

# Celebrating African culture and Afro-descendants Exhibition

African Culture and Afro-Descendants Exhibition

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Embassy of the  
**Argentine Republic**  
Federal Republic of Nigeria



Argentina



**ARGENTINE RESIDENCE**

8th NOVEMBER 2019

**PART OF THE ABUJA ART WEEK**

7th, 8th, 9th NOVEMBER 2019



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A Catalogue of Exhibition

Agama Art Publishing & Agency

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**Publisher**

Agama Art Publishing & Agency



## **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 African 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 that 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 that have never been recorded 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 making a difference and work with these artists in order to achieve this.

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

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# National Day of Afro Culture and Afro-descendants in Argentina



The date honours María Remedios del Valle, who died on 8th November 1847, after having fought in the Northern Army and appointed captain by General Manuel Belgrano. *Madre de la Patria* is the nickname that was earned because of her courage and absolute dedication. She was an Afro-descendant born in Buenos Aires between 1766 and 1767, who actively participated in the War of Argentine Independence.

## **Celebrate and Commemorate the Afro culture**

Afro-Argentine roots are part of the history and present of Argentina. That is why the main objective of 8th November is to recognize the Afro component in national culture and in all aspects of socio-cultural life. The Afro component has contributed not only with soldiers, but also with writers, musicians, poets, journalists, painters and politicians among others.

## **The Law**

Law No. 26,852, passed in 2013, is the first national legislative recognition for people of African descent. It was conceived as another tool for the fight against stigmatization and racism.

## **The Embassy of the Argentine Republic, Abuja, Nigeria**





## Susa Rodriguez-Garrido

**I**t is an absolute pleasure for me and for the artists from the FEAAN association and Agama Art Publishing to organise an event as important as this.

This exhibition was conceived and created in conjunction with the Embassy of the Argentine Republic in Nigeria, Agama Art Publishing and the FEAAN association. It is also part of the Abuja Art Week, which takes place from 6th to 10th November 2019.

The exhibition, on 8th November, at the Argentine Residence will open with the screening of "Íntegro, integro, integró", a short film by Argentine visual artist, Gaby Messina, followed by an art exhibition with very talented artists: Adaeze Obani, Esther Adebayo, Favour Jackson Anamaleze, Katurag Chinyio, Kemi Akin-Nibosun Sewell, Maylene Rasmussen, Ngozi Akande and Nelly Idagba, as a guest artist.

The exhibition commemorates and celebrates African culture and Afro-descendants in Argentina. This is a day to reflect, to explore and to honour the African roots in Argentina.

The pieces displayed in this exhibition aim to interpret this theme in very different ways with diverse artists to expose a wider audience to this aspect of the Argentine culture that is not always widely recognised.

**Susa Rodriguez-Garrido**

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# About Abuja Art Week



Abuja Art Week is a 5-day event where there will be curated exhibitions, talks, workshops, screenings and music performances at various locations across the city from 6th to 10th November 2019.

The first edition of Abuja Art Week will feature a dynamic line-up of programming covering the realms of visual art, art & technology and music. We will be bringing together a selected group of galleries, organisations, artists and events all under one umbrella.

Abuja residents are invited to attend events and activities organised by A Walk Space, the Embassy of the Argentine Republic in Nigeria, Beirut Lounge, Bush Bar Sessions, CCAbuja, FEAAN and Agama Art Publishing & Agency, Go Digital, Heritage Africa, House 33, Institut Français du Nigeria, Jake's Club, Kulture Kode, Naija Tech Creatives and Retro Africa.

In collaboration with our partners, we are committed to presenting a new face of Abuja as an innovative art, technology and culture destination in Nigeria.

**Abuja Art Week is produced by Hezekina Pollutina Ltd.**

# About AGAMA Art Publishing & Agency



Agama Art Publishing & 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 & Agency Ltd. is an independent publishing and agency that promotes African Artists through books, e-Books and catalogues about African art, photography, architecture, sculpture, design and fashion that irradiate 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, print and digital, for readers all around the world.

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## About FEAN



The Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAN) started in November 2001 during an all-Female Art Exhibition in Abuja.

The Association was born out of the need of female artists who in the past found it difficult to gain exposure in comparison to their male counterparts. Most of them after marriage or graduation abandoned the profession for other things.

They came together as a body to cast a spotlight on the challenges they face in society through art exhibitions, seminars, workshops and training younger artists. They have also used art to advocate against inequality, rape, genital mutilation, violence, child abuse, sex slavery in conflict areas and adoption.

