



RISING THROUGH THE SHADOWS
EXHIBITION

ABIGAIL NNAJI
Café de Vie, Abuja, Nigeria
20th - 22nd December 2020



Our Purpose

Our intention is to represent artists through exhibitions, events, talks, etc. and to create books, e-Books and catalogues that enhance and promote the huge Africa art talent in order to bring them to all audiences.

We want to use art as a social weapon to bring awareness about difficult topics. We want to discuss and explore themes such as child abuse, war, slavery, drugs, rape, misogyny, etc. We want to capture people's attention with these subjects, stories and ideas that have a massive impact on their lives and dreams. It is essential to listen carefully to how human beings today interpret their voices, especially through art.

We want to publish books, e-Books and catalogues about the current established artists who we work with and the new ones that we have trained and encouraged.

Our purpose is also to celebrate and publish young and long established African artists who have never been recognized in order to create an art legacy.

Our Culture

We believe in these artists and their ideas and therefore we think that what we do matters.

It takes a lot of hard work and research to represent artists and publish these books, e-Books and catalogues, and we care about these artists, their ideas and talent. We are committed to make a difference and work with these artists in order to achieve this.

We work in collaboration with Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN) and other art organisations. We work together, among other things, to find new talent, encourage established talent, record young and established artists, set up exhibitions and provide workshops, seminars and talks to underprivileged and disadvantaged female artists who want to start or continue their art career.

Susa Rodriguez-Garrido

Art Representative and Founder of Agama Art Publishing & Agency



Copyright © 2020

A Catalogue of Exhibition
Agama Art Publishing & Agency

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the copyright owner and publishers.

CURATOR

Susa Rodriguez-Garrido

GRAPHICS

Winifred Nkem Eziuloh
Susa Rodriguez-Garrido

PUBLISHER

Agama Art Publishing & Agency

PHOTOGRAPHY

Abigail Nnaji

CONTENT

Foreword:

Susa Rodriguez-Garrido 03

About:

Agama Art Publishing & Agency 05

Café de Vie: Victoria Minaise 06

SK African Art Collective 07

The Theme: *RISING THROUGH THE SHADOWS* 08

Artist:

Abigail Nnaji 09

Artwork

11

Contact

22

FOREWORD



**Susa Rodriguez-Garrido,
Art Representative, Curator and
Founder of Agama Art Publishing & Agency**

Abigail Nnaji is a force of nature, strong and bubbly which in a way is reflected in her colourful and energetic style.

The exhibition features XXX pieces of artwork with *Rising Through the Shadows* as a theme that explores African culture through a range of series such as Ankara, Afro, Gele, Fashion and Abstracts.

Abigail conceives abstract, semi abstract and exaggerated realist styles of painting combined with lines and bold colours as well as traditional motifs such as Uli symbols.

In her pieces, the use of paper cutting is prevalent, an intricate technique that gives her work a unique style.

The use of exaggerated features in her work is noticeable, from the afro hairstyle to long dresses that also provides an individual approach to her art.

The *Rising Through the Shadows* exhibition opens on 20th December and finishes on 22nd December at the wonderful café owned by Victoria Minaise, Café de Vie, Abuja, Nigeria.

xxx are working in collaboration to bring you a series of solo exhibitions throughout the year, with a selection of incredible Nigerian artists and artists who work and live in Nigeria. The artists that we will be exhibiting will include painters, photographers, sculptors and performance artists who will work in different mediums.

Please join us to celebrate our passion for art!

Susa Rodriguez-Garrido
Art Representative and Founder of Agama Art Publishing & Agency
<https://agamapublishing.wordpress.com/>

ABOUT



Agama Art Publishing and Agency Ltd. was founded by Susa Rodriguez-Garrido, in 2018, to promote African artists and to encourage them to express their enormous talent and creativity.

Agama Art Publishing and Agency Ltd. is an independent publisher and agency that promotes African artists through books, e-Books and catalogues about African art, photography, architecture, sculpture, design and fashion that radiate creativity, imagination, thoughts and education.

We also represent artists endorsing them through exhibitions, events, seminars, talks, etc. We select and publish the most brilliant African artists, bringing them to life in dynamic ways in print and digital, for readers all around the world.

ABOUT



Victoria Minaise is the founder of Café De Vie and an active member of the Abuja community. Café de Vie is one of the best cafés in Abuja, which provides the community with an agora for promotion of Nigerian art and culture with a vision behind it, full of passion and drive for creating the extraordinary out of the ordinary.

