



CROSSROADS

**Obi Nwaegbe
&
Chinedu Onuigbo**

Curator: Susa Rodriguez-Garrido

December, 3rd - 12th, 2020

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A Catalogue of Exhibition

Agama Art Publishing & Agency

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FOREWORD

Obi Nwaegbe and Chinedu Onuigbo are two incredible, versatile and socially committed artists, who come together in this exhibition called *Crossroads*, to explore their experiences. The *Crossroads* Exhibition touches topics such as the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that is having on them and on society all over the world, which has highlighted the huge impact that our housing has on our lives and our mental and physical well being.

The name of the exhibition, *Crossroads*, comes from the idea that both artists find themselves at a point of their personal lives where a crucial decision must be made and that this choice will have far-reaching consequences for them and for everyone around them. This intersection in their lives can correlate with the social situation in the world with the pandemic and the social dissatisfaction in Nigeria burdened with immense poverty, ineffective leadership, police brutality, among many other issues.

Nwaegbe's artworks include figurative and abstract expressionism. His work for this exhibition presents 22 pieces that depict a socially engaged artist with a focus on human solitude and isolation during the lockdown. In these paintings, the artist can be seen reproducing day-to-day activities that recover more importance during the pandemic, inviting the audiences to reflect on this challenging time. Some of the objects of these paintings are reading, working from home or simply in a pensive mood, others are illustrations of labourers carrying on working despite the threat of contracting the virus. In this way, the artist acknowledges everyone who continued their working activities considering the difficult circumstances that they might have encountered.

Onuigbo's works portray different art movements from impressionism, expressionism, abstract expressionism to modernism. His latest style has a Basquiat element to it with references to Picasso. Traditional African art, graffiti and cartoons also influence him.

The 26 pieces that are displayed in this exhibition show his evident interest in social issues in Nigeria but also all over the world. The year 2020 has given him a lot to be inspired by from the pandemic to the #EndSARS movement, which were a series of protests that broke out in Nigeria after years of police brutality, corruption and disproportionate human rights injustices. With his child-like approach in some of the artworks, Onuigbo opens a dialogue on very serious matters to bring this to the attention of a wider population without any disregard for his life, putting himself in the spotlight of death threats.

It is interesting to notice that both artists adopt bright colours to illustrate very sombre subjects, which can be seen as a contradiction. In fact, this indicates a very sharp and subtle way to emphasise these dilemmas, making the public surpassing the first impression of innocent appearance to delve deeper and use this exhibition as a weapon of discussion.

The *Crossroads* Exhibition starts on 3rd December and finishes on 12th December at Dolapo Obat Gallery in Abuja. It is an incredible experience not to be missed with 48 works to be admired, a compelling way to try to understand a bit more of the complexity of Nigerian society and the uncertainties of 2020.

Susa Rodriguez-Garrido

Head of Curation at Dolapo Obat Gallery

Art Representative and Founder of Agama Art Publishing & Agency

MUSING AT CROSSROADS IN UNCERTAIN TIME

Even with its troubles, Obi Nwaegbe believes the year 2020 deserves a memorable ending. Indeed, something undeniably befuddling about the year evokes the biblical end-time prophecies. For just as it was stirring to life, a bemused society – already lurching from one calamity to another – cringed before the disruptions caused by a full-blown novel coronavirus, called COVID-19. Yet even these disruptions in the country's social, political, and economic activities became the grist for the creative mill of a joint exhibition, titled *Crossroads*.

In Chinedu Onuigbo, Nwaegbe later found a ready and willing collaborator for the exhibition project, which – albeit not directly alluding to cases of the pandemic itself – dredges up issues swirling around their experiences during the government-imposed lockdown and safety protocols.

Both artists first met in 2015, when Nwaegbe first moved to Abuja from Lagos. Onuigbo was holding an exhibition at the upmarket Transcorp Hilton hotel and Nwaegbe, who went to see this show, was captivated by the intensity of the colours of the works on display. “His themes and styles were quite varied,” Nwaegbe recalls, alluding to that encounter. “Even though I didn't see that diversity as a hallmark of thematic focus, there was a uniformity in the professional delivery piece by piece and of any theme of style he chose to work on.”

