

Kenny Adewuyi



AFFINITY



Cover image: Who feels it knows it all, 2000. 2/4, H 30cm, B 32cm, P 38cm

AFFINITY

An Exhibition of

Sculptures by Kenny Adewuyi
and

Watercolors by Chinwe Uwatse

March - April, 2014

Lagos, Nigeria





Connecting

I am delighted to welcome you to *Affinity*, an exhibition of sculptures by Kehinde Ken Adewuyi and water colors by Chinwe Uwatse. The exhibition of 16 sculptures and 24 watercolors is being presented by two experienced Nigerian artists who both have a deep commitment to drawing attention to the struggles and questions of human existence through their art.

Both artists were born at the beginning of Nigeria's independence movement (1959 and 1960 respectively), and have over 20 years of artistic practice, drawn from rich cultural traditions that make their inspiration rooted in African history and identity.

Uwatse, a globally recognized artist with a second studio in Cannes, France, creates watercolors and ink drawings which have a light, almost translucent quality, rich in symbol and layered in soft hues and meaning. She is best known for focusing on the female ethos with a unique style that draws on the asymmetrical, two dimensional culture of traditional Igbo female body adornment called *uli*. She uses uli inspired colors, patterns and symbols to comment on the pressures and joys of universal womanhood.

She first became fascinated by the intricate uli tattoos on women and symbols on traditional architecture as a child during the Nigerian civil war. This fascination was later enhanced while studying art at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka, under the mentorship of Professors Uche Okeke and Obiora Udechukwu who brought the Uli Art movement into global focus. Today her rich, ephemeral works and poetry touch on themes such as fertility, beauty, affirmation and wonder.

"My affinity to Uli is both conscious and subconscious," Uwatse explains. 'The design concept and ideographs make perfect sense. So in my art, I try to see patterns, lines and emotive hues, representing and interpreting these the best I can".

Adewuyi, who studied art at Ahmadu Bello University, uses the lost wax technique, which dates as far back as the 9th century Igbo Ukwu tradition. He creates unique bronze sculptures which portray universal themes such as struggle, affection, and poverty. His unmistakable elongated forms, with exaggerated feet and torsos either curled into themselves, or drawn out and extended beyond normal proportion, express a gravitas of the human spirit.

"I employ methods of exaggeration and elongation of the human figure to best portray and express my inner feelings about the subjects that I often see in my environment," Adewuyi explains. "The human existence is full of ups and down but man must take courage and not lose hope despite the challenges of life." Adewuyi, who also maintains a

study in Vosges, France for six months a year, was mentored by the late Gani Odutokun, and grapples with complex philosophical and existential questions reflected in his bold, heavy sculptures.

Affinity is Temple Muse's first exhibition this year, presenting two internationally recognized artists who have not had solo exhibitions in Nigeria for many years, although their works have been featured at the Terra Kultur and Arthouse Contemporary auctions, as well as the Bonhams *Africa Now* auctions in the UK.

