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Cosmic Dance  
by Nnenna Okore  
Oil Pastel on  
handmade paper  
22 X 26 inches  
2016



TYNA ADEBOWALE | RANTI BAMGBALA  
TY BELLO | CAREY GODWIN | TAIYE IDAHOR  
WURA NATASHA OGUNJI | ZEMAYE OKEDIJI  
OBIAGELI OKIGBO | NNENNA OKORE  
NIKE DAVIES OKUNDAYE | KARIN TROY

CURATED BY SANDRA MBANEFO OBIAGO

MAY 14 TO AUGUST 15, 2016

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# HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?

Guggenheim	0
Metropolitan	0
Modern	1
Whitney	0

**1985**  
A PUBLIC SERVICE OFFERING BY GUERRILLA GIRLS  
CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ART WORLD

SOURCE: ART IN AMERICA ANNUAL 1985-86

# HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?

Guggenheim	<del>0</del> 1
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**2015**  
A PUBLIC SERVICE OFFERING BY GUERRILLA GIRLS  
CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ART WORLD

SOURCE: MUSEUM WEBSITES

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# HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE WOMAN EXHIBITIONS IN NIGERIAN ART SPACES 2015-2016?

# 13

footnote: **Nengi Omuku** at Omenka; **Zainab Jallo** at Rele; **Jumoke Oduwole** at Rele; **Khenye Gager** at Abuja; **Stephanie Sinclair** at Whitespace; **Khadijah Tijani** at Yusuf Grillo Gallery; **Wura Natasha Ogunji** and **Ruby Amanze** at Omeka; **Yetunde Ayeni Babaeko** at the Wheatbaker; **Polly Alakija** at Osborne Foreshore; **Ngozi Schommers** at Rele; **Ndidi Dike** at the National Museum; **Chinze Ojobo** at the National Museum;  
*Any omissions of art exhibitions showcasing female artists between 2015-26 in Nigeria are regretted.*

## Standing Out!

I have always believed that women across the globe stand out. Women in Africa stand out even more in the midst of immense pressures. After many years of working at the cutting edge of environment and development issues, mostly focusing on documenting the health and rights of the most vulnerable in society, especially women and children, I moved my focus from film to art.

During a recent visit to the Tate Modern in London, I came across some postcards by *The Guerilla Girls*, an advocacy group fighting for female artists to be more equitably represented in the global art world. It got me thinking about how much I have done to promote female artists. Not much really, because I have not really drawn a distinction between male and female artists. Just sought great art from Africa, and tried to showcase it.

Even though some of my best exhibitions and films have featured women artists like Nnenna Okore, Chinwe Uwatse, TY Bello, Polly Alakija, Yetunde Ayeni Babaeko, Peju Alatise, Sarah Boulos, and Nike Davies Okundaye, their art and not their gender was always front and center in my mind.

But the more I thought about the lack of support for young girls aspiring to pursue artistic expression, the more I became aware that I have not done *enough* to celebrate inspirational women in art; To demonstrate how women keep breaking internal, family and societal boundaries.

I decided it was high time I began to look more strategically at art challenging female stereotypes, and contribute more towards celebrating outstanding women artists in Africa and women artists *influenced by* Africa. I was not surprised to discover that the themes they grapple with have a deep, universal resonance which transcends the discrimination and violations we see every night on the evening news. Through their art, they exude a deep spiritual positivity and strength. I was not surprised to find that female artists in Africa are an unapologetic force, creating their own opportunities, and establishing their own platforms.

I am humbled and delighted to present *Standing Out*, showcasing the work of eleven leading and emerging female artists whose work reflect a multitude of issues surrounding feminism and equality, through a variety of media including painting, photography, sculpture, clay, glass, weaving, mixed media and performance.

What echoes through all the works is energy, resilience, interconnections and overlapping memories and identities, with rich visual metaphors of breaking boundaries across psychological, physical and emotional landscapes.

I am deeply honored to present the works of one of the world's leading textile artists, award winning Chief Nike Davies-Okundaye, whose talent and lifelong commitment to women's empowerment shows in her intricate textile, adire, and beaded art works which have become prized possessions of museum collections around the world. Chief

Nike's "celebration" artwork is a painstakingly beaded opus of women expressing robust and vibrant exuberance gained from the "spiritual experience to live every minute with love, grace, and gratitude." Her works are covered in traditional adire symbols which look like mere patterns to the uninitiated, but which clearly communicate universal values of such as work, community, strength, love, birth, and children through a secret Yoruba female vocabulary.

Some of these traditional patterns and expressions are echoed in the formidable drawings and mixed media sculptures created by Professor Nnenna Okore, whose drawings "cosmic dance" and "old birth" literally depict a primordial energy which "turns dust to mountains, and rivers to skies". Her paper and hanging burlap and clay sculptures tie in with deep rooted sounds and traditions of sweeping, chopping, talking, and rolling, which are echoed through repetition in the stitching, twisting and rolling of natural materials in her works, signaling "both the transience of human labour and its inevitable mark on the material world."

The relationship between labour and leisure is also explored in the unique works of visual and performance artist Wura Natasha Ogunji, in which she analyzes how women occupy space and how their bodies, social power, and presence is strengthened through "epic and ordinary actions." Ogunji's intricate drawings and embroidery on architectural drafting paper brings alive a world of iconic female characters featured in classic African films by Ousmane Sembene (*Black Girl*) and Djibril Diop Mambety (*Touki Bouki*) in which she explores the inner conflict between aspiration, nostalgia and house work and the strength to overcome physical and mental inhibitions and swim into a sea of life and adventure.

From Ogunji's embroidery, we follow the thread to the ancient traditions of weaving reflected in the intricate works of interior designer Carey Godwin, whose diverse artistic narrative is woven across colorful glass, wool, yarn, ribbon, and delicately embossed montage and ink prints. Godwin exposes a finely meshed resilience that is woven through the multi-dimensional fabric of women's experience through the ages – revealing a silent tenacity which society has always depended on.

