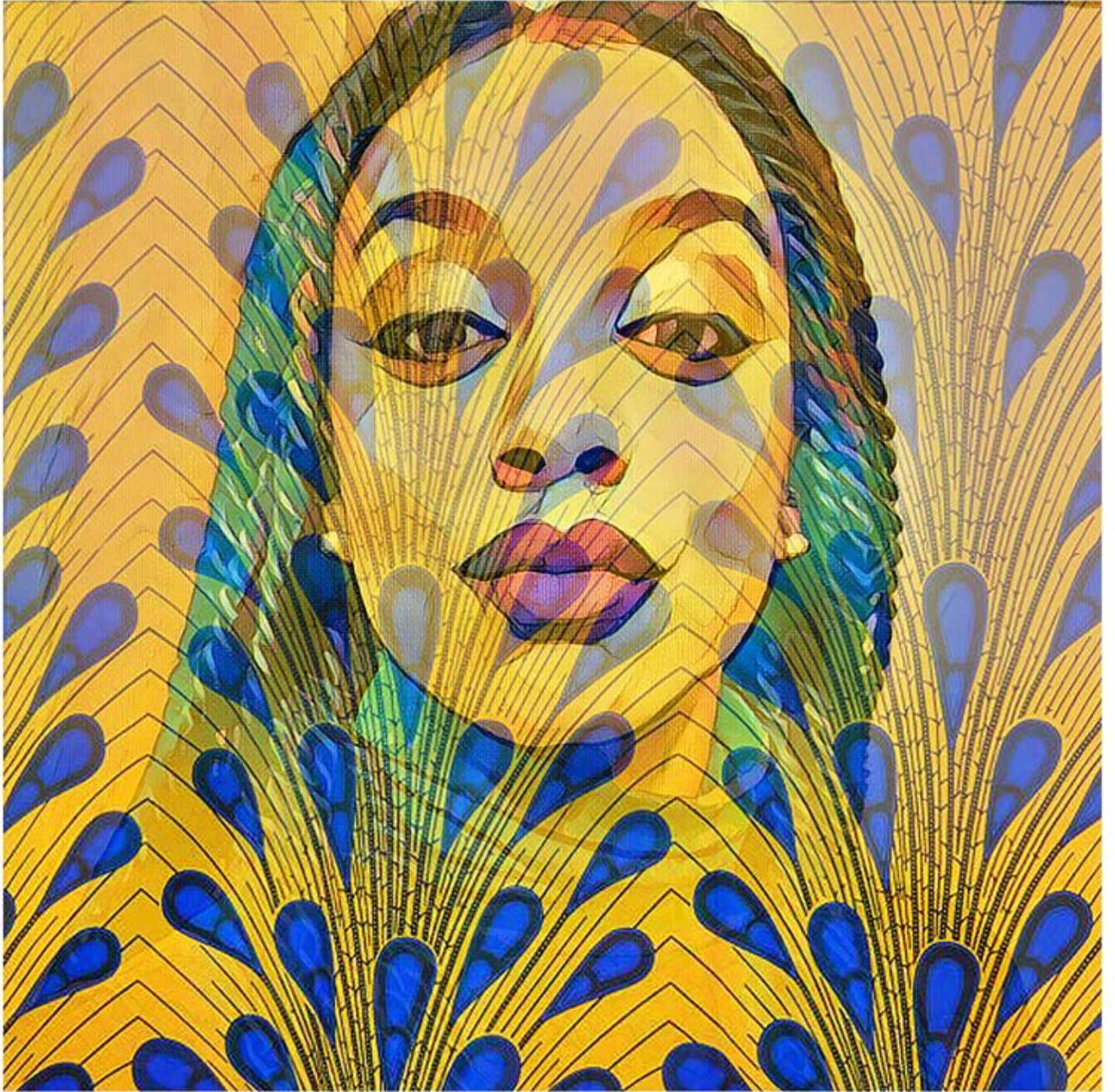


# UNMASKED





# UNMASKED

Curated by Nneoma Ilogu & Moni Oloke



March 10 to May 4, 2018

The Wheatbaker  
Lagos, Nigeria



# SPONSORS



LOUIS GUNTRUM

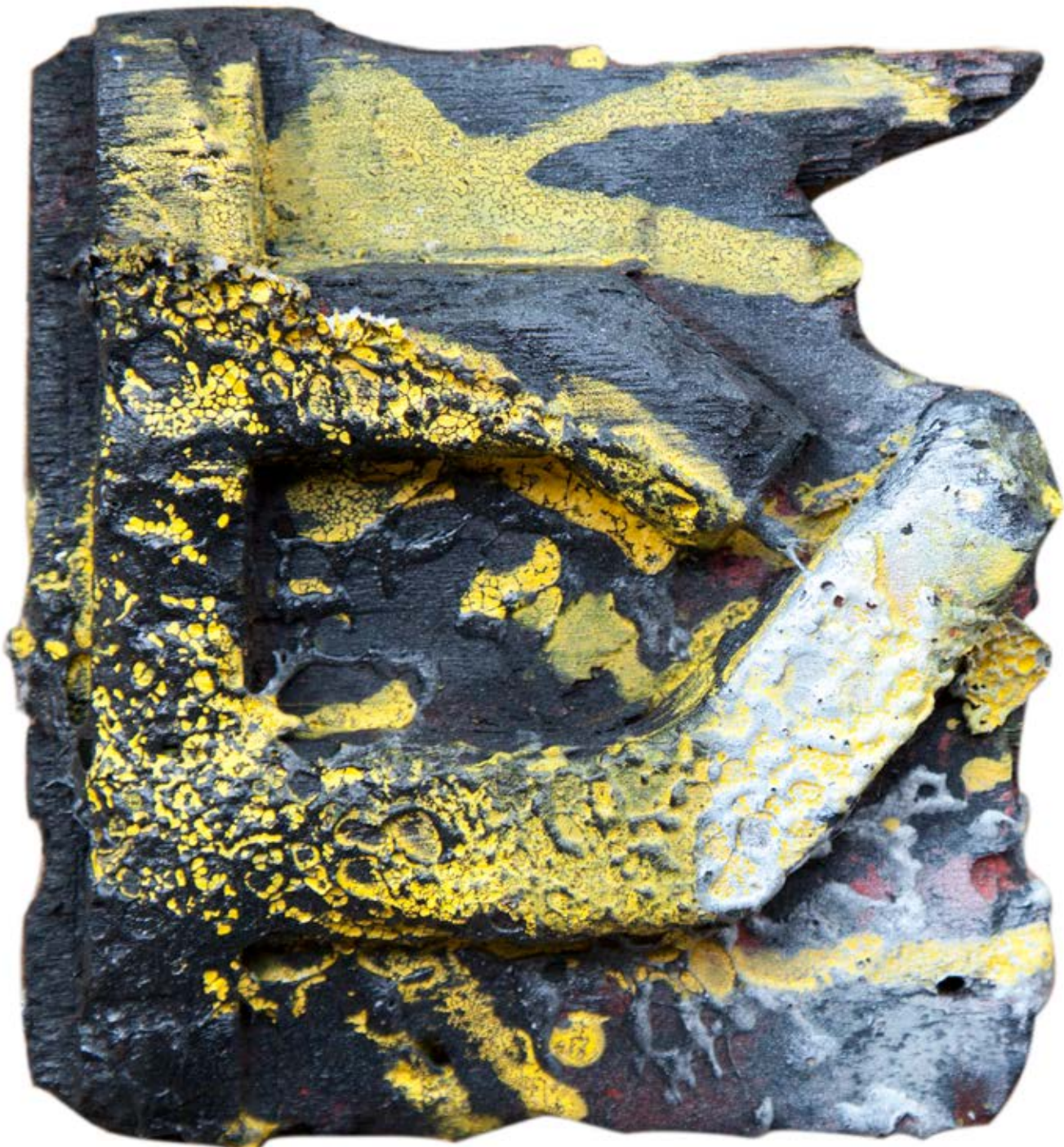


DJAKOU KASSI NATHALIE  
KOROMONE YOBAERE KOROYE  
NENGI OMUKU  
NYANCHO NWANRI  
QUEEN NWANERI  
REHA SHISHODIA  
SOMI NWANDU









