



DIS LAGOS LIFE

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Cover : Ayanfe Olarinde, Waka Pass (A Side Story), Digital Collage, 21 x 29 cm, 2019

Amanda **IHEME**
Ayanfe **OLARINDE**
Nelly **ATING**
Oluwamuyiwa **LOGO**
Omoregie **OSAKPOLOR**
Somi **NWANDU**



Feb 23 - May 17, 2020

Curated by Nneoma Ilogu





Preface

I have long accepted the adage, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” *Dis Lagos Life* presents amazing images that capture some of the stresses and contradictions of a city I have lived in for 26 years and come to love. Lagos sucks you into a vortex of energy and vibe that is both intoxicating and infuriating. Its mesmerizing spin is exhilarating and energizing, but if one is not careful, the Lagos merry-go-round can spin too fast and blur some of the deeper issues, the joy and the heart-ache, the color as well as the aching lack of millions of Lagosians who traverse this megacity every day.

It is impossible to do an exhaustive expose of Lagos. We don't have enough space nor time. But what we do have in *Dis Lagos Life*, is a sliver of the rough and smooth sides of this forceful megacity, seen through the lenses of six talented artists, who share their personal take on aspects of city life which resonate deeply.

From photos of historical buildings, to the daily struggles of transient communities, to the effects of censorship on the minds of our youth, juxtaposed against the beautiful pattern and repetition of our organic and built environments, this exhibition touches on the complex pressure of life in Lagos while beckoning us to grapple more honestly, with what must change.

Dis Lagos Life is an exciting showcase curated by Nneoma Ilogu, whose aesthetic sensibility has broadened over the past four years of working at SMO. Her thoughtful choice of artists and images reflects her deepened sensitivity to the artistic process, and her ability to draw out more complex stories through on-going conversations she has had with these talented photographers.

We appreciate the long term sponsorship of Louis Guntrum wines, and as we start a new decade, we continue to offer deep gratitude to the Wheatbaker family for allowing us to showcase the best of art in a beautiful setting and for providing a critical platform for artists to share important issues through their creativity.

Sandra Mbanefo Obiogo
Founder & Artistic Director, SMO Contemporary Art



Curatorial Introduction

It is widely said that “the purpose of art is to interrogate and document life”. When I first received the vision for this exhibition, I struggled, as I wasn’t quite sure the nature of my emotions towards Lagos. I found it difficult to encapsulate this enigmatic city with so much wealth, vibrancy, diversity, social engagement, chaos, injustice, and poverty. It became apparent that the solution lay in the process of trying to document the various facets of *Dis Lagos Life*, with fresh ideas, images, and narratives everyone was not necessarily familiar with.

One thing I was certain of, was the need to find the right artists whose works would speak volumes on the theme. Working in the creative industry for the past few years, I have been fortunate to meet a number of talented photographers, who captured and interrogated life in Lagos with audacious images.

DIS LAGOS LIFE offers a fresh perspective and interrogation of daily life in Lagos through the lens of six young dynamic artists, Amanda Ihome, Ayanfe Olarinde, Nelly Ating, Olamuniya Logo, Omoregie Osakpolor, and Somi Nwandu, who all have pertinent narratives about their experience and exposure to Lagos.

To complement these powerful images, quotes from five dynamic writers – Wana Udobang, Jareh Das, Kovie Evi-Parker, Roli Afinotan, and Adeoluwa Oluwajoba have been juxtaposed against the photographs, adding a

deeper dimension to the imagery, as each writer shares their sentiments and reflections of this enigmatic city.

With all of life’s challenges and chaos in Lagos, it’s easy to get overwhelmed, desensitized, and certain events go unreported. However, the works of each of these artists cause us to pause, collectively highlighting history, transience, loss, emotions, and injustice through an honest and critical analysis of lives in this city.

Amanda’s explores the humanity of built spaces, and critically analyzes historical buildings in the Brazilian quarters according to an organic lifecycle. Her photos of ‘Waterhouse’ tells a story of the preservation of the legacy of Papa Esan, a repatriated slave, who used the remuneration he received after slavery, to build a water well for his household and the surrounding community. His house was called “Waterhouse”, and his legacy preserved through the establishment of the Lagos Water Corporation. Amanda’s images explore the birth, life, death and reincarnation of the built environment.

Logor’s photos document familiar everyday themes, while spotlighting the nuances. His black and white images are pure poetry, as well as historical references. For example, his photos of the ubiquitous motorcycles, called “okada” which dotted the Lagos landscape just a few weeks ago, might as well be archival photographs, with the recent ban on this preferred mode

of transportation for the Lagos masses. He documents okada riders, known for their bold irreverence and the passengers, who hang on for dear life as they weave in and out of the daily traffic rush.

From another perspective, Ayanfe, the youngest exhibiting artist, presents photo collages, which address the struggles of city youths hustling for a better life and financial security in a witty, tongue-in-cheek way. Her collage “Wakapass” shows a blocked rear-view mirror, covered with hands, while pedestrians walk past, commenting on the current challenges Lagosians are facing trekking long distances due to lack of sufficient transportation.

Omoregie's ability to immerse himself in transient communities is evident in the raw expressions captured as he silently documented the displacement of waterfront communities since 2014. The photograph of a woman with a bulging head load, walking through traffic into the hazy evening smog, communicates the soulful uncertainty and hopeless resolve of vulnerable citizens of this megacity.

The images created by Nelly, a documentary photographer used to covering conflict areas, are an intimate exposé of unreported stories of those left behind by loved ones who have emigrated. Her images of Tola in her wedding dress, provides us an unveiled glimpse

of the emotional turmoil, mental unrest, and heartbreak associated with deferred love and loss.

From fashion designer to documentary photographer, Somi's work explores the different lives of waterfront communities. Her photograph of a house on stilts cross-layered with images of shimmering waste, creates the illusion of a ramshackle hut suddenly bejeweled. Her images beckon us to look beneath the surface to discover the hidden beauty which can be found in everything.

DIS LAGOS LIFE takes us on a journey through the streets and occurrences in Lagos. It pushes us out of our curated bubbles into the raw beauty and harsh realities of the city, forcing us to engage, discuss, speak out, and make change – even if just in our little corners.

So buckle up, and I hope you enjoy the ride.

Nneoma Ilogu
Curator



"There is something about this city with its vivaciousness, and clutter, and hardcore exterior that begs to be stripped bare. To be captured. To be remembered. With its yellow buses, and bridges, and waterscapes, and open markets, the city is alive. A constant buzz that conceals itself within the menacing grin of hustlers and the glumness of commuters too long in the heat and unending traffic, Lagos is pulsating with hope. This is why we stay here. It is why we return. This madness belongs to us all."