Nwaegbe ended up spending hours chatting up the artist with a view to understanding him and his work better. It soon struck him that the many visitors at the venue were enthralled enough by the works to pay well-above-average prices for them. “That confirmed my suspicions that he was already in a good place in the art business. He had all the demeanour of a successful artist and took his appearance very seriously so that, without his works around him, he easily fitted into the elite circles in Abuja.”

Nwaegbe was soon mulling the prospects of leveraging Onuigbo's panache in the art circles for future collaborations. And before long, the duo soon discovered the qualities they had in common. Both were raised in university communities: Onuigbo in Zaria and Nwaegbe in Nsukka. Both grew up as the children of lecturers.

Like Nwaegbe, Onuigbo holds a BA degree in fine arts, but from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The 46-year-old – known in the Abuja art circles as The Artfadar – preens himself on the fact that he had held 19 solo exhibitions and participated in over 30 group exhibitions, which included the New York Art Expo. A prolific artist, whose versatility expresses itself in his mastery of various mediums and depictions of various subjects, the influences of traditional African art, graffiti and cartoons are evident in his works.

Both artists continued to meet more frequently after that 2015 encounter. “We would usually meet up at exhibitions, mostly his or mine,” Nwaegbe narrates. At some point during one of their many meetings, Onuigbo privately confessed retreating from much of the artistic activity in Abuja to focus on his personal and professional advancement. “I think I have grown past the way they have been running things around here,” Nwaegbe quotes him as saying on one occasion. After over 20 years of consistent studio practice, which has seen his works adorning numerous private and corporate collections both within and outside Nigeria, Onuigbo thought he had enough reasons to slow down. “Surprisingly, these days, I don't paint everyday,” he

says. “I do more of thinking. I don't have a strict routine. My art practices have always been as the spirit leads and according to my mood.”

About 10 years ago, holding two solo shows at the Transcorp Hilton Abuja within the space of one year used to be *de rigueur*. “The exhibitions tended to be more commercial and the artworks were based mainly on street scenes, wildlife, landscapes and paintings of Nigerian festivals. But about two years ago, my paintings started to drift towards Neo-expressionism.”

Meanwhile, for Nwaegbe, art has been more like a lifelong adventure. As a child, he would play around with objects, making hand-propelled vehicles with cardboard papers. “My bedroom walls were decorated with paper doodles and paintings,” he reminisces. “My creative instincts accompanied me to my classrooms, where sometimes I would be engrossed in sketching exercises while lessons were going on. This has been usually my response to the boredom that I felt during some of the lessons.”

Usually, the 41-year-old's day starts before 6 a.m. He returns home before 8 a.m. after dropping off his wife at work. Work starts for him after breakfast and keeping up-to-date with local and international news. “As a home resident artist, I have both my studio and office at home, each serving as production and promotion units, respectively. Also, my resident status means that the routine was hardly altered by the pandemic lockdown since the home was where it all happened.”

Similarly, Onuigbo spends more time indoors because of his home studio. “So, the pandemic and lockdown did not really affect my practice,” he says. “These days, some of us socialise more on social media. It's an easier way of socialising and it is corona-free.”

On his social life as an artist, Nwaegbe says: “It is two-way traffic, really. I have come to understand that as an individual grows, there must be the consciousness towards building productive bridges and breaking down unproductive ones. That is not to suggest or hint at social climbing of any sort, but about finding like-minds across class divides with whom one share certain values and shades of understanding. The first step is to define one's goals and focus, and then the second is to manage one's time in a way that it is spent more with those who align with them. My own personal journey in this regard has me keeping smaller circles as I grow older to devote the maximum time I require for my work.”

Yet, life as a full-time studio artist in Abuja has its pressures and setbacks. Onuigbo ascribes this to lack of awareness and poor art appreciation in the capital city. “Lagos is by far a better environment for the visual arts,” says the artist, who draws his inspiration from the innocence, sincerity, and freedom of children.

Back to *Crossroads*, it was a fallout of Nwaegbe's personal musings. Early this year, he had discovered, in Onuigbo's works, a renewed thematic focus that seemed to have narrowed down to specific concerns bordering on Nigeria's socio-political issues. “This was a new shift in his work, which before now was essentially about technical proficiency in landscapes and figurative renderings and often without central themes. This was deliberate and painstaking and, according to him, was his new design to pander to the whims of the gallery-going audience.”