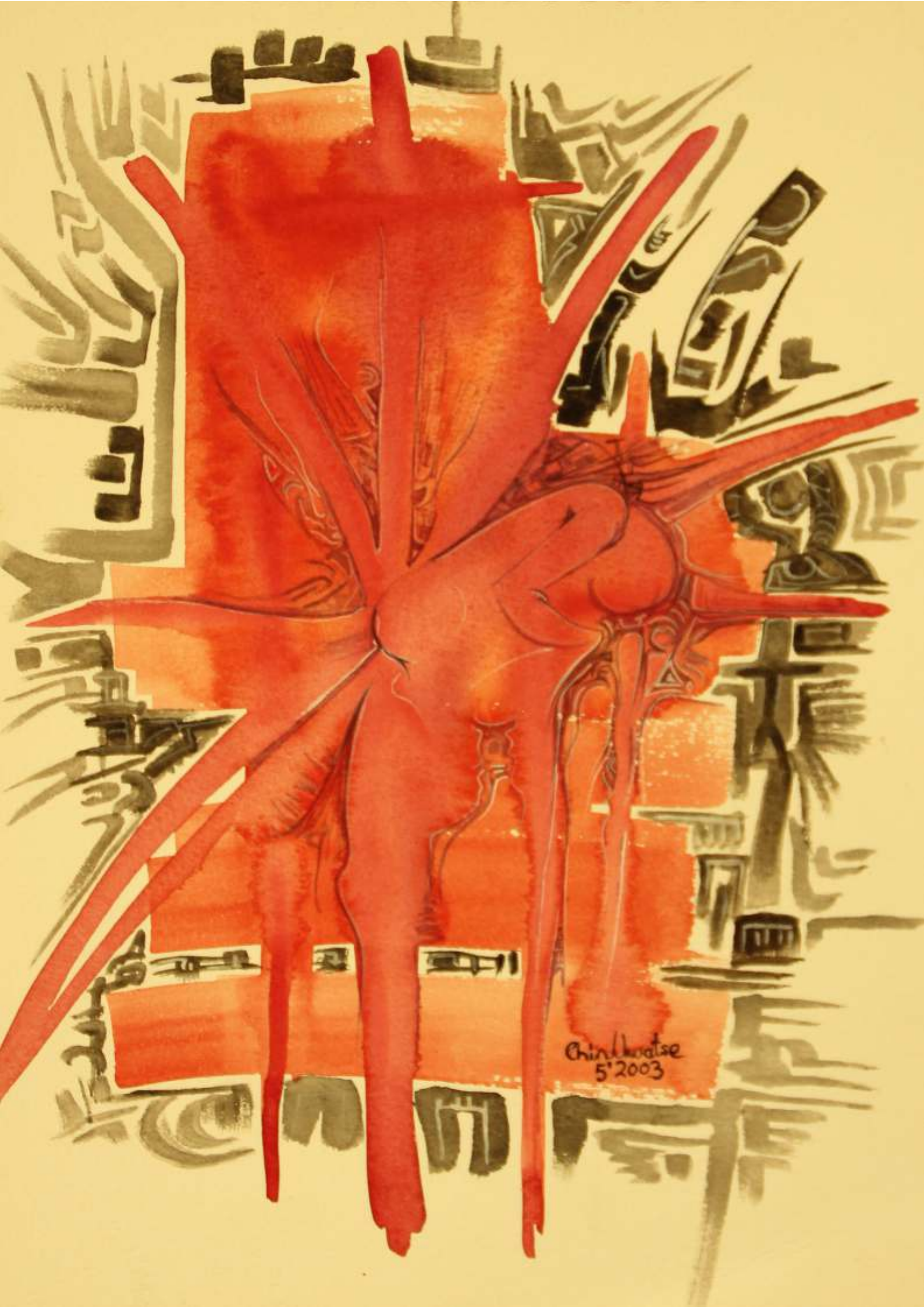
Uwatse's intricate and delicate works and Adewuyi's bold and massive sculptures equally express a deep affinity to the worlds' suffering masses; their works complement each other, and show a unique African world view that is both traditional and also very contemporary, realistic and also hopeful.

We hope you enjoy Affinity!

