

## **PRESS RELEASE**

*Millennial artists interrogate cultural hybridity in the wake of Afrofuturism*

[Lagos, Nigeria, September 06, 2020] SMO Contemporary Art is proud to present Neo Custodians, a virtual exhibition of sixteen works in painting, graphic illustration, hyper realistic drawings and collage by three young artists, Ifeatuanya "Ify" Chiejina, Nwakuso Edozien, and Johnson Eziefula, who aim to redefine, interrogate, and celebrate their identity.

These three young artists sift through layers of social, genetic, and cultural inheritance and influences in an attempt to define, examine, and celebrate their identity. Ify's works speak about the duality experienced when attempting to internalize societal precepts, Nwakuso uses mixed media as a metaphor to address the various layers and complexities of genealogical and geographical impact on the self, and Johnson takes on a psychological approach with the use of light and color to emphasize the permeation of cross-cultural influences.

"These "neo custodians" do not claim to have arrived at an answer, but with each brush stroke expose questions buried beneath the surface. They decipher the burden of the Millennial who navigates the notion of self by interrogating all inheritance and all influence" said Nneoma Ilogu, curator of the exhibition.

The exhibition is an exciting mixture of media at the hand of artists who are at the beginning of their artistic journey, exploring and finding their authentic voice in an artmarket saturated by many trend-followers. At a critical time of black political consciousness, especially amongst people of color, and with the spotlight being thrown on how art reflects the Black Lives Matters movement, these young artists bring a fresh, multi-textured sensitivity and depth to the global conversation around identity and culture.

"Chiejina, Edozien, and Johnson reveal a continuous sensibility that asks the spectator to recompose the continuity of a narrative of heritage and identity. A vivid incompleteness is the potential of a new era of custodians and substitutes a static fulfillment of a transforming role. Being a Neo Custodian evolves into something thrilling as we are invited to enter laboratories of discourses" commented Dr. Charlotte Langhorst, Art Historian.

Neo Custodians runs from September 6 - September 30, 2020 and can be viewed on SMO Contemporary Art's website.

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