- **Okechukwu Uwaezuoke** is a Visual Arts Analyst & Thisday Columnist

Chinedu Onuigbo and Obi Nwaegbe: Differing Perspectives on a Nation at *Crossroads*

At first glance, the title of the joint exhibition *Crossroads* featuring Chinedu Onuigbo (b. 1974) and Obi Nwaegbe (b. 1979), evokes suspicions that they are only at an experimental and confusing phase of their career, when they must be compelled to make a crucial decision that will impact heavily on their future direction.

Considering that both Onuigbo and Nwaegbe are mid-career artists with well-developed bodies of work, the earlier assertion is easily dismissed. Taking more than a cursory look at the display of 47 paintings, one does not fail to realise their differing, yet closely related approaches to engaging police brutality, which occasioned the #EndSARS campaign, poor governance, attendant corruption and the increasingly negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges to the visual arts community and the general public have forced such unwelcome developments as a lockdown that imposed prohibitions on travel and large gatherings to adversely affect exhibitions, art fairs and public auctions, as well as grow caution by collectors and investors in the acquisition of works as financial markets fluctuate.

This brief essay gives an overview of the artists' creative responses to these challenges and their preoccupation during this period of incapacitation. However, it does not attempt to offer an in-depth historical or comparative analysis of their creative output but illuminates key aspects of their oeuvre and underlying philosophies through an examination of formal concerns.

On one hand, Onuigbo, borrows heavily from the geometric shapes of classical African sculpture to invent his own visual vocabulary. In the 27 paintings he presents, his figures are emboldened with expressive colour and line, to delineate form and accentuate detail.

As with these archetypes, he often symbolically exaggerates certain facets of his subjects' anatomy to emphasize their significance to a higher purpose or search for empirical truth. In works like 'African Angel', Mixed media, 152 x 122cm and 'Hopeful', Mixed media, 152 x 122cm, the head topped by crowns assumes the central focus, depicting its privilege over the rest of the body, as a site of wisdom and bearer of destiny. In yet other paintings like 'Adam and Eve', Mixed media, 152 x 122cm, the phallus and the female genitalia are displayed in large dimensions, ostensibly as metaphors for fertility or potency.

To lend weight to the information gleaned from these historical and traditional sources, Onuigbo seamlessly blends contemporary critique and social commentary by incorporating text into his paintings. Here meaning is heightened, creating a hybrid of sorts, in a nod to Jean-Michel Basquiat. According to Fred Hoffman, the latter functioned "as something like an oracle, distilling his perceptions of the outside world down to their essence and, in turn, projecting them outward through his creative acts." It becomes easier to understand the socio-political and economic relevance of Onuigbo's work when one re-imagines him in the mould of the celebrated Basquiat—his markedly contrasting naïve approach serving him well in addressing pertinent issues and distilling them to benefit the general public.

On the other hand, Nwaegbe's work is characterised by its decorative qualities and colour applied lavishly almost straight out of the tube and in broad flat strokes. However, his debt to Fauvism and the Abstract Expressionist movement is evident. Vaguely reminiscent of Raoul Dufy, 22 paintings betray a radical departure from an earlier strongly figurative style exemplified in his first solo 'Tainted Visions', staged just over a decade ago. This divergence may not be understood as a linear progression of styles but as a psychologically expressive response to the prevailing socio-economic and political disruptions.

His subjects are also worthy of mention; differentiated by their fair or dark complexions, they are united by a frequent and recurring motif in the almost total absence of eyes and other facial features in favour of gesture and rhythm. This devoid or melancholic state, at once becomes both a metaphor for the inertia we feel, incapacitated during the lockdown period, as well as a call to embark on a journey in solitude on which we internalise our ideas and hone our regenerative capacities.

