



# STASIS

Djakou Kassi Nathalie  
Olawunmi Banjo  
Kelechi Nwaneri



# STASIS

Djakou Kassi Nathalie  
Olawunmi Banjo  
Kelechi Nwaneri



Curated by  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako







August 31 - October 18, 2019









Reduce and Reuse IV, Glazed clay, 50 x 44 x 7 cm, 2019

# Introduction

STASIS is an exhibition of recent works by Djakou Kassi Nathalie, Olawunmi Banjo, and Kelechi Nwaneri, who touch an existential raw nerve as they explore our yearning for balance and belonging in an ever changing physical and emotional landscape. Through detailed paintings, intense drawings, and voluminous ceramic works, they take us on a journey of discovery, as each artist grapples with their concept of stasis and how to achieve equilibrium in our conscious and subconscious mind. STASIS explores our ability to achieve balance despite societal pressures, mental health challenges, and the effects of climate change on our well being. Each artist explores the struggle between our inner and outer worlds and creates a path to a deepened sense of self awareness and identity.

As the senior of the three artists, Djakou Kassi Nathalie's works are earth centered, reflecting a fascination with the grandeur of nature in relation to humanity's miniscule scale, yet hugely destructive impact on the planet. Kassi's memory of running across the red laterite earth with its undulating cracks and crevices of her native Cameroon, is reflected in her rugged earthen vessels, wall

hangings, and sculptures. Through her abstract work we are reminded of the undulating sub-saharan African landscape punctuated by majestic mountain ranges, hills, and cavernous rocks, and feel the critical geo-political effects of climate change on an arid landscape. Her sculpted pots, bowls, and plates are covered with symbols and masks, inspired by our communal values, and a quintessential tension between modernity and tradition. Her works are a response to universal themes rooted in African proverbs and stories, including characters from Chinua Achebe's, much loved novel, Things Fall Apart.

In contrast to Kassi's voluptuous rugged expressions, Olawunmi Banjo's latest series of portraits of acrobatic figures minutely rendered in twisted, intertwined, and tightly woven wires and ropes, create an interesting artistic tension. She is a self taught artist whose hyper-realistic elegant style has evolved with this new set of works, embracing a primarily blue color palette, while exhibiting a deep sense of symmetry. Her three large self-portraits depict various stages of actualization, painted against miniscule landscapes of well known global

buildings and monuments. Her works speak to a deep "balanced sense of self" breaking through the intense pressure of technology, social norms, and the constant need for external validation. Her gaze is inward and upward. Her athletic characters leap and fly through space despite being tethered to a visible reality.

Emerging artist Kelechi Nwaneri's charcoal and acrylic drawings on paper and canvas are multi-layered and complex, displaying a charged landscape populated by masked mythical humans covered in typical West African symbols and tattoos. Nwaneri's foray into art after completing a degree in agriculture, shows an artist unafraid and unconventional. He is heavily influenced by West African iconography, and his complex world is steeped in uli, nsibidi, adinkra and adire tradition and masks. Nwaneri's art is fueled by a palpable intensity, with canvases populated by muscled male forms in some form of combat, clad in typical Ankara fabric. Familiar African patterns and shapes undulate across his surreal landscapes, reminiscent of classical greek mythology in which the graces and outer wordly beings, characterized by his Black

Figure, torment and wrestle with the the subconscious minds of his cast of characters. His allegorical landscapes are complete with animals observing the theatrics as if borrowed from an ancient mythology. Nwaneri is fascinated with issues surrounding mental health, reflecting the struggles and the emotional and psychological wrestling we do to achieve balance and self-awareness.

Three artists, one classically trained and two self taught, with an age difference spanning almost twenty years, originating from different parts of West Africa, provide us with a fascinating insight into their understanding of STASIS, expressing three radically different viewpoints. We hope you enjoy the show.

Sandra Mbanefo Obiago  
Curator





# A Reflection on STASIS

SMO Contemporary presents STASIS: an exhibition celebrating commissioned artworks by Kelechi Nwaneri, Nathalie Djakou Kassi and Olawunmi Banjo.

The trio meditates on surviving within a context that continually challenges their mental and social stability. How can you reconcile the conflict between societal standards, cultural expectations, and a desire to focus on priorities and practice? How do you cultivate when confronted by challenges that stifle expression?