Obiageli Okigbo's architectural perspective of "light, rhythm, geometry and enclosure" shines through in her paper and ink on canvas works, which are rich in history and iconography. Her "female heroes" portraits are a celebration of African "queen, goddess, scholar, diplomat, scientist, icon, prophet and freedom fighting warrior" reminding us "that the African woman has administered great and mighty nations, led determined and capable armies into battle and founded splendid and enduring royal dynasties."

Okigbo's work is intended as "recognition, tribute and salute to the prominence, grandeur and majesty of women of African descent" including historic figures like *Tiye*, the great royal wife and matriarch of the Egyptian Amara Dynasty, *Sarraounia*, the warrior queen of Azna and *Amina Mohamud*, the Hausa warrior queen of Zaria, to contemporary figures like the Kenyan Nobel Laureate *Wangari Maathai*, South African singer and activist *Miriam Makeba* and *Rosa Parks*, the "First Lady of the Civil Rights Movement".

The intersection of present and past, also comes to light in the multi-layered photographs by musician/photographer, TY Bello, whose works "whisper words of wisdom to our



present". Her self-portraits are layered across points of transition with images she took of celebrity musicians, creating new narratives and interactions by connecting memory through re-purposed and perfectly re-orchestrated cross generational figures. Her visual metaphors of being led through different phases of life exude a mystical cross fertilization of spiritual connection through ideas, age, gender and identity. Her photographs touch on intercession and "the strength we get from each other's wishes and prayers".

The use of hair as a visual metaphor can be seen in Taiye Idahor's *Imadode* works, meaning literally, "I did not miss my way". Her delicate paper collage of braided newspaper intertwined and overlapped with photographic film packaging arranged in a spherical pattern are her visual language of identity and the cyclical nature of life, as she explores public versus private image, reality versus virtual images of self, and "the boundaries between them in relation to culture, faith and tradition."

Zemaye Okediji's mesmerizing underwater photographs expands our understanding of what it means to be a woman through dreamy imagery representing opportunities and barriers within natural and imagined intellectual landscapes. Her multi-layered images of women existing in fluid underwater blue and green hues and eventually breaking out of this slow, silent aquatic landscape explores "one's ability to find functional balance and thereby project prominence" by overcoming "boundaries that only exist in our minds".

The idea of "I am limitless" is echoed in the beautifully fashioned wearable art works by Karin Troy, whose intricately handcrafted hammered and formed re-purposed brass and silver jewelry draw inspiration from her years of working with grassroots artistic communities in Mali and Cote d'Ivoire. Her jewelry beckons us to unfold and bloom, expose the light within, while strengthening bonds and taking calculated risks to open up and grow. Her works touch on how society values its women in "Onitsha bride price", and how we as women value ourselves.

Ranti Bamgbala's iconic enshrouded ceramic artworks are a contemporary interpretation of women's traditional pottery, which she has echoed by layering raw, organic materials around a thrown base. Her artistic methods of manipulation push beyond the limits of clay and explore concepts of light and play through strength, balance, color, and tactile materiality. Bamgbala's fresh exploration of language and metaphor through her delicately layered, perforated and fired pots, hint at women's traditional concealment of their physical and mental prominence through outward embellishment that includes subtle points of ventilation and communication.

This powerful language of concealment and exposure reverberates in Tyna Adebowale's powerful monochromatic female forms with dashes of red highlights. Her intricately tattooed faces and bodies reveal patterns which run like ribbons through their personalities, expressing the artists' clarion call to fight discrimination and break down body stereotypes by disregarding "the pressure to be thin, fat, short, tall, dark and light."

In *Beauty*, a performance by Wura Natasha Ogunji, hair is used as a physical reference point and symbol of women's outward looks, refinement, elegance and style. The performance also explores the interconnectedness of women and the relationship that they have to each other and to their hair.

As we celebrate our women artists in *Standing Out*, we thank our amazing sponsors, luxury house Moët Hennessey and UBS, the Swiss International bank, for supporting the best of global art and creativity in Africa.

We hope you enjoy this orchestra of visual motion and interplay, appreciate its drama and subtle expressions, as well as its performance, strength and texture which inevitably shows how women continue standing out.

We bow in recognition of our phenomenal artists, Tyna Adebawale, Ranti Bamgbala, TY Bello, Carey Godwin, Taiye Idahor, Wura Natasha Ogunji, Zemaye Okediji, Obiageli Ogunji, Nnenna Okore, Nike Davies-Okundaye, and Karin Troy who are quintessentially *standing out* and whose art is distinctly *out standing!*

Sandra Mbanefo Obiago  
Exhibition Curator  
Lagos, April 2016



Koromuso silver rings by Karin Troy, 2016



## We start with our similarities

When I look at another woman, I should be able to see myself. I have to, because of the experiences that unite us. We struggle with the same issues of identity, ownership and acceptance of our position as women, and we face the same rejections because of them. Am I meant to be submissive? Am I meant for motherhood? Or, am I less of a woman if I can't conceive?

These types of questions present a paradox, and the relationship women are meant to have with each other challenges us to think more deeply about if there really are answers. Our experiences also carve out our differences, and invite us to accept them. Am I a feminist? Is she my sister or my competition? These questions are constant, and even *that* unites us. The differences come when we attempt to carve our own space in the history of our existence.

We are, in essence, mystical beings. There is more depth to being a woman than verbal communication can convey, but our art has the ability to illustrate that depth better than any other medium.

There are just as many levels to understanding what it means to be a woman existing in a certain place today, as there are levels and modes of expressing it. What we see is that the communication of womanhood can take any shape or form - and thus it can be expressed in any form of art.