10 Detail and String Installation by Reha Shishodia, *current page and page 12*

# Foreword

## *Standing Out And At Peace Within*

We've been talking about mental health for some time at SMO. The fact that there is very little support and understanding of mental health issues in Nigeria is daunting. Depression and other forms of mental illness are easy to spot in the over-populated, traffic congested, and bursting at the seams mega-city of Lagos. According to the World Health Organisation, over 7 million Nigerians suffer from depression and 4.8 million Nigerians (2.7% of the population) suffer from anxiety disorders. World wide just 3% of total government spending is for mental health.

The expectations and pressures on women are enormous. Not surprising that we wear a mask to hide, deflect, cover, subterfuge and protect our inner worlds. Yet despite these immense pressures, Nigerians have been declared the world's happiest people. Are we also the happiest women of the world?

We felt it would be good to address mental health through a safe space that art provides and ask seven phenomenal artists to help us unburden, unmask, reveal, and let off steam through their artists' sensibility. The Wheatbaker walls are aglow with the powerful, energized artworks of Nengi, Nathalie, Somi, Nyancho, Koromone, Reha and Queen who have strong links to Lagos but come from different parts of Nigeria, Cameroon, the Gambia, India, and the United States.

They share their unfettered pure insight into what it takes to connect with our inner selves through profound and mundane events in our lives. Their works reveal a complex inner-world which touch on issues of identity, the breaking down of cultural stereotypes, the importance of education and personal space and saying no to gender based violence, the re-alignment and strength found through spirituality, and the need for independence, inter-dependence, and equality rising to a symphony of the fearless female spirit echoing from each artwork.

I am also most pleased to support my staff, Nneoma Ilogu and Moni Oloke curate their debut exhibition. They both have degrees and work experience in the health field in Nigeria and the United States, and appreciate mental health from both a medical and artistic viewpoint. As they step out to curate their first art exhibition in honor of World Women's Day, I say Bravo to our outstanding artists and curators as we celebrate women in Africa who are indeed Standing Out for the world to see!

Enjoy the show!

Sandra Mbanefo Obiogo  
Founder & Artistic Director  
SMO Contemporary Art



# Curatorial Intro

The world is at a pivotal moment. There is a line being drawn in the sand with the *TimesUp* and *MeToo* movements sweeping first, the entertainment industry and then spilling out into the rest of the world. In times of momentous change it is easy to stand on the side lines watching the transformation instead of being one of the catalysts. At SMO Contemporary Art, there is a tacit commitment to using art not just as a visual emotive tool but also as a tool for social justice; art for a cause. Even though our team is made up of mostly women, and the art industry in Nigeria is being led by a strong group of women, there still is a dearth of successful female artists in the industry.

As in Chimamanda Adichie's much-lauded TED talk 'The danger of a single story' in which she highlights the importance of telling our own stories; women need to have the platform to tell their stories. Their voices need to be heard as much as their faces need to be seen. Also, from a holistic health background where problem solving is always a dialogue, one cannot diagnose a problem or hope to make any form of progress if only one side is speaking. So taking into cognizance the changes occurring, a natural inclination to dialectic and a desire for social justice, UNMASKED was conceived.

UNMASKED is the third edition of *Standing Out*, a yearly exhibition comprising of female artists tackling themes and issues that are pertinent to womanhood globally. This year we decided to focus on the mental wellbeing of women and this poem by Langston Hughes captures the plight of the everyday woman in society.

Because my mouth  
Is wide with laughter  
And my throat  
Is deep with song,  
You do not think  
I suffer after  
I have held my pain  
So long.

Because my mouth  
Is wide with laughter  
You do not hear  
My inner cry  
Because my feet  
Are gay with dancing  
You do not know  
I die.

- Langston Hughes

Our female artists are ready, have been ready to speak their truth and we are here to listen. Although they do not necessarily speak for all women, they are lending their voices through their art to the growing clamor of women breaking glass ceilings, tearing down walls and ripping off masks.

All will be revealed in Queen Nwaneri's cyclic '*Ray of Light*' paintings with ever growing concentric circles that depict inner femininity whose beauty does not necessarily meet the standards set by society and more importantly does not have to. The strokes on her textured canvases are thick, bold and unapologetic as if to say, 'here I am. Take me as is or not at all'. The series emphasize that true beauty and power emanates from within and hence must be protected at all cost, much like our mental well-being.

Reha Shishodia's paintings explore the quiet, yet indefatigable strength of women and their ability to transcend and overcome life's ups and down while maintaining perfect balance. In contrast to Queen's explosiveness, they exude the calm resilient side of womanhood by drawing us into strong congruous strokes on her multilayered canvas, which echo the natural cycle of life. Her installation of strings and communications symbols at the hotel entrance touch on societal interdependence and subtle yet strong interconnections between us all.

Drawing from a well of personal and spiritual experiences, Koromone Koroye's poetry paints a picture of resurgence with her words. In 'We Are The Girls' she shakes off labels and boxes that women are placed in by urging them to take unrepentant ownership of themselves and embrace their rightful equality. Her poem *I Can Write About That Too*, draws us into the "back story" and unspoken struggles of women of color, and the desperate cry to overcome clichéd depictions of race and history and truly write about our truthful, unfettered selves.

Nyancho NwaNri's stark and poignant photography series titled '*What Should I Wear Today*' focuses on the figurative layers women must put on when going out to face the world. What persona to put on each day? Nice but not too nice to be mistaken for a pushover; tough but not to the point to be labeled as bossy. The never ending tug-of-war of presenting a version of self that is non-threatening or upsetting to the status quo has come to end. In her series of minimalist black and white portraits we see the emotional struggles women experience before breaking into their true selves.

Nengi Omuku's reveling of femininity in paintings with floating beings against contrasting backgrounds bring to mind the interaction and disconnect between the inner self and how that self exists in the real world. As an artist who has explored and documented mental health issues through her palette for numerous years, we see a profound depiction of the inner worlds of amorphous beings reflecting both strong and subtle color and light through complex, cloud filled mindscapes.