STASIS epitomizes this tension. Derived from the Greek στάσις, it often refers to a state of stillness and stability created when all opposing forces become equal: a standstill.[1] Each artist articulates this contention through their various mediums of ceramic, charcoal and canvas.

Kelechi Nwaneri's surreal works have connotations of mythologies and folklore, merging traditional west African Adinkra symbology with Indonesian-inspired Dutch wax prints. The colour palette of monochromatic greys, white and black hues punctuated with scarlet reds, sky blues and verdant greens is both conflicting yet charming. There

is something equally beguiling yet unsettling about the contradictions of Nwaneri's colour palette, which manages to flow and feel intuitive.

Battle Within (2019) is a visual manifestation of this tension, depicted through the scene and techniques within the composition. Two male fighters collapse and amalgamate into each other as they battle, rendering the viewer entranced by their conflict and commonality. The peaks of each wrestlers' back are defined, emphasizing the contrast between the physical and the metaphysical. One fighters body is reminiscent of artist Owusu-Ankomah's trademark motif of Adinkra symbolism embroidered onto the body, while the other opponent echoes the famous dutch wax print adopted by Yinka Shonibare in Wind Sculpture I (2013). The opponents illustrate the difficulty of discerning between body, mind, metaphysical and imagined. Framed by a full moon in the left corner, there is a sense of transition: of pivoting between time and realms.

Reoccurring throughout Nwaneri's fifteen artworks is a constant sense of internal conflict versus physical

displacement. It is apparent through the contortions of the bodies framing each work: some bent double while others are crossed legged or in the fetal position, each stance exposing a level of vulnerability yet defensiveness.

Meanwhile, Nathalie Djakou Kassi's ceramics are preoccupied with experimenting with malleability. Her works exist as sculptures, utilitarian shapes and reflections of political, cultural and current affairs around the world. Kassi's works are informed by news and images that resonate with her and impel her to comment through clay.

This series of works appear meticulously mapped out; however, the masks embedded within some of her ceramics were instantaneously inspired by forms that only revealed themselves when Kassi took her knife to clay. Most of her ceramics are manifestations of how she moves intuitively and what she feels compelled to mark on ceramic. When she creates, she enters into a trance, as if 'I am travelling...I am not here anymore'.

Her work is often a meditation on the environment. Kassi regularly talks about the disintegration of the

earth by human beings and how we disregard it. She reiterates her discontent through *Birds of Land*, *Invasion of the Land*, and *Tension*.

Equally, *Ghost City* (2019) is a response to the chaos from a flooded war zone. An aerial view of this zone revealed a network of abandoned buildings which once comprised of a city, now sadly deserted and derailed by conflict. She presents her despair through cracked earth. Nathalie speaks of her disappointment, of how 'we human beings, the way we fail this world...we treat it like trash'. Meanwhile, her quartet of works: *Melodies of Lines* is a subversion of calabash, a contemporary interpretation of a traditional stable.

In contrast with Kassi's discontent with humanity's regression, Olawunmi Banjo is more optimistic and hopeful for human enlightenment and elevation. Banjo's acrylic paintings are alluring and illustrate predominately female forms in flux. The tension of their movements is painted in a dream-like state, with muted blood reds, opulent oranges and ivy greens lacing each work. Every meticulously painted strand celebrates the ephemerality of



human nature and movement, as well as the tension and tendons of the physical body in search of something intangible and otherworldly inviting you to follow each line as they shift and shape into ambitious positions.

Banjo consistently presents her work with a signature style: Balayage pastel backgrounds laced with strands that are centred in the middle of the canvas by bodies extending beyond themselves, often flying, in deep thought or search for something more. Particularly in *Leap of Freedom*, *Inner Peace*, *Lifted* and *Sense of Self (I & II)*. Each protagonist is in search of something that extends beyond themselves and the physical world. Banjo describes this wonder as 'the moment of realization [that] reveals the energy we [all] hold within us and knowing that your higher self is within you'.

Despite Nwaneri, Kassi and Banjo's different mediums, they each provide a nuanced interpretation of the tension that is STASIS and unpack the contradiction of a word that encapsulates both passivity and action, stability and disintegration. Throughout each work, there are layers of contradictions that co-exist to highlight how complex humanity

and our relation to the physical, mental and spiritual is. All three artists channel their respective conflicts into artworks, ultimately subverting the STASIS of their environments.

Bianca Ama Manu  
Curator  
Nubuke Foundation

[1] Cuddon, J. and Preston, C. (2006). *The Penguin dictionary of literary terms and literary theory*. London: Penguin Books.