Kovie Parker
Writer, Curator

Amanda IHEME



Amanda Iheme is an architecture photographer and psychotherapist living and working in Lagos, Nigeria. She studied at the University of Cape Coast for a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and received a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from Swansea University. She currently runs her private practice called Ndidi while working as an artist. Her works, exhibited at Art X Lagos 2019 and Lagos Photo 2018, explore themes of history, truth, emotion and spirituality in relation to buildings and spaces.

Through the stories and images of selected buildings in Lagos built between the 1800s and 2010s, this body of work shows that all things created: spaces, people, animals, objects experience the same journey through life. We all have the same story. We are born. While we live, we will experience many transitions from childhood to adulthood. We will sometimes be stagnant and that calls for the process of redefining ourselves. We have the capacity to heal and restore whatever back to life and as we are energy and energy can never be destroyed, we reincarnate. For those we leave behind when we leave this physical plane, they find a way to carry on by preserving the memories of us.



Jaekel House - Restoration, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018

Restoration

“Returning something to its earlier good conditions”

Jaekel House built in 1898 was named after the Late Francis Jaekel, the superintendent of the National Railway Corporation and was restored by Professor John Goodwin in 2010.

It now serves as the head office of the non-governmental organization, Legacy1995 which aims to identify, preserve, restore and reconstruct historical buildings, monuments and areas of the built environment.



Cuban Lodge - Transition, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018

Transition

"The process of changing from one state to another"

The Cuban Lodge was built by Afro-Cuban, Hilario Campos in 1931 to house repatriated slaves as they moved from being slaves to free men who had returned home.



Glover Hall - Reincarnation I, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018

Reincarnation

"A philosophical or religious concept that the non-physical essence of a living being starts a new life in a different physical form or body after biological death"

The first Glover Hall was built in the 1800s on a piece of land donated by Madam Tinubu as a memorial to honor Governor Glover's (Governor of Lagos Colony, 1863-1872) achievements. It stood by the marina where the Union Bank Building stands today. In 1961, it was torn down and re-built further back on the same piece of land by Watkins Grey in 1963 which is where it stands till today.



Glover Hall - Reincarnation II, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018



Glover Hall - Reincarnation III, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018



Waterhouse - Preservation I, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018

Preservation

"To maintain or to keep alive, a memory or quality"

Waterhouse was built in the late 1800s by Papa Joao Esan Da Rocha, an Ijesha man who had been captured by Ijebu traders and sold into slavery. After the abolishment of the slave trade, he returned to Lagos with his family and built his home on Kakawa street which had been apportioned to him for resettlement. It bears the name Waterhouse because Papa Esan built a big sanitary well for himself and sold some of the water to Lagosians at a time when there was no portable water in the city.

His son, Candido Da Rocha invested in his father's estate after he passed turning the water well into what we now know as the Lagos Water Corporation or Iju Waterworks. Today, the well sits quietly and unused in the yard at Waterhouse on Kakawa street in Lagos Island.



Waterhouse - Preservation II, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018



Waterhouse - Preservation III, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018



Waterhouse - Preservation IV, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2018



Waterhouse - Preservation V, Photographic print , 30 x 42 cm, 2018

*"I often think that there is the world and there is Lagos.
The city is this cacophonous, kaleidoscopic estuary of
magical and magnetic energy. Here we live on the
edge, manifesting dreams and conjuring miracles.
This place is an assault on the senses and everyday this
city presents you with a new kind of dystopic adventure.
Lagos is seductive, it fucks with your emotions, gaslighting
you that you keep questioning your own sanity but you
will always find yourself coming back.
This city never truly unclenches its fist"*

Wana Udobang
Poet, Journalist, Filmmaker

Ayanfe OLARINDE



Ayanfe Olarinde (born 1996) is a self taught multimedia visual artist. She obtained a BSc. in Microbiology from the University of Lagos in 2018. Her journey into art stems from her love of scribbling, a process through which she is able to unpack her emotions in playful and intriguing ways, whilst speaking on broader issues of self exploration as well as the stories that often are untold. Ayanfe's forms of expressions have evolved to include photography and mixed media collages, and the underlying theme through all her works is the interrogation of society and governance. She has participated in multiple group exhibitions, and her works have been written about in publications such as NowThis News, CNN, Euro news, Konbini, and RADR Africa to name a few.

*“ My aim, through my art, is to advocate for the marginalized,
raise awareness, and impact society for good.”*



Waka Pass (A Side Story), Digital Collage, 21 x 29 cm, 2019

“Waka pass” reveals the untold truth behind the pitiable state of a people looking for change. The masses are constantly a second option after self satisfaction, by the same people who should treat them as priority. Self-enrichment, possession of power and influence has been ranked over the welfare and productivity of the people.



Postcards From Lagos, Photography and digital collage, 29 x 21 cm, 2019

Dear Lagos Jesus,

From one heart to another,
the gusto to industrialize our dear Lagos is inevitably glaring,
but we can't help but cry for help.
Our city is only as good as the people living in it.



Far-fetched I, Photography and digital collage, 29 x 21 cm, 2019

Emoting through the ranging thickness of my scribbling, I find harmony in crooked lines, which for me, has become a skillset forged from the heat of frustration along the path to self-discovery. Through my art, I make crooked lines into something meaningful, a metaphor which I believe relates to life and its ability to create beauty out of imperfection.

A self proclaimed explorer, I am always seeking new mediums and means of expression, and gather inspiration from personal experiences, my immediate society, and music. Through the dynamic nature of my works, I connect my viewers to multiple perspectives of the themes addressed. My aim, through my art, is to advocate for the marginalized, raise awareness, and impact society for good.



Far-fetched II, Photography and digital collage, 29 x 21 cm, 2019

Every system needs a balance.

"Irunmu lowo, talika darun, mekunu rogo"

means "Money is hard to get, the poor have suffered".