Words like boldness, empowerment and defiance resonate powerfully in the dark pigmentation of his figures' skin—the artist's intentions obvious in his recordings of everyday life and the mundane that celebrate Black resilience and achievement in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Colour's centrality to the Nwaegbe's work is further appreciated in his use of vibrant hues to draw attention to such sombre subject matter. By inviting us to contemplate our existence in an increasingly turbulent world, Nwaegbe urges us to perfection by setting aside our secular way of thinking and meditate in proffering solutions to the upheavals and unrest prevalent in our

In all, the individual works by Chinedu Onuigbo and Obi Nwaegbe exude great strength but collectively juxtaposed against each other, they impact in good measure on the lengthening trajectory of contemporary art in Nigeria. Indeed, *Crossroads* will be long remembered as a collaborate project between two artists, aimed at raising awareness, advocating for change and inspiring action on major issues affecting our immediate community.

Oliver Enwonwu

President, Society of Nigerian Artists

ARTISTIC VIEWS FROM THE PANDEMIC ERA

Obi Nwaegbe and Chinedu Onuigbo are two notable mid-career painters working in the city of Abuja. In this two-man exhibition titled *Crossroads*, they explore their experiences as both individuals and as members of a larger society emerging from the realities of a global Covid-19 Pandemic. Cataclysmic events such as the Covid 19 Pandemic come with ravages and regeneration. It caused the death of many and disrupted the calendar of many art events, but it also made possible a multi-layered social realignment that gave birth to new ways of being. One of such new social strands includes the artistic inspiration and creative offshoots that characterized the global lockdown era. Artists, being the witnesses of time and memory, were inspired by this social upheaval that seized the world. They created works that depicted aspects of the event, its social impact on the artist as well as his intimate dialogue with the events around him.

As the global lockdown lasted, discussions and articulations of artistic thoughts on the pandemic were taking place in both the mainstream and social media. At the same time artists in their studios devoted time to capture the moment by creating works that sought to make sense of the conditions that surrounded the pandemic era. Obi and Onuigbo lived through this period, observing the lockdown and other Covid 19 protocols while engaging themselves actively in their studios located at different parts of the city. Their works may be grouped into the two phases that seem to define the period.

The first phase of the period was marked by the pervasive isolation which forced individuals and families to stay at home. Banned from leaving their immediate environments as stipulated by the Covid 19 protocol, there was an opportunity for people to engage in activities that encouraged bonding. Husbands and wives had to stay together in a manner that is somewhat close to a honeymoon. With the schools closed, Children and their parents, and other family members, enjoyed the opportunity to be together for a long time. The Pandemic lockdown provided a chance for people who have lived in the same space and were still strangers to interact with each other. It is this period that Nwaegbe's work tends to capture with his titles such as *Portrait of Artists at Work* (Acrylic on paper, 45 x 75cm), *Season of Reflections* (Acrylic on Canvas, 120 x 180cm). In one of the works on this suite titled ' *Service to theUpstream* (Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180cm), Nwaegbe pays tribute to the workers who manned some critical sectors of the Economic, Health and Security systems which prevented the world from experiencing a complete shutdown. Although the work shows three men working on an oil rig (an upstream operation in the Nigerian Petroleum industry), the painting is also about other workers in the critical sectors, media, and the bank workers. Nwaegbe's focus on the mitigating activities that occupied his time and space such as reading, artmaking thinking is just one way of engaging the global pandemic lockdown. While Nwaegbe explored the pervasive solitude that characterized the period, letting it inspire his work as discussed above; the second wave of artistic inspiration during the pandemic is related to the protests that erupted in different parts of the world. Among others, the most prominent protested during the pandemic era started with the death in late May of George Floyd in the hands of brutal Police officers. The outpouring of solidarity for Floyd and other people killed in similar circumstances in the USA and other parts of the world resonated with people of all races. There were protests in various cities and continents of the world, and art was part and parcel of it. Graffiti was painted on inner-city walls and city spaces, while long-standing statues of "heroes" were

pulled down and replaced with portraits of the martyrs of the protests, were fallouts of the protests. Onuigbo's artworks appear to have the elements and style of Jean-Michel Basquiat's by marrying images and graffiti which he started on the streets of 1970s New York City in George Floyd's country, the USA. Onuigbo's paintings were inspired by the social conditions in his home country Nigeria, when during the partial lockdown, in early October, protests erupted in Nigeria over police brutality and excessive human rights abuses. It first started online, trending under the hashtag #EndSARS and soon entered the streets as a peaceful protest, where youth protested against and called for the disbandment of SARS- Special Armed-robbery Squad- a unit of the Nigerian Police Force which has been at the centre of these abuses. Beyond his exuberant images and colours, Onuigbo's pop art is loaded with social commentaries. He uses devices such as graffiti, which has been used historically as part of protests in an expressive manner. The graffiti written on Onuigbo's canvases speak to the issues of inequality, corruption, bad leadership, police brutality as well as sundry social vices. These are the same messages that were pitched by the Nigerian youth who were actors in the #EndSARS protests.