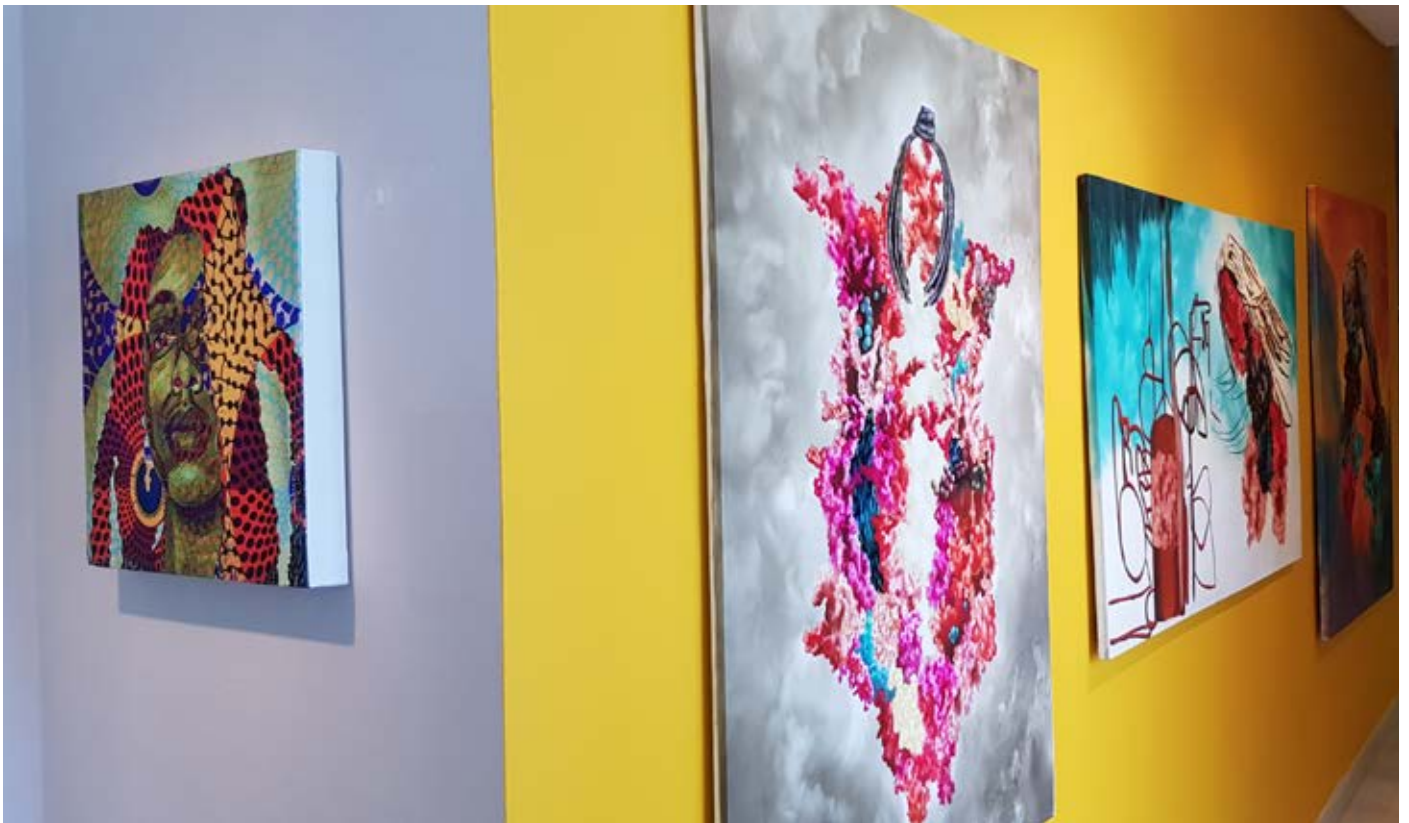
Somi Nwandu's multilayered digital self-portraits search out the truth through her "strokes of limitless". She seeks to express the presence of multiple and sometimes contrasting identities within the same self, which eventually burst out into "her true colors" set against bold African prints which echo the strength drawn from her rich African culture.

Djakou Kassi Nathalie's intricately carved dimensional ceramic works address the confines and limitations women experience through societal and traditional constructs. The myriad masks she carves into her earthen art beckons women to dare, to take responsibility for their existence, and to overcome the surrounding "commotion" by standing tall, overcoming colorful pitfalls, and contributing to the world despite the hollow spaces each of us carries in our beings.

The struggle to hide or be seen, to stay quiet or speak up, to put on a disguise or to rip off the mask; in UNMASKED, the revelation will be broadcast and we are honored to be catalysts and not simply observers.

This is our first curatorial effort and the support of our team, especially our artistic director Sandra Obiago has been spectacular and inspiring. Our avid sponsor, Louis Guntrum and gracious hosts, the Wheatbaker have contributed immensely to the success of this exhibition and we offer them all our most sincere gratitude.

Nneoma Ilogu & Moni Oloke  
Curators







We wear the mask that grins and lies  
It shades our cheeks and hides our eyes.  
This debt we pay to human guile  
With torn and bleeding hearts...  
We smile and mouth the myriad  
subtleties.  
Why should the world think otherwise  
In counting all our tears and sighs.  
Nay let them only see us while  
We wear the mask  
We smile but oh my God  
Our tears to thee from tortured souls  
arise  
And we sing Oh Baby doll, now we  
sing...  
The clay is vile beneath our feet  
And long the mile  
But let the world think otherwise.  
We wear the mask.

- Excerpt from the poem  
'We Wear *The Mask*' by Maya Angelou



18 *Unfinished Symphony II* by Queen Nwaneri, Acrylic on canvas, 45 x 45 cm, 2018