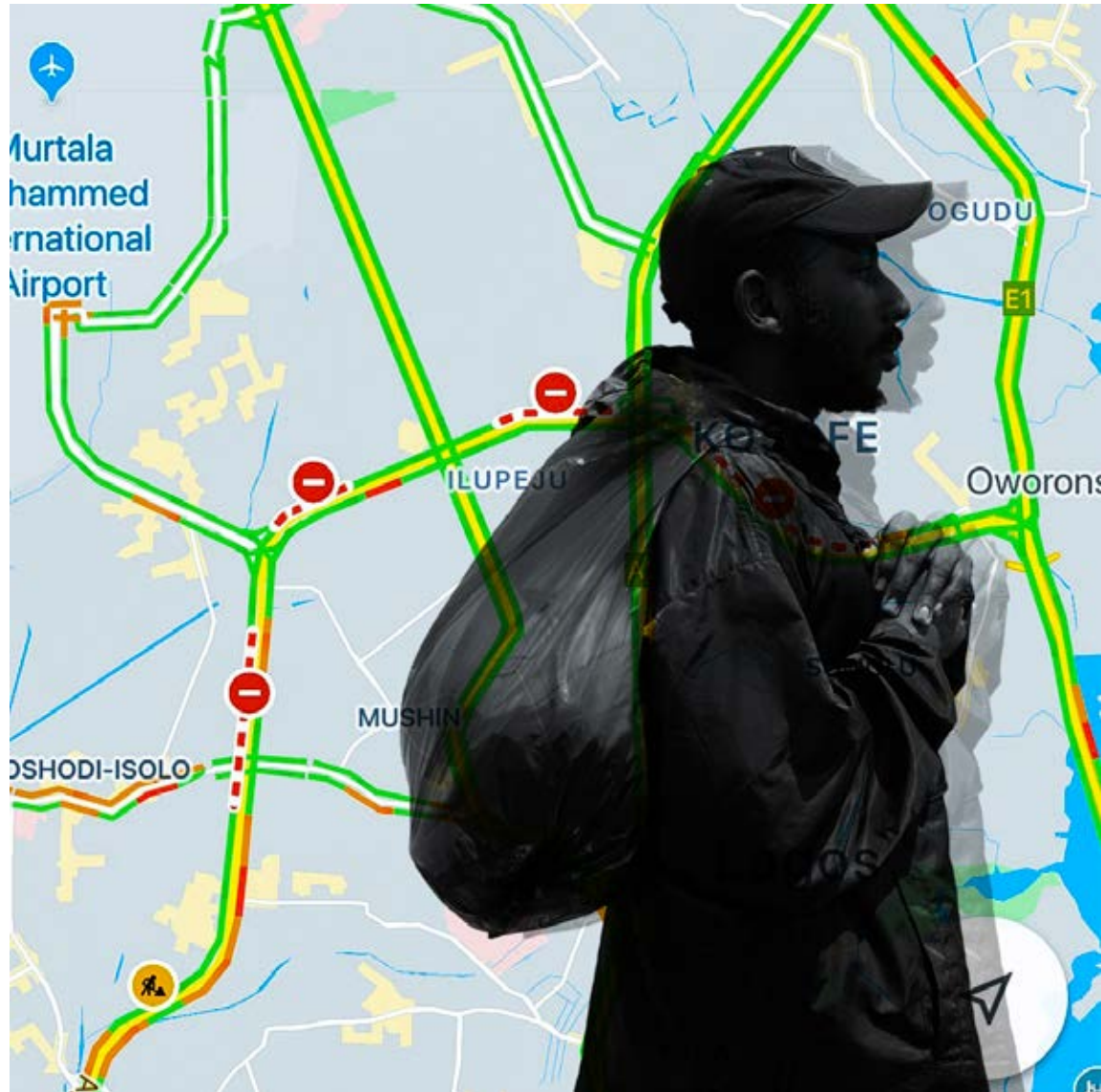
The ordinary man is kept in constant struggle to survive, yet there's little or nothing to show for it, as the benefits of his hustle diminish before they get to him. He is subjected to living off crumbs and leftovers and nobody really cares.

The Lagosian Hustle Diaries...



Bill Hush, Photography and digital collage, 29 x 21 cm, 2019

"Bill Hush" is a realization of the facts of our continuous wallowing. Before now, people had experienced freedom to live, create and share experiences, as it should be in a democratic nation. With the recent move to permanently limit and restrict communications of the ill-treatments and societal issues, it is obvious, the priority has never been *"of the people, for the people or by the people."*



Wakadobe !, Photography and digital collage, 29 x 21 cm, 2019

With the increasing hardship, migration has become the order of the day. The endless hurdles, long transit time and difficulty in migrating isn't enough to put a halt to the unending search of greener pastures - if there are even any.

Dis Lagos Life
Brimming with dreams cradled in our mothers' prayers
in faraway land
Fast and faster, the hustle and bustle
To check the clock, is to lose time
Of the tenacious and the bold, who lose their foothold
Mining the wealth this land has promised

Dis Lagos Life
Where blaring horns pierces through morning reverie
And each dawn, fraught with relentless hope than it
can hold
Hope so brittle to be shattered in a blink,
And mountain peaks flattened in a twinkle

Dis Lagos Life
Where crazy is the norm
Because sanity comes at a cost too high
A life where feet race beside wheels,
for pennies that will vacate pockets just as fast
But Dis Lagos Life,
We die here.

Roli O'tsemaye
Writer

Nelly **ATING**



Nelly Ating (born 1989) is a freelance reporter doubling as a photojournalist reporting from the front lines of conflict zones in Nigeria. She is currently exploring conceptual documentary work on flouted topics in her immediate society. Her work has been published on CNN, Premium Times, Vanguard, Thisday. Ating was also recently featured on CNN Africa and BBC World Service Radio for her work in documenting victims of the decade old insurgency in Nigeria. She has also showcased her work at the 2020 Lagos Photo Festival and UAE Cultural Perspective art show.

Nigeria is currently embroiled in an emigration crisis. A sizeable number of its working-class population under 40, are desperate to travel out of the country for a chance to have a better life and live in a safe environment.



Tola Shittu I, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019

Governments around the world are finding it difficult to grapple with the challenges migration presents such that Nigerians who are poor, who can't afford the visa and flight ticket make their way to Europe through the desert, damning the sun, but end up inside the Mediterranean. For the few of them who manage the sea, their arrival fuels the conversation around migration in Europe.

While the middle class who can afford it pay to make their way to Canada, USA and Europe. This is not the first time Nigerians are migrating amass for greener pastures, in the '80s due to the diminishing oil revenue and introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). In 2018, the Pew Research Center revealed that 45% from over 200 millions of Nigerians planned to move to another country within five years. Citing violence, unemployment, or escape from poverty as a driver. The majority of these accidental migrants are young adult professionals who are the backbone of Nigeria's fledgling economy.



