One of today's most significant contemporary painters, British artist Chris Ofili has played the shifting roles of art world trickster, brilliant colorist, and archivist of Black cultural history, often all at once. Born in Manchester, England to Nigerian parents, Ofili became widely known in the 1990s for his monumental canvases that were bedazzled with glitter, beads, collage elements, and elephant dung. The latter material, which has sparked occasional controversy, references the artist’s formative travels in Zimbabwe while also serving as a wry, self-primitizing gesture, subverting the art world’s exoticizing expectations of artists from the African diaspora. *Popcorn Tits* (1996) is exemplary of this early stage in the artist’s career: Propped up by two balls of dung likely sourced from the London Zoo, the painting is garishly bright, covered in scrawling, graffiti-like marks of dotted paint that recall 1970s psychedelia, while deflecting our gaze from the swirling array of pornographic fragments alluded to in the work’s humorously vulgar title.

Currently based in Trinidad and Tobago, Ofili has expanded his practice substantially in recent years. For instance, a 2012 collaboration with The Royal Ballet led to the creation of set designs and costumes based on paintings and pastel drawings that reinterpret Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* through a lush, Caribbean-inspired palette and iconography. Similarly, *Poolside Magic* (2013) is one in a suite of vividly pigmented watercolors based loosely on a 1940 photograph of Trinidadian artist Boscoe Holder with a model in his Port-of-Spain studio. Recasting these figures as a contemporary nude bather, served by a cocktail waiter in coattails, Ofili adds a trademark layer of sensuality, mysticism, and narrative intrigue in his reworking of this scene.

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