Sharon Ann Schuler  
Museum of Art & Design  
1000 Ave. of the Americas  
New York, NY 10018  
212





DJAKOU KASSI **Nathalie**





Djakou Kassi Nathalie (b. 1975, Cameroon) studied ceramics for three years at the 'Institut Samba Supérieur' on a full scholarship. Her works have been featured in numerous exhibitions in Cameroon, Europe, and the United States. She won the first Africa Prize at the International Fair of Ouagadougou (SIAO) in 2012. She moved to Nigeria in 2015, and has been an active member of the Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA). She has taken part in numerous exhibitions in Nigeria with SMO Contemporary Art (2018), the Society of Nigerian Artists (2015, 2016, 2018), Moorehouse Hotel (2016) and with Quintessence (2018). She was one of the winners of the Union Bank Art Competition for their 100th Year Anniversary in 2017. Her works are inspired by nature and man's volatile interaction with his environment.



Over thinking, Glazed clay, 30 x 30 cm, 2019







Reduce and Reuse V, Glazed clay, 29 x 26 cm, 2019





Reduce and Reuse III, Glazed clay, 53 x 41 x 8 cm, 2019

My art is inspired by my passion for the environment, which started during my childhood growing up in Cameroon. I loved to play and manipulate different natural materials and used to experiment with clay, wood, copper and plaster. But my favourite material was clay, which led me to pursue a career as a ceramic artist. I love clay, because it allows me to imagine and travel through a world of lines and volume. I like to take risks, and explore my dreams, vision and feelings through this amazing material.

My works are inspired by the environment, by places I've visited, and my interactions with people. I also draw inspiration from architecture, fashion, and lines which attract my mind's eye. I experiment with many techniques, and use classic as well as unconventional ways to coil, mould, sculpt and spin my creations. My works touch on different themes, but often revolve around my interpretations of modernity versus tradition..

Even though I often create utilitarian shapes, I see my works as sculptures. I like to explore and broaden the scope of ceramics, taking it beyond craft and mere decoration. Art is the universe for me, full of mysterious surprises. Art has no limits; it is made up of beautiful accidents leading to amazing innovations.