Tola Shittu II, Photographic print, 14.8 x 21 cm, 2019

Love & Loss explores an intimate side to Nigeria's emerging middle-class migration crisis who are separated from their partners by distance and visa. Revealing the complexities that define the distant relationship with their partners at home and abroad. This project captures these Nigerian partners at home, while they are alone in their emptiness, far from the comfort of their lovers, discussing how they handle intimacy, how they battle the separation, fears, losing their identity in the absence of each other and interaction with new culture/society. Also, the torture of visa application process with its own financial burden, denials and fear.



Tola Shittu III, Photographic print, 14.8 x 21 cm, 2019



Tola Shittu IV, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Tola Shittu V, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019

Tola Shittu, 27, Lagos Nigeria, a new bride poses in her custom-made wedding dress. A little malfunction on the dress but the memories of her wedding day still lingers. Her husband Bayo, a Medical Doctor in the UK flew back to Nigeria two-weeks to their wedding on short notice. Distance has always been part of her relationship with Bayo as he left Nigeria due to poor compensations, countries like the UK, the US, and Canada have become a popular destination for its health practitioners. Bayo was among the lucky ones to pass his professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test (PLAB), this ensures that he is qualified, has the right knowledge and skills to practice medicine in the UK.

"For some reason (actually known to me), Quora has been sending me emails about narcissism. I mean, I've been called one and I've known many. Since this email infestation, I've learned that there are all sorts of terms that describe the operating system of a narcissist: 'The Love Bombing', 'The Sudden Tantrums', 'The Discard', 'The Hoover Stage' (when they don't want you, but also don't want anyone to have you), and the retaliating 'Absolutely No Contact' declaration from the victim. Scrolling through the pool of testimonies one day, I remembered walking through New York with my friend who had just separated from her mother- I described what I was going through with Lagos, and she said "You know cultures can be narcissistic too right?"

Sheila Chukwulozie
Performance artist, Writer

Oluwamuyiwa **LOGO**



Logo Oluwamuyiwa (born 1990) is a photographer and filmmaker. His approach revolves around conceptual and documentary style photography. Logo's interest in visual arts is to be a shrewd observer of the human carnival by capturing and retelling stories from perspectives that are often overlooked, ignored and taken for granted. He graduated in 2011 with a Bachelors degree in Computer and Information Science from the Lead City University, Ibadan. In 2016, Logo took part in the participatory mobile intervention for public buses in Lagos produced by British Council/Watershed UK's #PlayableCityLagos, and in 2015 he also did an experimental series titled "elephant in the room" as part intervention on the issue of Gated Communities & Public spaces workshop organized by the Goethe Institute, Manila, Philippines. Logo was selected for the Future Assembly, a London based professional development platform for artists from Africa and its diaspora and the New Dimensions Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality LAB in Cape Town, South Africa. His work has been exhibited locally and internationally .



Joy Uncapped, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



Danfo Driver, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019

Even on the days when its ironic generosity offers less, Lagos is to me, what New York is to Photographers like Gary Winogrand, Diane Arbus Robert Frank, Joel Meyerowitz and the cities Stieglitz romanticized.

Like many before me, I have assumed the role of an observer of this great human carnival, the most populated African city famous for her manic ability to go from an embarrassing zero to an impressive hundred in all its aesthetics, including her prized jewel: "Her Human Resources – The Lagosian".

By visually asking "If I strip Lagos of the color, what will I find?", Monochrome Lagos presents an alternative visual vocabulary through which to comprehend this city — one that strips Lagos down to its component parts, as an encounter between the individual and the built environment. In a palette limited to black and white I play with contrast, line and architectural forms to frame the poetic juxtapositions of Lagosians relating to their city. The project muffles the sensorial tropes of Lagos, bringing to the fore the spaces wherein one can find solace within the city. The captions are often poetic ruminations on presence and absence. I am seeking to explore a dialogue between word and image that could re-envision the working structures of the photo-essay.

Monochrome Lagos is often showcased via virtual digital social media platforms. This serves as a living archive of the city and allows engagement with Lagosians that has embraced the tech revolution. The seriousness of the work on these temporal platforms encourages a conscious observation of viewers' surroundings in a city where everything is constantly in a rush. The ultimate external objective of the project is to hone a paradigm shift in how the city is perceived and appreciated by a global audience.

The beauty I have found even in the barest forms offers a lasting artistic satisfaction irrespective of the city's feistiness. At heart this is a love affair with Lagos as canvas and muse.



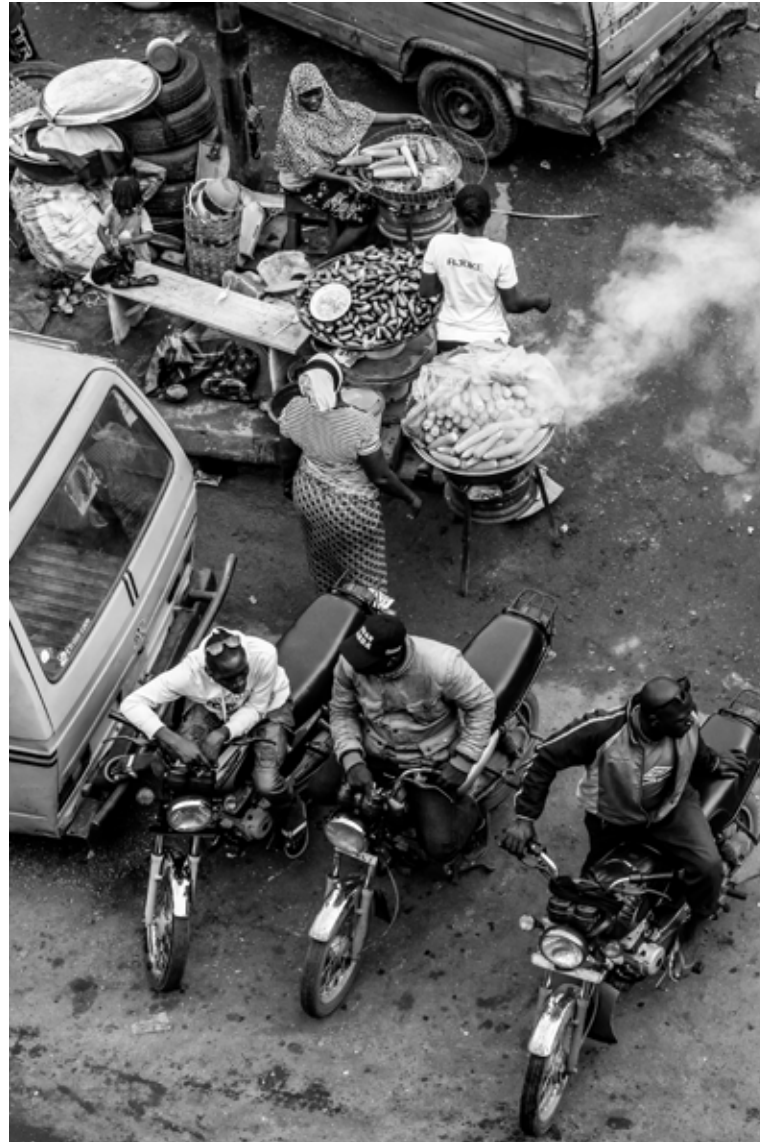
Scammer Watch, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Mosako, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