It make sense, then, that female artists are able to conceptualize and express their own existence in a way that speaks to the level of comprehension required to understand women in general. They create safe and accessible ways for others to interpret womanhood through each long brush stroke, each molding and indent of the clay, or each graceful hand motion in dance.

There's another level of complexity to my experience as a Nigerian woman, but it's one that only a fellow Nigerian woman can understand in its entirety - unless an artist can make it relatable to anyone else. This is what the eleven women featured in the "Standing Out" exhibition have done, and their incredible art captures the essence of that understanding. That familiarity is a language that speaks louder than words.

I see myself in Obi Okigbo's illuminating portraits of women in history of African descent. When I see the detail with which she's able to paint Rosa Parks' eyebrows, I see that she is trying to convey the strength of that woman, and I understand it. I see the length of time she spent articulating Rosa Parks' vision with each stroke of the paintbrush. Obi Okigbo is saying she embraces that woman's experience, and she is inviting others to embrace it as well.

I see the beauty of my own hair in the use of hair in Taiye Idahor's unspoken communication. I know that her repurposing found materials into beautiful pieces of art speaks directly to the part of my female experience that struggles with insecurity. Can I see myself as beautiful, despite what I've been through that makes me think otherwise? This exhibit asks that question.

Or can I, too, reject the notion that crafts aren't art - as Ranti Bamgbala and Carey Godwin do with use of pottery and weaving in their art. It sends a strong message to the world, announcing that the work of my hands, as a Nigerian woman, is beautiful, is significant, and it is worthy of your celebration. Pottery and weaving are also symbolic of the connection we African women have to our earth, and to each other, which fosters a connection to the art on an intimate level.

These are the mediums through which I understand the complexity of women, and these are the connections that the eleven women have been able to make in their "Standing Out" conversations.

Conversations about who we are, and the space we occupy as women, as Nigerian women, and as thinking, feeling and capable beings. Questions of identity, community, national borders and personal limitations are meditated on, and we are invited to reflect on our own beauty. We are not just women in Nigeria, we are women existing in the world the same way others do.

What it actually means to be a woman is to attain the highest level of comprehension of all of these complexities, and embrace them anyway. This also gives us freedom to be as dynamic, as individual, and as exactly who we are - as we can possibly be.

Each work of art featured in "Standing Out" reflects our kinship, but each is also distant, unique and in itself complete. That is what it means to be a woman in this world. And the women that have contributed to this exhibition are telling my story while also telling their own.

Chiderah Monde  
Journalist, Writer & Publicist





The Stare, Acrylic, Pen, and Ink on Canvas, 39"x 38", 2015



# TYNA ADEBOWALE



Tyna Adebowale (born 1982) is Unemhe from Edo State and graduated in painting from Auchu Polytechnic. She is an award winning painter and multimedia visual artist who has exhibited her work in eighteen group exhibitions in Nigeria, Brazil, Cameroun, South Africa & Ghana. She has taken part in workshops and artist residencies at the Foundation for Contemporary Art, Accra, the Nigeria Brazil Cultural Centre in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, the Bakassi Peninsul' Art in Limbe, Cameroun, at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and at the Center for Contemporary Art (CCA) and the African Artists Foundation in Lagos Nigeria.

*The female form is a major influence in my art. This is because I am passionate about presenting issues around female identity sexual identity and gender discrimination. I love celebrating the diverse shapes of the female body to counter the stereotypes and challenge false standards. It is important to me that women disregard the pressure to be thin, fat, short, tall, dark and light; I want them to fall in love with their own bodies. Without a doubt, some of these issues reflect my personal struggles as a female living in an environment where silence and submission are demanded of women. My work is an attempt to give voice to the struggles of the women in my society.*

Tyna Adebowale



Tom #00, Acrylic, Pen, and Ink on Canvas, 38.5" x 39.5", 2013



Top: Japa, Vulcan black clay, 16 x 17cm, 2015  
Bottom: Mpros, Terracotta, 13 x 21cm, 2015

# RANTI BAMGBALA



Ranti Bamgbala was born in Lagos and raised in London. She received an MA from The Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design where her thesis was entitled 'How can art and design help man understand his connectedness to his environment?' The research allowed her to make tangible her love of Eastern philosophy, etymology and clay. After extensive travels, including a two-year pause in Greece, she was accepted onto the renowned City Lit ceramics diploma course. Bamgbala has maintained a consistent and dedicated studio practice since graduating in 2015.

*My work is inspired by a love of words and metaphor, and clay as an extraordinary material. I make constant reference to, and imbue my work with the concepts of: **light** - metaphorically and physically, in process and form; **organic** - working with clay in its natural unreinforced state, embellishing the surface with colours, patterns and textures that stand out to me; **raw** - I work intuitively, collaging freely cut slabs of embellished clay around a thrown base; and **play** - I enjoy pushing this wondrous material to its limits, embracing all the making process has to offer, along the way to a beautifully finished piece.*

*Ranti Bamgbala*



Opi, Terracotta, 24 x13cm, 2015



Intersections 1, Photograph, 2016



# TY BELLO



TY Bello is one of Nigeria's most recognized artists. She came to public attention in the early 2000s as a member of the music group Kush. She has also built a reputation as one of Nigeria's foremost photographers and is a member of the talented photography collective Depth of Field.

Her evocative portraits never fail to rouse strong emotions and have made her one of the most applauded and keenly sought after portrait photographers in the country. Indeed she has the unique distinction of having photographed three sitting Nigerian Presidents.

TY deploys the same creative gift to produce engaging yet timeless music. She launched her successful debut solo album Greenland in 2005. Its title track- Greenland and Ekundayo became instant hits and are now widely accepted household favorites. The Future- her Nigerian jubilee tribute was released on the eve of the April 2011 general elections. It became the awakening song for Nigerians as they steered the fate of the nation with their votes.

TY's songs and her photography- which has been exhibited in Nigeria and around the world- have earned awards both at home and abroad.