Reduce and Reuse II, Glazed clay, 58 x 37 x 14 cm, 2019





Powerful Nature, Glazed and polished clay, 42 x 34 x 31 cm, 2019







Powerful Nature II, Glazed and polished clay, 41 x 39 x 26 cm, 2019





Fossils, Glazed clay, 40 x 36 x 32 cm, 2018





The Beauty of Imperfections, Glazed clay, 49 x 14 cm, 2019



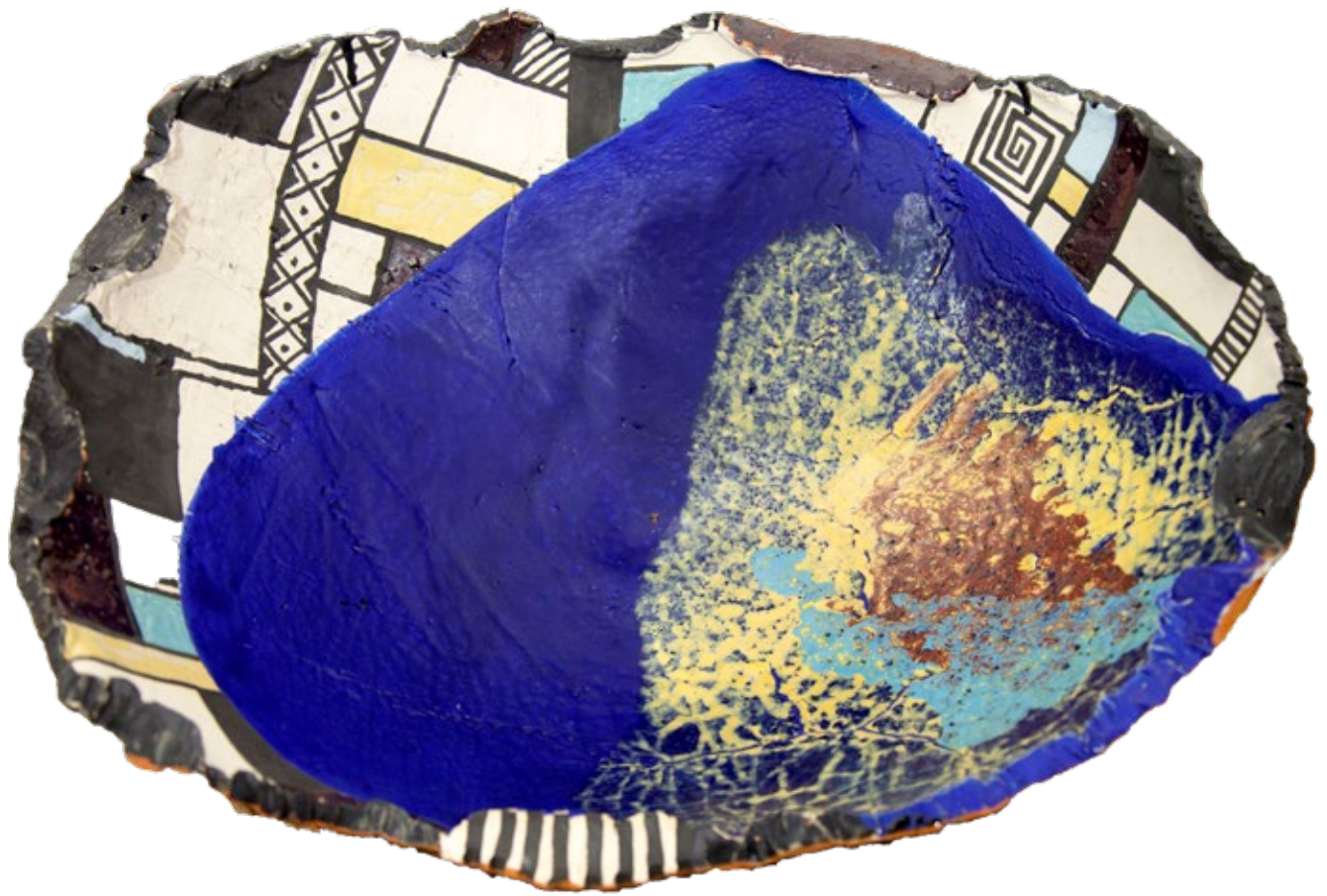


Extinction of Land, Glazed clay, 61 x 43 x 22 cm, 2019





Birth of New Land, Glazed clay, 56 x 51 x 20 cm, 2019



Invasion of Land, Glazed clay, 57 x 41 x 25 cm, 2019





Ghost City, Naked clay, 58 x 36 x 30 cm, 2019



Handmade vs Machine, Glazed clay, 46 x 44 x 12 cm, 2019



Family Texture, Naked clay, 59 x 33 cm, 33 x 28 cm, 26 x 20cm, 2019



Family Texture II, Naked Clay, 58 x 14 cm, 53 x 14 cm, 29 x 14 cm, 2019



Melodies of Lines I, Glazed clay, 45 x 18 cm, 2019





Melodies of Lines II, Glazed clay, 45 x 18 cm, 2019



Melodies of Lines III, Glazed clay, 45 x 17 cm, 2019



Melodies of Lines IV, Glazed clay, 45 x 17 cm, 2019



Initiation, Fired clay, 71 x 69 cm, 2019



I



II



Selfie, Glazed clay, 23 x 24 cm, 2019

III



IV





Standing Alone, Ink and acrylic on canvas, 119 x 119 cm, 2018



*“Art is the universe for me, full of mysterious surprises. Art has no limits; it is made up of beautiful accidents leading to amazing innovations.”*







W. Lawrence Barye  
2019

Olawunmi **BANJO**





Olawunmi Banjo (b. 1985) is a self-taught Nigerian visual artist who studied Entrepreneurship at the Pan African University in Lagos. She has taken part in solo and group shows in her native Nigeria, and has showcased her work in numerous international exhibitions and art fairs including at Re-Art Meets Africa , Ihlienworth, Germany (2018), Press for Progress International Women Arts Exhibition in Dubai (2018), 24th Pan African Film & Art Festival (PAFF) in Los Angeles, USA (2016), and at the Heinrich Heine University's 10th Afrika Tage in Dusseldorf, Germany (2015). She was a finalist at the Global Art Awards for Painting at the Armani Hotel in Dubai (2017). Banjo began her artistic journey in hyper-realism with her characteristic attention to detail, and has evolved her painting style to explore more surrealistic landscapes in an attempt to re-orient typical mind-sets. In her recent body of work, Banjo paints expressive wire figures, which explore deep ideologies by portraying everyday social and individual realities which confront us. By keenly observing nature, works of art, and life situations fueled by personal experiences, Banjo's art is a response to hidden realities which confront us individually and collectively across the globe.



