





Emeka **UDEMBA**
Ngozi **OMEJE**
Data **ORUWARI**
Moufouli **BELLO**

Booth 3
Art X Lagos

November 2 - 3, 2019
Federal Palace
Lagos

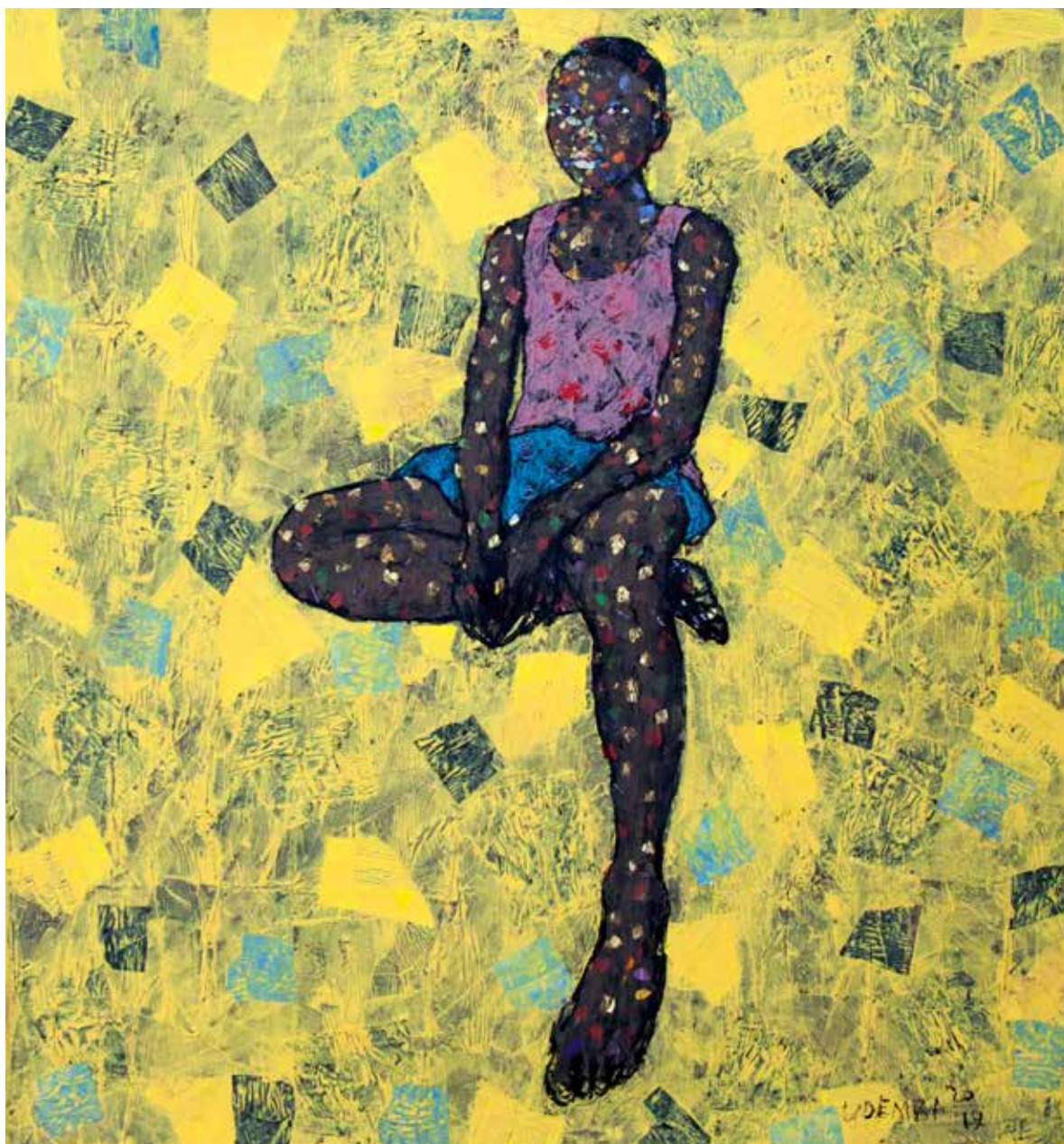
"I work as multi-disciplinary artist because, like the Igbo adage says "You don't stand in one place to see a masquerade, you move around it". My photography, paintings, installations, and video lead to a more in-depth conversation. These works are trying to say "I am confident in my skin, I am confident in my race" and we should not allow ourselves to be defined by a stranger's gaze."