Victoria is a philanthropist par excellence; her DNA revolves around issues of children and women education and protection. She has been a catalyst of many initiatives through the years, leveraging her human skills in bridging differences and bringing people together around core human issues, generosity and goodness.

She is a graduate of Interior Design from the KLC School of Design London, along with

her creativity, she is a certified yoga teacher and teaches stretching to help design a well-balanced and healthy *mode de vie*. She speaks English, Hausa, French and Arabic.

Involvement with Charity

She has worked alongside leading organisations as well as diplomats, government officials stemming from a worldwide network of ambassadors. Her passion of "give back" encompasses the many charity organisations she is involved with, to endlessly inspire and empower those who are yet to shine.

Her journey with charity organisations began in 2005, in Abuja, where she led the facilitation of funding for underprivileged communities. She utilises her platform and influence within the expat community and reaches out to wealthy Nigerian businessmen and women keen to make a difference.

Her passion and interests, has always been innately drawn at impacting lives and developing a better livelihood for those in need. This expedition all began with her first visit to Kubwa, to a foundation known as Daughters of the Charity, run by Irish nuns, who assist and tend to children with severe autism, and afterwards, she has participated in several outreaches such as:

- Skill Acquisition for the disabled in Karmajiji.
- Room expansion for the surviving twin orphanage baby home.
- 1girl1Pen, a Scholarship initiative to get our girls back to school.
- Advocacy for reusable pads to school girls and teenagers.

ABOUT



SK African Art Collective is a cloud based African art platform, which utilises the power of online advertising, networking and marketing to empower African artists to promote their stories and celebrate their heritage on a global stage.

SK is an art promoter, whose mission is to publicise African art and artists. SK embraces both traditional and contemporary art forms. The platform aims to collaborate with Nigerian and foreign art enthusiasts to refine the perceived value of an African art. Working closely with international curators, evaluators and seasoned collectors we hope to mentor and refine the journey for the African artists, facilitating their rise to distinction.



Dr. Emmanuel Essien is the visionary founder of the SK African Art Collective.

An abstract artist himself, his art has sold in places like Ukraine and Nigeria, he is driven by his passion for art and goal to position African artists on the global stage.



Dr. Chidi Obeka is the hardworking operations officer in charge of the smooth functioning of SK African Art Collective.

A shrewd businessman and polymath, he is driven by his passion to provide solutions that will help Nigeria thrive internationally.

ABOUT

RISING THROUGH THE SHADOWS

Life at this time has been more of a lesson and hard facts that life has brought to us. In the past, our lives have been full of interrelationships of human living, dependency on each other and sharing everything together. This has not been without visits from loved ones, the hugs and the physical interactions. This is what we all grew to know. The most invaluable being "human touch". But life happened. COVID-19 happened. It changed the way we lived and interacted. It became a story of survival of the fittest. We came to that realisation and have been unable to accept it completely. It was a struggle to survive, to live, to breathe. It was not a time to assume irresponsibility or a time to conquer great heights or accomplishments. At the time, THE WORLD STOOD STILL! It was a time to intentionally be alive! No one was prepared for the hardships it brought, the disappointments, difficulties experienced, loss of jobs, businesses or the deaths that took away loved ones. No one knew how we would cope with the depressions, the emotional drain and gender based violence that would arise from this daunting experience. But somehow we found a way to. This will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark in our hearts forever. History will never forget.

Rising from the Shadows, is an exhibition that shares a story of hope that "Even though It's been a tough year, we shall rise like never before!" We as humans were made to get through challenges no matter how difficult and find a coping mechanism to overcome them. A lot has changed in our lives, but we are still here. We have had to change our way of living in order to embrace the new way of life: social distancing, wearing of masks and sanitising. We await for the better tomorrow to take us back to where we used to be. No one knows how long, but we are certain it will come.

This exhibition tries to capture human interactions, thought processes and experiences of the "before and after" COVID-19. Its a story of the Good, Bad and Ugly experiences. *The Cello* player reminds us of how we used to gather together to listen to a soulful music which soothes the mind, *Day Dream (Ankara Series)* shows a young woman whose dreams are uncertain as she tries to find a new meaning to life's unexpectancies during a lockdown. *Synergy II* portrays how humans achieve more when they work together through physical interactions. *Bossman* captures how technology tries to replace human interaction as it gradually evolves online placing us all under isolation. *Asoebi II* reminds us of the parties and owambe we used to attend and how we have to learn to limit our physical gatherings. *Blue Book* is a story of a stay at home mom. She discovers her passion to write as she spends more time reading through the lockdown. *Letters to Our Sons* a tell tale of mothers and the need to teach our sons how to treat and love women better, considering the number of gender based violence that rose during the lockdown.