FEAN's mission is to identify talented Nigerian Female Artists and their skills to bring about positive social change in society.

Their vision is to foster a sense of pride and achievement among female creative professionals to promote the dignity of women and to encourage members to continue practising art.

**Chinze Ojobo**  
FEAN President

## Adaeze Obani

**A**daeze studied at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Arts and Design. Her academic experience has exposed her to various art practices and polished her creative skills. Her art mainly “artualizes” the physical, mental and emotional beauty of the female gender, and what women go through in the society and in the world at large. She paints more of abstract and loves playing with colours. Her paintings alternate between abstract expressionism and surrealism.

Her hard skills are painting, graphics, teaching and textile making. Her soft skills are creativity, insight, critical thinking and communication. She currently teaches art at home and she has taught in various schools.

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

*Art, to me, is all about defining beauty in your own way. In other words, creating your own kind of beautiful. Beauty fills in one's heart a special kind of joy... art does same. Creating beauty and expressing myself in ways words can't describe led me to painting.*





**UNTOLD BEGINNING**, Acrylic on canvas, 60.96cm x 91.44cm, 2019

We are strong; we give birth life and give care to that life. The mother of the Argentinian country, María Remedios del Valle was a strong woman, who gave birth to life and she did everything within her power to protect and cater for that life. The Afro-descendants, still today, create life and strive hard to sustain it.



**FLOW OF BEAUTY**, Acrylic on canvas, 50.8cm x 60.96cm, 2019

The Argentinian and African culture are so beautiful, filled with colour and vigour, it is radiant and spreads across the neon. The beauty is contagious.



**SOBER**, Acrylic on canvas, 40.64cm x 50.8cm, 2019

The mother of the Argentinian country, María Remedios del Valle was a strong woman, who fought battles, was imprisoned and lost her loved ones in the process. This made her sad. She passed through tough times and even had to beg at the end to earn a living. All this made her sober. At some point, she felt sad, even though she was brave and daring. Still, this was not her breakdown. She fought until she could fight no more.



**BIRTH**, Acrylic on canvas, 40.64cm x 50.8cm, 2019

This Argentinian woman is beautiful and graceful. She is full of hope for the future. She is excited for the untold beginning of new ventures

## Esther Adebayo

**E**sther, from Ekiti State in Nigeria, is a student of Fine and Applied Arts at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State. She is a student of Dr. Gbolade Omidiran, who has helped her in developing her natural art talents. She has enjoyed using the experimental approach, which has helped her to become more creative.

Esther specialises in painting on mixed media, mostly in 3D. She highlights Nigerian culture and heritage in her works.

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

*My admiration for creative design started when I was a child, I would assemble different materials and find a way to construct something with it much to the admiration of everyone. As a teenager observing my environment, I realise my inclinations were always drawn to modelling and designs in my neighbourhood and I am always critiquing almost every artistic creation. This shaped my career; art also does the same to the world. It's a healing therapy, looking up to transforming my environment to a better one with my artwork.*





**MOTHERS**, Acrylic on canvas, 40.64cm x 40.64cm, 2019

Motherhood is an important role in society that comes with a lot of responsibility. It is said that a woman trained is a nation built. She goes the extra mile not knowing what the future holds, positive or negative, even when it is not comfortable for her child. As seen in the painting, she is going to dare the world having little or less idea of what is coming next. The painting depicted is to celebrate and pay homage to mothers in the house most especially for the theme of this exhibition, María Remedios del Valle for taking the courage in participating in the Argentina War of Independence. A true mother is a mother indeed.





**RHYTHM OF LIFE**, Acrylic on canvas, 40.64cm x 81.28cm, 2019

The rhythms of Africa have crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic many times since the dark days of slavery. The painting of drums depicted is a symbol of freedom that Africans have lost and they struggle to regain it. The Afro-descendants kept their heritage alive through drumming. With this means, the descendants could share their culture with each other and the world. The texture used symbolises things found in Africa blending with the flow of colour.



## Favour Jackson Anamaleze

**F**avour is one of Niger Delta's finest sculptors from Nembe in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. She was born in Carrara, Italy in the mid-70s. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree as a Sculptor Major at the University of Port Harcourt. She also has a Certificate in Theatre Arts (Acting Major) from the University of Port Harcourt in Rivers State.

