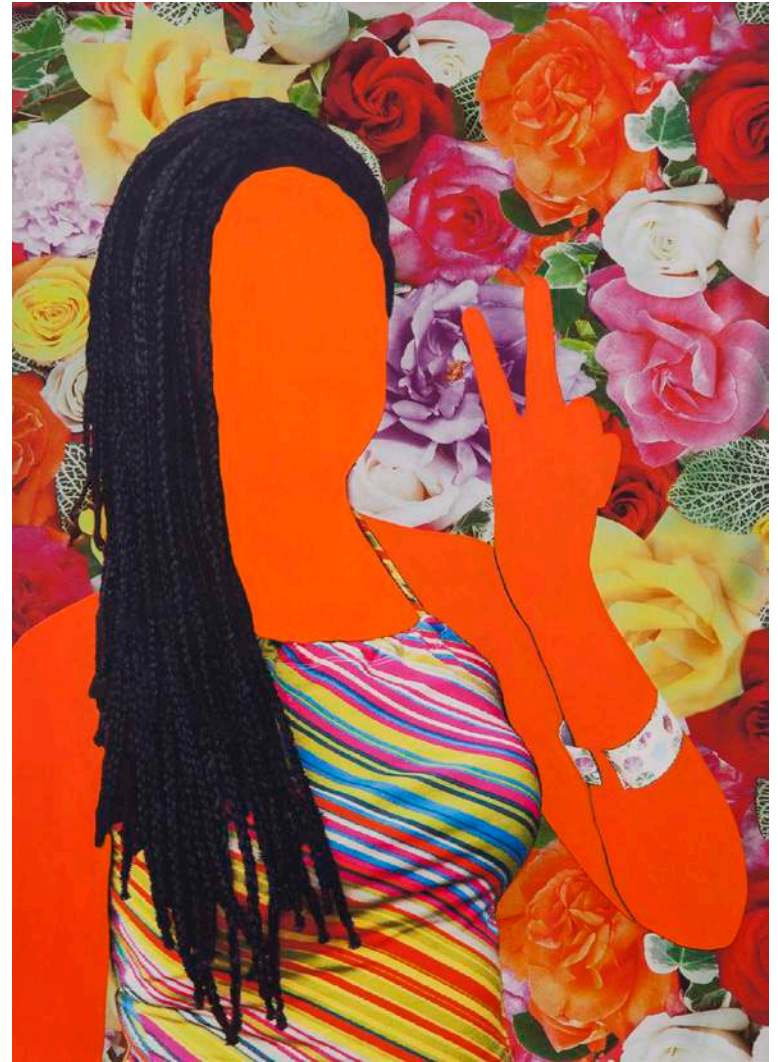
Carnival, Jungle Beat, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Matthew Williamson 'Jungle Beat')
on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



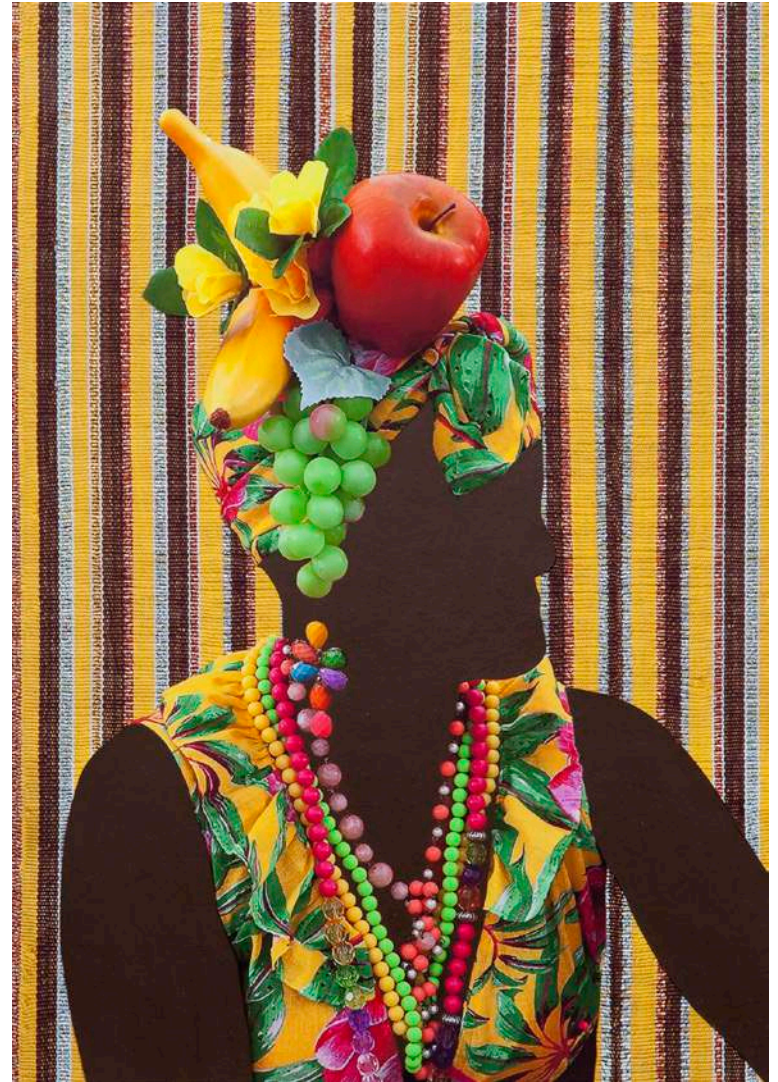
Carnival, Dream, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with African Wax Sunflower print) on
308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Rose, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Tropical Rose vinyl
print) on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Carmen, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Yoruba print) on 308gsm
Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