Sandra Mbanefo Obiango

Exhibition Curator

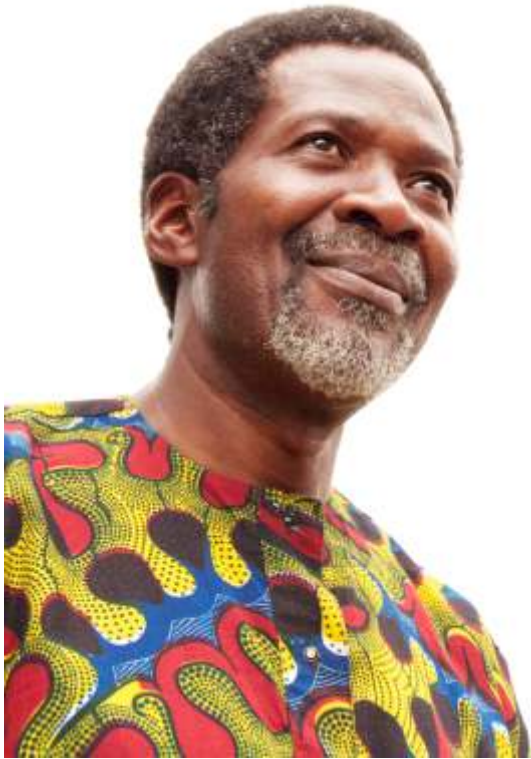
March 2014



Chin/hoatse
5'2003



Kenny Adewuyi



At times in life one finds oneself, irrespective of one's age, gender or status, in situations not desired by oneself consciously or subconsciously. These are the kind of moments I reflect on, and see my art as a means of communicating these instants, my voice self expression.

I employ methods of exaggeration and elongation of the human figure to best portray and express my inner feelings about the subjects that I often see in my environment.

The human existence is full of ups and down but man must take courage and not lose hope despite the challenges of life.



In Contemplation, 2007, 2/4, H 24cm, B 30cm, P 53cm





Time will tell, 1998, 2/3, H 15cm, B 46cm, P 31cm





Arise o you, 2007, 2/4, H 23cm, B 26cm, P 46cm





When you are down, 2007, 2/4, H 18cm, B 29cm, P 48cm



In Conversation

Kenny Adewuyi & Amara Obiago

Amara Obiago: How did your artistic journey begin?

Kenny Adewuyi: During childhood I liked using my hands to make different crafts. In secondary school, one of my eight subjects was arts and crafts and I ended up being the best student. After secondary school, I intended to study law or business administration but a year and a half along the line I could not gain admission. My friends noticed that I spent time drawing and said "Kenny you are good in art -- why don't you study art?" Initially, I said no, because I thought it was just a hobby. But eventually I enrolled in fine arts at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, and this is how I started my journey into studying art.

AO: Who inspired you to become an artist and who were your mentors?

KA: My group of friends inspired me to start my artistic journey. One of my mentors was the great painter, late Gani Otudokun, who was a very strict and principled person. As students we found him very difficult not realizing that the best direction was what he taught us. His art inspired me although he was a painter and I am a sculptor. I was also mentored by an American lecturer, Tyrone Geter, an African American artist. I used to love attending drawing classes at his house, even on Sundays. In those days we used to study Monday through Sunday because we worked 24/7. Even though at the time, we used to think that this was punishment, but the discipline really prepared us for life.

AO: Your sculptures feature elements of exaggeration. Why do you choose to focus more on certain parts of the human body?

KA: The exaggeration of the lower limbs came about at the start of my post-graduate program. I liked sculpting the human figure and with my little knowledge of anatomy I choose to experiment and not respect the normal rules of proportion. The lower torso of the human figure interested me. I tried to lay more emphasis on that rather than the upper part of the body. It is something which has continued subconsciously since then. Even though I am still exploring and developing my art.

AO: How do you prepare for a new piece?

KA: First I work on the form in raw clay. After that, I wax the mould to get the original clay form into wax. Then I make a wax cast and get the wax form which I finally cast into bronze.

AO: How do people respond to your work?

KA: Both locally and internationally, people have really shown great interest in my work because it is so different. It is what comes out of me. I never bother about how people receive my work. All I do is express myself and my inner feelings.

AO: Is your inspiration different in Nigeria versus in your French workspace?

KA: My Nigerian background has a strong influence on my inspiration and my ideas of creativity. Things I see around me are things that motivate my creation and come into play when I make my sculptures.

AO: How could the Nigerian artistic environment be improved?

