

Ruth Ige is a Nigerian-born abstract and figurative painter, based in Auckland, New Zealand. The artist's intimate, evocative compositions oscillate between bodily forms and painterly abstractions. While some resemble traditional portraiture, others consist of color fields that capture a more mysterious, ethereal effect. Ruth's works explore and convey ideas of place and space in an intimate way, using secrecy and mystery as a form of empowerment in the portrayal of blackness.

Ruth Ige responds to ideas surrounding blackness and representation – through figure and with the use of the colour itself. The artist creates rich, hypnotic portraits of imagined subjects. Their bodies blur between blue, watery dimensions, and are at once in our midst as they are in a realm of their own. Through a form of veiling, she evokes the empowering qualities that mystery can bestow. Gleaning figurative suggestion from abstraction, her pieces literalize the cultural conditions of blackness through color, deploying acrylic in smoky, corporeal swathes and swells. Ruth Ige uses figuration like a weight to hold down great swoops of acrylic indigo, cerulean and gray. This figurative weight, though head-shaped and solid black, is the opposite of a silhouette. Its blackness isn't neutral or empty but full and mysterious, a place where gestures and moods concentrate into unknowable density.

"I am interested in creating images that are not easily understood. Where there is this sense of being outside of a specific place or time. Where past, present and future collide and are coexisting within the same space. Bringing in a quietness, a slowing down and focusing in. Within all that, exploring blackness through the figurative form and the colour itself and all that it implies."

– Ruth Ige

Ruth Ige (b. 1992, NG) holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts from Auckland University of Technology, NZ. Ige's work has been featured in several solo&duo exhibitions, including at City Gallery Wellington, Wellington, NZ and at Weasel Gallery, Hamilton, NZ. Ruth Ige has participated in numerous group exhibitions, both locally and internationally, including at STEVENSON, Cape Town, ZA, McLeavey Gallery, Wellington, NZ, KARMA Gallery, New York, NY, US and at LISTE – Art Fair Basel, CH. Ruth Ige currently lives and works in Auckland, NZ.