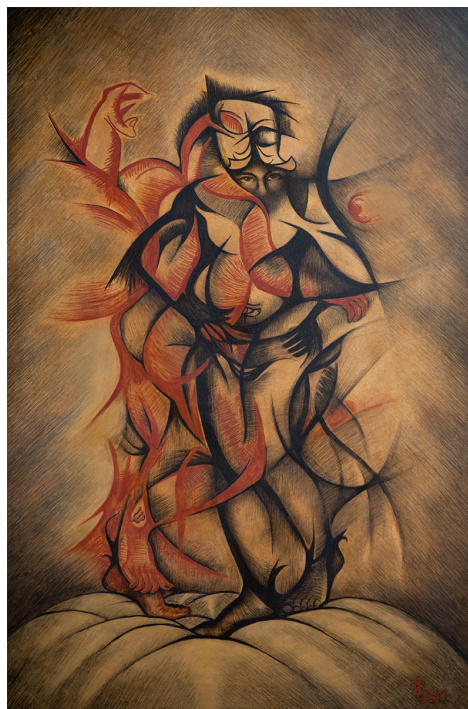


Bringing Home the Last Rebel: *Oseloka Osadebe's Inner Light*



Inner Light by Oseloka Osadebe, Conte crayon on board, 2013, 123 x 80.5cm

(October 15, 2018; Lagos, Nigeria) SMO Contemporary Art is proud to present *Inner Light*, a retrospective exhibition of rare works by Prof Oseoloka Osadebe, a member of the famous Zaria Art Society, popularly called the Zaria Rebels, who are the founding fathers of contemporary art in Nigeria. This historically significant body of work will be showcased at the National Museum, Onikan from October 22nd – December 7th, 2018.

Inner Light is Oseloka Osadebe's first retrospective exhibition of eighty-five paintings, sketches, drawings, posters, and one sculpture, a remarkable collection of works spanning over fifty years of artistic practice. Osadebe left Nigeria in the early 1960's and is the last rebel to come home, sharing works created over a lifetime of experimental practice.

The exhibition traces his artistic journey from growing up in the bustling city of Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria, in the 1930s and 1940s, to studying in Zaria, Northern Nigeria from 1958 to 1962 alongside other greats like Uche Okeke, Demas Nwoko, Yusuf Grillo, and Bruce Onobrakpeya, to eventually leaving Nigeria on a scholarship to pursue graduate studies in the United States followed by years teaching in America as a professor of theatre.

Osadebe's eclectic body of work range from abstraction to realism, exploring broad themes of culture, self-actualization, spirituality and identity. His years of teaching theatre lend a unique perspective to his works.

“The occasion of Oseloka Osadebe’s first one-person exhibition in Nigeria in more than fifty years is a remarkable event that will no doubt fill in one more of the many gaps in the modern Nigerian art historical scholarship,” wrote Chika Okeke-Agulu a leading international scholar of African Art and Professor at Princeton University. “Osadebe’s artistic journey has indeed been a long one. From the young artist who with his Art Society peers at the dawn of political independence in 1958 announced their commitment to a formal language informed by indigenous traditions, to an early career in the United States, during which he explored modes of abstraction first developed by the historical avant-garde, and finally to the mature artist who found renewed interest in realism, his evolution is quite remarkable.”

“We are delighted to be part of the homecoming of Oseloka Osadebe, and present this important body of work at the National Museum because of its historic importance for Nigeria and the world,” said Sandra Mbanefo Obiagio, the exhibition curator and Founder of SMO Contemporary Art.

The exhibition is sponsored by Access Bank, Deutsche Bank, The Wheatbaker, Louis Gunrtum Wines and the Lagos State Government, and opens to the public on Monday October 22nd and runs until December 7th, 2018.

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for more information please call Moni at 0815 982 9123 or email info@smocontemporaryart.com

About Oseloka Osadebe

Professor Oseloka Osadebe (born 1934) is an outstanding artist, playwright, theatre director, and teacher. He grew up in Onitsha, Anambra State, and from an early age, distinguished himself as a brilliant draughtsman, eventually earning acceptance to the prestigious Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology in Zaria. He became a pioneer member of the famous Zaria Art Society and graduated in 1962 with a specialisation in painting and sculpture. He proceeded to teach art at the University of Nigeria Nsukka from 1962 to 1964, before leaving the country on an Aggrey Fellowship for African Students to pursue graduate studies in the United States. He graduated with a Master’s in Fine Arts degree from the Art Institute of Chicago, in 1967 and received a second master’s degree in 1973 from the Goodman School of Drama also in Chicago, specialising in scene design, lighting and directing. He completed his doctoral work at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois in 1981, specialising in Western and African Theatre and Drama and spent his career teaching theatre and set design at numerous universities including Jackson State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Tougaloo College, Spelman College, and Central State University. He is a member of the Association of Theatre in Higher Education and the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education. Osadebe retired in 2007 and has spent the last eleven years reviving his passion for visual arts

at his studio in Jackson, Mississippi. He returns to Nigeria for the first time in over 50 years to present a retrospective exhibition of rare works he created from 1960 to 2014.

About SMO Contemporary Art

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. Founded by Sandra Mbanefo Obiogo, SMO holds cutting edge art exhibitions which showcase masters and exciting new talent expressing their creativity through art, performance, film and new media. SMO is experienced in organizing symposia, conferences, training and events, which provide a platform for the creative industry to inspire and strengthen humanity's aspiration for the good society.