KA: Let's see more art! Art has not received enough favourable attention in Nigeria as most artists are still living from hand to mouth. We are still finding it difficult to survive but I think history will vindicate us. I would like to see more collectors trying their best to acquire art and support upcoming artists. We need more professional galleries, as well as promoters, and agents to work with artists. We need exhibitions that will really project and promote Nigerian and African art on the continent and abroad.

AO: What really keeps you going in this environment?

KA: It is a very difficult thing to explain because my profession has turned out to be my hobby. I am in art because it is what I love to do and it is what I have passion for. Art has been part of me and whenever I focus on my art I forget about what is bothering me. My art is my medicine.

AO: What themes do you cover in your work and why?

KA: I am very influenced by what I see in my environment and the people I see around me. My work generally focuses on day-to-day issues surrounding life and human existence. The likely poses of standing, sitting, sleeping and squatting... I also comment about those aspects in life that are not all that "rosy".

AO: How has your work evolved over the years?

KA: I am still searching and developing my art and I do not think I have reached my peak. As time goes on I continually try to improve my standards, especially in terms of size. I am working towards my pieces being no less than one meter in height by 2015.

AO: What advice do you have for young artists?

KA: Always focus first on your creativity and think of money last.



A stitch in time saves nine, 2007, 2/4, H 35cm, B 19cm, P 39cm





Silent observer, 1998, 2/3, H 23cm, B 22cm, P 40cm





I can not but hide, 1999, 2/3, H 15cm, B 29cm, P 21cm





Struggle, 1995, 2/3, H 37cm, B 34cm, P 45cm



Kehinde Kenny ADEWUYI

Born 1959 in Nigeria

Education:

- 1985 : B.A Fine Arts, specialization Sculpture.
Ahmadu Bello University. Zaria, Nigeria.
- 1995 : M.F.A Sculpture, Ahmadu Bello University.
Zaria. Nigeria.

Work Experience:

- 1985-1986 : N.Y.S.C Gwagwalada F.C.T. Abuja. Nigeria.
- 1986-1992 : Lecturer Fine Art Department.
College of Education. Sokoto. Nigeria.

1992 to present Studio Artist

Solo Exhibitions:

- 2010 *expokennyadewuyi*
Galerie d'art actuel Socles & Cimaies
MJC Philippe Desforges Nancy France
- 2006 : *Kenny en Bronze*
Espace Volontaire, Remiremont. France
- Automne Africain*
Chapelle St Vincent –Art Act- La Rochelle. France.
- 2004 : *Times in Life*
Maison de France. Ikoyi. Lagos. Nigeria.
- Echanges de dialogues intérieurs*
Centre Georges François Leclerc.
Dijon. France.
- 2000 & 2002 : *Festival Bol d'Air Bol d'Art*
Lapoutroie. Alsace. France.
- 1998 : *Kenny in the Recent*
Alliance Française. Kaduna. Nigeria.
- 1985: *Final Year Exhibition*, Fine Art Department
Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria

Group Exhibitions:

- 2012: Galerie 22 ; Coustellet France
Afrique plurielle, regards croisés au Coeur de l'humanite, Musée Pierre Noël Saint Dié des Vosges France
- 2011 ***As it is Ancestral Space***, Translated Identities; Contemporary African Art Exhibition Series
Mojo Gallery Dubaï U.A.E
- 2009 ***Dialogue between Cultures***, Alliance française and Society of Nigeria Artist SNA, Lagos State Chapter, National Museum, Onikan Lagos. Nigeria
- 2008 ***October Rain*** SNA Lagos Chapter.
National Museum, Onikan Lagos. . Nigeria
- 2006 ***Rencontre en Matière***
La Douera. Malzeville. France
- 2003 ***Bambaras, Baoules, Dogon et cie***
Musée Sundgauvien. Alsace. France.
- 2000 ***Accident and Design***
Brunei Gallery. S.O.A.S. London. UK.
- 11th Festival of Geography***,
Galerie Espace des Arts Plastiques.
Saint Dié des Vosges. France.
- L'Afrique en Création*** Lille 2000
Hôtel de Ville. Roubaix. France.
- Exposition de Résidence d'Artiste
Tour de la Liberté.***
Saint Dié des Vosges. France
- 1999 : ***Accident and Design***
Alliance Française. Kaduna.
Maison de France, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1997 : ***Sanctuaire Ephémère***
Musée Départemental d'Art Ancien et Contemporain, Epinal. France.