*.. So many cross roads and interventions as we journey.. the past resurrecting as a unique persona whispering words of wisdom to our present self. leading us on to a future we've never met.. decoding the mystery.. its beautiful watching the conversations but every once in a while,they all come together in council..Disregarding time..questions and answers..questioning the answers ... building us.  
As time draws overlapping lines so do our connections with others..  
Our interactions and intercessions changing the core of who we are.. we change those that change us..each heart combination birthing new identities.. BUILDING US still.*

*in.ter.sec.tion: the point or set of points where one line,surface or solid crosses another.. a place where two or more roads meet.*



Intercession biz, Photograph, 2016



# CAREY GODWIN



Carey Godwin was born and raised in Nigeria until the onset of the Civil War after which she continued her education in Britain. She has made frequent trips home to Lagos over the years, and has travelled across Nigeria and Africa, including exploring the Sahara Desert on a road trip from Lagos to Bern, Switzerland. Carey studied and worked as a commercial designer for 28 years, running a successful business in London before retiring to the Welsh Borders. In recent years her interest in colour and textures grew from experimenting with printing with texture to weaving, spinning and dyeing with different materials. Carey is currently exploring weaving with color using fused glass. Through Carey's work in mixed media she has been able to share and teach these old crafts to a group of women in Wales who continue the process of experimentation, pushing the boundaries, and 'breaking rules'. Carey's use of colour and imagery in fabric, glass and printmaking is inspired from her travels around the world.

*Most of the women who break boundaries and stand out don't consciously set out on this walk of life. As situations arise, with the inner strength of understanding their abilities to make a difference, they quietly move forward to overcome the adversities standing in their way. As women make their way, and become recognised for their stamina, others look to them as an example of what can be accomplished. Those who really stand out do so by their achievements and the non-confrontational way in which this has been attained.*

Carey Godwin



The catch, 2010, embossed montage & ink, 330 x 338mm



Scarf, 100% Cashmere yarn, woven on a 24 shaft loom, 560 x 2000 mm, 2015





# TAIYE IDAHOR



Taiye Idahor grew up in Lagos, she studied Fine Art at the Prestigious Yaba College of Technology Lagos Nigeria where she graduated in 2007 with a Higher National Diploma (HND) after specialising in sculpture at the college.

In the last five years Taiye Idahor has worked significantly within the concept of identity and women using hair as a visual language. Tangled through the issues of trade, beauty, the environment and globalisation, she examines how these factors build the woman's identity in today's Africa but in particular Lagos Nigeria where she has lived all her life.

She has participated in a number of exhibitions and workshops both at home and abroad including Nigeria our Nigeria, Presidential Inauguration Exhibition Abuja Nigeria 2011; the specially curated at the Dubai Art Fair, Marker 2013; her first solo exhibition "Hairvolution" in Lagos Nigeria 2014 and *Timeline* a residency exhibition in Johannesburg South Africa 2015.

Taiye Idahor also works part time with the Centre for Contemporary Art Lagos Nigeria as project coordinator and curatorial assistant.

Imadode ,1  
Acrylic paint, paper,  
& photo collage on canvas,  
90 x 83cm (unframed)  
2016

## **Imadode**

*Imadode\* is a Bini name from Edo state and it means "I did not miss the way". It is an ongoing project and experiment, an extension of the change of name series that began in 2010. It came about from the change of name pages found in newspapers where people, mostly women, made public declarations of their new names acquired mainly through marriage. The artist's curiosity on this kind of public announcement now acts as a foundation for this series. The series explores the artist's interest and concern on one of life's most pressing issues today, identity. In this case it focuses and responds to the discussions surrounding "image"; public versus personal image, reality (life as we know it and live it) versus the virtual (life through pictures, chats, television and social media) are at the forefront of her ideas and thought.*

*Imadode expresses the artist's own personal struggle of trying to find the boundaries between them in relation to culture, faith and tradition and contemplates how they can be reconciled.*

*Taye Idahor*

*\*pronunciation: E-ma-doe-der*



Imadode 2, Acrylic paint, paper & photo collage on canvas, 89 x 82 cm, 2016



There are many ways to  
fall into the sea  
Thread, permanent  
marker on polyester film  
61 x 45.5 cm  
2016

# WURA NATASHA OGUNJI



Wura-Natasha Ogunji is a visual artist and performer. Her works include drawings, videos and public performances. Her hand-stitched drawings, made on architectural trace paper, reference the daily interactions and frequencies that occur in the city of Lagos. She often combines images of the iconic and the ordinary in unexpected ways. Her most recent series of works on paper was exhibited in the *Magic* exhibition at Omenka Gallery. Selected exhibitions include: *No Such Place: Contemporary African Artists in America*, Edward Tyler Nahem Gallery (New York); *Future Reflexions*, The Arches Glasgow, UK; *That's not the Atlantic (There's a disco ball between us.)*, Arthello Beck Gallery, Dallas; and *Six Draughtsmen*, MoCADA, New York.

Ogunji's performances have been featured at the Gordon Institute of Performing and Creative Arts, Cape Town; Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos; The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis; and the Menil Collection, Houston. Her commissioned performance '*An ancestor takes a photograph*', which recasts the traditional Egungun masquerade with women, is featured in the Seattle Art Museum exhibition '*DISGUISE: Masks and Global African Art*'. Ogunji is a recipient of the prestigious Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (2012) and has received grants from The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York; The Dallas Museum of Art; and the Idea Fund, Houston. She has a BA from Stanford University (1992, Anthropology) and an MFA from San Jose State University (1998, Photography). She lives in Lagos.

