

SMO Contemporary Art is pleased to present our summer exhibition 'JOURNEYS', a showcase of 33 paintings, mixed media works and sculptures, by ten emerging and mid-career artists from Nigeria and Zimbabwe, hosted by the Wheatbaker.

The exhibition features works by Ademola Ojo, Aluu Prosper, Collins Abinoro, Ejiro Fenegal, Iniobong Usoro, Praise Sanni-Adeniyi, Prudence Chimutuwah, Robert Oniha, Sanjo Lawal and Tumininu Gbebire, which explore the diverse questions we grapple with on our life journeys in search of meaning. The artists, ranging in age from 23 to 39, present a cross-generational analysis of critical themes such as cultural identity and rootedness, the spiritual and physical search for home, and humanity's yearning for safety, abundance and a place for enfolding.

In an age of ever increasing multi-kulti hybrid ethnicities, Ademola Ojo, Aluu Prosper and Robert Oniha's experimental works delve into the roots of our cultural identity, traditions, and beliefs within a globalized context. Iniobong Usoro, Sanjo Lawal and Tumininu Gbebire tackle critical socio-political and cultural questions arising from world-wide migration patterns due to diverse factors including climate change, while Collins Abinoro and Ejiro Fenegal create impressive sculptures out of stone, marble dust, newspaper clippings and up-cycled cutlery which comment on governance, identity, and spirituality.

The striking collage works out of decommissioned bank notes, snippets from magazines, and personal letters by Prudence Chimutuwah from Zimbabwe, explore female empowerment within male dominated spaces. The poignant surreal portraits of Praise Sanni-Adeniyi reflect the mental and emotional struggles all of us encounter on our physical and meta-physical journeys.

"The idea of "Journeys" was inspired by the rising "Japa" brain drain we are experiencing in Nigeria, and the fact that the entire world is seeing increasing migration pressure due to economic, environmental and political challenges," explained Majid Biggar, the exhibition's curator and SMO Gallery Manager. The diversity of artworks and mediums presented serve as a mirror, reflecting our own journeys, and provoking introspection on the paths we have traversed."

The exhibition is open to the public from July 9 - September 10, 2023 and is hosted and supported by The Wheatbaker, with drinks sponsored by the K Foundation.

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