Each of the artists has created a unique body of work that betray their eccentricities. They have engaged with the peculiarities of the pandemic theme. While their artworks may differ in style, they have adequately expressed themselves while reflecting on the transformative energy that came with a rare period in human existence, when the world almost came to a standstill. These artists have presented us with new spectacles; new ways to rethink and ponder on our relationships with elements of nature that sometimes threaten our very existence.

-**Agwu Enekwachi** is a PhD Student in Art History at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka



Obi Nwaegbe, born in Enugu in January of 1979 is a Nigerian multimedia artist and public analyst from Delta State who studied in and graduated from University of Nigeria Nsukka where he majored in painting. Since graduating in 2004 he has worked in many capacities as a writer, painter, web developer and Interior decorator and has exhibited in Different parts of Nigeria and Africa and has over twenty group exhibitions and three solo exhibitions to his credit.

Also, to his credit are numerous explorations in photography on same subject as well as video documentaries some of which have featured in local and international media. He has worked on a range of artistic concepts and styles and a quick profiling of his work would reveal and advent through academic realism to expressionist themed art. His debut exhibition which held at Omenka Gallery of the Ben Enwonwu Foundation was perhaps the most documented solo exhibition to have held in the country that year (with over a dozen media publications).

Obi Nwaegbe moved to Accra briefly to dialogue with the cultures of the Gold Coast in 2011, and in the process was able to get himself acquainted with the arts community in Accra. His sojourn in the neighbouring West African country culminated in a second solo exhibition at the Alliance Francais in Accra in 2012. After the exhibition he returned to Lagos to continue finding his divergent muses. His Ghana experience was also to herald a slight departure from the conservative academic inclinations of his earlier works and a gradual shift to more modernist and contemporary arguments.

Within the last three years he has modified his artistic worldview to include figurative and abstract expressionism. His works have also been analysed in different newspaper print media both locally and internationally. Obi Nwaegbe currently lives in Abuja where he is making creative impact through art placements as well as through the finishing of exteriors of homes and public spaces. He has been involved in exhibitions and workshops within the Federal capital and was invited to participate as the guest artist for the Female Artists of Nigeria exhibition in 2016 which held at the Abuja exhibition pavilion.

In the last three years Obi Nwaegbe's image as a prolific and energetic artist has soared greatly, with features in several exhibitions and workshops in and outside the Capital territory and has featured in group exhibitions internationally. Recently he organized an exhibition "Faces & Forms featuring other renowned colleagues in what id easily one of the most outstanding artistic events to take place in the Capital Territory in many years. He also has a passion to train young graduates and prepare them for private professional practice in various fields of art and design. He is also founder and director of Artstier Company Limited, an art production and placement Company based in Abuja.



(1) Woman in Study, Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 90cm

(1)



In Celebration of Foresight, Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 90cm

(2)



The Memory of Intellectual Struggles, Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180cm