All Shades Of Form And Movement, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



Theatre Of Surrealist Idiosyncrasies, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



Bold Stride, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Okada Shenanigans-, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Raindrops and Drifting Thoughts, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Reflection On A Busy Street, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Meruwa, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



Put Your Back Into It, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



Man and a Mannequin, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



Raw Textures, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Smiling Eyes, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



Duck and Style, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Holy snacking, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



Movement, Photographic print, 42 x 30 cm, 2019



After School Stroll, Such Memories, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019



Fishermen and Pedestrian Silhouettes, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019

“Lagos is a city often spoken of in terms of ‘urban sprawl,’ a term at risk of flattening out and simplifying the variety and complexity of its urban expansion over the last fifty-nine years. If Nigeria’s independence brought a wave of twentieth-century (indigenous) modernist architecture to separate the city from its colonial past, and birth a new indigenous identity to match the city’s industrialization, the 2000’s brought a need to separate old from new, dystopia from utopia with new gated functional areas of the city and economic zones pitched against the ruins of an old Lagos no one seems (as of yet) to know how to sustain or transform. The city’s shoreline, then becomes a site for future projection and potential that has not been without contestation. From the ongoing realization of Eko Atlantic, to displacement of water-side communities forcibly to grab land, Lagos has long been a city segregating its populations based on class, and future projections seem even more inclined to sustain the rich. Let’s hope the tide turns and Lagos becomes more inclusive for all.”

Jareh Das
Researcher, Curator, Writer

Omoriegie **OSAKPOLOR**



Omoriegie Osakpolor (born 1990) is a documentary photographer and filmmaker. He received his BA (Hons) in English and Literature from the University of Benin, Edo State. He is presently a mentee at the Nlele Institute Mentorship Programme and was nominated for the Edwin George Prize for Photography at The Future Africa Awards in 2017. Omoriegie believes photography can be a source for societal change and hopes to engage his audience and the society in general in cultural interactions. His work focuses primarily on culture and social justice and have been featured on CNN Africa and his works in both solo and group exhibitions locally and internationally, including Bournemouth University (Arts By the Sea 2019), UK and at the 12th Bamako Biennale (2019), to name a few. His short film; "Grey" which was partly inspired by Ed Kashi's "Aging in America," won the Fashola Photography Foundation Prize (2019).

Lagos is the commercial hub of Nigeria with a population of more than 20 million. An estimated 4,000 people migrate into the city daily from other parts of Nigeria and other countries in search of economic opportunities that they hope the city would offer.

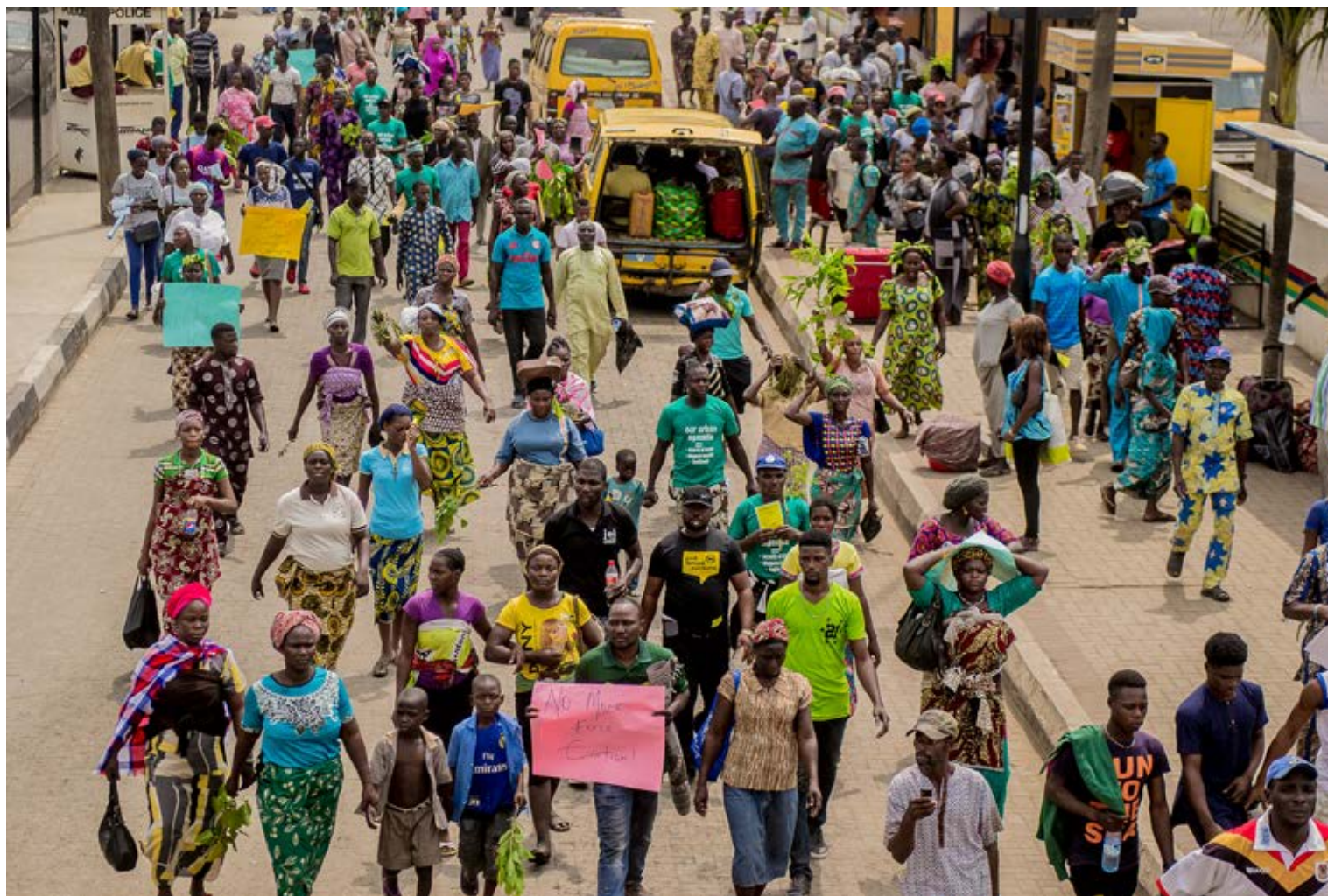
With this influx of people comes the problem of housing coupled with the state government's capitalistic and elitist desire to make Lagos a mega city like the other major commercial cities in the world. These problems (high demand in housing by the growing population and the Lagos State Government's economic desire to make the city "world class") gave rise to gentrification. At the receiving end of this are the urban poor, especially those who live and have known the waterfront communities as their ancestral home. 90% of who are the Egun or Gunuvi tribe, a tribe of mostly fishermen and women found in South Western Nigeria (Lagos and Ogun States) and other parts of West Africa.