Sense of Self I, Oil on canvas, 122 x 101 cm, 2018





Sense of Self II, Oil on canvas, 122 x 101 cm, 2018



Sense of Self III, Oil on canvas, 122 x 101 cm, 2018

In this new digital age, it is easy to lose our identity because of the distractions we feed our minds on, and seeking for external validation from others' opinions. To a large extent, all of this makes us feel pressured which has resulted in a higher rate of depression, low self-esteem, and even suicide across the world.

Often times we go in search of something to fill the emptiness; some of us find security in different ideologies like ancient teachings, traditions, religions, nature, science and more. Most of what we look to have the same hidden truth: "What you seek is within you". The moment of realization reveals the energy we hold within us and knowing that your higher self is within you. Not knowing our potential only makes us wander. We embrace who we are when we have a balanced sense of self and experience the world without losing touch with who we truly are. We can only help others if we first learn to help ourselves and knowing the boundless energy we hold within helps us to experience the true nature of existence and the happiness, peace, love, equality and freedom it holds.



Leap of Freedom, Oil on canvas, 91.5 x 122 cm, 2019



Lifted, Oil on canvas, 101.5 x 122 cm, 2019



Sway, Oil on canvas, 56 x 71 cm, 2016



Recess, Oil on canvas, 56 x 71 cm, 2016



Inner Peace, Oil on canvas, 91 x 101 cm, 2019



*“We embrace who we are when we have a balanced sense of self and experience the world without losing touch with who we truly are. What you seek is within you.”*

## CV

**Name: Olawunmi Banjo**

### SELECTED GROUP & SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019** - Femme, Alexis Gallery, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2018** - Same Experience, Different Local, by Kanbi Contemporary. The Koppel Project Hive, London, UK
- 2018** - Re-Art Meets Africa (Art Biennale), by RE-ART Halle, Ihlienworth, Germany
- 2018** - International Women Arts Exhibition "Press For Progress" by Zee Art, Under the Patronage of His Highness Sheikh Butti Suhail Al Maktoum. Grand Gallery, Arabian Court, One & Only Royal Mirage, Dubai, UAE
- 2017** - Global Arts Award, Armani Hotel, Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE
- 2017** - Standing Out II / The Art of Nigerian Women, Collectors Book Preview by SMO Contemporary. The Wheatbaker, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2017** - Eko Art Expo with Terra Kulture Art Gallery, Eko Hotel & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2016** - 24th Pan African Film & Art Festival (PAFF). Los Angeles, California, USA
- 2015 - 2016** - Solo Exhibition "Mind Revolution II" by Legacy Empire Management. Praxis am Traveplat, Friedrichshain, Berlin, Germany
- 2015** - 10th Afrika-Tage Dusseldorf. Heinrich-Heine Universität, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2015** - Terra Kulture & MyDrim Gallery (TKMG) Lagos Art Auction, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2015** - 23rd Pan African Film & Art Festival (PAFF) Los Angeles, California, USA
- 2014** - Solo Exhibition "Mind Revolution" by Legacy Empire Management. Nike Art Gallery, Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2012** - Canopy by Conoco Philips, Nike Art Gallery, Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2012** - Canopy by Conoco Philips, Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, Nigeria
- 2012** - Colours & Creativity, WIVA, National Museum, Onikan, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2010** - Send forth Exhibition for the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Dr. Robin Renee Sanders, Nike Art Gallery, Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2009** - Art of Golf by A.A.R.C. Ikoyi Club 1938, Golf Section, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2009** - Fyne ArtDiction by ITA, Southern Sun Hotel, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2009** - Championship Cup, Ikoyi Club 1938, Golf Section, Ikoyi,

- Lagos, Nigeria
- 2009** - Fadan Fashion show and Art Exhibition, Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2008** - 17th Experience Nigeria by African Art Resource Center. National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2008** - The Nigerian Cup" Golf Tournament, Ikoyi Club 1938, Golf Section, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2008** - Serendipity by ITA Foundation, Didi Museum, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2008** - Beyond Imagination, National Gallery of Art. Aina Onabolu Modern Art, Igamu, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2008** - The NAIJAZZ / NAIJART Studio 868, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2008** - Art Expo Nigeria, National Museum, Onikan Lagos, Nigeria.
- 2008** - Wiva Perspective, National Museum, Onikan, Lagos, Nigeria