Nzuko (The Briefing), Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180cm



Library Season, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 180cm



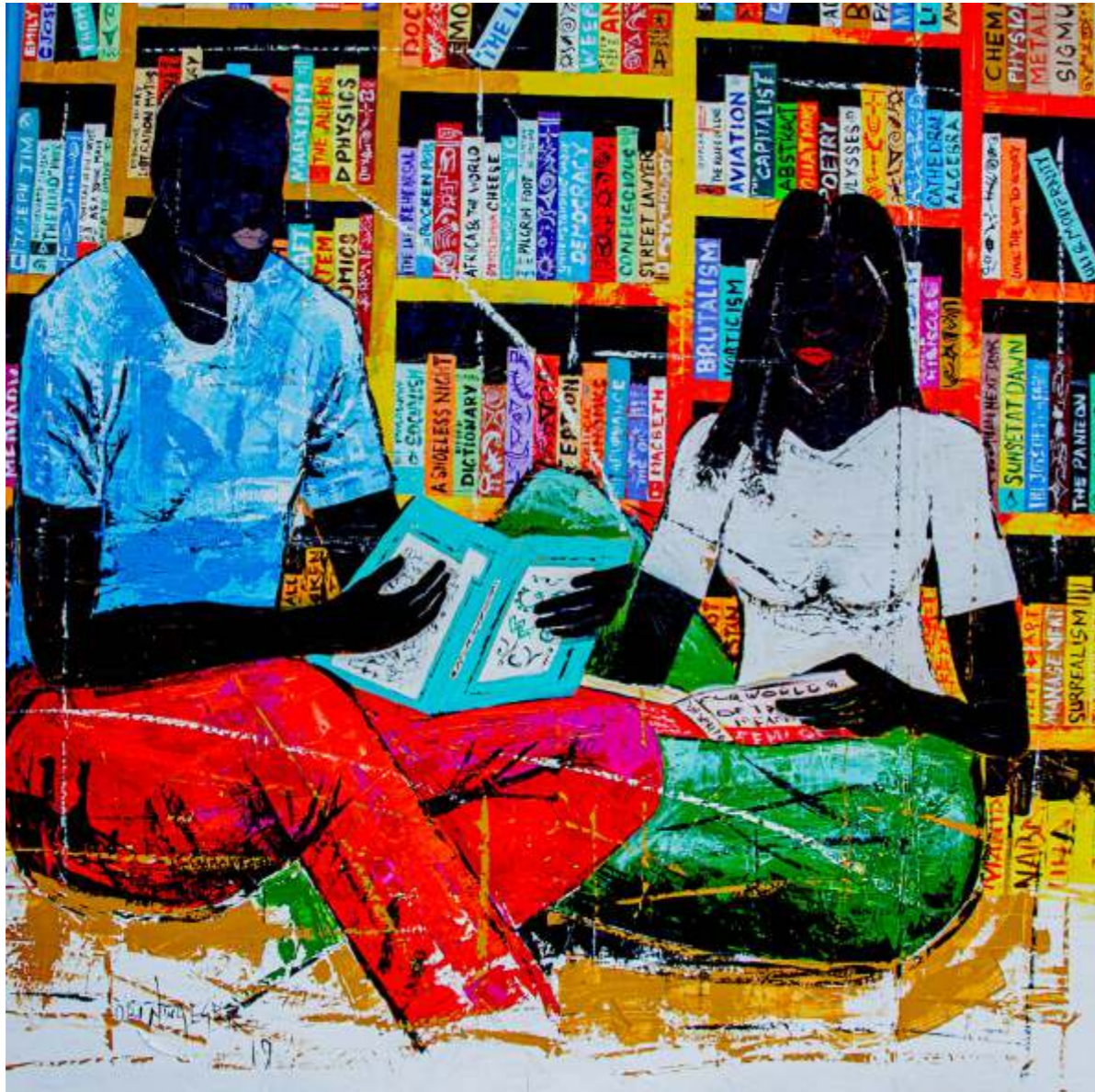
Coffee Chat, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 180cm



Season of Reflections, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 180cm



The Reclining Artist, Acrylic on canvas, 130 x 180cm



Season of Awakening, Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180cm

(10)



Service to the Upstream, Acrylic on canvas 180 x 180cm

(11)



Living the Times,, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120cm

(12)



Love, Belief & Magic, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120cm

(13)



Lover's Corner, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120cm

(14)



Gestures before the Storm, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120cm

(15)



Pondering on Critical Matters, Acrylic on paper, 30 x 50cm

(16)



Pondering on Critical Matters II, Acrylic on paper, 30 x 50cm

(17)



The Poetry of Romance, Acrylic on paper, 50 x 75cm

(18)



Portrait of the Philosopher, Acrylic on paper, 50 x 75cm

(19)



Portrait of the Artist at work, Acrylic on paper, 45 x 60cm

(20)



Portrait of the Artist Acrylic on paper, 45 x 60cm

(21)



Thinker in Limbo, Acrylic on paper, 45 x 60cm

(22)



A Scholar's Call, Acrylic on paper, 45 x 65cm

(23)