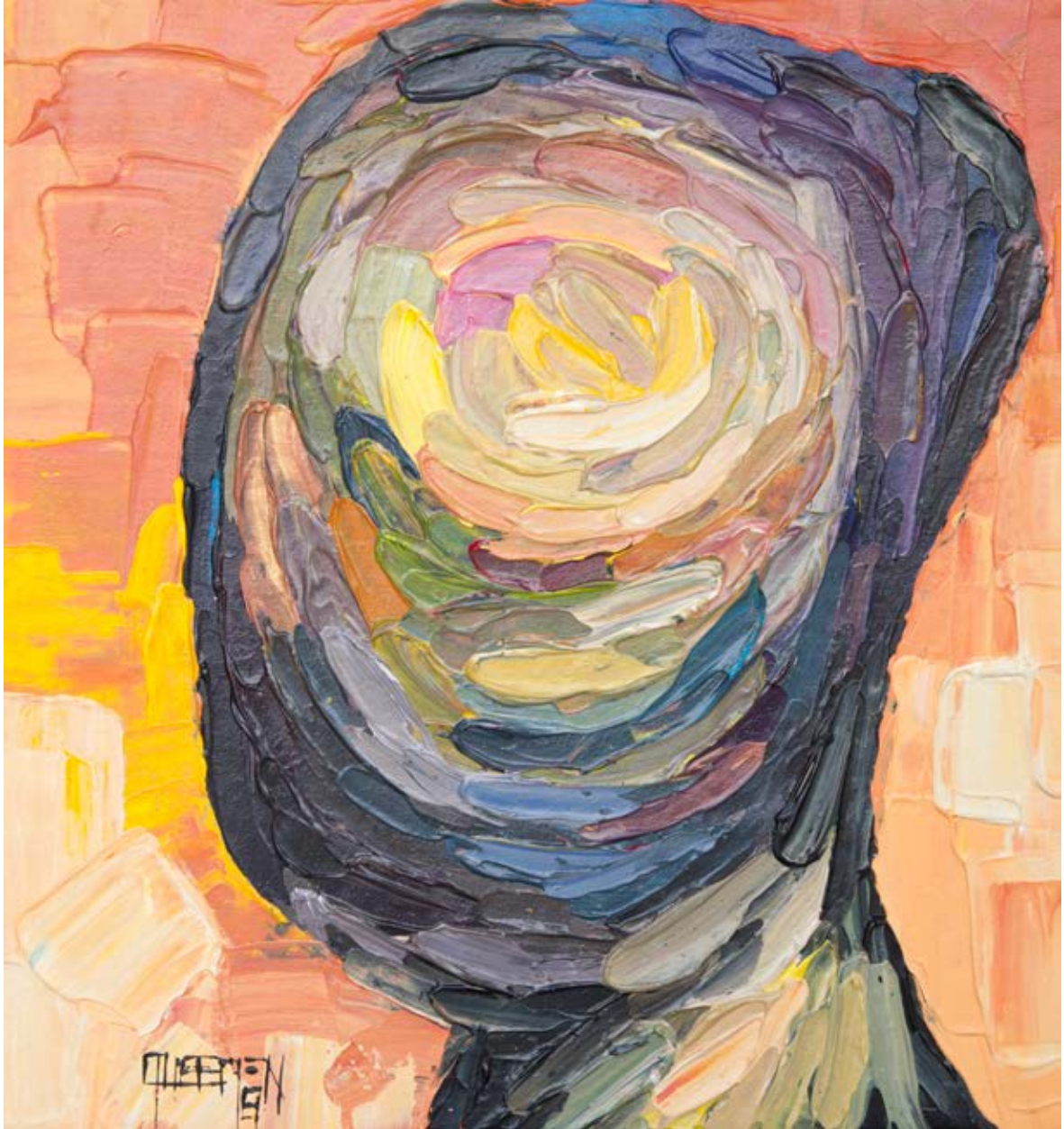
# QUEEN NWANERI



Queen Nwaneri-Olatunde was born in 1993 in Rome, Italy. She attended Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife where she obtained a Diploma in Fine and Applied Art in 2012.

She is reputed for her unabashed expressions in which rich texture of colours give vent to her subject, often times in a manner that escapes conventional exactitudes. As a portraitist, she draws her themes from the mood of her subjects (women and children) as she situates them in discourses; also allowing for spatial escape (as opposed to closed finish) this opens up extensive suggestions about her artistic concerns. She has participated in several group themed exhibitions, her most recent participation at the International art fair, Art X Lagos. She is also represented in North America, by Cuverley LLC, an art management firm based in Atlanta, USA.

Her works are in several private collections in the US, Germany, the Netherlands, Republic of Benin and Nigeria.



*The Outsider III*  
Acrylic on canvas  
45 x 48 cm

20 2018



*The Outsider I*  
Acrylic on canvas  
45 x 45 cm  
2018



*The Outsider IV*  
Acrylic on canvas  
45 x 48 cm

The body of work titled 'the outsider series' and 'ray of light' talks about the emotion and thoughts that revolves around a woman. The distortion gives us room to understand how her mind works and reacts, her energy, her passion, her resilience.

The power of reacting to situations within and without and not compromising what she believes in..... the power, strength and freedom she exudes. I have been able to express different expressions, in colours, strokes and contours compelling the subject to be comfortable in whatever form. The strokes and pallet knife techniques were used to provoke viewers' attention into layers of thoughts going through abstracted portrait.



*Unfinished Symphony III*

Acrylic on canvas

45 x 48 cm

24 2018



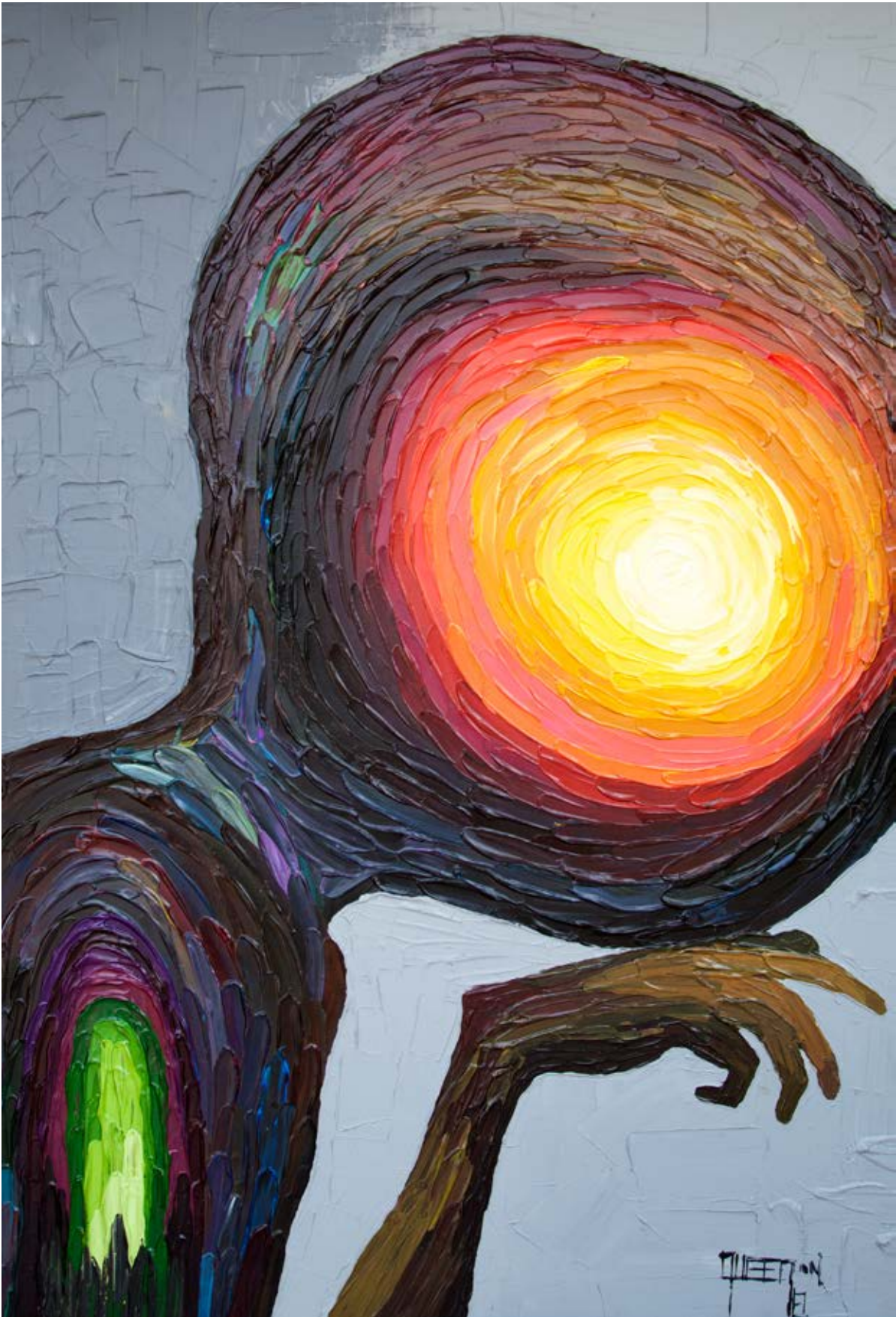




*The Outsider II*  
Acrylic on canvas  
45 x 48 cm



*Unfinished Symphony I*  
Acrylic on canvas  
45 x 48 cm  
2018







*Tryst of Inertia IV*  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 30 cm

# REHA SHISHODIA



Reha Shishodia was born in Mumbai in 1977. Art for her is life & all the shades to her personality are drawn out through her creativity. Her paintings, multi media installations and video art incorporate elements of socio-political, economic, religious and cultural interpretations.

She graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the R.A Poddar College of Commerce & Economics in 1999, and received a Diploma in Graphic Design from the National Institute of Fashion Design in 2006. She has taken part in many group and solo exhibitions across India, and done art commissions for clients in India, Singapore and Italy. She draws inspiration from life around her and dives into experiences from the past to the sensory. She moved to Lagos in 2017 with her family.



*Tryst of Inertia*  
Acrylic on canvas (Diptych)  
121 x 106 cm







*Tryst of Inertia II*  
Acrylic on canvas with pigments

Reha depicts the spirit of woman through her series of "Tryst of Inertia". The undeterred spirit of a woman is the core of her inner beauty. She remains unperturbed by her circumstances and the inertia caused by the mundane things of life increases her resilience. Her tryst with life and everything that it has to offer becomes the quintessential factor of her existence. She not only becomes a woman of substance but becomes the epitome of grace beauty and strength transcending her call of duty.



*Tryst of Inertia III*  
Acrylic on canvas  
30 x 30 cm





This string installation is called, *Woman - The Cradle of Civilisation*. The inspiration behind this work is the belief that women hold everything together just like my black strings. Women are the centrifugal force in society. The black thread represents the diversity of life because black is the combination of all the colors in the spectrum. Throughout history, civilisations developed and progressed through the stability that women gave by nurturing the family core which led to the sustained growth of the community. Agriculture fueled commerce which created livelihoods for women and their families. I believe that art and culture is the bedrock of civilization and that the symbols in this work represent the origins of life, growth and connection through language. Women have use language to nurture our growth and the spread of civilizations.





“WHEN THE SPIRIT STARTS TO MOVE,  
LET IT MOVE.

DO NOT WRAP IT IN A BLANKET  
AND LEAVE IT  
AT THE FOOT OF YOUR BED  
LET IT SOAK LIKE LIGHTER FLUID,  
ENJOY THE HEAT

LET IT BREAK YOU  
AND WHEN THAT HEAVINESS IS  
FINALLY GONE,  
STAY UP AND HAVE A 3AM  
CONVERSATION  
WITH YOUR MAKER.”

- From ‘When the Spirit Starts to Move’  
by Koromone Koroye



# NENGI OMUKU



Born 1987 in Delta State, Nigeria, Nengi Omuku's paintings feature amorphous presences that float through 'active' or loaded spaces. Her work functions as a metaphor alluding to wider themes of identity, mental journeying and mutual belonging. Omuku's colour palette acts as a subtext for transforming the human figure.

She completed an MA degree and BA degree in Fine Art at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, graduating in 2012.

Recent exhibitions include At Work, Arthouse Foundation (2018) Stages of Collapse, September Gray Art Gallery, Atlanta (2017), the Armory Show Focus: African Perspectives, New York City (2016), A State of Mind, Omenka Gallery, Lagos (2015) and Jerwood Drawing Prize 2014, Jerwood Gallery, London (2014). She is the recipient of several awards including the British Council CHOGM Art Award, presented by HRH Queen Elisabeth II. Her work has been shown at international art fairs including ArtXLagos, 1.54 London, and the Armory Show in New York



*All My Things*  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 160 cm

Nengi Omuku's works show coloured anthropomorphic forms, which stand in contrast to the scapes they inhabit. They are based on the supposition that the human figure can be transformed from its present reality, with an intent to look beneath the surface.

Her work functions as a metaphor alluding to wider themes, one of which is difference: between the sexes, as well as presumed racial differences. She questions the encounter, 'How do we react when we meet one another? Fear or understand, beckon or flee?' It is her desire to convey, through drawings and paintings, presences floating through active spaces, presences that have the aspiration of becoming events in their own right.



*Some Will Fall By The Wayside*

Oil on canvas

100 x 160 cm





*Splay*  
Oil on canvas  
140 x 100 cm







*Strut*

Oil on canvas

140 x 100 cm

50 2017

“How Do We React  
When We Meet Another?  
Fear or Understand  
Beckon or Flee?”

- Nengi Omuku



# NYANCHO NWANRI



Nyancho NwaNri, is a Gambian-Nigerian filmmaker and photographer born in Lagos, Nigeria in 1988 whose work revolves around African history, culture languages, spirituality and ethnic identity.

She graduated in 2012 with an Honours degree in Digital Animation from the University of Greenwich, UK. She is a self-taught filmmaker and photographer who started her career at Disney's ESPN and has since worked in the Film and TV industry in the United Kingdom and across West Africa.

Her works have been exhibited at various festivals locally and regionally including Chale Wote Festival, Ndiva Women's Film Festival (Ghana), and the Lagos Photo Festival & Tamerri Festival (Nigeria). She has also taken part in several group exhibitions in Nigeria.

Nyancho NwaNri was the curator of the photography exhibition at the inaugural edition of Tamerri Festival- a first of its kind arts and culture festival in Nigeria, and is also an accredited Canon film and photography trainer under the Canon Miraisha Programme, conducting trainings and workshops across Africa.



© Nyancho NwaNri

*What Should I Wear Today? I*

Photograph  
29.5 x 75 cm

54 2018







## What Should I Wear Today?

Everyday we wake up and before we step out to face the day we ask ourselves "what should I wear today?" Most think of this in relation to our external appearance not realising that deep down inside what we're really asking is not what clothes we should put on, not what shoes we should wear or what jewellery or makeup we should choose to adorn ourselves but rather what façade, what persona, what guise we should wear and how we should present ourselves to the world each and every single day.

As women we bear the burden of high expectations from society. We are programmed to aim to please and conform to what society defines as woman, womanly, womanhood. We tend to always put on a brave face burying our true feelings and emotions in a pile deep within our souls. Sometimes we hide behind clothes and make up and external projections of who we are told we should be.

We smile even when we are hurting, we laugh even when we are dying, we keep our head up even when we are sinking. We believe we have to be strong, to always have it all together.

What should I wear encourages women to reject those projections, tear down the walls they have built, peel off the façades and reveal what truly lies within, embracing the beauty of womanhood with all its kinks and blemishes.

It aims to push women to open up, speak out and rise together against the obstacles we face, the challenges that society, culture, traditions and religions have placed in our path, the pressures that tear at us from inside out and by so doing we initiate a healing both individual and collective.

It is known that the woman is the life giver, the one who brings forth, the preserver of the human race. It is she who binds the society and keeps it all together amidst peace and war, flourish and famine. Therefore, to heal and uplift the woman is to heal and uplift society.

- Nyancho NwaNri



*What Should I Wear Today? IV 1 - 5*  
Photograph  
29.5 x 19.5 cm





# KOROMONE YOBAERE KOROYE



Koromone Yobaere Koroye, born in 1991, is a spoken word poet, creative thinker, writer, storyteller and all around phenomenal woman. She obtained a BA in English and Creative Writing with a minor in Africana Studies in 2012 and an MFA in Creative Writing with a focus on poetry in 2014 from Hofstra University, New York.

She has been writing poetry from a young age but she discovered her passion for spoken word performance during her freshman year in college. After her first time on a stage, she knew she had found her calling as an artist. After completing her master's in English Literature, she spent a year working as a travel writer in New York.

She moved back to Nigeria in 2015. She works at Flutterwave as a Marketing Executive, and in her spare time, she writes fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction as well.