#### **SELECTED COMMISSIONS / PROJECTS / WORKSHOPS**

- 2011** - Art Installation project with Art Accent for Guarantee Trust Bank headquarters, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2010** – Commissioned to interpret through painting the logo of 50 @ 50: Nigerian Women, the Journey so far, by the First Lady

- of Nigeria and founder of Women for Change Initiative (WFCI). Abuja, Nigeria
- 2010** - Art Installation project with Art Accent for Radison Blu, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2009** – Created a Painting of The Institute of Government and Public Policy / Awolowo Museum, Commissioned and presented to the Lagos State Governor Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN by the MD of Ocean Beach Golf & Leisure Resort, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2008** - Lagos on my mind - Graffiti workshop Organized and supported by the African Artists Foundation and British council "WAPI" Graffiti workshops: African Artist Foundation – Studio 868 – 10th Lagos Book and Art Festival Exhibition at National Theatre, Lagos, Nigeria 32
- 2012** - Colours & Creativity, WIVA, National Museum, Onikan, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2010** - Send forth Exhibition for the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Dr. Robin Renee Sanders, Nike Art Gallery, Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2009** - Art of Golf by A.A.R.C. Ikoyi Club 1938, Golf Section, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2009** - Fyne ArtDiction by ITA, Southern Sun Hotel, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2009** - Championship Cup, Ikoyi

Club 1938, Golf Section, Ikoyi,  
Lagos, Nigeria

**2009** - Fadan Fashion show and Art  
Exhibition, Civic Centre,  
Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria

**2008** - 17th Experience Nigeria  
by African Art Resource  
Center. National Museum,  
Lagos, Nigeria

**2008** - The Nigerian Cup" Golf  
Tournament, Ikoyi Club 1938,  
Golf Section, Ikoyi, Lagos,  
Nigeria

**2008** - Serendipity by ITA  
Foundation, Didi Museum,  
Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria

**2008** - Beyond Imagination,  
National Gallery of Art. Aina  
Onabolu Modern Art, Igamu,  
Lagos, Nigeria

**2008** - The NAIJAZZ / NAIJART Studio  
868, Victoria Island, Lagos,  
Nigeria

**2008** - Art Expo Nigeria, National  
Museum, Onikan Lagos,  
Nigeria.

**2008** - Wiva Perspective, National  
Museum, Onikan, Lagos,  
Nigeria

African Art Resource Center.  
National Museum, Lagos,

## **FEATURES**

**2017** - The Art of Nigerian Women,  
Book

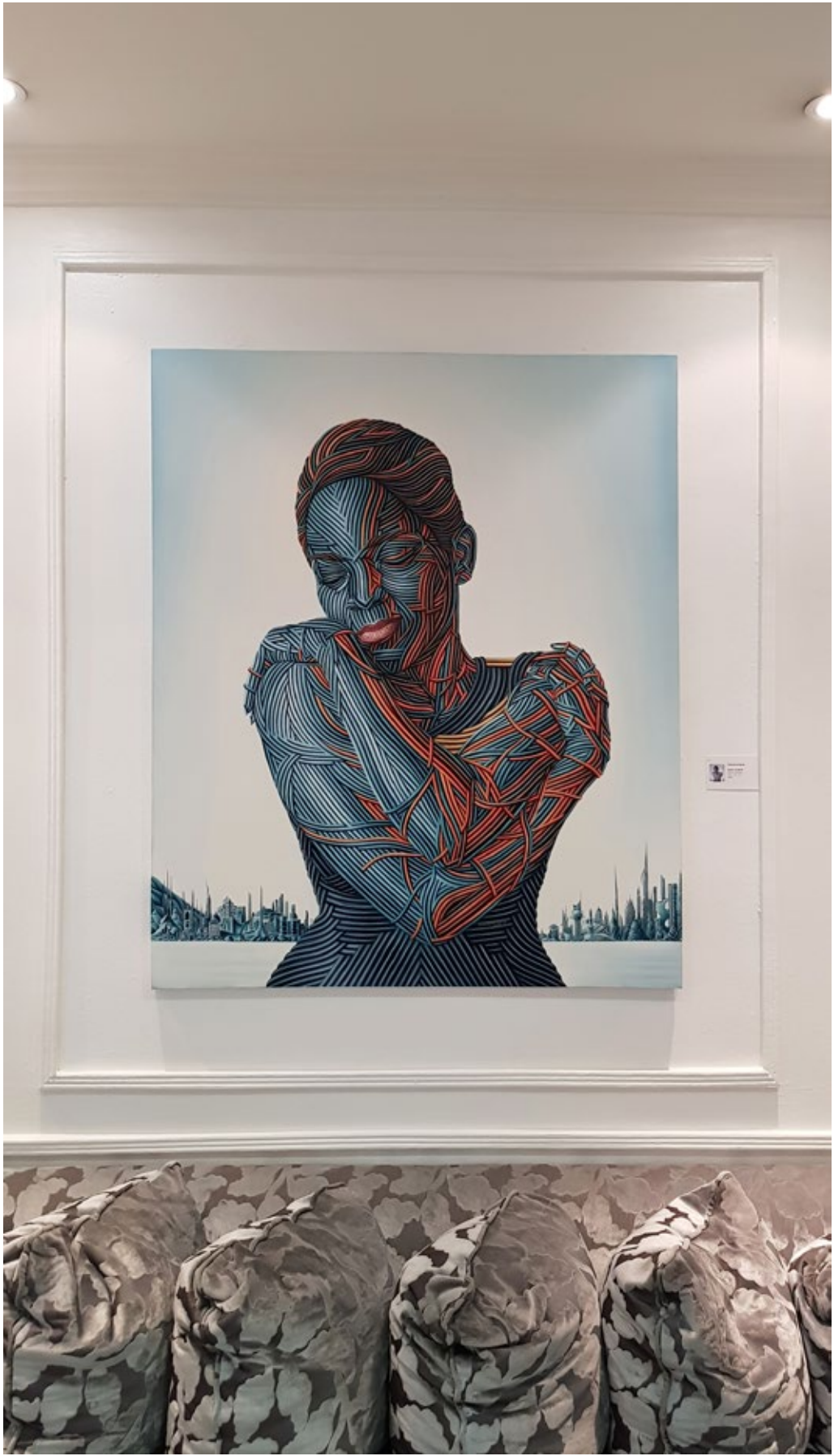
**2012** - Featured in Position  
International Arts Review

**2011** - ARTFLOW Magazine, UK.  
Featured in the Issue 6, June

## **EVENTS/ AWARDS / NOMINATIONS**

**2017** - Nominee & Finalist - Global  
Art Awards (Painting  
category), Armani Hotel, Burj  
Khalifa, Dubai, UAE

**2008** - Runner Up - 17th Experience  
Nigeria Art competition  
"Nigerian(s) at Work" by





Kelechi **NWANERI**







Nwaneri Kelechi (b. 1994) is a self-taught mixed-media artist. He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Extension from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 2015. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions in Nigeria, and won the 2018 Spanish Embassy annual Visual Art Competition in Abuja.

Nwaneri started pursuing drawing during his third year in university. He was inspired by artists such as Kelvin Okafor, Arinze Stanley, and Ken Nwadiogbu, and initially focused on pencil realism, which he later combined with acrylic and oil paints, watercolor, and collage. Nwaneri's work focuses on issues around mental health, psychology, and social values. He uses his art to advocate for mental health awareness, and applies uli, nsibidi and adinkra iconography to create surrealistic landscapes which explore metaphysical and allegoric imagery and concepts.



Battle Within, Acrylic, charcoal, pencil, watercolour on canvas,  
145 x 162 cm, 2019

My work is born out of the desire to represent the quiet interaction between our conscious and subconscious state of mind in relation to our environment. I believe that everything in our lives dances to the vibrations of the subconscious. A major feature of this pencil and charcoal series is the 'Black Figure', which is usually clad with symbols and motifs. These figures are inspired by the idea of scars and tribal marks which represent our subconscious state. I use primarily West African iconography, mainly Adinkra, Uli, & Nsibidi symbols, as well as the lines and patterns found in Adire fabric, to create forms and figures which I draw alongside realistic subjects and serene settings, creating a surreal landscape. I create allegorical scenes which touch on mental health and social values, telling stories borne out of true experiences. The paintings I create explore scenes from my imagination, which I do my best to paint as vividly as I saw them.



Dilemma, Acrylic, charcoal, watercolor and pencils on Bristol Strathmore paper, 106 x 119 cm, 2019

'Dilemma' describes the state of mind of someone who is faced with choosing between two seemingly identical options. The unusual background can be likened to the complexity of choices and decisions. The infant figures represent identical choices that cling to the mind of the troubled individual anticipating their fate of acceptance or rejection.