1996 : **2+2**
Alliance Française. Kaduna. Nigeria

Sanctuary
Alliance Française. Kaduna. Nigeria.

1995 : ***Times no Boundries***
Maison de France. Ikoyi. Lagos. Nigeria.

Participation in Symposia:

1997 : Sanctuaire Ephémère
Musée d'Art Ancien et Contemporain.
Epinal. France.

1996 : *Sanctuary*
Maraba Pottery. Kaduna. Nigeria.

Artistic Workshops:

2007 : Regular workshops on bronze & sculpture
Centre Alternative. (C.P.I.F.A.C)
Velaine en Haye. France.

2006 : *Approach to Sculpture and Bronze*
Atelier Céline Laurent.
Jean Laincourt. France.

1999 : *Clay Form and Bronze Casting*
Ecole Française. Kaduna. Nigeria.

1998 : *Bronze and Forms*
Maison de la Céramique. Mulhouse. France.

Bronze and Forms
Ecole des Arts Plastiques. Monaco.

Sculpture and Bronze
Espace des Arts Plastiques.
Saint Dié des Vosges. France.

1997 : *Sculpture and Bronze*
Beaux Arts. Mulhouse. France.

Residencies

2000 : Artist in Residence for 3 months
Ecole des Arts Plastiques.
Saint Dié des Vosges. Fra
Artist in Residence
AFAA. Afrique en Création. Transculturelles de Roubaix.
1 Month Visit « Chez Rita ».
Roubaix. France.

International Symposiums:

2002 : **12th International Sculpture Festival : Camille Claudel**, La Bresse. Hautes Vosges. France.

2004 : **14th International Sculpture Festival: Camille Claudel**
La Bresse. Hautes Vosges. France.

Permanent Exhibitions:

Galerie Amarrage-Art Z Saint Ouen France.
Galerie ART ESPACE 83, La Rochelle, France.
Galerie 22 Jamoz, Coustellet, France.
Beddington Fine Art Sculpture Garden, Bargemon, France.
The Mojo Gallery, Al Quoz 1, Dubai U.A.E

Works in Public Collections:

1985 : Sculpture Garden . Ahmadu Bello University .
Zaria. Nigeria.
1998 : Alliance Française. Kaduna. Nigeria.
2001 : Ecole des Arts Plastiques. Saint Dié des Vosges. France.
2004 : Maison de France. Lagos. Nigeria.
Centre Georges François Leclerc. Dijon. France.
2011: MJC Philippe Desforges Nancy France

Awards

1985 Recipient award for best student in sculpture and
general drawing. Ahmadu Bello University. Zaria. Nigeria.
1990 : Award for the best Art Educator in Colleges of
Education., Organised by Federal Ministry of Education.,
Lagos, Nigéria.



Free, 2000, Water Colour, 24cm x 17cm

Chinwe Uwatse



LIFE!!

My People Think...

What if...

What should you do

To move beyond false notions

Odd potions

To reach perpetual and real motion...

Bones - ivory, white, strong and bright

Skin - Sienna, brown, umber, or tan

Blood - red not blue, human as me or you

We are all bones wrapped with skin

Atop seams where red power flows within

An integral part of our Lord's kith and kin

We may be shy, young or old

Spirited, mild or bold

Spotty, dotty, funny or wise

It does not matter our strength or size

We have what it takes be the prize...

