

# VANTAGE POINT





Oyebola **Famuyiwa**  
Bernard **Kalu**



Curated by







## Preface

I stumbled on Oye's work quite by chance on Instagram. What caught my attention and differentiated his work from other drone photographers was the intersection of art and technology which he captured in his shots. His eye for detail and insistence on the perfect shot is flawless. Our interaction began at the start of the COVID lockdown - a time when silence was loud and the soul eagerly consumed beauty and hope. Oye's body of work 'Eko at rest' provided that hope. Taken over the no-movement period, it is a study of a traumatized ecosystem resting and regenerating. The views captured and the peace embodied therein are breathtaking.

Moving on to 'Eko's patterns', Oye's lens once again focuses on forms created naturally through human migration and settlement. The landscapes/ cityscapes he captures appear as colorful tapestries worthy of translation unto a skilled weavers loom.

My opening chat with Oye just over one year ago was ... 'Everything I love is conflated in your work. The earth from the sky, natural land patterns formed by human settlements and the simple art of nature. I don't know what your creative drivers are, but your work is awesome!'

I finally met Oye in person when I engaged him on a private commission almost a year after our on line discussions. I wanted to gift a friend with a special memento after 40 years of flying. Oye was tasked with his most perilous test yet. To photograph Grailland, a private estate in Iju Hills~with permission of course. The shot had to be taken far enough away from the location to simulate a pilots view, but skillfully avoiding the invisible boundary of the aircraft flight path. He produced a masterpiece!

In the run up to our 10th anniversary and as we continue to showcase new and refreshing Nigerian talent, it is a sincere pleasure to welcome Oye Famuyiwa to The Wheatbaker to share a glimpse into his world from the sky. We are also delighted to welcome Berard Kalu, a talented photographer who has been collaborating with Oye for some time, and who together are producing a book.

We are delighted to welcome you both and celebrate your photographic vantage point of Lagos with the world!

Mosun Ogunbanjo  
Director, The Wheatbaker









## On Seeing and Being Seen

It is believed that our perceptions are shaped by our experiences. Our understanding, is controlled by subconscious memories. *Vantage Point*, takes us on a soul-searching journey of hope through images of Lagos by Oyebola Famuyiwa and Bernard Kalu, which broaden both our perception and experience of the quotidien.

Famuyiwa, captures the city above the noise and chaos, causing us to re-focus our attention on the geometric poetry, expansive greenery, and serene waters which surround this island city. Kalu on the other hand, walks us through boisterous neighbourhoods, reflecting energy in the striking colors, unapologetic gazes, and swift motion captured by his lens.

Famuyiwa, a self-taught aerial photographer, began his artistic journey focusing on the technicalities of his craft, but soon found himself enthralled with creating beauty from the mundane. He tells a story of Lagos that is not often seen or spoken about: the peace and beauty that lies in the upper hemispheres.

His photos of the *Lagos Trade Fair* complex not only speak to the poetry of geometry, but also to the beauty of connectivity. In *Eko Living*, where terrestrial town planning may seem chaotic and lacking structure, his view from above creates an aesthetically pleasing cul-de-sac. Famuyiwa's images emphasize the importance of perspective, such as in *A Picture with A Picture* and *Lone*, in which external dilapidation, fades away as we focus on the beauty that lies deep within. His Lagos waterways transport us to a place of stillness; a calm that typically would not be associated with this megacity.

Kalu, a self-taught documentary photographer, initially took more of an experimental route with the medium, eventually becoming more intentional in the use of color to elicit emotions. On the surface, the vibrancy and enigmatic movement in his images are typical of Lagos. But on closer observation the unique angles in which he photographs his subjects and scenes, draws out a fresh narrative of emotion and thought.

In *Dispirited* one can almost hear the theme song of *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, as background graffiti offsets a lone gilded throne, framed off-center, on which a youth reclines on his seat of power, highlighting an alternate, defiant reality. The same can be said of his images shot within polluted landscapes. In *Forgotten*, one is more entranced by the beauty of nature, or the cotton candy like smoke in *Apocalypse*, reminiscent of scenes of Holi festival in India, rather than focusing on the foreground environmental degradation.

Both artists are strikingly different, but complementary. Their diverse narratives remind us of the importance of perception. Each image encourages us to look past the surface to what lies beneath. An opportunity to cast our gaze upward, and hope or dream of something better. These two trail blazers are a critical addition to the broadening canon of photography of Lagos. My hope is that *Vantage Point* makes us appreciate and see both the macro- and micro-scopic realities of Lagos, as enjoyed from a terrestrial and bird's eye perspective.