Displaced - Tarkwa Bay I, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2020

DISPLACED is an ongoing project which I started in early 2017 while working with Justice and Empowerment Initiatives (JEI), an NGO fighting for the rights of slum and informal settlements in waterfront communities in Nigeria. I have been documenting some daily moments in the lives of the people in some waterfront communities and their protests as they try to take back their lands and/or get compensation from the Lagos State Government through the court. The project tells the story of the Egun people who are struggling to keep their communities and identity in a city that seems not to want them despite the city being their ancestral home after living there for more than four generations. About 30,000 informal settlers have been displaced by the state government between 2014 and now.

With the project, I try to look at the life and struggle of the Egun people and other informal settlers against the backdrop of globalization. And how society treats its most vulnerable members. What happens to a people's culture, religion, mental health and identity when they are forcefully and violently evicted and dislocated from a place they have known and called home for generations? The project also pays tribute to the resilient spirit of this people.



Displaced - Otodo Gbame I, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2017



Displaced - Otodo Gbame II, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2017



Displaced - Otodo Gbame III, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2017



Displaced - Otodo Gbame IV, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2017



Displaced - Tarkwa Bay II, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2020



Displaced - Tarkwa Bay III, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2020



Displaced - Tarkwa Bay IV, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2020



Displaced - Tarkwa Bay V, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2020

"I think of Lagos in fragments. Fragments of transitional spaces between one fleeting movement and the next. There is a certain reluctance on the part of the city to present itself in its entirety, rather choosing to present as an amalgam of visual and auditory experiences. A series of images and sounds, revealing parts and holding back others. I think of Lagos in moments, the city that gives as it takes. nothing is ever lost, nothing is never needed. It is easy to describe Lagos as noisy, chaotic, violent and ultimately tragic. It is true to define it as such, but Lagos is also calm on a Sunday evening watching cigarette smoke drift through a window that looks out to nothing, a potluck on a Saturday afternoon, heated yet tender arguments into the early mornings. Lagos is pain and solace. A contradiction of being. Lagos is home, till it is not."

adeoluwa oluwajoba

Artist, Writer

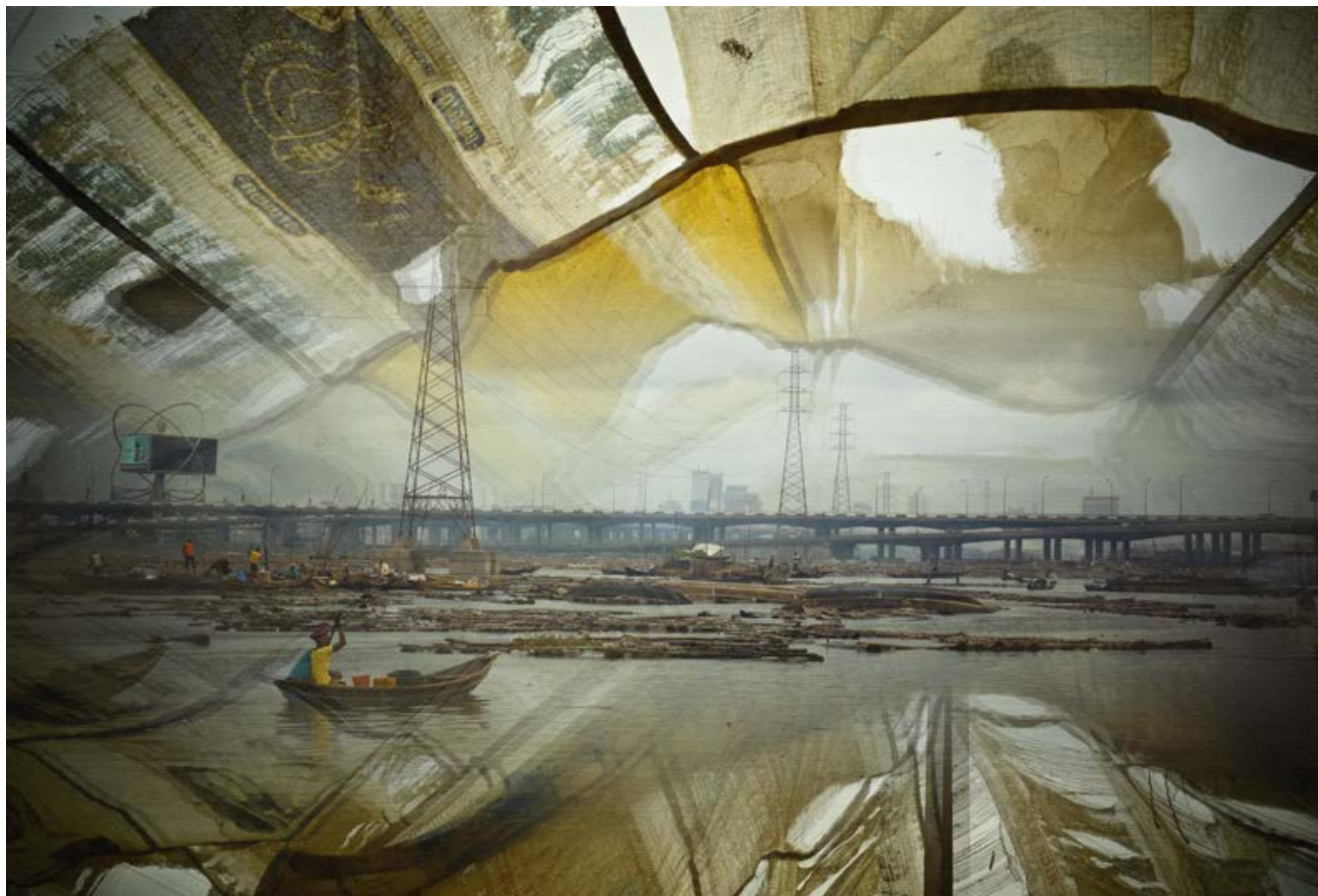
Somi **NWANDU**



Somi Nwandu (born 1993) was enamored with the arts from and early age. She was fascinated with photography and spent years exploring digital software alongside expressing her creativity through writing, painting, and fashion illustration. In 2013, she graduated from the Art Institute of New York with a degree in Fashion Design, and in 2016, further obtained 2 degrees in Fashion Business Management, and International Trade & Marketing for the Fashion Industries from the renowned Fashion Institute of Technology. She recently completed an MA in Global Creative and Cultural Industries (GCCII) from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London while actively pursuing her art in photography, fashion and the digital world.