Favour is the daughter of the great Italian trained sculptor, Professor Jackson Ayerite Waribugo, whose monumental sculptures including the famous Mangrove Giant and Oil King, adorn Port Harcourt and several other cities in Nigeria and diaspora.

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

*As an artist, I am essentially interested in creating works that call for the participation of the audience to the same extent as my involvement in it. My art hides its meaning, on purpose. It delivers a message and that message is hidden, on purpose. The challenge as with any recreated moment from the past is to not caricature the moment but instead capture it in all of its glory.*



**THE PATRIOT**, Oil on canvas, 60.96cm x 91.44cm, 2019

Patriotism is the feeling of love, devotion and sense of attachment to a homeland and alliance with other citizens, who share the same sentiment. Patriotism is by nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. María Remedios del Valle was one individual whose patriotism to her homeland was never in doubt. The painting depicts a black female soldier as the captain of a battalion of soldiers charging to the war front. The painting is inspired by the story of María Remedios del Valle, who was drafted into the Argentinian army as a nurse to take care of wounded soldiers. She defied all odds out of pure love for her country even at the expense of her husband and children, who were killed during the war.



**SCARS OF MARÍA**, Oil on canvas, 40.64cm x 50.8cm, 2019

A scar is an area of fibrous tissue that replaces normal skin after an injury. Scars result from the biological process of wound repair in the skin. When someone has a wound, the healing process can involve suffering that may feel worse than the initial wound, leading to a psychological trauma. The painting is inspired by the life and times of María Remedios del Valle. It is believed that the body of our heroine had six obvious scars on it when it was recovered after her death. Such scars must have taken a toll on her psyche in the event of her state of well-being after the war. History has it that she became a destitute after the war until she was rehabilitated and placed under pension by her country. The painting depicts the profile of a female with an African hairstyle and six African motifs embedded in her head, symbolic of the psychological trauma. The blue and white motifs symbolise the Government of Argentina, which improved her living conditions and it is represented by the green space.



**NURSE MARÍA**, Oil on textured canvas, 40.64cm x 50.8cm, 2019

Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. It also includes the promotion of health, prevention of illnesses and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Such were the duties of María Remedios del Valle when she was initially drafted into the army. Even when in captivity, she still cared for her fellow prisoners and even aided some to scape. The painting depicts an African woman in an African attire taking care of a wounded soldier. Both figures are in an abstract form with the background of red and yellow, symbolic of the state of a nation in danger.



**MADRE DE LA PATRIA**, Oil on canvas, 50.8cm x 60.96cm, 2019

The meaning of being a mother is virtually endless. A mother is a protector, disciplinarian and friend. A mother is a selfless, loving human being, who must sacrifice many of her needs for the needs of her children. A mother works hard to make sure her child is equipped with knowledge and skills. Being a mother is perhaps the hardest, most rewarding job a woman will ever experience. Argentina was a "child" to María Remedios del Valle, hence the title *Madre de la Patria* (Mother of Argentina). The painting shows the profile of a black African female. The figure represents our heroine at a state of uncertainty as she watches Argentina burn during the battle for independence. She sacrificed everything to ensure that her homeland is free. The strokes of blue and white colours represent the Argentinian flag and are symbolic of a war-torn Argentina.

## Katurag Chinyio

**K**aturag or Kaycee, as she is known, is a painter and graduated from the famous Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Fine Art (Painting).

She has had quite an interesting experience with the art industry from the National Gallery of Art as a serving corp member, Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN) as a gallery assistant to some private galleries.

Katurag has participated in several exhibitions. Her works vary from realism to abstract, depicting women and children, their emotions through each day and their struggles in life and hope for better life. Most of her works contain red, black, and other earthy colours that relate more to her.

Her recent works use pointillism, line strokes and acrylic on canvas techniques, which make her unique.

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

*To me, art has no boundaries and expressing myself is easier with art and from my works emotions can be told seen and perceived.*





**SOUL FOOD**, Acrylic on canvas, 16cm x 20cm, 2019

This painting depicts the image of a man drumming and we know that music has its way of satisfying the inner hunger we feel. In Argentina, music is one of their greatest forms of entertainment and the culture promotes it quite well. That is why I have depicted a man playing on a drum to signify this. For the fact that we are celebrating African culture, what better way than to have music included in the celebration. In every culture round the world, there is a form of music that is peculiar to the people; this is to say that music is a universal language and it is found everywhere and in every culture.