## WHEN THE SPIRIT STARTS TO MOVE

I was never one for prayer,

I was never one for hymns or psalms or Sunday morning services  
standing next to preachers and pastors  
holding a bible like it was burning coal

I was never one for rosaries or prayer beads  
or Korans and Ramadans

I was never one for 8 am masses or monthly confessions or Hail Mary's  
or  
"Father I have sinned again"  
"Father I held hands with the devil last night and ended up in a taxi  
at 6am  
I lied and cursed and said the Lord's name in vain"

I was never one to listen but no one ever tells that you should never  
leave yourself and build a new home inside of somebody else

No one tells you to stop after that the 6th shot of vodka

Or that falling in bed with a stranger will leave you marked, stained,  
broken

No one tells that you that the pleasure never stays around for too  
long  
Yes the memories may linger but they will never settle

They will never hold your hand and tell you what it means to be beautiful

No one tells you how empty it will feel when it's all over  
How that emptiness will grow and keep you up at night  
How it will crowd and suffocate and leave you clawing at your skin  
and  
holding your mind captive

Until the day prayers start to spill from your tongue with unbridled force

Until you forgive yourself first before you ask to be forgiven

No one will tell you how God will slow down time and allow you to live again

When the spirit starts to move, let it move.  
Do not wrap it in a blanket and leave it at the foot of your bed

let it soak like lighter fluid,  
enjoy the heat

Let it break you  
and when that heaviness is finally gone,  
stay up and have a 3am conversation with your maker.

- KOROMONE YOBAERE KOROYE



*'I can write about that too'* sometimes comes across as an aggressive, angry poem - maybe it is both but it wasn't written from a place of anger but from a place of frustration. Creatives are sometimes forced to limit themselves and produce art for people, not ourselves. And as a female creative, I'm expected to stay in a box and write about only one type of experience and this poem is challenging that stereotype. I can write about pretty much anything as long as it ties into my experiences as both a human and a woman.

*'We are the girls'* is a call to action to girls to embrace who they are and only change if 1. They are harming themselves and others 2. If they want to break out of their comfort zones. The poem is a reminder to the world that the girls are coming out and are no longer hiding themselves behind closed doors and traditions. I deliberately chose to use 'girls' over 'women'. There's something very flirty and playful about being a girl. Women take themselves too seriously sometimes - girls are free to do whatever they want. The spirit of a girl lives in every woman.

## I CAN WRITE ABOUT THAT TOO!

Black girl can write about eatin' sunflower seeds  
in the summertime,  
Pantoums about autumn,  
Sonnets about her childhood,  
Haikus about apple pickin'

she can write about alla dat  
but she don't want to.

Black girl can write about love,  
she can compare her lovah's eyes  
to the bluest oceans  
she can write about how his kisses tasted like this  
and how his spine curved like that,  
she can talk about cheeks flushing  
and picnics in the middle of winter

but she don't want to

she wanna write about malt liquor and  
how that hemp that be filling up the  
lungs real heavy,  
how her white friends tell her she's sassy  
how they be rollin' their necks & snappin' their fingers  
when she come around

she don't wanna write about love or trees

she wanna write about the white  
man that told her he could  
be into black girls, how he  
grabbed her waist too tight and  
touched her hair  
how he said her naps were so pretty and  
he could bring something better  
to the table but

ain't nothin' pretty about naps.  
She got a head full of curls that  
don't need TRESemmé or Herbal Essences;  
she got shea butter for that  
but black girl don't wanna talk about hair  
she wanna write about how  
her auntie won't stop bleachin'  
even though her face too yellow and  
her knuckles too black,  
even though the cancer been eatin'  
away at her skin cells  
but she can't stop cuz' she  
think there ain't nothing better than  
being almost white,  
ain't nothin' better than being beautiful.

Black girl so tired of being told to  
write about something else,  
no more stanzas about her race, history,  
her God

But what else do I got?  
I have so much blackness in me  
it be threatening to spill out of  
my pores.

I will not write about the Civil War that  
wiped away my tribe  
or about Northern Nigeria and  
the Muslims burning churches  
and the Christians killing Muslims.  
I will not write about Trayvon  
or gather what's left of him to  
mould a boy again so his mother  
can smile once more.  
I will not shout like Oprah or write  
like Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Nikki Giovanni

I got a grand canyon full of poems  
growing inside of me,  
filling up every space

and all a black girl wanna do is write,  
will you let her?

- KOROMONE YOBAERE KOROYE

## WE ARE THE GIRLS

This is a PSA to all men:  
We are not your mothers.

We are not your crutches or stepping stools,  
we are not the girls who birthed you.

We are not the girls who nursed you in your infancy,  
we are not the girls who cuddled you back to sleep,  
we are not your dream catchers.

We are not the girls who like to be censored  
we are not the girls who wait around for men;  
we are not the dependent girls

We are the firecracker and knockout girls.  
We are the ocean girls.  
We are the early birds and the night owls,  
we are the girls who stay out all night.

We are the girls who smile with too much teeth,  
we are the girls with too many bright lipsticks.

We are the girls who are too fat!  
We are the girls who are too skinny...  
We are the girls who eat for two.

We are the desert girls who make you thirsty.

We are the match, the light and the fire.

We are the girls who sit with our knees together  
we are the girls who dare to dream  
we are the girls who build and knock down  
we are the logical girls

we are the star signs and the solar system  
we are the girls who revolve around the earth

We are the sun.

We are the girls who change with the seasons  
sometimes we are loud and insistent like July rains  
and sometimes we are the dusty chills of harmattan

we are the girls with the tight dresses and mini skirts showing bare  
knees  
we are the girls who dance in the rain and run through puddles  
we are the girls who smoke cigars and drink beers with the boys

we are the girls with the loose tongues  
we are the girls who cuss and gossip  
we are the girls who pray all night  
we are the girls who sit in church and read psalms

we are the girls who look nothing like your mothers  
we are the girls who cook nothing like your grandmothers  
we are the girls who will dare not stay at home  
we will not welcome you at the door or take your shoes off.

We will not hold your hands or stroke your egos

we are the girls who take without asking  
because this world is ours too

we are the difficult girls  
the girls who talk back

we are the girls who aren't satisfied with reaching for the stars,  
we are the girls who want to occupy the damn universe.

so let us be those girls  
let us kick our feet up and laugh loud  
let us show our knees and thighs  
let us be ballerinas and doctors  
let us be poets and dancers  
let us be mothers and CEOs

We are not the girls who raise men.