Emeka Udemba

Emeka Udemba



Emeka Udemba (born 1968) graduated with a degree in art from the University of Lagos, Nigeria in 1991, and runs a vibrant art studio in Freiburg, Germany. Through his painting, photography, video, installations, and performances, Udemba explores the intersection of images and structures as a means of gaining deeper insight into how identity, and culture affect our sense of collective consciousness. Udemba's works investigate imaginary worlds and rethink the boundaries of the archetypal. Udemba has exhibited in Switzerland, Germany, France, Spain, Austria, Italy, Iran, Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Taiwan. His works have been celebrated internationally, including at the 11th Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil and the 13th Dak'art Biennale, Senegal in 2018, Osmosis Festival, Taipei, Taiwan (2017), Mediations Biennale, Poland (2016) and at the Jogja Biennale, Indonesia (2015). He has exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris , Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin , Haus der Kunst in Munich, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels. He was awarded the Ambassador of France Award, at the Dakar Biennale, Senegal in 2002. Udemba has curated important international art projects and received Special Mention for the Best Art Practices Award for young curators, for the project Lagos Open, in Bozano, Italy, 2007.



'Witness' No.103, Mixed media on canvas, 110cm x 120cm, 2019



UDENBA 20
19



Up Against The Wall, Mixed media on canvas, 120cm x 110cm, 2018

Often people of color like me who live outside of our native countries are always confronted with questions of legibility, illegibility and stereotypes. As migrants we are thrust into the position of the outsider.

My works reflect on the construction of subjectivity of the 'other' and how this is influenced by information around us. The works in this exhibition reflect my ongoing exploration with painting and installation to address issues of my own identity and a sense of place in the world.

These paintings channel the vibrancy of hybrid cultures and relativity through snippets of published media worked randomly into compositions that reference layers of meanings; race, gender, history, memory, time and beauty. They are like calculated accidents, interacting between colors, transparencies, words and textures which outcomes are sometimes better or worse than I foresee. In these works a sense of dislocation, adaptation, possibilities and manipulation of information come through.

These paintings open playful creative spaces to discover possibilities of critical engagement between others and myself.