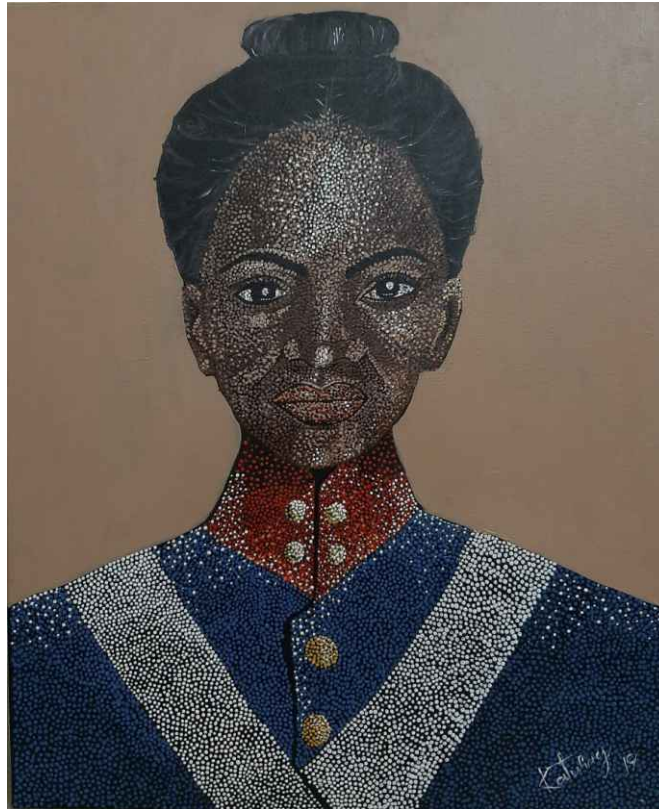
**BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL**, Acrylic on canvas, 60.96cm x 91.44cm, 2019

The maiden in this painting is depicted with her chin held up high in pride... proud of who she is and where she is from. The maiden is portrayed wearing a traditional Argentine costume, which shows that she identifies with the culture of where she finds herself. She prides herself with the foreign culture, embraces it and becomes a part of it. She is black, she is African and she is cultural.



**BLACK HERITAGE**, Acrylic on canvas, 16cm x 20cm, 2019

Black heritage depicts a little girl, who is clad in traditional ornaments and attire and she has a determined look... staring into the unknown and ready to face it. Who knows what tomorrow may bring? She is not ready even if she accepts who she is now and flaunts it without limit. The rich array of beads round her neck telling stories of untold victory and the various colours clad together to make her obviously noticeable shows that yet she is young, uncertain and does not know much, but she is brave and likes what she has and is willing to embrace it. She is surrounded by a great culture and prides in her great heritage... where she comes from because it defines her now and it defines her tomorrow.



**MARÍA**, Acrylic on canvas, 50.8cm x 60.96cm, 2019

This is my own interpretation of María, a fierce woman who stood against all odds and fought for her right. She lost a lot and still never gave up. Her bravery took her places and made her the hero she was. It is a sad thing her effort was not genuinely applauded until much later. She lost everything, but it never held her back she is an example of bravery and today she is known as the Mother of Argentina because of what she stood for. I stand to celebrate her and other Afro-Argentines, who fought the good fight, who lost their heritage and who are still in existence.



## Kemi Akin-Nibosun Sewell

**K**emi is an artist living and working in Nigeria. She is known for photography, printmaking and design. Her works are expressions of possible solutions to problems in the society through conceptual and practical ways. She is the winner of Life In My City Art Festival 2014 'Best Photograph' Award, and 2013 'Best Photography' category. She has attended several master classes on photography facilitated by Nlele Institute as well as artistic exchange programmes.

She has participated in several group exhibitions and her solo exhibition in 2014 she toured three Nigerian states. She is a graduate of Industrial Design at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and holds diplomas in Photography and Art, Mathematics and Statistics from Barking Abbey Sixth Form, Barking, United Kingdom.