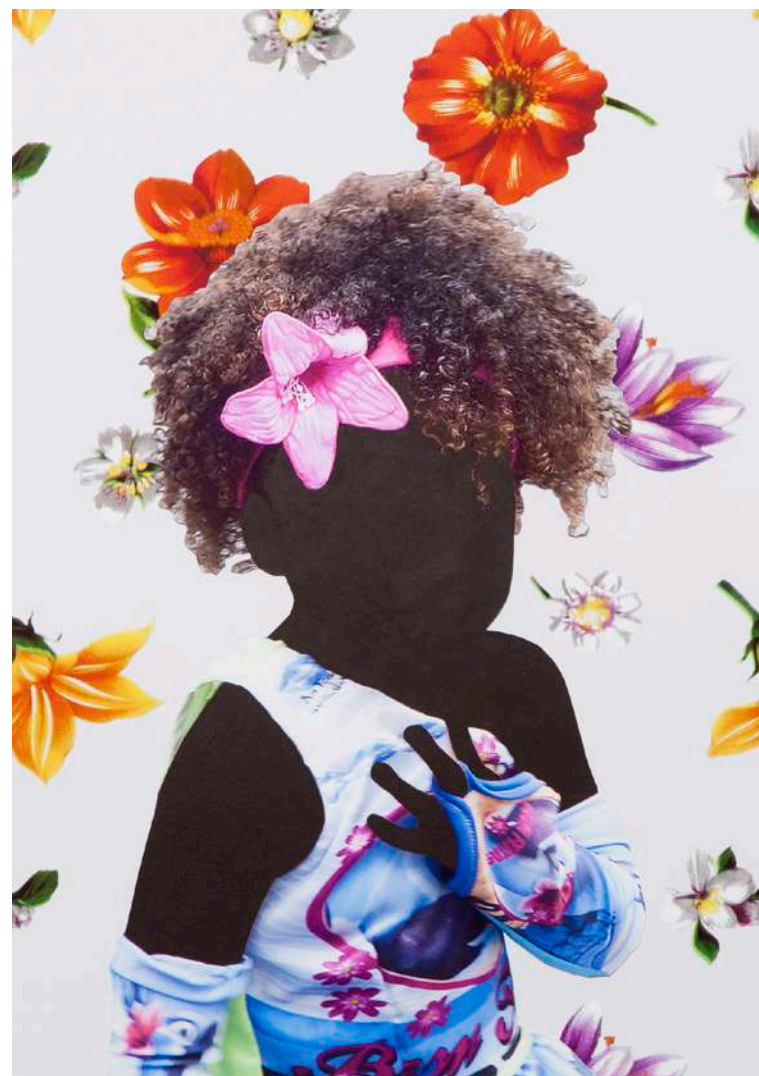
Carnival, Buffalo, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Dancing Bear Buffalo print)
308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Carnival, Butterfly Party, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Osborne & Little
'Butterfly Garden') on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