Life, an end to all strife

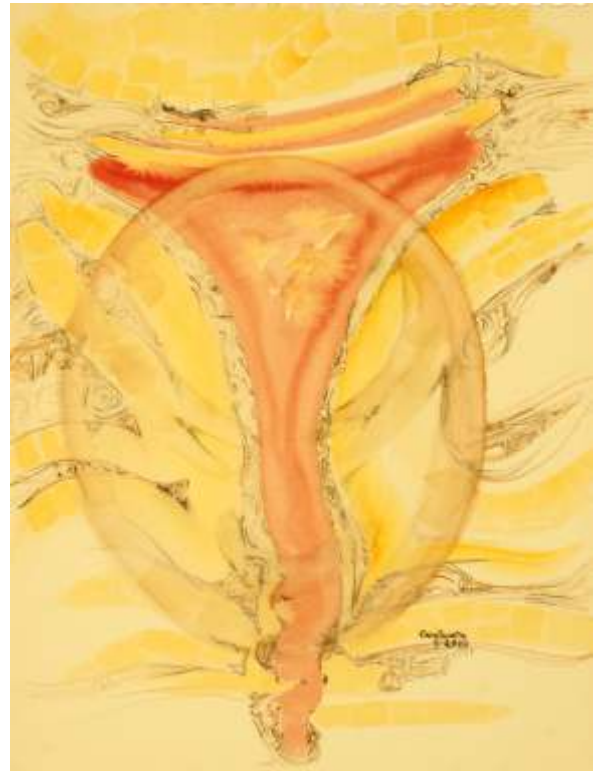




The Universe is me, 2002, Watercolor on Paper, 24cm x 17cm



I am the Centre of the Universe, 2002
Water Colour, 23cm x 32cm



Giver of Life, 2003
Water Colour, 24cm x 17cm

I Carry the World, 2002, Water Colour, 14cm x 10cm



Chin
2002

In Conversation

Chinwe Uwatse & Amara Obiago

Amara Obiago: How did your artistic journey begin?

Chinwe Uwatse: I cannot really say that my artistic journey began at a particular stage in my life. I have always loved to draw and paint, as far back as I can remember.

AO: Who inspired you to become an artist?

CU: My inspiration came from a series of life changing events...I already knew I could draw and paint; initially did not see this as a career path. Veterinary Medicine was my real love when I was in my teens. One had to be good in all the sciences at that time to be able to study Veterinary Medicine. Unfortunately, I was a total dunce in Physics, so that put paid to any chance of my ever studying to become a Veterinarian. I was inspired by Professor Ben Enwonwu; I had also read about two accomplished women, Esto Clara Ugbodaga-Ngu and the very beautiful Afi Ekong -- they actually made me believe in making a career in art.

AO: Who were your mentors?

CU: In university I shared a studio with Tayo Adenaike who was like an older brother; he was doing his Masters degree and literally "bullied" me. Also Obiora Udechukwu who was my academic adviser and supervising lecturer...He was quite scary at the time, and took no nonsense from his students.

AO: When did you start grappling with the traditional ULI design and incorporate this into your art? Is drawing on uli philosophy conscious or subconscious?

CU: My affinity to Uli is both conscious and subconscious. My first conscious introduction to Uli was during the Nigerian civil war. I was fascinated by the indigo patterns, that were carefully drawn on body parts. These were believed to be "protection" against certain ailments, and bad influences. For several years, this memory remained forgotten. My reintroduction to this traditional art form was in university. The design concept and ideographs, then made perfect sense. I guess it also has to do with consciously recognizing that the 'strange' marks and designs make perfect sense! So in my art, I try to see patterns, lines and emotive hues, representing and interpreting these the best I can.



Chinlwa
12/99

AO: What are some common themes you express through your art?