- KOROMONE YOBAERE KORoyE







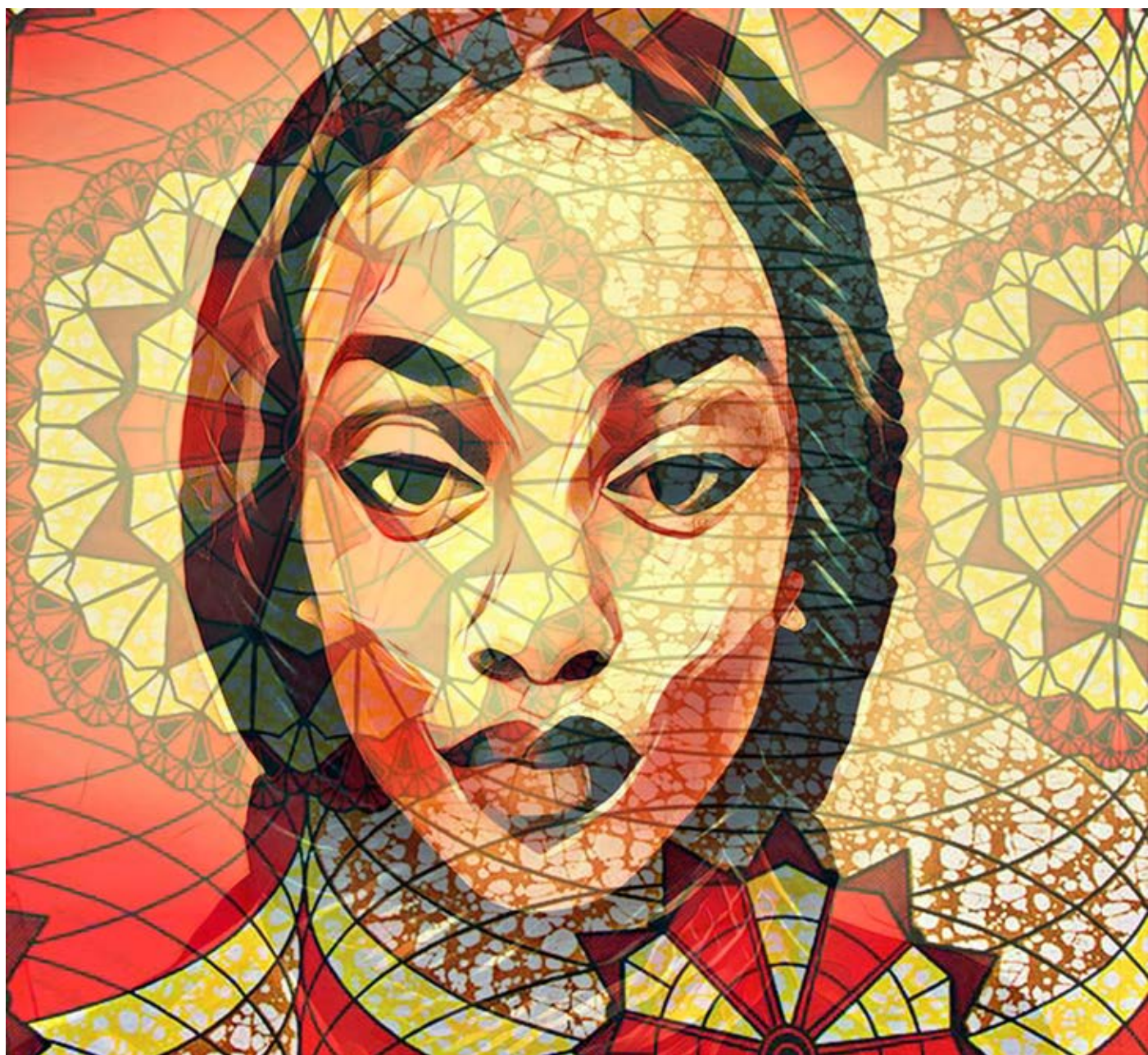


# SOMI NWANDU



Somi Nwandu was born in 1993 in Maryland, U.S.A. and grew up in Enugu, eastern Nigeria, as well as in the US. From an early age she was fascinated with photography and spent years exploring digital software alongside expressing her creativity through writing, painting, drawings and fashion sketches.

She moved to New York at the age of 17 to study Fashion Design, Business Management, and International Trade and Marketing at the Fashion Institute of Technology and graduated in 2016. Somi worked in New York City with celebrated international fashion brands like Tom Ford, Macy's and Alexander Wang as well as Ruff 'n' Tumble in Nigeria. Somi is currently completing an MA in Global Creative and Cultural Industries at The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, while actively pursuing her art in photography and fashion.



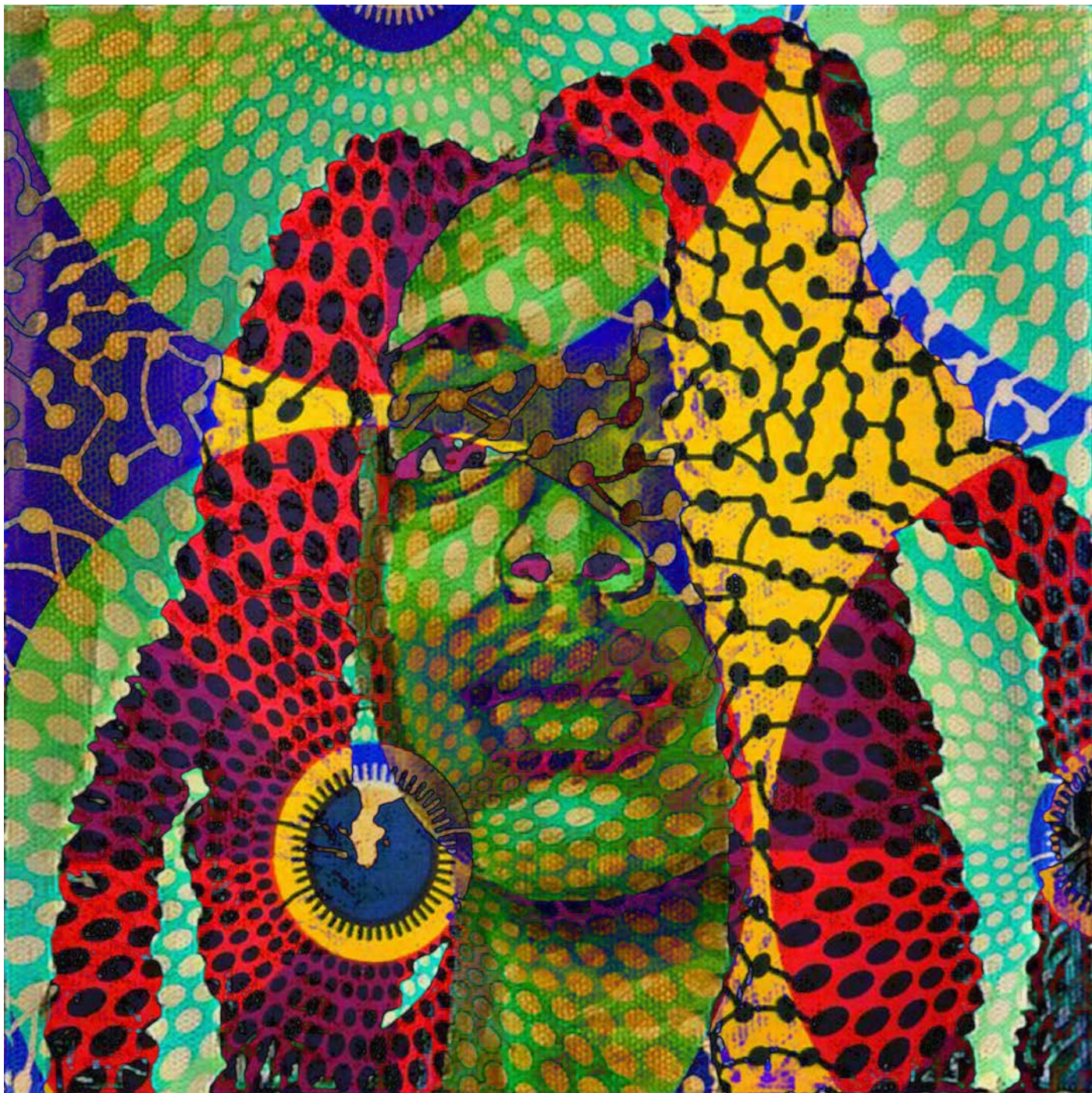
*Self To Daunt*  
Digital print on canvas  
50 x 50 cm

"The future is digital. My artwork presents a story of the future and the past: my future and my past. I express the desire to hide and be seen, simultaneously, and the hesitations to treasure true beauty and strength while exploring the sui generis nature of individuality. I am my own muse. My thoughts and truths inspire me and express the universal struggle for identity – a merging of inner worlds with the textures of reality. My works show my facial features interwoven with patterns that reflect my powerful heritage and African culture."