Brothers in Arms, Mixed media on canvas, 130cm x 200cm, 2016



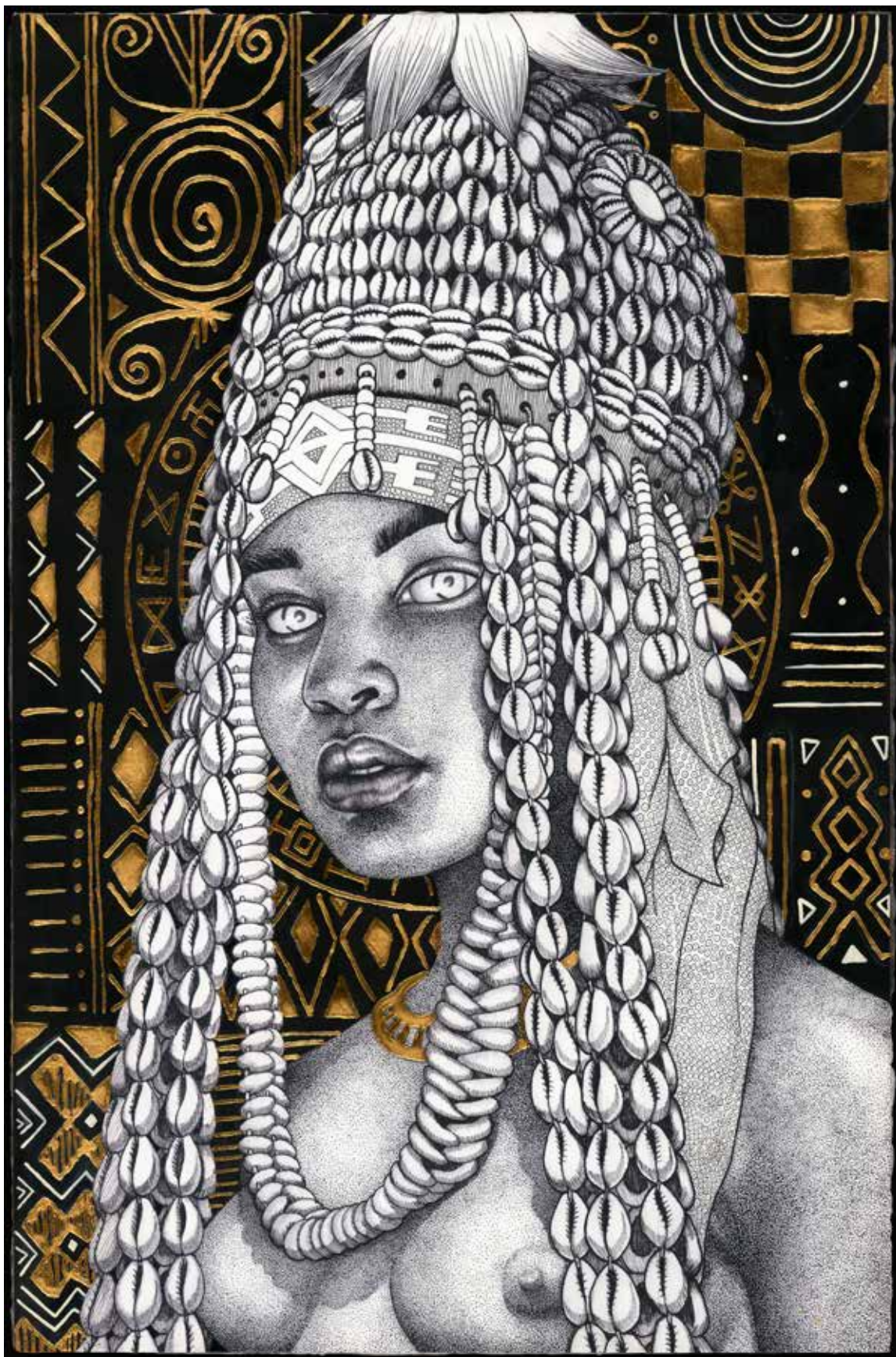
"I consider my practice as a doorway to healing and awakened consciousness. With hopes that through my expressions I'm able to not only bring the viewer along with me on this journey of enlightenment, but also restore balance and harmony within their subconscious."