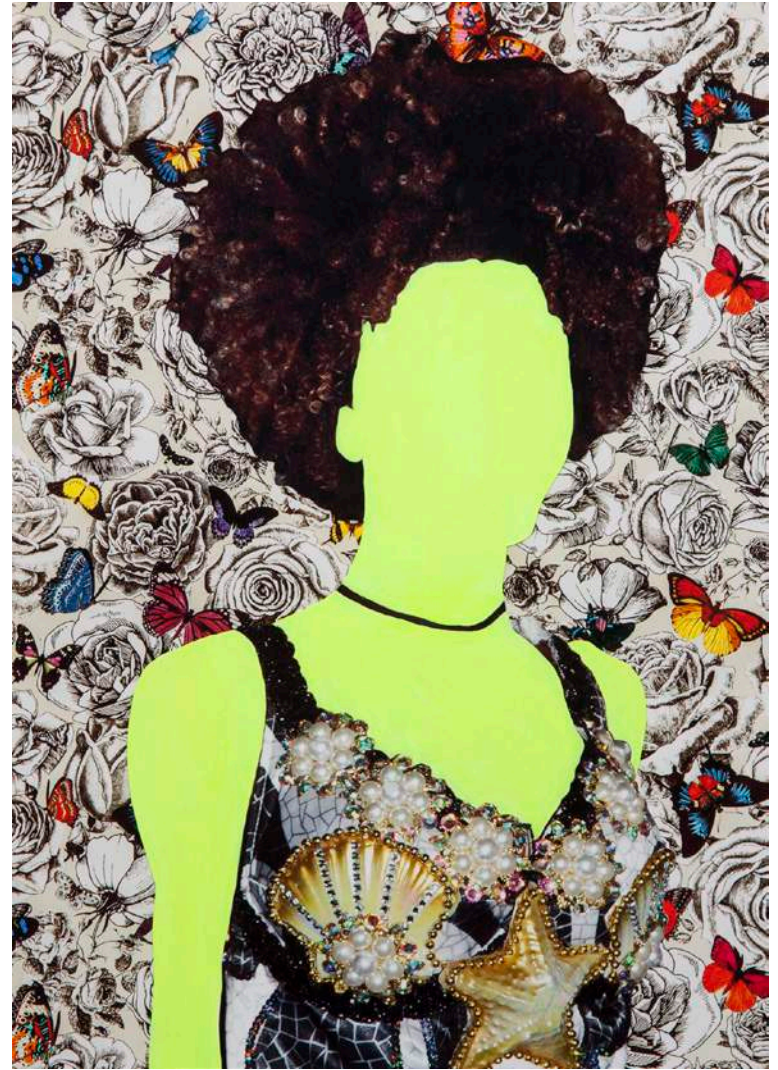
Carnival, Hibiscus, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Hibiscus Flower vinyl print) on
308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



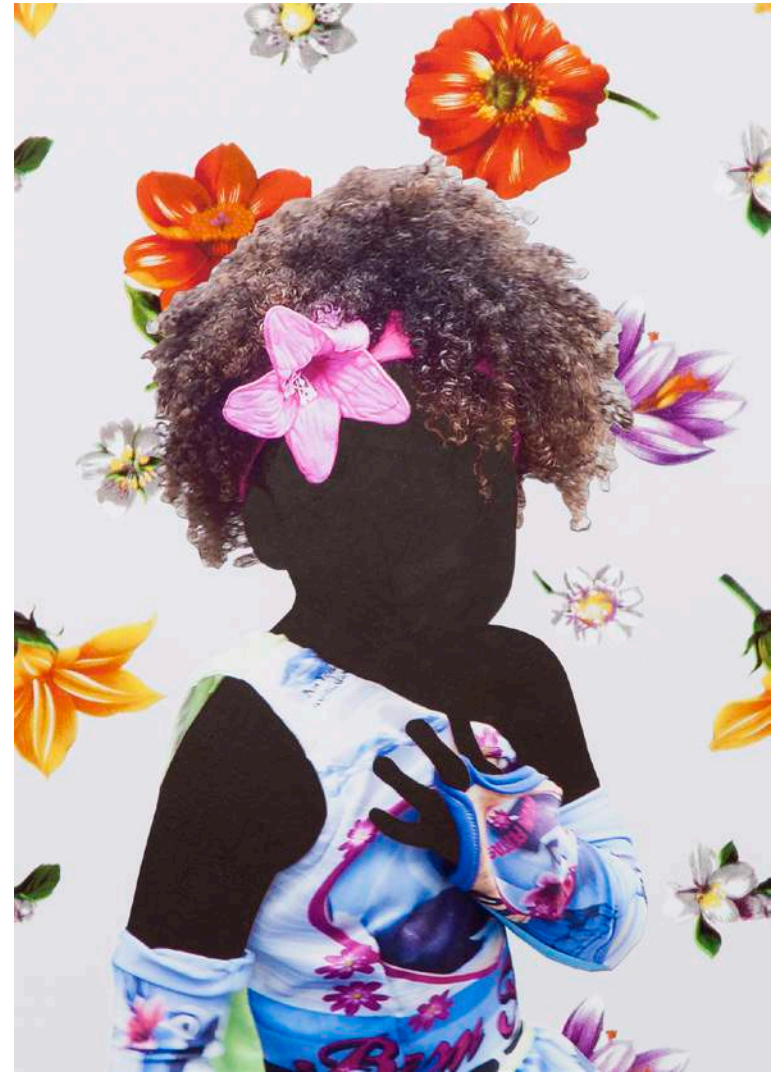
Carnival, Tyger, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Matthew Williamson 'Tyger Tyger'
wallpaper) on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
41 x 29 cm
16 1/8 x 11 3/8 in