The interplay of both the advantages and disadvantages drives us to think outside the box and create a more enabling environment to survive. We may not have achieved all we set for this year, but survival was utmost. It may look like a long time, but gradually life will return to normal once the vaccines roll in.

I am a Survivor! I came, I saw and I conquered.

Abigail Nnaji
Artist

ARTIST

ABIGAIL NNAJI



Abigail Nnaji is a graduate of University of Nigeria-Nsukka with a BA in Fine and Applied Arts majoring in painting.

Her style is not only influenced by the academy but by her constant exposure through cultural interactions. Based on her experiments with paper she has been able to find a new and unconventional application in her art by fusing it into her paintings through the use of paper cutting technique.

She is constantly experimenting as she tries to find new ways to express her art. For her, self expression should not be limited. Based on her experiments with paper she has been able to find new and unconventional application in her art by fusing it into her paintings through the use of paper cutting technique.

In 2016, she was sponsored by the Chinese Embassy to go to China to learn the Chinese paper cutting technique of which the cuttings have several connotations.

In 2018, she was selected as the first African to be presented as the Invited International Artist for the Great Gulfcoast Arts Festival in Pensacola, Florida USA, based on her paper cutting technique.

Abigail has participated in several group exhibitions and some of her works are in private collections at home and abroad, of which one work adorns the Mayor's office in the city of Pensacola Florida.

Her pieces feature themes in serenity, beauty, identity and love, especially as she tries to capture activities that often explore social perceptions in new light.

Currently, she is a member of the Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN), Association of Professional Creative Artists and Designers in Nigeria (APCAD) and FERRUM-The Art House, Switzerland. She is also an important member of the Agama Art Publishing & Agency group of artists.

ARTIST

Artist Statement

As an experimental artist, I am inspired by lines and fascinated by colours. I am constantly searching for new ways to express my art beyond the canvas by trying out new materials, eg: plastics, fabric, grass, wire mesh as well as paper. Generally, my paintings are fused with the traditional Uli symbols synonymous with the South Eastern part of Nigeria and which has now become part of my style. My paintings depict everyday life as I try to capture nature and beauty, while highlighting human struggles. My works predominantly feature women as I try to portray the experiences of the female gender. Prominent in my work is the depiction of the Afro hair style because of its symbolism of black pride, as most of my works are fashion inspired. Growing up, I was influenced by my mothers fashion business as I watched her cut fabrics to precision.

My recent works were further influenced by the Chinese paper cutting because of the similarities with fabric cutting. I adopted the technique to fuse to my style of painting and named it "Paper Cutting Technique". However, I have experimented with the use of paper in another style in the past. I employ both abstract and semi abstract styles of painting to create an alluring mix using lines and colours as well as traditional motifs. Using the paper cutting technique has helped me create a unique style for my works and given me the opportunity to push boundaries. I am able to express myself effortlessly despite the intricacies involved in producing the pieces. In addition, each work I create gives me a new drive to further create a more interesting piece for the next one.

Competitions

2019: 3rd Prize winner of 13th Edition of Spanish Visual Arts Competition, Spanish Embassy of Nigeria
2017: Top100 finalists in Union Bank Centenary Challenge
2016: 2nd Prize Winner, Chinese Ambassador's Residence Image Drawing Cup Competition

Solo Exhibitions

2020: Afro-Infusion, Agama Art Publishing & Agency Solo Exhibition Series, British Village Inn, Abuja
2017: City People: Using Paper Cutting Technique, Coco Cafe, Abuja
2019: City People II, NSIBIDI.The Gallery, Abuja