Wura-Natasha Ogunji's artistic practice extends between drawings and performance art. In her most recent series of works on paper she stitches and draws characters from films [Sembene's *Black Girl* and Mambety's *Touki Bouki*]. In these re-imagined film stills a woman lounging at the ocean shares the page with the character Diouna who is dressed in heels while carrying a bucket and a mop. The series title, *There are many ways to fall into the sea* makes reference to the metaphor for a story coming to an end. In Ogunji's performance work, the artist highlights the relationship between the body and social power and presence. She develops performative language and aesthetics to speak about how women, in particular, occupy space through both epic and ordinary actions. The 2016 re-performance of her 2013 piece 'beauty' further explores the connections that women have to each other, their hair and appearance, as well as the relationship between labor and leisure.

There are many ways to  
fall into the sea (Blue)  
Thread, permanent  
marker on polyester film  
61 x 45.5 cm  
2016





Pregnant perspectives, 119.4 x 92.7 cm, Photograph, 2016



# ZEMAYE OKEDIJI



Zemaye is a self-professed commercial photographer by day, journalistic photographer by night and art photographer 24/7. Her photography probes lifestyles and cultural perspectives by portraying the mundane in a new way. Her current artistic expression blurs the lines of perception and reality within new and changing environments. She believes in the power of art to positively affect people's states of mind and potentially heal nations. She also believes that digital photography is a powerful tool to that end. Zemaye runs The Exwhyzee Studio in Lekki Phase I and has done work for a number of local and international clients. Her current focus is developing an art career that helps defragment Nigeria by linking industries and creating work that begins dialogue to that end.

*My currently untitled series is a visual exploration of the effects of internal, external and present factors on one's ability to find functional balance and thereby project prominence. The medium and techniques used as well as the resulting photographic abstractions, push boundaries within the context of what it means to be a woman in Nigeria. From an artistic standpoint, the series attempts to push boundaries by using underwater photography shot in Lagos as a metaphoric framework to convey the environment as naturally occurring yet unnatural and explore visual signals of both emotional harmony and emotional tension. From a gender standpoint, the series is a meta-symbolic abstraction of a woman's personal battle with different levels of conflict triggered by disparaging societal norms and interactions with her environment that ultimately lead to a state of heightened self-awareness.*

*The series is in keeping with the theme "Standing Out" because it addresses the critical issue of societal pressure and cultural projection on the female individual in a new way. It approaches the conversation from a personal and psychological point of view. Through the use of new techniques, it examines the notion of being limited by one's environment, location or industry status quo particularly in this age of global connectedness. In a sense, the journey of the woman set in water that is bound only by whatever contains it, reinforces the notion that boundaries only exist in our minds and inspires a conversation about distinction in a way that reflects the very bias that it seeks to challenge.*

*Zemaye Okediji*



Iceberg HR 119.4x92.7 Framed photograph on 3mm acrylic 2016



Anna of Idoto, Indian-ink & pigment on linen, 42 x 38 inches, 2012

# OBIAGELI OKIGBO



Obiageli Annabel Zeinab Okigbo (b. 1964 Ibadan).

Obi grew up in Nigeria until the age of 16. She continued her studies in Kent, then graduated from Oxford Brooks University with a BA in Architecture and pursued her post-graduate studies at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London.

She practiced architecture in London, Rome and Paris until 1994.

In 1995 she moved to Brussels where she lives with her children Sofia and Luca. Expanding her reach into the visual arts, she began developing her work on a theoretical level through painting and has consequently exhibited in Nigeria, United Kingdom, Dubai and Belgium including two major solo exhibitions in Lagos, 2003 and London, 2007.

She established the Christopher Okigbo Foundation in 2005, which is tasked with researching and preserving the legacy of Christopher Okigbo, poet (1932-1967).



SARRACONIA (19<sup>th</sup> Century),  
WARRIOR QUEEN of AZNA



MIRIAM MAKEBA "MAMA AFRICA" (1932 – 2008)  
SINGER/SONG WRITER, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

### *Female Heroes*

For many thousands of years the African woman has been worshipped, revered and idolized by individuals, families and nations, not only in Africa but also around the world. Ancient records show her as queen, goddess, scholar, diplomat, scientist, icon, prophet and freedom fighting warrior exalted with and sometimes above her father, husband and brothers. The African woman has administered great and mighty nations, led determined and capable armies into battle and founded splendid and enduring royal dynasties.

For the "Standing Out" exhibition, I will be showing "*Female Heroes*" as precursors of a larger piece "*Mystic Lamb*" which I have been developing since 2008. This selection of 12 portraits (Indian ink on paper) is intended as a historical recognition, tribute and salute to the prominence, grandeur and majesty of women of African descent.

I will also be showcasing "Anna of Idoto" made on the event of the re-publication of 'Labyrinths, the collection of poetry by Christopher Okigbo (1932-1967) in 2012. His mother Anna Okigbo died when he was a young child, leaving a void which years later inspired several poems dedicated to her memory. I am "believed" to be the reincarnation of Anna (my grandmother)...Thus, 'Anna of Idoto', in the guise of a "self-portrait" is a double dedication; from daughter to father & son to mother.

<sup>1</sup> The culmination of this research is a life-size Re-production of the "Ghent Alter-piece" or "Mystic Lamb"; the polyptych by Jan and Hubert Van Eyck, 1425 (12 Panels measuring approximately 7mx3m in total). Inherently, this piece is perceived as an offering; a work of devotion; a celebration of the cyclical nature of the human condition, the archetypal quest for the Self and the truth of our existence; the everlasting cycle of Birth, Death, and Regeneration.