Beyond academia, Somi draws inspiration from her experiences holding positions in branding, creative project management, marketing, and art direction. A burgeoning, award-winning photographer and visual artist, she believes in the power of art to uplift, unify, and inspire people. Working in various media, her hope is to emphasize the significance in building more cross-cultural creative ties between Africa and the rest of the world. Somi's works have been exhibited in various group exhibitions, as well as at international fairs and photo festivals such as The Other Art Fair LA, New York Art Fair, the Lagos Biennial, LagosPhoto, and Xposure International Photography Festival Sharjah. She currently works at the Smithsonian Institution - National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C

Off the coast of Lagos' mainland is Makoko; a community largely situated on water. A vast floating insanitary slum filled with heartbreak, hope and resilience. It is a nation onto itself. As one crosses the Third Mainland Bridge, the single pathway between the mainland and the island of Lagos, they are graced with a coastal view of the community. The wooden houses built on bamboo stilts, almost uncomfortably close to each other, are an extreme contrast to the modernity of the island.



Makoko Loko: Life on The Water II, Photographic print, 42 x 59.5 cm, 2019



Makoko Loko: Life on The Water , Photographic print, 42 x 59.5 cm, 2019



Makoko Loko: Life on The Water III, Photographic print, 14.8 x 21 cm, 2019

Life in Makoko runs on its own frequency. At a young age, the children of Makoko are taught how to swim in a rather unusual manner. The mother, whilst holding onto one of the child's arms, dips the children into the Lagos Lagoon, and springs them out, in then out, in then out. This motion is repeated until the children have adapted to the water and can float and manoeuvre around the water on their own...

As their main source of transportation, canoes are the next frontier after learning to swim. They are taught how to row from a very young age as it underpins their daily existence through fishing, trading, and transporting. Also built in Makoko, these canoes are made of wood, tar and nails, owned per family and can be identified by the engravings of the family names on them.



Makoko Loko: Life on The Water IV, Photographic print, 21 x 14.8 cm, 2019



Makoko Loko: Life on The Water V, Photographic print, 21 x 14.8 cm, 2019

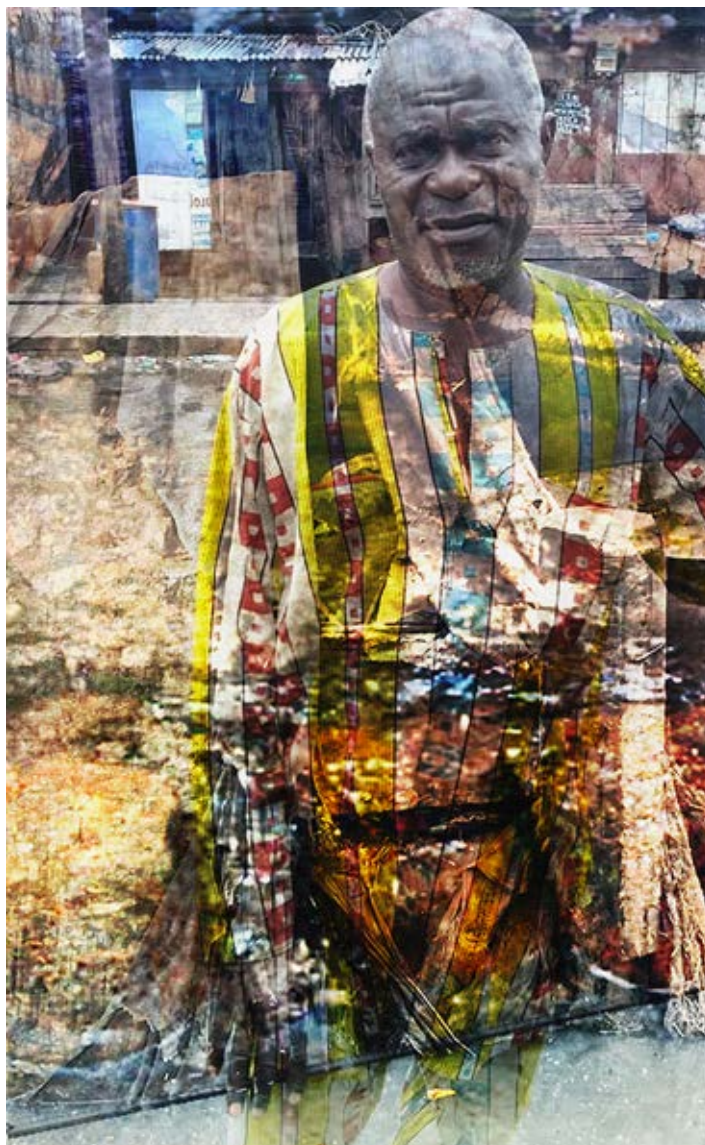


Makoko Loko: Mr Tajudeen Ajulo, Photographic print, 21 x 14.8 cm, 2019

Teeming with the urgencies of everyday life, Makoko is a kaleidoscope of experiences, with a unique way of evolving alongside its occupants. While visitors to the community are initially concerned by the precariousness of their circumstances, the pervasive joy of the residents quickly puts those concerns to rest. Abounding in smiles, laughter and an ingrained willingness to help one another, they take great pleasure in simple encounters with good company. Limited resources put aside, if only temporarily, in the faces of children playing across structures with each other, and resilient women and men running businesses out of their canoes or buildings. The Makoko community is just that; though deprived of much, they have humanity in abundance.



Makoko Loko: Mr Daniel Oke, Photographic print, 21 x 14.8 cm, 2019



Makoko Loko: Mr Kehinde Ojo, Photographic print, 21 x 14.8 cm, 2019



Curator



Nneoma Ilogu is a creative professional passionate about the use of art to engage, activate, and elicit a better society. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and a Master's of Public Health (Health Behavior concentration) from the University of Kentucky. Journeying through academia, she realized her desire to create structures and systems in the health industry that foster sustainable and healthy communities. In transitioning to art, she has employed a similar model as she engages with art and its transformative abilities in her managerial capacity at SMO Contemporary Art. Here, she has co-curated multiple local and international exhibitions. She intends to create sensory engaging art experiences, which direct the viewers gaze to matters impacting communities.