Chinedu Onuigbo is a versatile artist who was born on July 13, 1974 in Zaria, Nigeria. His early development was within the wall of the Zaria Ivory towers where he was nurtured by parents of the academic community. Since graduating from Zaria he has resided in Abuja, the nation's federal capital where he has traversed several movements, styles, and media over the course of his professional practice. His practice is dominated by individual and self-funded exhibitions mostly organized outside gallery spaces, a strategy he avers has helped him work out his creative path and salvation on his own terms. In addition to over nineteen of these solo exhibitions, are also group participators with the Society of Nigerian Artists and other such relevant bodies. Such collaborations also culminated in a participation at the New York at Expo of 2010 which he attended.

Perhaps more than many of his peers, his practice has traversed the various movements including impressionism, expressionism, abstract expressionism, and modernism. In the last two years he has narrowed down to Something of the pop art influenced modernism of the African and American late seventies and early eighties. A reference to the works of Pablo Picasso and Jean Michael Basquiat may also be paramount. He is also influenced by traditional African art, graffiti, and cartoons.

Chinedu Onuigbo's educational background spans over two and a half decades which culminated in a BA in Fine Arts (majoring in sculpture) from the prestigious Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Chinedu operates a resident studio in one of the highbrow estates in Abuja. His practice has spanned over twenty years. This long practice has afforded him meetings with many important personalities, including public office holders, many of whom have become passionate collectors of his work. His influence within the Abuja art community is palpable as well as exemplary. He also draws inspiration from the works of children, their spontaneity and sincerity to self is for him a great incentive.



Adam & Eve, Mixed media, 152 x 122cm

(24)



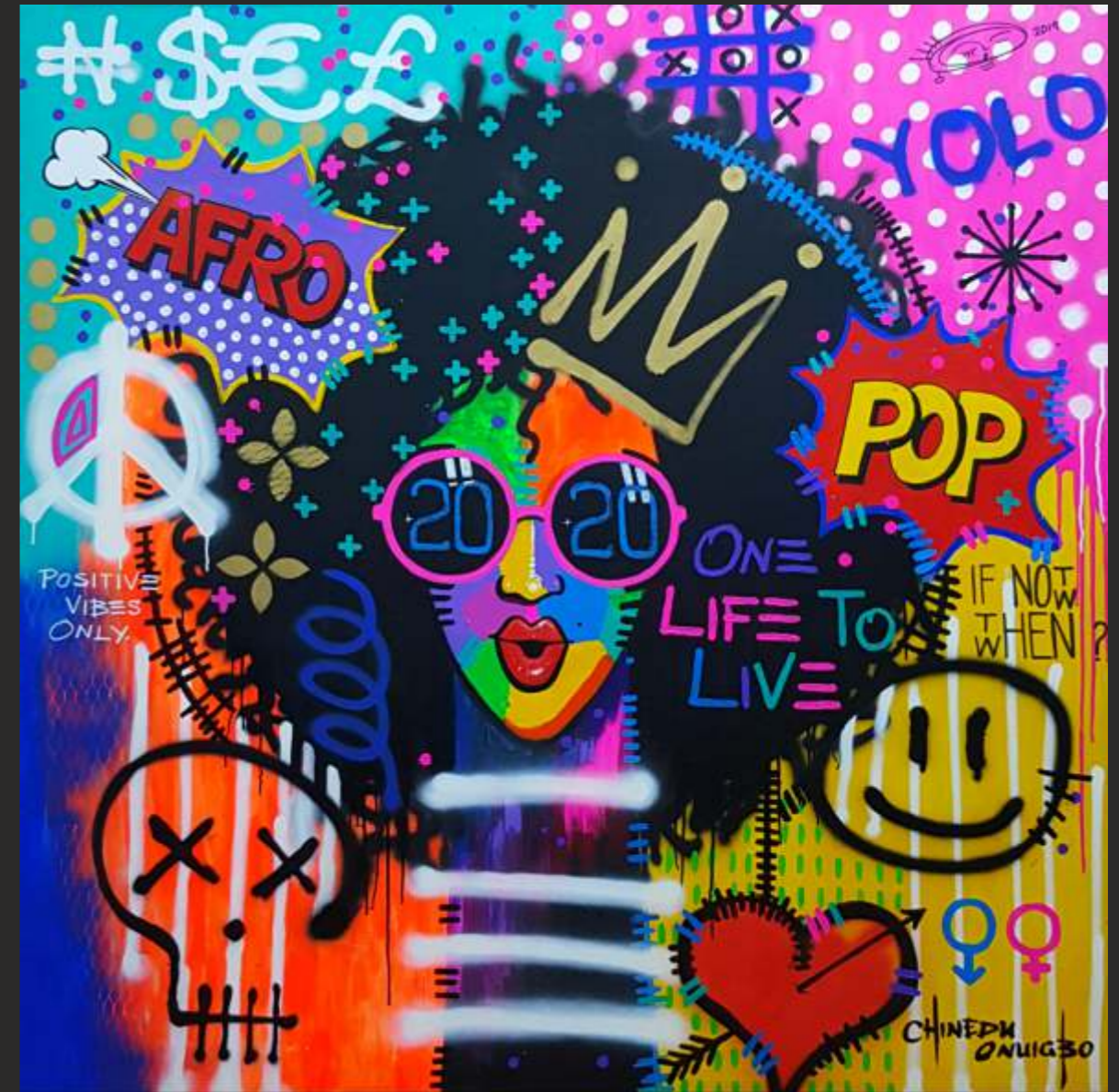
Angel of Peace, Mixed media, 152 x 122cm

