

Victor Butler's *nuanced whisperings of the soul*

November 1 – December 7th, 2018

(Lagos, October 29, 2018) In the midst of Lagos' "bursting at the seams" art calendar this week, Nuance, a highly anticipated solo exhibition of exceptional works by Victor Butler, a leading international artist from Ghana, opens to the public at Temple Muse on November 1, 2018, curated by SMO Contemporary Art.

The exhibition showcases 23 paintings on canvas and two prints, which draw us into Butler's multilayered landscapes of myriad perspectives, subtly referencing traditional narratives in surreal spaces influenced mathematics, science and natural history. Nuance is a one-of-a-kind journey of discovery into Butler's world, exploring the meaning of community, culture, time and space, permanence versus relevance.

Victor Butler (born 1964) is a self-taught artist with over 30 years of studio practice. His works have been exhibited internationally including in Canada, England, France and the United States. He studied medicine and has worked at the cutting edge of auto mechanics, information technology, and furniture design. His impressive painting technique and deeply philosophical approach to life is evident in his surrealist style and subject matter.

Nuance is Butler's first exhibition in Nigeria and shows the breadth of his signature surrealist style, celebrating relationships on the personal, family and community level. Butler speaks to the soul and identity of African communities as they draw on ancestral roots within futuristic mindscapes which reference cultural identity and traditions vis-à-vis the need to preserve and conserve the natural world.

He invites his viewers to stop and look below the surface at issues, which he references through arid worlds revealing intertwined forms and rich textures which speak volumes once they are recognized in the shadows.

In *Witnesses*, Butler paints an abstract sea of faces with interwoven eyes, each fixing their stare on the same scene but with different interpretations, looks, and depth of reasoning; some faces appear complete, while others have either one or two eyes missing or altogether lack the ability to speak in mouth-less faces. In *Interrupted* we see the subtle dynamics within a group of six women dressed identically, casting questioning looks in the same direction, as if disturbed in mid-sentence.

Butler is able to capture the subtle power struggle in these different scenes and groups, through nuanced expressions revealing the intricacies and complexity in people's interpretation of the same thing. We see how Butler's poetic interpretation of the world is deeply rooted in his profound understanding of how community and culture is inextricably linked with science, the natural world, and technology.

In his artist statement, Butler speaks about the peculiarity of "objectivity and subjectivity within the mind and soul of the community" which he explores on each canvas.

"We are excited to showcase Victor Butler's work for the first time in Nigeria at two venues, Temple Muse and at the ArtXLagos fair," said Sandra Mbanefo Obiago, the Founder and Artistic Director of SMO Contemporary Art. "The complexity, sophistication, and subtle depth of Butler's art definitely sets him apart as an African Master."

"Butler's fantastic art also cross references the evolution of African design in a very futuristic way, commented Avinash Wadhwani, Director of Temple Muse. "Nuance fits perfectly into both visual art and contemporary fashion as Butler's futuristic designs and forms resonate with a renaissance creative community in Lagos and beyond."

The exhibition, which is sponsored by Access Bank and Veuve Clicquot, opens to the public on Thursday, November 1, and runs until December 7th, 2018.

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