WANGARI MAATHAI (1940 – 2011)  
NOBEL LAUREATE 2004, HUMANIST/POLITICAL ACTIVIST



AMINA MOHAMUD (1533 – 1610)  
WARRIOR QUEEN of HAUSA, ZARIA

*Building upon a fundamentally Architectonic understanding of the world; light, rhythm, geometry & enclosure, my work attempts to assemble 'poems' or 'connections' of perception which permits the language of representation to engage with issues of transience, memory, history, rites...*

*I am interested in archetypes: "primordial mental image inherited by all." looking for points of convergence... constants, I turn to Mythology, Nature and Science; they exist in every culture but with timeless themes. Myths are "clues" to the spiritual potentialities of the human life. The source of my interventions is this shared potentiality.*





# NNENNA OKORE



Born in Australia and raised in Nigeria, Nnenna Okore has received international acclaim for her installations, in which she reclaims and reconfigures organic or discarded materials into abstract, richly textured forms of extraordinary range and nuance. Okore is keenly sensitive to the rhythms and contours of everyday life. The repetitive acts of stitching, twisting, rolling, or weaving; the familiar sounds of sweeping, chopping, talking, and washing, all deeply inform her aesthetic, as they signal both the transience of human labor and its inevitable mark on the material world.

Nnenna Okore is a Professor of Art and Department Chair at Chicago's North Park University, where she teaches Sculpture. She earned her B.A degree in Painting from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (First Class Honors) in 1999, and went on to receive her MA and MFA at the University of Iowa, in 2004 and 2005. Added to numerous national and international awards, she was a 2012 recipient of the prestigious Fulbright Scholar Award. Her participation in over a hundred solo and group exhibitions combined, in the last decade has earned her much international recognition and accolade. She has upcoming solo shows at Monique Moloche Gallery, Mattatuck Museum, Memphis Brook Museum of Art and Jenkins Johnson Gallery all in the United States.

Standing out

I am hypnotized  
By the impetus of her early gaze  
Her magical touch  
That turns dust to mountains  
And rivers to skies

I am mesmerized  
Uncertain why everything floats  
From under the heavens  
Are they really moving?  
Or maybe a phantom of my imagination

I am bewildered  
By its once vibrant state  
The apparition that seems to die by morning  
Only to resurrect a new tale  
It shakes and it shimmers  
Leaving behind a renewal



Old Birth, Oil Pastel on Handmade paper, 23.5 x 29 inches, 2016



Abule series  
Watercolor/pen & ink on paper  
33 x 49 cm  
2006

*My tree my foundation, one of my roots goes under your skin.  
Even the touch of your burning love makes me dance in the rain,  
you are in my blood. You design my entire universe with your artistic  
patterns of new dawn!!!*

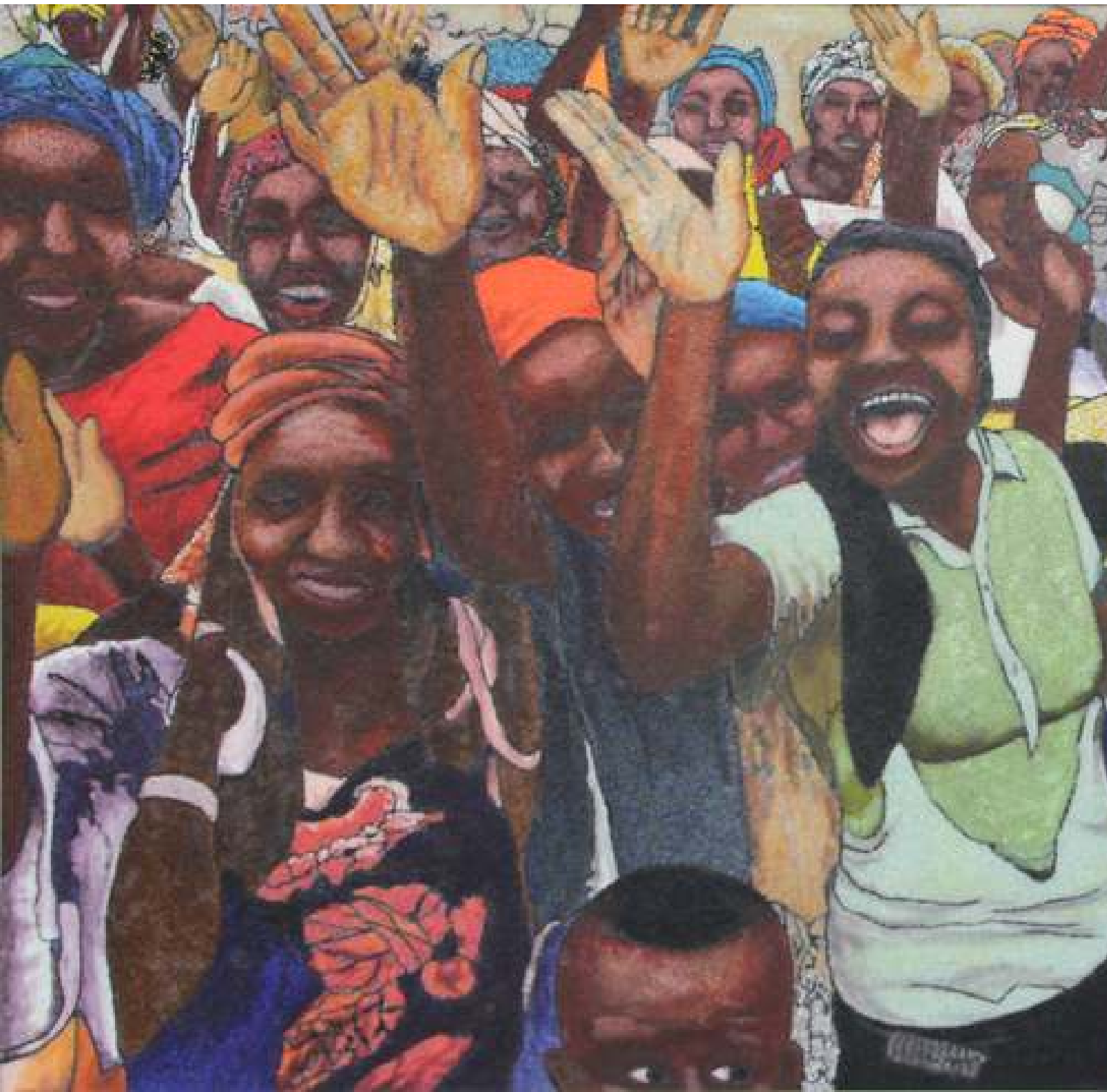
# NIKE DAVIES OKUNDAYE



Chief Nike Davies-Okundaye (born 1951) is one of the world's foremost textile artists. She learnt traditional weaving and textile dyeing from her grandmother in Ogidi-Ijumu, Kogi State. Chief Nike's artistic skills were nurtured at a young age by her family who were musicians and skilled craftsmen. She spent the early part of her professional life in Osogbo, which is recognised as one of the major centres for art and culture in Nigeria. During her stay in Osogbo, indigo dyeing and Adire production dominated her training.