Data Oruwari

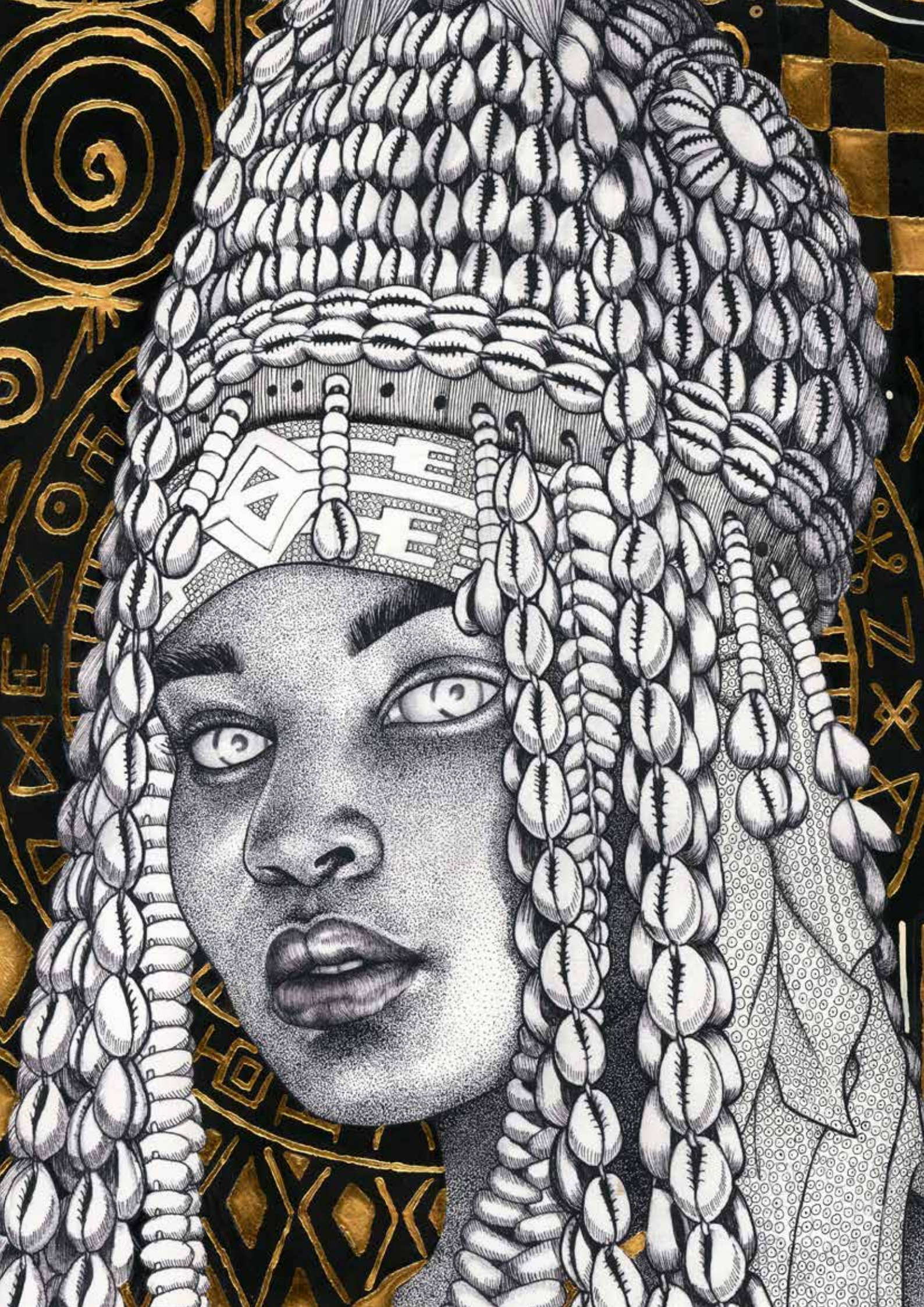
Data Oruwari



Data Oruwari is a Brooklyn based visual artist of Nigerian descent who is a designer and energy healing enthusiast. She is a contemporary sacred artist who creates unique iconographic representations of afro-spiritual identities. She combines draughtsmanship alongside the ancient technique of gilding with 24 karat gold leaf, to create works that illuminate the divine in us all; and seeks to heal and reconnect humanity with spirituality from an African perspective. Her influences include the decorative arts, the visionary art movement, byzantine iconography, and natural law. She has participated in group exhibitions at the Columbus Metropolitan Library, Ohio; AMREF ArtBall, New York, White Cloud Gallery, Washington DC, and at SMO Contemporary Art's Standing Out exhibition at the Wheatbaker, and the Panorama Contemporary Art Fair in Lagos, Nigeria.