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

*As a multi-disciplinary artist, my subjects of choice range from socio-political issues to personal convictions of solutions to problems encountered whilst travelling through different cities. Re-imagining the possibilities of my environment and life. My personal take is that we need to be more lenient on the emphasis of telling "a story of Africa", and concentrate more on the process that begets the story. Through my personal and professional journeys, I realised that to affect change is to proffer solutions for addressing issues in my immediate environment.*



**IMMUTABLE I**, Print ink and watercolour on paper, 63.5cm x 50.8cm, 2019

The piece reflects on the moment of recognition of the efforts of black people seeking freedom and civil rights. Specifically in Argentina's history, the effort of María Remedios del Valle who was a camp follower turned soldier in the Argentine War for Independence. The use of dark background is to portray the fact that her efforts (like many others) were almost lost in history. Out of the dark background emerges a feminine figure from a pink, yellow and gold background, which represents bloom and glorious emergence.



**IMMUTABLE II**, Print ink and watercolour on paper, 63.5cm x 50.8cm, 2019

The piece reflects on the moment of recognition of the efforts of black people seeking freedom and civil rights. Specifically in Argentina's history, the effort of María Remedios del Valle who was a camp follower turned soldier in the Argentine War for Independence. The use of dark background is to portray the fact that her efforts (like many others) were almost lost in history. Out of the dark background emerges a feminine figure from a green and yellow background, which are typically the colours of combat.

## Maylene Rasmussen

**M**aylene was born in the ancient Gandharan Buddhist city of Taxila in northern Pakistan, a country where she spent most of the next half century. Maylene has also lived and exhibited her art in Vietnam, Thailand, Jordan, Italy, Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria and the USA, learning and growing from a variety of influences along the way.

She was trained in classical realism (drawing and painting) at the Florence Academy of Art in Italy, and in lacquer painting at the Hanoi University of Fine Arts in Vietnam.

This past year she has been in Abuja, Nigeria inspired by the transcendent beauty, energy and strength of women she has met. Her lacquer paintings are part of an ongoing global series that brings to life on paper, canvas and board the *Women of My World*. These visually stunning and inspiring images communicate the power, simplicity and timelessness of the female form.

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

*I'm passionate about celebrating beauty, life and sensuality through figurative and natural imagery, with the female figure as a dominant theme. Working with oil on canvas, charcoal on paper and lacquer on wood, I create works that transcend traditional, cultural and artistic boundaries.*

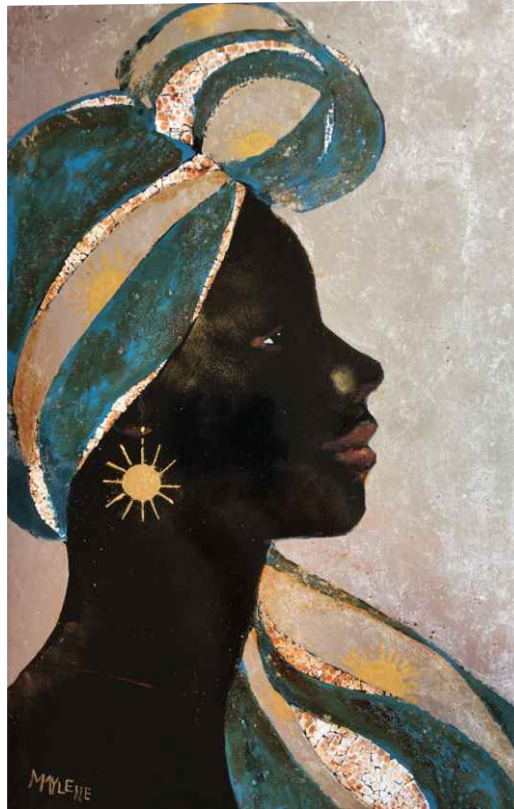




**THE SECURITY**, Lacquer, shell, silver and gold on board, 60cm x 40cm, 2019

This is our home. Do you see us?





**THE COUNTRY**, Lacquer, shell, silver and gold on board, 50cm x 30cm, 2019

Centuries ago, brought here without choice. Generations born here. This is our country.



**THE MUSIC**, Lacquer, shell, silver and gold on board, 50cm x 30cm, 2019

The beauty of combined rhythm, dance, movement, becoming a unique Argentine legacy.



**THE DREAMS**, Lacquer, shell, silver and gold on board, 60cm x 40cm, 2019

To be loved as Argentines. Recognition of how we got here.



## Ngozi Akande

**N**gozi is a prolific artist who uses her art as advocacy for women's rights and empowerment. She is a mentor to younger artists, women and children through art workshops, career talks in schools and art competitions for boys and girls.

She presented art workshops for children in July 2015 at the World Children Festival at the Eclipse in Washington, USA.

As the President of the Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN) for 7 years, she impacted in the life of the women through programmes she initiated.