CU: The common themes in my work are fertility, exuberance, affirmation and wonder, at the beauty of nature. No matter the composition or inspiration, I try to dwell on positive affirmation. 'For every rhyme, there is a good reason'.

AO: Why do you mainly use watercolour as your medium?

CU: It is an unforgiving medium that can make amazing compositions, easy to manipulate. However, where one is not careful it can totally ruin a picture; therefore it is quite challenging. I love the excitement of splashing the first layer of colour, and building up on it. One has to be precise about the colours, layers and composition. It is also a 'fast' medium to work with.

AO: How do you begin your artistic process? How do you prepare for a new piece?

CU: It starts off with particular images that keep recurring, subconsciously and consciously. Sometimes, the process begins from a particular riff from music, a line or a verse in poetry or prose. To begin a new piece, I have to 'zone'...listen to music, mainly rock music and tune out imagined and/or perceived distractions.

AO: How is your inspiration different in the Nigerian workspace versus the French workspace? Can we see this difference in your works?

CU: In both workspaces, I am totally immersed in my environment. In Nigeria, my work appears less exuberant than the works I produce in France. The natural light differs in both places. As there is very little atmospheric pollution in the South of France, from factories smoky generators and cars, natural light is more vivid and translates better in painting compositions. However, my paintings in Nigeria display more local philosophical or cosmological compositions.

AO: How has your work evolved over the years? What prompted these changes?

CU: I believe that my work has gone through several stages, actually prompted by overpowering personal emotions. From expressing mainly in blocks of colour, I find that lately I use more lines. I guess the logical explanation would be that: "I have 'travelled many roads', some more travelled than others; I tried



Chinell Watson
2012

to avoid dead ends, crossroads junctions, bends on the road, that were not very clear. The 'climate' on these roads, have varied...ranging from clear, sunny blue skies, with a cool breeze to soothe...all the way to muggy humid hazy confusing ways from which I have had to consciously and subconsciously extricate myself...' The points at which my works change, are the times I have had to give myself a mental shake.

AO: How do you hope people respond to your work?

CU: I hope my works make people think, let their imagination wander and wonder. See beneath the layers of colours and engage with a work on a psychological level.

AO: In conclusion, how could the Nigerian artistic environment be improved?

CU: We artists should realize that we are professionals, learn to work with each other, not compete with one another; we should learn to elevate ourselves and our chosen profession to the top of the social ladder. When we look within our traditions and culture, sifting out those aspects and markers that identify us, and use these in a contemporary context...Then the artistic environment in Nigeria will become a force to be reckoned with.



Chen
99-2001



Still Waters, 2012, Water Colour, 46cm x 61cm



Challuise
2011



Her's , 2009
Water Colour, 45cm x 56cm



His, 2009
Water Colour, 45cm x 56cm

In Five Times Five Years...

Awoke this morning
From a dreamless sleep
A lump in my throat
In my head a discordant beat
Checking an inordinate need to weep

Wondering in my head
Should I return to my bed?
For what am I yearning

Have I been smote
Would I retract
This one act
Should I find that somehow I have erred?

Chinwe Uwatse

2013



Oke Akiko, 2009
Water Colour, 46cm x 61cm





Security, 2009
Water Colour, 44cm x 56cm

CHINWE UWATSE

Nee: Ntephe

Date of Birth 31st January 1960

Education: 2001 – 2003, Master of Science_Human Resource Management, Business School, Enugu State University of Technology (E.S.U.T.)

1977 – 1982, Bachelor of Arts (Hons), Painting Major, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Professional Experience

1982 – 1999, Visual Arts officer (Arts Administrator], National Council for Arts and Culture, Lagos

- Was in charge of organising and curating local and international art exhibitions
- Curator National Art Collection National Council for Arts and Culture
- Curator Traditional Craft Collection National Council for Arts and Culture
- Liaison with traditional artists and craftsperson's nationwide
- Involved in activities of the Society of Nigerian Artists

1994 till date:

Member, Advisory Board, Africa Resource Center Inc. Endicott NY, U.S.A.