Group Exhibitions

2020: Therapeutic Art & Mental Health Resources for Domestic Violence Survivors, Virtual Exhibition, US Embassy, Abuja
2020: Art. Voice. Power: End Gender Violence, Novare Gateway
2020: GUNDUA-An Art Exhibit on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), NSIBIDI.The Gallery, Abuja
2019: Arkane Africa, Expiration Internationale D'Art Contemporaine D'Afrique, Casablanca, Morocco
2019: Gift of Blood, Kulture Kode Art Gallery, Abuja
2019: Audacious, NSIBIDI.The Gallery, Abuja
2019: Uncovered Female Nigerian Artists, Agama Art Publishing & Agency, British Village Inn, Abuja
2019: Balance for Better, Women Unite, Nike Art Gallery, Lagos
2018: Invited International Artists, Great Gulfcoast Arts Festival, Pensacola, Florida, USA
2018: ICAF Exhibition, Radisson Blu Anchorage Hotel, Lagos
2018: Press for Progress, Women Move On, Nike Art Gallery, Lagos
2018: UNWOMEN Int'I Women's Day Exhibition, Nikon Luxury, Abuja
2017: Abuja Unlocked, United States Embassy in Abuja, Cafe De Vie, Abuja
2017: Orange the World, German Embassy Ambassador's Residence, Abuja
2017: China Through The Eyes of Nigerians, China Cultural Centre, Abuja
2017: Nkoli Ka, Nsukka School After 50 years, Exhibition Pavilion, Abuja
2017: Be Bold For Change, Women Arise, Nike Art Gallery, Lagos

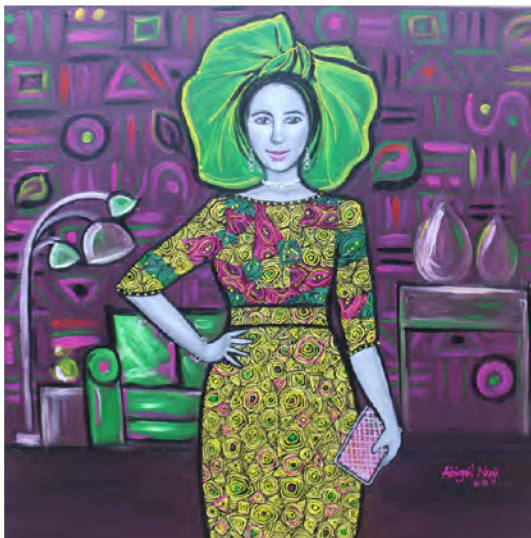
ANKARA SERIES



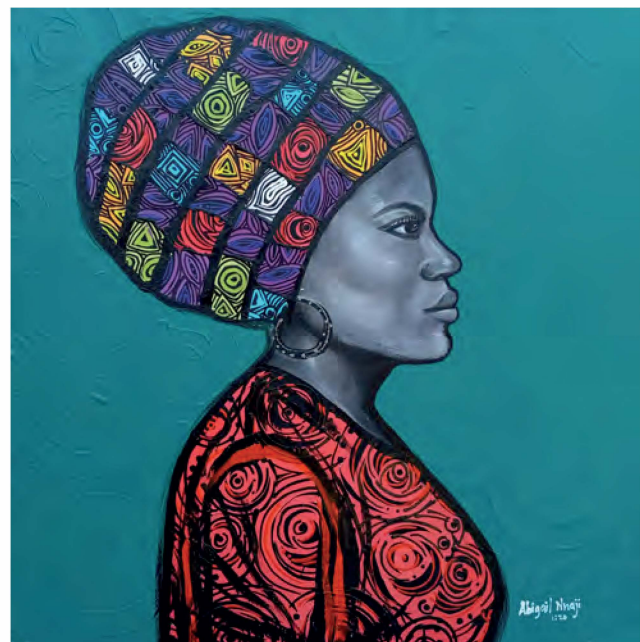
The Violinist, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Day Dream, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Sisi II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



African Queen II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 60.96cm x 60.96cm, 2020

AFRO SERIES



Friends, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 121.92cm x 121.92cm, 2019



White Rose, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 121.92cm x 121.92cm, 2019



IF II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



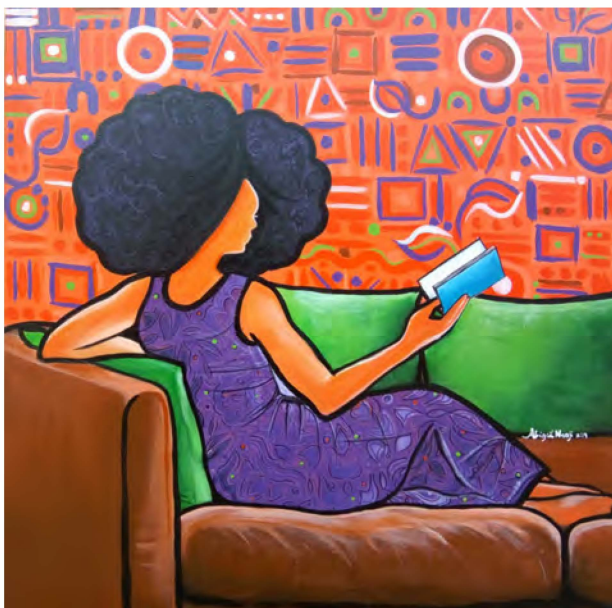
Reflection II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Hope II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 60.96cm x 60.96cm, 2020