Chief Nike is the founder and director of four art centres, which offer free training to young artists in visual, musical and the performing arts. She is the owner of the largest art gallery in West Africa, comprising over 7,000 artworks. The centres also serve as a rich source of knowledge for traditional arts and culture to scholars and institutions.

Chief Nike has showcased her art globally at major exhibitions and festivals including in the USA, Canada, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, the United Kingdom and in Nigeria. She has been featured in numerous films including *Kindred Spirits* by the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC, *African Voices* and *Inside Africa* by CNN and *For the Love of Indigo* by CFC/Sandra Mbanefo Obiagio. She is a recipient of many national and international awards for both her artistic and humanitarian work. She is a sought after speaker and has lectured and taught workshops at many universities including Harvard University, Northern Michigan University, University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Alberta




Celebration, Beads on board, 128 x 250cm, 2005



*You can only share the smiles, tears, love and fears when you have traveled and journeyed through their hearts. Seeing and chanting with people on a daily basis feels like perfect celebration and precious possession. It's just like a moving train and a force that gives you a spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude.*

Chief Nike Okundaye



Pull tight your cloak of quiet  
confidence, listen well, speak  
kindly, lead gracefully, love,  
and as you walk through the  
world, hold your head high.

Hold Your Head High, limited edition, repurposed brass, 4cm – 12cm high, 2016



# KARIN TROY



Karin Troy has been living in West Africa, and collaborating with local artisans for nearly 20 years. During this time Karin has enjoyed immersing herself in the art, culture, textiles and literature of the numerous West African countries that she has called home. Raised in the beautiful Pacific Northwest corner of the United States, Karin's creativity and appreciation for art, was influenced and encouraged by her artistic mother. In addition to the United States, Karin has lived in Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, France, Dubai, and Nigeria.

Inspired by African shapes, textures and traditional techniques, Karin began designing elegant "wearable art" which sits perfectly between artifact and bespoke luxury jewelry. Her Koromuso signature, which means "Elder Sister" in Bambara, grew out of years of working with local artisans who skillfully hand craft her designs using traditional techniques. Karin uses materials such as brass, silver, gold, stones, and wood, which are locally and sustainably sourced. She has supported her artisans and their communities through direct investment and development projects with an emphasis on empowering and improving the lives of women and children.

Koromuso has exhibited at select museums and galleries in the United States, Nigeria, and South Africa.




And the day came when the risk to  
remain tight in a bud was more painful  
than the risk it took to blossom.

*Anais Nin*



Bloom, limited edition, re-purposed brass, 43 cm x 43 cm, 2016

*While intrigued by her sparkle,  
it was the light from within,  
the strength, beauty and grace  
with which she held herself  
that captured their hearts and forged their bond.  
Cloaked effortlessly in quiet confidence,  
'I am limitless', she whispered.  
They believed her,  
and so she was.*



*Inspired by the African influences around me, I was compelled to create unique pieces that represented my own personal style while also reflecting the source of my inspiration. Wearing my own designs makes me feel at home, whether I'm in West Africa or abroad.*

*I believe that the jewelry one wears makes a statement about who they are and what holds meaning for them. It provides a glimpse into someone's personality without saying a word, but I often find that when I'm wearing my pieces people do tend to comment. I love jewelry that makes bold statements and sparks conversation.*

*I feel rewarded when my work inspires strangers to connect and I hope that many more conversations are generated, and bonds forged, when these pieces are worn.*