(25)



Mental Slavery, Mixed media, 147 x 123cm

(24)



Vision 2020, Mixed media, 152 x 152cm

(25)



Solitude, Mixed media, 122 x 152cm



Mixed Feelings, Mixed media, 122 x 122cm

(27)



Police Brutality, Mixed media, 152 x 152cm

(28)



True Justice II, Mixed media, 152 x 122cm

(29)



Single Ladies, Mixed media, 152 x 122cm

(30)



African Angel, mixed media, 152 x 122cm

(31)



Hopeful, mixed Media, 152 x 122cm

(32)



See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak no Evil, Mixed media, 122 x 152cm



Africana, Mixed media, 122 x 122cm

(34)



Africana II, Mixed media, 122 x 122cm

(35)



Toy Car, Mixed media, 122 x 122cm

(36)



Skipping Rope, Mixed media, 122 x 122cm

(37)



Child Labour, Mixed media, 122 x 122cm

(38)



Live & Let Live, Mixed media, 152 x 152cm

(39)



Freedom Fighters, Mixed media, 152 x 213cm



Stock-in-Trade, Mixed media, 152 x 152cm



True Justice, Mixed media, 122 x 122cm



Suffering & Smiling, Mixed media on paper, 53 x 38cm



Suffering & Smiling II, Mixed media on paper, 53 x 38cm



Suffering & Smiling III, Mixed media on paper, 53 x 38cm



Siddon de look II, Mixed media on paper, 53 x 38cm



Vanity Fair, Mixed media on paper, 101 x 114cm



Street Hustle, Mixed media on paper, 101 x 114cm

About Agama

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 formats, for readers all around the world.

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 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 organizations. 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

About Dolapo Obat

Dolapo Obat Gallery was founded by Dolapo Obat with the idea of offering Abuja residents and tourists an exciting art gallery.

The gallery is a contemporary space for art education, to inform minds and to inspire creation for the future we are building. It exhibits contemporary art: paintings, photographs and sculptures.

Dolapo Obat is a young writer, visual artist, entrepreneur and engineer, who lives in Abuja. He grew up in Abuja and moved to Manchester, UK, when he was 16 to pursue higher education. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering (University of Manchester) and a Master's degree in International Business and Management, for which he spent a semester in Sydney, Australia, as an exchange student at the University of New South Wales. To further his passion for art and develop his creative skills, he studied photography at London School of Photography; fashion editorial at Paris College of Art in Paris and creative direction at Central Saint Martins in London.

He is fervent about image-making and insightful storytelling focussed on dichotomy. He is mostly influenced by soul music that uses cultural commentary as a tool for contemplation and performance art that strains the limits of the body and the potentialities of the mind. Furthermore, he enjoys books and films that explore human morality, the pliable nature of individual identity and the psychological and philosophical effect of birth, love and death.

About SK African Art Collective

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.