Sisi I, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Blue Book, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019

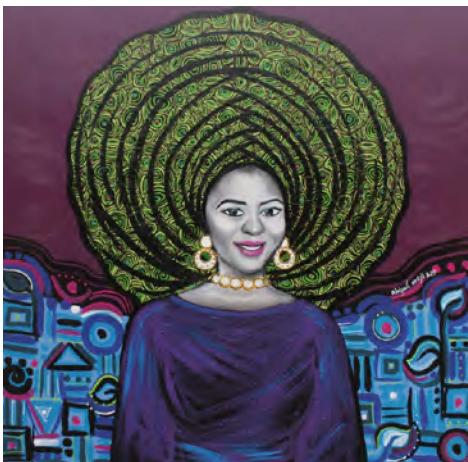
GELE SERIES



Asoebi III, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Owambe II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Owambe III, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Owambe IV, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 60.96cm x 60.96cm, 2020

ABSTRACT SERIES



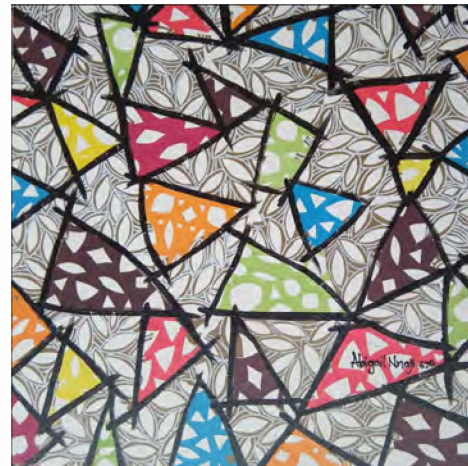
Blooming Green, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 50.8cm x 50.8cm, 2019



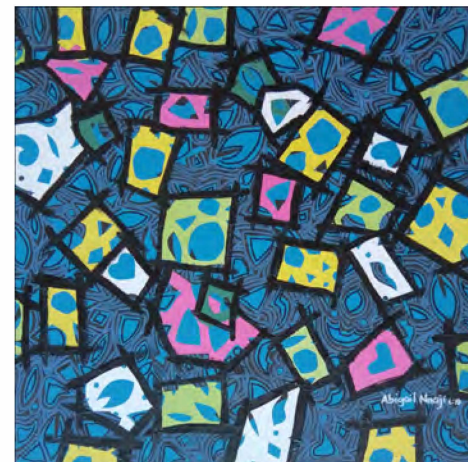
Blooming II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 121.92cm x 121.92cm, 2019



Different Strokes II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Evolution I, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 60.96cm x 60.96cm, 2019



Evolution II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 50.8cm x 50.8cm, 2019



Rebirth, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Generation II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



MyRoots VI, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2020



My Roots II, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 60.96cm x 60.96cm, 2019



To the Promised Land III, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 50.8cm x 50.8cm, 2020



Untitled I Acrylic and paper on canvas,
50.8cm x 50.8cm, 2020



Untitled III, Acrylic and paper on canvas,
50.8cm x 50.8cm, 2020



Untitled II, Acrylic and paper on canvas,
50.8cm x 50.8cm, 2020

FASHION SERIES



Standing Out, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Standing Tall, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 121.92cm x 121.92cm, 2019



Contemplation, Acrylic and paper on canvas,
91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019



Lost in Thought, Acrylic and paper on canvas,
91.44cm x 121.92cm, 2019



Lily in the Fields, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2017



My Dream, Acrylic and paper on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44cm, 2019

CONTACT

If you would like to:

- set up an exhibition or art event,
- hire one of the artists for a seminar, talk, presentation or party,
- have your artwork assessed and valued,
- purchase artwork.

Please contact me:

Susa Rodriguez-Garrido

Art Representative and Founder of Agama Art Publishing & Agency

susargarrido@googlemail.com

+234 701 226 2189

<https://agamapublishing.wordpress.com/>

<https://susarg.wordpress.com/>

<http://strengththroughserenity.weebly.com/>

<http://www.woosywoods.co.uk/>



susargarrido@googlemail.com



[@throughserenity](https://twitter.com/throughserenity)



[/susargarrido](https://www.facebook.com/susargarrido)



www.abigailnnejigalleria.blogspot.com



<https://agamapublishing.wordpress.com/>