Can't Let Go, Acrylic, charcoal, watercolor on canvas, 140 x 153 cm, 2019

'Can't Let Go' portrays the mind of someone who seems to be holding on to a hurting past memory. Although she realizes the need to let go and move on, it seems that this memory is tied to and has become a part of her. She comes to understand that maybe not all that is forgiven can be forgotten and that she probably has to live with this memory for the rest of her life.





Temptations, Acrylic, charcoal, pencil, watercolor on canvas,  
122 x 91 cm, 2019



'Temptations' portrays the mind of someone under pressure to do something he doesn't want to be involved in. Although faced with intense temptations, he realizes that he can find the focus to stay strong and look away from the enticing offers of darkness within himself. The apple represents the forbidden fruit and the spirits represent unseen creatures that I believe plant evil thoughts in the hearts of men.





Carry You Home, Acrylic, oil, charcoal, pencil on canvas, 121 x 123 cm, 2019

Sometimes life takes us to places where we can do nothing but pick ourselves up and move on to greener pastures. 'Carry You Home' portrays the journey of a man that has carried his broken self through and out of a painful experience and has finally arrived at a place of new beginning. The dead bird tied to his conscious self signifies the end of a sad and blue era and the start of something new.





Trinity, Acrylic, charcoal, on coffee stained Bristol Strathmore paper,  
106 x 148 cm, 2019

Suggesting the existence of three persons in one, 'Trinity' portrays the mind of a person with multiple personalities, referred to as 'dissociative identity disorder'. In this work, three different personalities represented as the masked figures try to take control of an individual, leaving him confused on his own identity as he struggles to find himself.





Three Maidens, Acrylic, charcoal, watercolor, pencil on canvas,  
140 x 153 cm, 2019

Inspired by the theme of the 'Three Graces', this piece portrays the personalities of three types of women; the Modest, the Wild and the Confused respectively. These personalities, hidden in the masks are expressed in the way they decide to wear their fabrics.





Blue, Acrylic and charcoal on Bristol Strathmore paper, 106 x 119 cm, 2019





Broken, Acrylic and charcoal on Bristol Strathmore paper, 106 x 119 cm, 2019



Time, People & Change I - IV Acrylic, oil, charcoal, pencil on canvas  
42 x 60 cm, 2019



## CV

**Name: Nwaneri Kelechi Charles**

### EDUCATION

**2015** - University of Nigeria, Nsukka.  
B.A, Agricultural extension

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

**2018** - Artyrama Gallery "Ode to mankind," CFAO building, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria

**2018** - Thoughts Pyramids Gallery  
"Spanish Festivals and traditional celebrations"  
Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria

**2016** - National Festival for Art and Culture (NAFEST)  
"Exploring the Goldmine Inherent in Nigerian Creative Industries. Ibom hall, Uyo.

### Honors and Awards

**2018** - First prize, Annual Visual Arts Competition (Organized by the embassy of Spain), Abuja, Nigeria

### PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

**2018** - "The Festival". Embassy of Spain, Abuja, Nigeria,



Time, People & Change III, Acrylic, oil, charcoal, pencil on canvas  
42 x 60 cm, 2019









## Curator

Sandra Mbanefo Obiagio is a multi-faceted writer, photographer, poet, art collector & curator, 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.

Obiagio 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. Obiagio 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.





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.temple-muse.com](http://www.temple-muse.com)





SMO Contemporary Art specializes in showcasing contemporary art in non-traditional exhibition spaces, focusing on established and emerging artists based in Africa and the Diaspora.

SMO priority areas include art curating, research and documentation, valuation, events, film and photography, training and artist talks. SMO has expertise in organizing exhibitions & events which provide a platform for the creative industry to inspire and strengthen humanity's aspiration for the good society.

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





Editorial & Art Direction: Sandra Mbanefo Obiago  
Project Management: Nneoma Ilogu  
Research & Press : Moni Oloke  
Photography: Majid Biggar, Sandra Mbanefo Obiago  
Design & Layout: Majid Biggar

© SMO Contemporary Art Ventures 2019  
[www.smocontemporaryart.com](http://www.smocontemporaryart.com)



All right reserved.  
No part of this publication shall be reproduced, stored  
in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means  
without prior written permission of the publisher.