Her participatory art programme to create awareness on gender violence has also been well received by the public.



**THE STRENGTH OF THE AFRICAN WOMAN II**, Mixed media on canvas, 91.44cm x 152.4cm, 2019

The painting is a mixed media work comprising of jute, fabrics, newspaper, oil and acrylic paint. The woman is in a dancing position holding a horsetail in her hand. She is endowed with African features of broad nose, heavy chested and depicted in dark brown, black and red colours. The African woman exhibits a lot of energy in whatever she engages in. The painting depicts her inner strength and dedication.



**MY STYLE I**, Mixed media on canvas, 91.44cm x 152.4cm, 2019

My Style I is a mixed media series of paintings containing fabrics, and tissue paper to create texture. The colours are derived from the colours on the fabrics. raw colours are applied directly on the canvas and blended into the fabrics, this creates the colours in the painting. the colours moves from dark to bright colours, this shows the life of an African woman and her ability to endures all challenges and come out successful at the end. This is a replica of the life of María, she fought the war, she was not recognised at first but today she is celebrated.



**MY STYLE II**, Mixed media on canvas, 40.64cm x 50.8cm, 2019

My Style II is a mixed media series of paintings containing fabrics, carton and tissue paper to create an impasto effect. The colours are derived from the colours of the fabrics. Raw colours were applied directly on the canvas and were blended with the fabrics.



**LEFT IN THE COLD**, Acrylic on canvas, 91.44cm x 91.44Cm, 2019

The painting shows a girl wearing a flowing gown depicted in white, cream, pink and light green colours, she wears her long hair stepping into the unknown. The colours in the background are sombre colours of yellow ochre, brown, dark crimson, light green and pink, which is in harmony with the colours on the gown. The painting tells the story of a growing girl child, who is trying to find her feet around her environment. This situation is applicable to the growing African child, who most times are left in the cold to fend for themselves.



## Guest Artist: Nelly Idagba

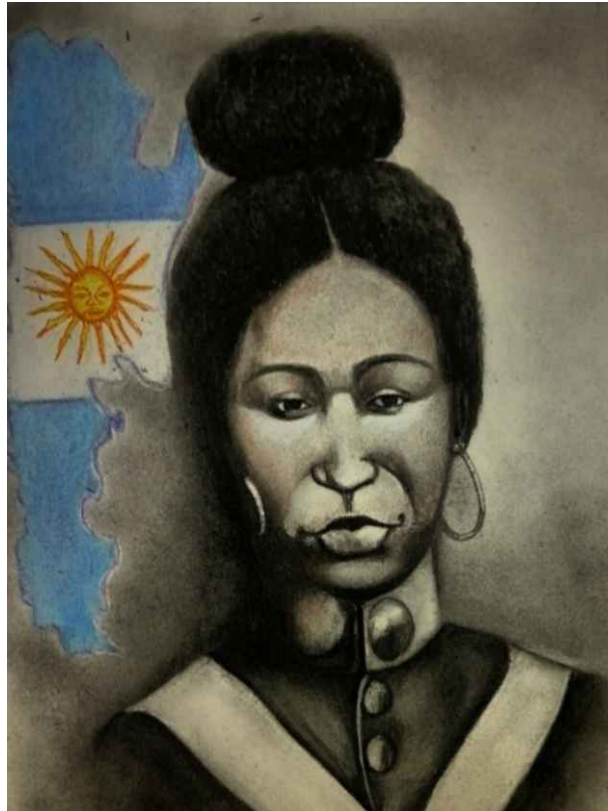
**N**elly is a self-taught artist and a lawyer by profession. She has a passion for drawing and painting and decided to experiment with art. She paints with acrylic on canvas and draws with pencils. She paints abstracts, portraits and landscapes and is inspired by the beauty of Africa and its culture.

Nelly has been commissioned several portraits and has sold her work locally and internationally.

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

*I do basically pencils art as well as acrylics on canvas. A lot of my works are a reaction of Africa and its culture. I do mostly abstracts and a few landscapes.*





**MARÍA REMEDIOS DEL VALLE**, Pencil on paper, 40.64cm x 50.8cm, 2019

María Remedios del Valle also known as the *Madre de la Patria* was an Afro-Argentine camp follower turned soldier who participated in the Argentine War of Independence. She was a heroine. She was recognised for her contributions to the independence of Argentina.

# Contact

If you would like to:

- organise 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**

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