Beat, Butterfly Party, Large, 2016
Fluorescent acrylic painting on photographic print (with Osborne & Little
'Butterfly Garden') on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
58 x 42 cm
22 7/8 x 16 1/2 in



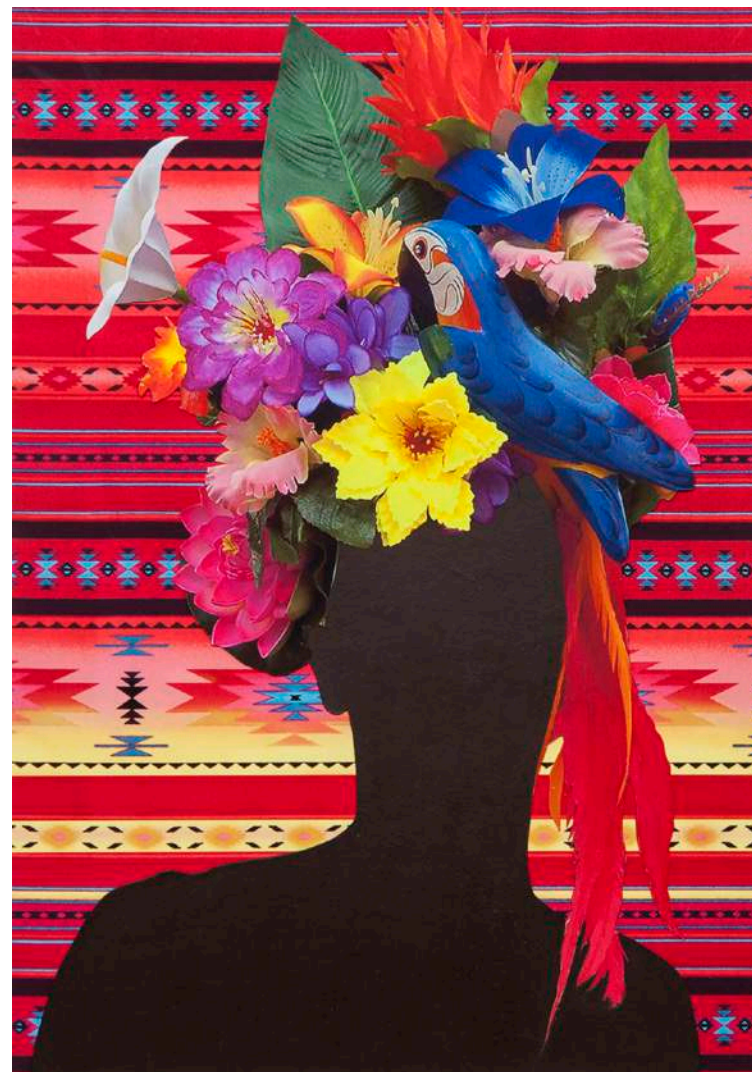
Beat, Hibiscus, Large, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Hibiscus Flower vinyl print) on
308gsm Hahnemuhle
58 x 42 cm
22 7/8 x 16 1/2 in



Beat, Tyger, Large, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Matthew Williamson 'Tyger Tyger'
wallpaper) on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
58 x 42 cm
22 7/8 x 16 1/2 in