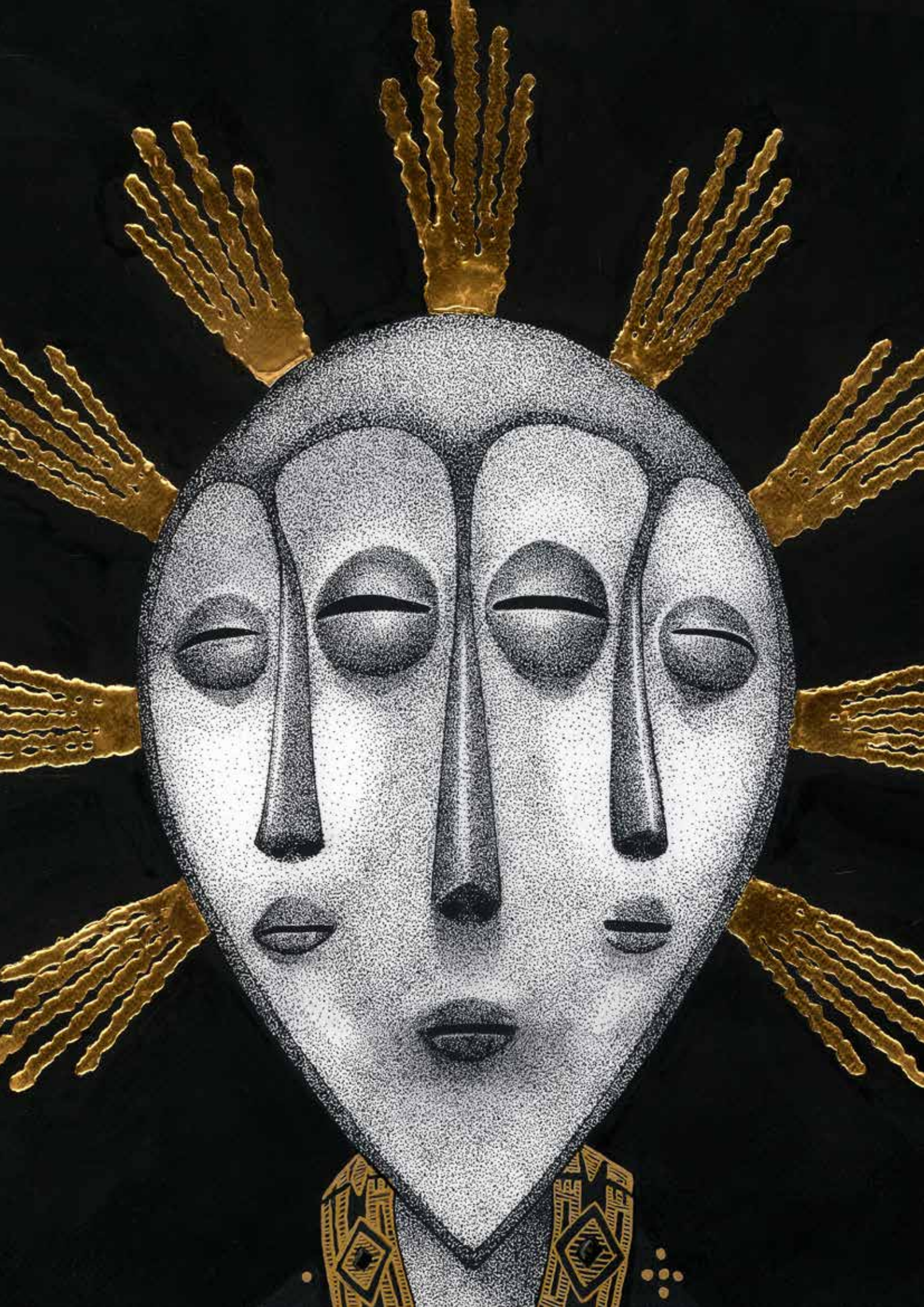


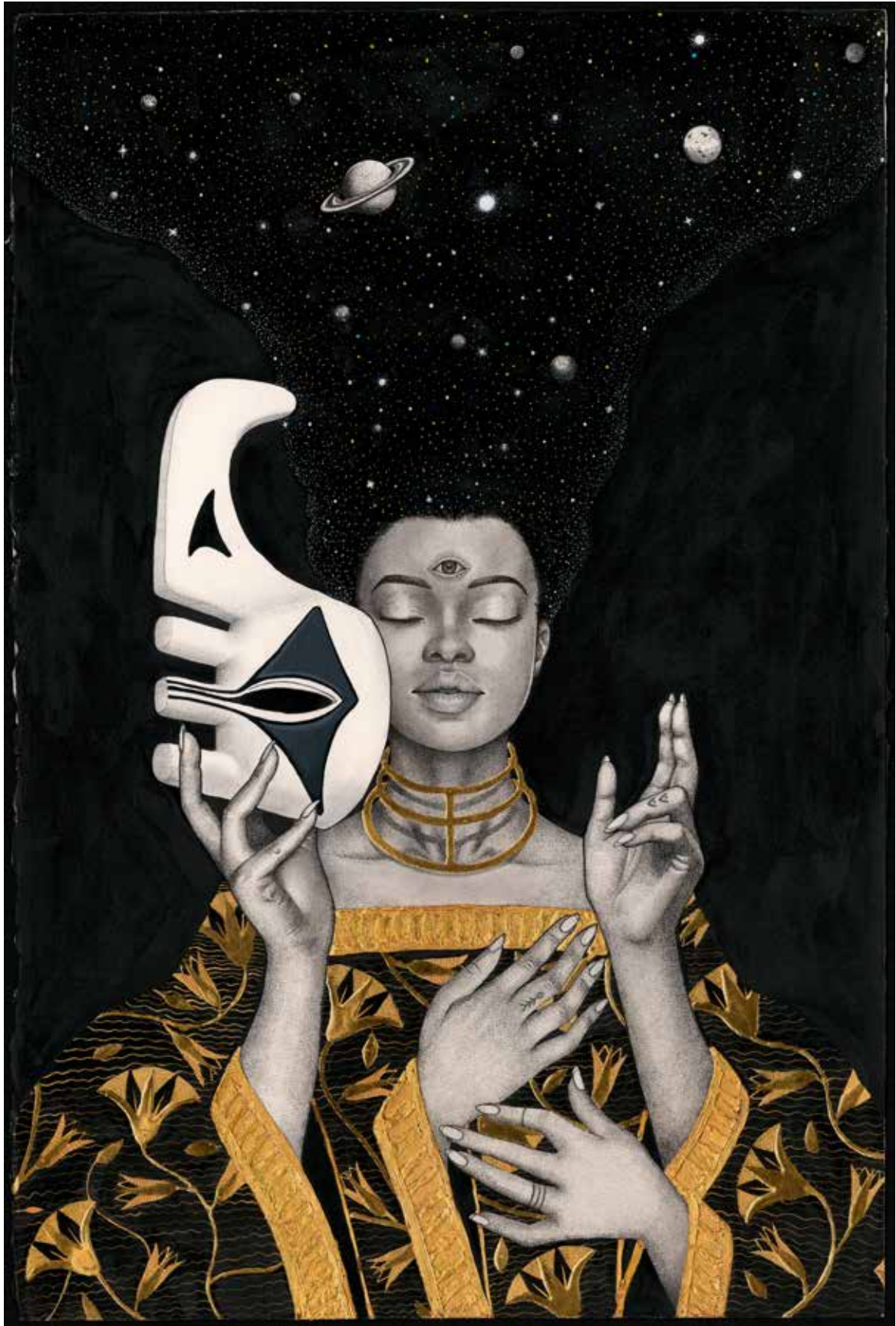
Ala's Return , Ink, Gouache and 24k gold leaf, 50.8 × 76.2 cm, 2019





Anyu-Anwu, Ink, Gouache and 24k gold leaf, 50.8 × 76.2 cm, 2019





Celestial Intuition, Ink, Gouache and 24k gold leaf, 50.8 × 76.2 cm, 2019





Hand of A Healer II, Ink, Gouache and 24k gold leaf, 30.5 × 30.5 cm, 2019

I believe that we are all spirits having a human experience which is why I'm drawn to expressing the duality of our existence in connection to the universe. I'm also intrigued by the richness of Afro-Indigenous worldviews on themes of cosmology, spirituality and metaphysics.

My work is inspired by inner worlds, mystical experiences, mythologies, global belief systems and ancient spiritual practices that reveal divine connections to our Creator.

I consider my practice as a doorway to healing and awakened consciousness. With hopes that through my expressions I'm able to not only bring the viewer along with me on this journey of enlightenment, but also restore balance and harmony within their subconscious.