*Self in Glory*  
Digital print on canvas  
50 x 50 cm





*Self On Secrets*  
Digital print on canvas  
50 x 50 cm







# DJAKOU KASSI NATHALIE



Djakou Kassi Nathalie was born in 1975 in Cameroun and attended the "Institut de Formation Artistique", a secondary art school from 1992 to 1995. Upon graduation, she received a full scholarship to the 'Institut Samba Supérieur' where she studied Ceramics for three years. She became a full-time artist after university, and began teaching the technology of ceramics at her alma mater secondary school.

Her works have been featured in numerous group exhibitions in Cameroon, Europe, the USA and most recently in Nigeria. She participated in the international fair of Ouagadougou (SIAO) in 2012 and won the first African prize.

Nathalie moved to Nigeria in 2015, and is now a member of the Society of Nigerians Artists (SNA) with whom she exhibited in 2015 and 2016. She has also exhibited at the Moorehouse Hotel, Lagos, with celebrated Nigerian ceramist, Ato Arinze. She lives and works in Lagos.



*Chaos,*  
Fired and glazed clay,  
58 cm,





*Labyrinth,*  
Glazed clay  
28 x 43 cm

My works speak on everyday happenings and our reactions to these occurrences; the ability of these situations to reveal our true identity, as well as affect our interactions. As women, we are more impacted by the happenings of society and culture. I address these issues, in the shapes and faces featured in my work, by reminding us that when we take our last breath, we end up as dust. My art reminds us that we are responsible for what goes on around us, and at large in the world.



Fossils  
Fired and glazed clay  
27 x 30 x 43 cm







*The Trap,*  
Fired and glazed clay,  
63 x 23 cm  
2018





*The Crowd*  
Fired and glazed clay  
69 cm

“Pottery is not just producing pots, its like a therapy,you feel good and relax,you heal your mind,you settle your anxiety and you give birth to a new thing”



*Equity of Life*  
Fired clay  
43 cm





*Ray of Light 3,*  
Queen Nwaneri,  
Acrylic on canvas,  
91 x 114 cm,



# SPONSOR



The Wheatbaker as part of the Legacy Hotel Group, 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 showcasing Duke Asidere, Kelechi Amadi-Obi and Yetunde Ayeni Babaeko (2011), Making History showcasing ancient Nigerian art (2012), Sequel 1a showcasing works by Olu Amoda, Recent sculptures by Billy Omabegho (2012), the WW Independence Series featuring Tayo Ogunbiyi, Karo Akpokiere, Folarin Shasanya, Hakeem Salaa, Toyosi Faridah Kekere-Ekun (2012-13), Flow showcasing mixed media installations by Nenna Okore, Here & There showcasing paintings by Polly Alakija (2013), photography by Lakin Ogunbanwo, Duality showcasing paintings by Isaac Emokpae, Unfurling, showcasing photography & poetry by Sandra & Amara Obiago (2014), Eko Moves showcasing photography by Yetunde Ayeni Babaeko (2014) and AKALAKA showcasing paintings by Tayo Adenaike and sculptures by Obiora Anidi, The Contemporaries, showcasing Nnenna Okore, Duke Asidere, Uchay Joel Chima, Gerald Chukwuma, Raoul Olawale da Silva, Anthea Epelle, Taiye Idahor, Chika Idu, Tony Nsofor, Onyeama Offeodu-Okeke, Tony Nsofor and Adeyinka Akingbade, and Save Our Art! Save our Heritage!, a charity exhibition supporting the restoration of the Osun Groves UNESCO World Heritage Site that featured 18 artists including Sangodare Ajala, Adebisi Akanji, Rabiun Abesu, Buraimoh Gbadmosi, Kikelomo, Ajibike Ogunyemi, Bisi Fabunmi, Jimoh Buraimoh, Muraina Oyelami, Prof. Bruce Onabrakpeya Chief Nike Okundaye & Chief Tola Wewe, Polly Alakija, Wura-Natasha Ogunji & photographer Adolphus Opara in 2015-2016 ; Equal Rights showcasing Mike Omoighe, Evolving Currents featuring Raqib Bashorun and Chika Idu , and Mental Space showcasing paintings by Duke Asidere, Freedom featuring Gbenga Offo in 2016 ; Permutations featuring Tayo Olayode; In 2017, the Wheatbaker hosted Standing Out II which featured Amami Isiuwe, Bunmi Oyesanya, Data Oruwari, Marcellina Akpojotor, Ngozi Ezema, Olawunmi Banjo, Omo Udentia, Ozoz Sokoh, Sade Adebowale and Taiye Idahor, Wanderlust featuring Chidi Kwubiri, Emeka Udemba, Jimmy Uche Nwanne, Junkman of Africa, Numero Unoma and Yetunde Ayeni Babaeko. From 2017-18, the Wheatbaker showcased the hotel's permanent collection featuring over 40 exceptional works by artists who have exhibited at the hotel since 2011.



# SPONSOR



## LOUIS GUNTRUM

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.



# CURATORS



Nneoma Ilogu (b. 1989), manager at SMO Contemporary Art, graduated from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette with a Bachelors of Science in Dietetics in 2011, after which she obtained a Masters of Public Health at the University of Kentucky in 2014. Passionate about the promotion of health, she worked at the March of Dimes in Lexington Kentucky, and Iberia Medical Centre in New Iberia Louisiana, amongst other hospitals. On her return to Nigeria in 2015, she channelled this passion into her love for the arts, and is actively mapping ways in which to communicate health issues through art.



Moni Oloke was born in Kano in 1990 and is a natural observer of life. She grew up in Lagos before graduating with a degree in Psychology from Southern New Hampshire University in the United States in 2012, channeling her genuine interest in human behavior. She returned to Nigeria upon graduation and worked at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital and then briefly at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba. Always one willing to delve into new experiences, she worked at NetPlus Advisory, a technology e-commerce & e-payment solutions company as a business development manager before joining SMO in 2016. Moni combines a keen interest in psychology, digital technology, and art by finding an outlet for her creative expressions in the fast-paced Lagos art world. She is passionate about social justice, mental health, womanhood and using art to tell stories. She lives and works in Lagos and her goal is to improve the quality of life of at least one person.





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.

Founded by social activist, art collector, and filmmaker, Sandra Mbanefo Obiago, SMO holds cutting edge art exhibitions which showcase masters and exciting new talent expressing their creativity through art, performance, film & new media.

SMO is experienced in organizing symposia, conferences, training and events, which provide a platform for the creative industry to inspire and strengthen humanity's aspiration for the good society.

Priority Areas:  
Art Curating  
Research & Documentation  
Valuation  
Events  
Film & Photography  
Training & Artist Talks

**[www.smocontemporaryart.com](http://www.smocontemporaryart.com)**

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Design & Layout : Majid Biggar

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