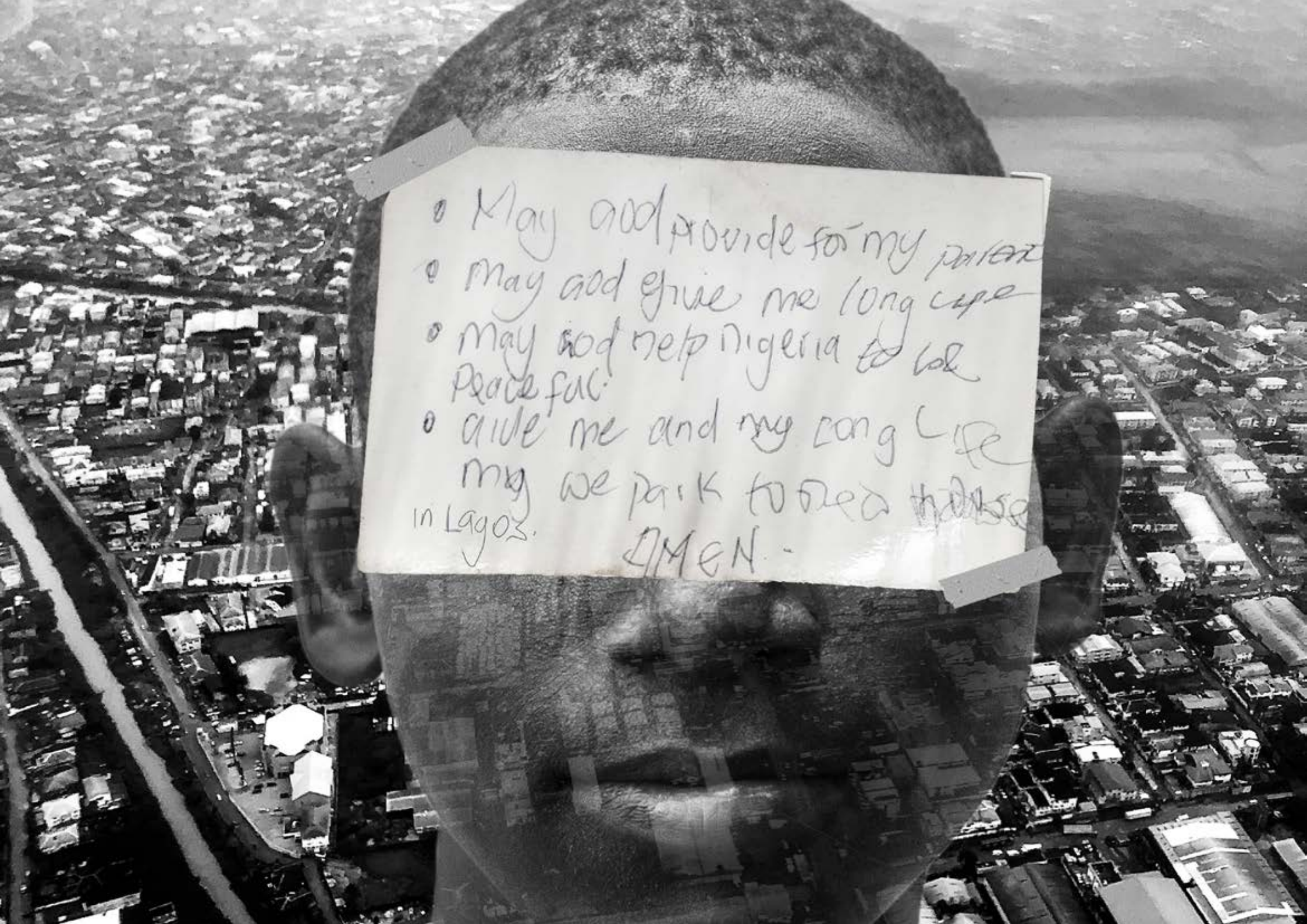




SMO Contemporary Art specializes in showcasing contemporary art in non-traditional exhibition spaces, focusing on established and emerging artists based in Africa and the Diaspora.

SMO priority areas include art curating, research and documentation, valuation, events, film and photography, training and artist talks. SMO has expertise in organizing exhibitions & events which provide a platform for the creative industry to inspire and strengthen humanity's aspiration for the good society.

www.smocontemporary.com

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- May God provide for my parents
 - May God give me long life
 - May God help Nigeria to be peaceful.
 - Give me and my long life my we pray to God those in Lagos.

AMEN.



The Wheatbaker has keenly supported Nigerian arts and culture since opening its doors in 2011. The hotel's commitment to celebrating the best of Nigerian creativity saw it dedicate its walls to showcasing exceptional traditional, modern and contemporary art. The Wheatbaker has hosted world class art exhibitions including the *Collectors' Series* (2011), *Making History* (2012), *Recent sculptures* (2012), *the WW Independence Series* (2012-13), *Flow, Here & There* (2013), *photography by Lakin Ogunbanwo, Duality, Unfurling*, (2014), *Eko Moves* (2014), *AKALAKA, The Contemporaries, Save Our Art! Save our Heritage!*, (2015-2016), *Equal Rights, Evolving Currents, Mental Space, Freedom* (2016), *Permutations, Standing Out II, Wanderlust* (2017), *The Wheatbaker Permanent Collection* (2017-18), *GBAM!, The Contemporaries II* (2018), *Recent Works, Eni! You Can Always Tell Where The Elephant Has Passed By, If Walls Could Speak and Convergence* (2019)





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Louis Guntrum was established in 1648, and eleven generations later, Louis Konstantin Guntrum has elevated the wines to fresh new heights. With their commitment to artistry, tradition and excellence, the Guntrum family is proud to introduce these new wines that represent the tradition and vision of a rich wine-making legacy in Germany's Rhine valley.

Louis Guntrum award winning wines are enjoyed in over 80 countries worldwide. A newcomer in the Nigerian market, Guntrum wine is pleased to support African creativity.



UNITY
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Our
STRENGTH

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Back Cover : Oluwamuyiwa Logo, Fishermen and Pedestrian Silhouettes, Photographic print, 30 x 42 cm, 2019

*"At heart, this is a love affair with
Lagos as canvas and muse."*

- Oluwamuyiwa Logo