Member of the Board, Pendulum Arts Center, Lagos

Member Board of Trustees, Cora Art and Cultural Foundation

Solo Exhibitions*Burdens We Bear*, Terra Kulture, Plot 1376, Tiameyi Savage Street, Victoria Island, Lagos. June 16 – 21, 2007

The Best Is Yet to Come, Virtual Exhibition, Gallery in www.africaresource.com

Dissimulation, Earthly Treasures Gallery, Westboro, Ottawa, Canada July 29 - August 29, 1992

Phantasmagoria (dream sequence), Blackberry/New Dimension, 767, Fulton Street, Brooklyn, New York. November 1991 and National Museums Onikan, Lagos August 1991.

Group Exhibitions

Oreze (The King's Crowd) a group exhibition of paintings, sculptures, and ceramics, in honour of His Royal Majesty Nnaemeka Alfred Ugochukwu Achebe The Obi of Onitsha 7th – 11th November, 2013

Orakwue, a group exhibition of painting, sculpture, and ceramic, in honour of HRM Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe, The Obi of Onitsha (Agbogidi) 6th – 13th April, 2013. Alexis Galleries 282, Akin Olugbade Street, Victoria Island Lagos.

10 Squared. 100 Ways of looking at the World

November 30, 2012 – January 30, 2013. Arts Horizons LeRoy Neiman Art Center, New York

La mujer entre la realidad y la fantasía o un caleidoscopio (Between Reality and Fantasy – A Kaleidoscope) Contemporáneo en Cuzco, Cusco, Peru, July 2010

Woman 2008 Al Kahf Gallery, International Center of Bethlehem, Palestine, February – March 2008

Woman 2007, Windspiel Galerie, Vienna, Austria. October – November 2007

Convergence, An International Exhibition of Art, 2007 Sasthmangalam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. 2007

Identities and Labels, Eight Contemporary Nigerian Women Artists. Pan – African University Lagos. September – October, 2005

Impressions, Bang and Olufsen Center, Ikoyi, Lagos. August 7 - 20, 1999

Nigerian Art, Exhibition at the World International Property Organisation, Geneva, Switzerland. 1995

International Critics Choice, Mitchell Museum, Mt Vernon, Illinois, U.S.A. October - November, 1993.

Publications

Several essays published in the Guardian Newspapers on contemporary Nigerian Art and the place of traditional art in modern Nigeria.

Sponsors



Ruinart is the oldest established Champagne House exclusively producing champagne since 1729. Founded by Nicolas Ruinart in the Champagne Region in the city of Reims the house is today owned by the parent company LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SA. As a patron of contemporary art and design, Maison Ruinart can be found all over the world, wherever the artists of today enjoy the freedom to express themselves and exhibit their work. Ruinart is a proud sponsor of many international art events including Masterpiece London, Art Basel Hong Kong & Miami, MiArt, and PAD Paris & London.



Having opened its doors in May 2008 Temple Muse is West Africa's leading luxury concept store focusing on designer home & giftware, fashion & accessories as well as art & design. Our strength not only lies in offering the very best of world-renowned brands, but also in nurturing homegrown talent from across the continent.

The iconic flagship store equipped with its very own champagne bar is located in the heart of Lagos and possesses a “gallery-like” open feel, where clients can relax & indulge in all things wonderful. Most recently, Temple Muse has hosted a number of specially curated art exhibitions offering its clients cutting edge contemporary art and will soon introduce a new multipurpose design space, 'The Salon', located in the Temple Muse gardens

Editorial & Artistic Direction: Sandra Mbanefo Obiagio
Photography, Layout & Design: Adeyinka Akingbade
Editorial & Project Assistant: Sophia Amara Obiagio

© 2014

ISBN:



Chinlhwatse
5.2003

Chinwe Uwatse



AFFINITY