

BALICE HERTLING

GALERIE

Kayode Ojo
Betrayal
September 6 – October 6, 2018

I knew you'd come.
He drinks.

I've just come to comb my hair.

He stands.

I knew you'd have to. I knew you'd have to comb your hair. I knew you'd have to get away from the party.

She goes to the mirror, combs her hair.
He watches her.

You're incredible.

You're drunk.

Nevertheless.

He holds her.

Jerry.

I was the best man at your wedding. I saw you in white. I watched you glide by in white.

I wasn't in white.

You know what should have happened?

What?

I should have had you, in your white, before the wedding. I should have blackened you, in your white wedding dress, blackened you in your bridal dress, before ushering you into your wedding as your best man.

My husband's best man. Your best friend's best man.

No. Your best man.

(Quote from Betrayal, a play by Harold Pinter, 1978.)

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Balice Hertling is pleased to present *Betrayal*, Kayode Ojo's first exhibition at the gallery.

American artist Kayode Ojo was born in 1990 and lives and works in New York. He received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York in 2012. In 2018, he has had group shows at Paula Cooper gallery in New York, Salon 94 Freemans in New York and Balice Hertling in Paris. In 2018, he has had a solo show at *And Now* in Dallas and is going to open solo exhibitions at New York's Martos gallery and at Sweetwater in Berlin.

Kayode Ojo's work filters different aspects of contemporary life by exploring mass produced objects as well as popular culture, advertising strategies and cinema. He often employs antiquated forms to produce dramatic effect: exaggerated traditional gender roles, formal wear, modernist furniture, aspirational apparel and design objects.

For this exhibition, following the logic of the practice of stage-to-film adaptation, Ojo takes inspiration from two movies : *Betrayal*, the 1983 film adaptation of Harold Pinter's play starring Jeremy Irons, Ben Kingsley and Patricia Hodge and the movie *By the Sea* from 2015.

Both films dwell on the concept of a double agent operating a romantic relationship. A contract between two people clandestinely expanded to be negotiated amongst four.

In the exhibition Ojo presents six sculptures made from ready-mades such as garments, jewelry or furniture, three paintings and a video. The works either directly reference elements in the films or loosely take on the mood.

Betrayal (1983) is the film adaptation of a play written by Harold Pinter in 1978. Critically regarded as one of the English playwright's major dramatic works. With a semi-autobiographical screenplay, it features Pinter's characteristically economical dialogue, characters' hidden emotions and veiled motivations, and their self-absorbed competitive one-upmanship, face-saving, dishonesty, and (self-)deceptions. *Betrayal* follows significant moments in the seven-year extramarital affair of art gallery owner Emma with literary agent Jerry, the best friend of her husband Robert.

By the Sea (2015) is an American romantic drama film written and directed by Angelina Jolie, starring Jolie and Brad Pitt. The film is set in the 1960s, and the story takes place in France. An American couple, the former dancer Vanessa and her husband Roland, a successful writer, have been married 14 years. They drive to a coastal hotel. Roland wants to write a story while staying there. The two are barely on speaking terms; Vanessa is withdrawn and grieving for an unknown reason. Roland appears to drink too much and seems unhappy that Vanessa is no longer interested in him sexually. Vanessa and Roland strike up a friendship with an attractive young couple staying in the room next to them. Vanessa attempts a liaison with the young husband in the next room, interrupted violently by Roland. He bruises the husband, who must later explain to his wife and does so truthfully, seriously damaging the relationship between the young couple. At the end, having finally come to terms with their life together, Vanessa seems able to go on and Roland is able to finish writing a new book. As Vanessa and Roland leave the hotel and drive away, they appear to be reconciled.

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