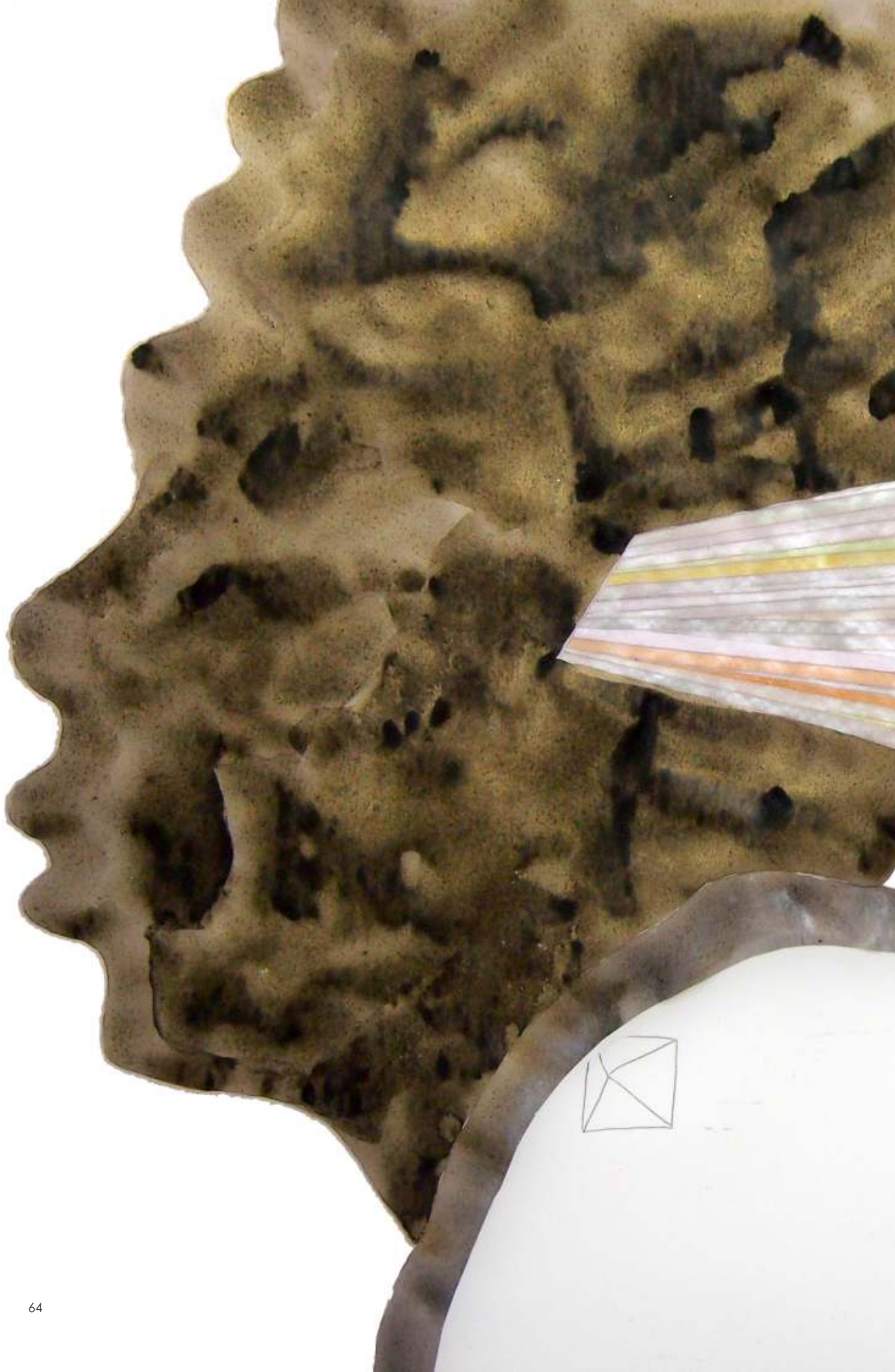
Onisha Bride, limited edition, sterling silver and coins, 85 cm long, 5 cm wide, 2016





Rendezvous, Acrylic on canvas, 156 x 245cm, 2010









Orange gems, Graphite, ink on mylar, 45.5 x 63.5 cm



# Beauty

Saturday, April 14, 2016

2-4:00pm

Temple Muse

Lagos, Nigeria

Performers: Wura-Natasha Ogunji & Deola Olagunju

Conceived by Nicole Vlado and Wura-Natasha Ogunji, beauty explores the relationships that women have to each other and to their hair. The performers will have their hair braided beginning at 2:00pm in at Temple Muse and then stand with their hair connected across the swimming pool until 4pm

This work was conceptualized during Vlado's first visit to Lagos and was partly inspired by the 1977 performance Relation in Time by Marina Abramovic and Ulay.

# PERFORMANCE





He almost caught up with himself, Graphite, ink on mylar, 2016 by Wura-Natasha Ogunji

# CURATOR



Adolphos Opata

Sandra Mbanefo Obiago is a multi-faceted curator, writer, photographer, poet, art collector and award winning filmmaker. She has curated art shows and worked with the local creative industry to promote the best of Nigerian art.

She ran the communications program in Sub-Saharan Africa for environmental group, WWF International for eight years before founding and running Communicating for Change, a media for development social enterprise in Nigeria for fourteen years. She is a social activist and her campaigns, films, radio programs and publications have touched on themes such as human rights, women's empowerment, health including HIV & AIDS, environment, democracy and good governance. She organized conferences, workshops, and symposia for Nigeria's growing film industry and helped develop a course on Media Enterprise at the Pan African University.

Obiago produced and directed many films over the years, including a five-part documentary film series, Red Hot: Nigeria's Creative Industries, featuring artists from the film, music, performance and visual arts sectors. She was Associate Producer of the feature film, Half of A Yellow Sun, adapted from the award winning novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

She has been involved in many community initiatives and served as a trustee of the Convention on Business Integrity (CBI), was a member of the Advisory Council of the Nigerian National Film Institute and has served as a member of the jury of the Nigeria Media Merit Awards and the African International Film Festival (AFRIFF) awards. Obiago is a Fellow of the Aspen Institute's African Leadership Initiative for West Africa (ALIWA) and has served as Sunday School teacher since her teens. She received an M.A. in Telecommunications from Michigan State University, and a Bachelor of Education degree in English and German from the University of Manitoba, in Canada. She is happily married with three children.



Onisha Bride, limited edition, sterling silver and coins, 85 cm long, 5 cm wide, 2016

# GALLERY



Having opened its doors in May 2008 Temple Muse is West Africa's leading luxury concept store focusing on designer home & giftware, fashion & accessories as well as art & design. Our strength not only lies in offering the very best of world-renowned brands, but also in nurturing homegrown talent from across the continent.

The iconic flagship store equipped with its very own champagne bar is located in the heart of Lagos and possesses a "gallery-like" open feel, where clients can relax & indulge in all things wonderful.

Over the years Temple Muse has developed a reputation as being one of the leading art spaces in Nigeria having hosted a number of critically acclaimed exhibitions, and through continuously offering its clients cutting edge contemporary art.

[www.templemuse.com](http://www.templemuse.com)

# Sponsors







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Front Cover: *Crowning glory*  
by Zemaye, 78.74 x 60.96cm,  
Photograph on Acrylic, 2016,  
1 of 5

Back Cover: *Intersections*  
by TY Bello, Photograph, 2016

Inside Back Cover: *Scarf: Multi colour*  
by Carey Godwin, Woven with a linen  
warp and a multi yarn, 250 x 1240 mm 2015