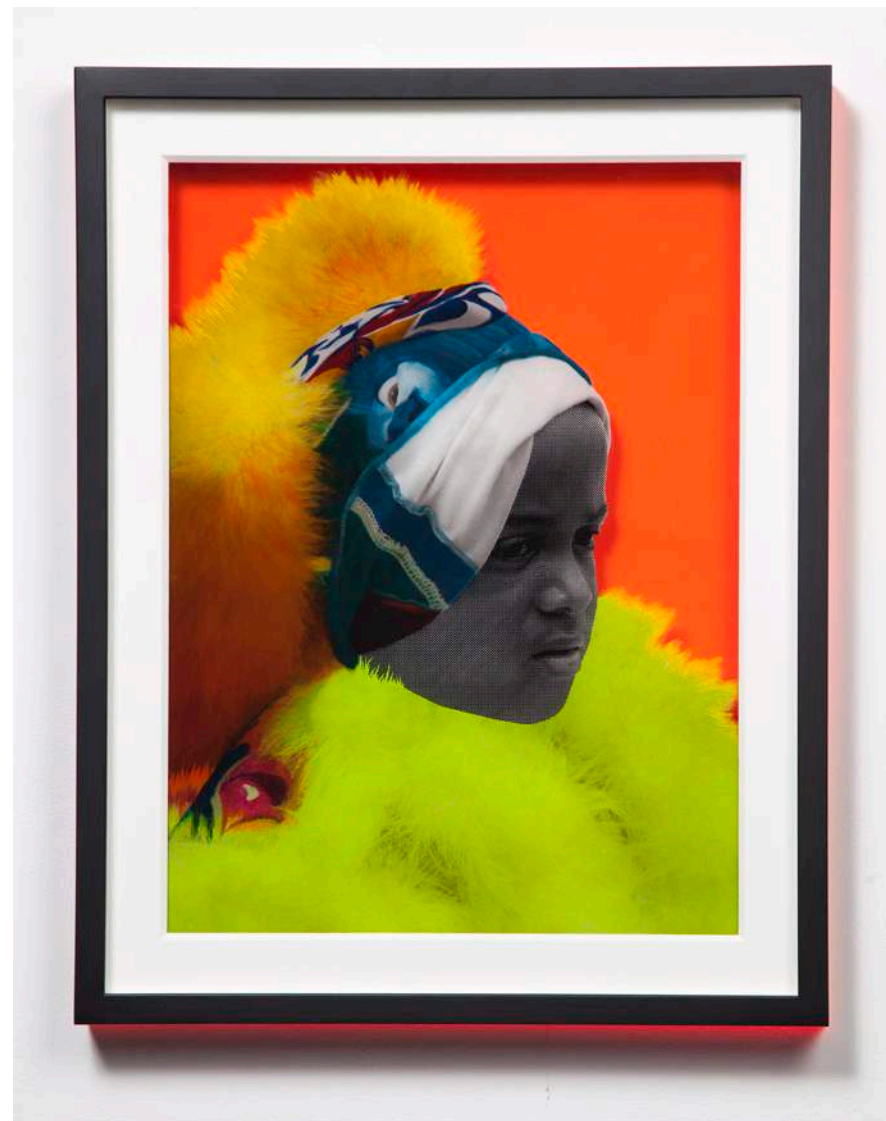


Beat, Glória, Large, 2016
Acrylic painting on photographic print (with Dancing Bear print) on 308gsm
Hahnemühle
58 x 42 cm
22 7/8 x 16 1/2 in



BATE
BOLA

Bate Bola XIV, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a lava orange Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola XIII, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a helios yellow Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola XII, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a neptune blue Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in





Bate Bola VI, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a acid green Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in

Bate Bola X, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent & metallic paints & silkscreen print in a lava
orange Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola V, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a acid green Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola VII, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent & metallic paints & silkscreen print in a
celestial blue Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola XVI, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, fluorescent & metallic paints and silkscreen
print in a helios yellow Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola VIII, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a neptune blue Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola XV, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, fluoresect & metallic paints and silkscreen
print in a celestial blue Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola I, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a lava orange Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola IX, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a helios yellow Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola IV, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a neptune blue Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in





Bate Bola II, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints, diamond dust & silkscreen print in lava orange Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in

Bate Bola III, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in helios yellow Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola XI, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints & silkscreen print
in a acid green Quasar frame™
49 x 39 cm
19 1/4 x 15 3/8 in



Bate Bola, 2016
Hand painting with pearlescent, metallic & fluorescent paints and silkscreen
print in a lava orange Quasar frame™
119 x 97.5 cm
46 7/8 x 38 3/8 in



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