Hand Of A Healer I, Ink, Gouache and 24k gold leaf, 30.5 × 30.5 cm, 2019



Moufouli Bello



Moufouli Bello is a multi-media & visual artist who was born in the Republic of Benin. She has a master's degree in International Labor Law from the National School of Administration, and has professional experience in law and journalism. She is passionate about painting, drawing, photography, installations as well as animation, sound, digital art and writing. She is interested in exploring ideological structures, and how traditions, culture, politics and technology affect our emotions and perceptions of society, and our concept of unity. Her artistic practice began in 2012 with participation in the creation of the Upright Man of Benin organized by the Zinsou Foundation. In 2016, Bello was one of the laureates of the French Institute and the Cité internationale des arts in Paris. Her Papyrus project, exploring issues on identity, ethnicity and community, was the focus of her solo exhibition at the French Institute of Cotonou. In 2017, she was invited to take part in the Afrique: le Grand festin in Vienna, Austria, by Barthélémy Toguo for Bandjoun Station. Her most recent project, We should disobey, on systemic sexism, was presented as part of Amazone, in Benin.



A Kind Of Woman, Acrylic on canvas, 140 x 110 cm, 2019





Samy Knows The Truth, Acrylic on canvas, 140 x 110 cm, 2019

I want my art to start conversations on taboo topics that society considers "untouchable" because of traditional codes which justify gender-based injustice, inequality and oppression. My intention in doing a work on body language which arrests our gaze. I want people who look at my portraits, to actually meet the eyes of my women and truly see them, so that they, in turn, can also "see themselves". This consciousness of self is what gives full power and control, and identifies a leader. My women watch you. They make you look at them. They have a certain presence. We live in a society where the woman is invisible, and voiceless. Society claims to know better what is good for women, than what she thinks is good for herself. Nobody asks for her opinion. Sometimes she even has to negotiate her humanity and the integrity of her body.

My art reminds us that we can decide to have a choice. We must not deny our own existence by helping others. My art questions reality and the immutability of our perception of reality. My art challenges our senses, and aesthetic reading of this perception of reality. I want to question it, disturb it, and modify it through physical experimentation.



Sofia Don't Need To Change, Acrylic on canvas, 140 x 110 cm, 2019



Ngozi Omeje



Ngozi Omeje (born 1979) is one of Africa's finest ceramic installation artists. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in 2005 and a master's degree in 2009 from the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Her acclaimed installation works using globular clay units, rings, leaves and re-purposed plastic flip-flops suspended on hundreds of nylon threads were shown at the Korea Ceramics Biennale and Cheongju Craft Biennale in South Korea in 2019, the Dakar Biennale in Senegal, the First Central China Ceramics Biennale in China, and at the inaugural ArtXLagos Art Fair in 2016. She has taken part in numerous international and local exhibitions including the Connecting Deep 10th anniversary exhibition of CCA Lagos (2018). SMO Contemporary Art exhibited Omeje's work at the Saatchi START Art Fair in London in 2018 and at the Standing Out all female artist group exhibition at the Wheatbaker in 2017. She took part in an artist-in-residence program at the Sev Shoon Art Center in Seattle, USA where her 'Think Tea, Think Cup' installation became a prominent piece in their permanent collection. She has won multiple awards including, Overall Winner of Life in my City Art Competition in Enugu (2014), and Outstanding Concept at the National Art Competition in Lagos in 2015 and Most Creative Potter from the University of Nigeria Nsukka (2005). Omeje teaches ceramic art at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.



Not In Sight, Terracotta, Plastic, Metal, 2 x 4 x 3 ft, 2019





Ornamental Vase, Terracotta, Plastic, Metal, 1 x 1 x 2 ft, 2019

My practice as a ceramist evolved from using a potter's wheel to pinching, tying, hanging and wrapping clay as an experimental production technique which gave room for my experimental spirit to soar. I moved from the limited world of producing utilitarian cups, plates and vases, to a more open-ended and discursive ceramic Installation. My tendency to explore is inherent in the art works I produce.

Through the course of my practice and research, I came up with the idea of using globular clay units attached to strings to configure unique ceramic forms. I act upon the impression and the limitation that tying creates in my memories. I redirect the energy of the string into a life-giving force to exorcise the negative impression of tying, binding and ownership. The string gives life to my works. It allows challenges to be a source of strength. I have created many works with strings in different dimensions with diverse stories to tell.

Using strings to produce my installations depicts life on a balance; I reassess the frailty of life by using strings as a source of life to the suspended artworks.



Ornamental Vase, Terracotta, Plastic, Metal, 1 x 1 x 2 ft, 2019





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.

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