Nneoma Ilogu  
Curator







# Oyebola Famuyiwa

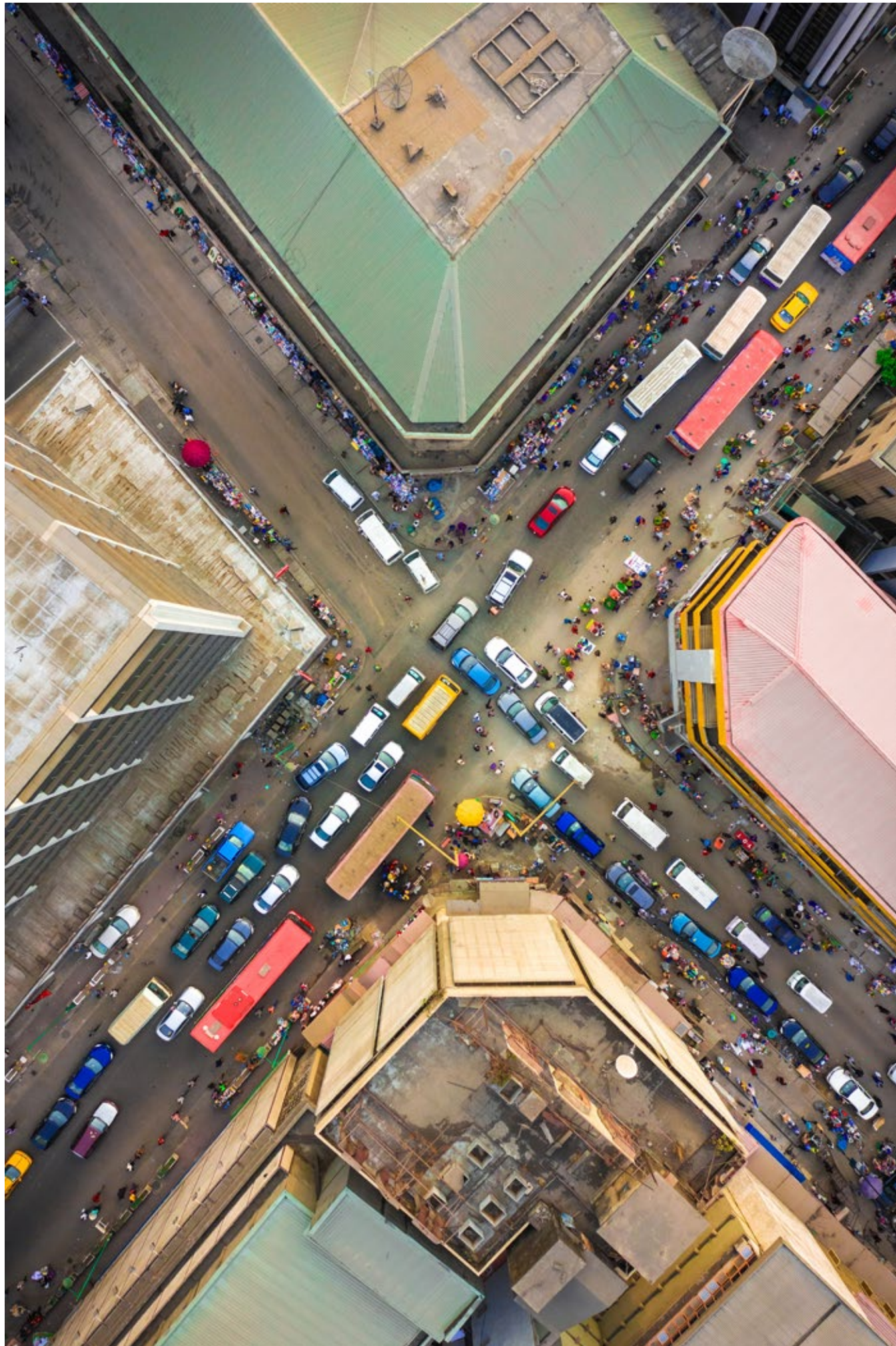


Oyebola Famuyiwa (born 1987) is a fine art photographer with strong interests in architecture and aerial photography. He ventured into photography while studying Electrical Electronics Engineering at the prestigious University of Ibadan. He currently manages ArtbyOye (Fine Art Photography), Potterclay Photography (Lifestyle and Events Photography) and PixBus (Mobile Photo Booth in a 1979 VolksWagen Bus). As a little child he always wondered how a photographer could capture images with a camera and deliver large framed prints. This fascination with image processing at a very tender age encouraged him to save up and buy his first analog camera gear in junior secondary school.

Oyebola's works have been featured in exhibitions such as the 2009 Life In My City Art Festival (LIMCAF), British Council iCreative Expo 2011, Lagos Photo "2011 Amateur Photography Competition" and the 2019 "China-Nigeria Friendship in Pictures" Photography Competition. His works have also been featured in international and local magazines. He also has his work in the Lagos Edition of the Monopoly Electronic Banking game which is produced by Bestman Games Limited.

As a strong believer in humanity he searches beyond the obvious thereby creating art even in the most uninteresting places. He is inspired by the creative possibilities of nature, the versatility of humans and the opportunities these afford him.





My work is an extension of my many personal interests and experiences. Armed with the knowledge that change is the only constant thing, I persistently document my environment and relay how I experienced it at that time. My love for Mathematics makes me play with angles, forms, shapes and lines when creating images, using both the ground levels and the skies to create new and exciting views of the spaces around me.

The city of Lagos is a huge source of inspiration for me, especially when I come across images taken from as far back as the 1960's. I find it interesting comparing old Lagos to present day Lagos. The number of changes in this urban landscape has been enormous. In my quest for historical images of Lagos I have decided to fill in the gap and create my own images of the city in the hopes that it will inspire someone in the near future.

It is always a great privilege for me to share my visual experiences with people. I believe that the works I create today will be a source of time travel for those viewing it tomorrow

**X Factor**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2020  
36 x 24 inches





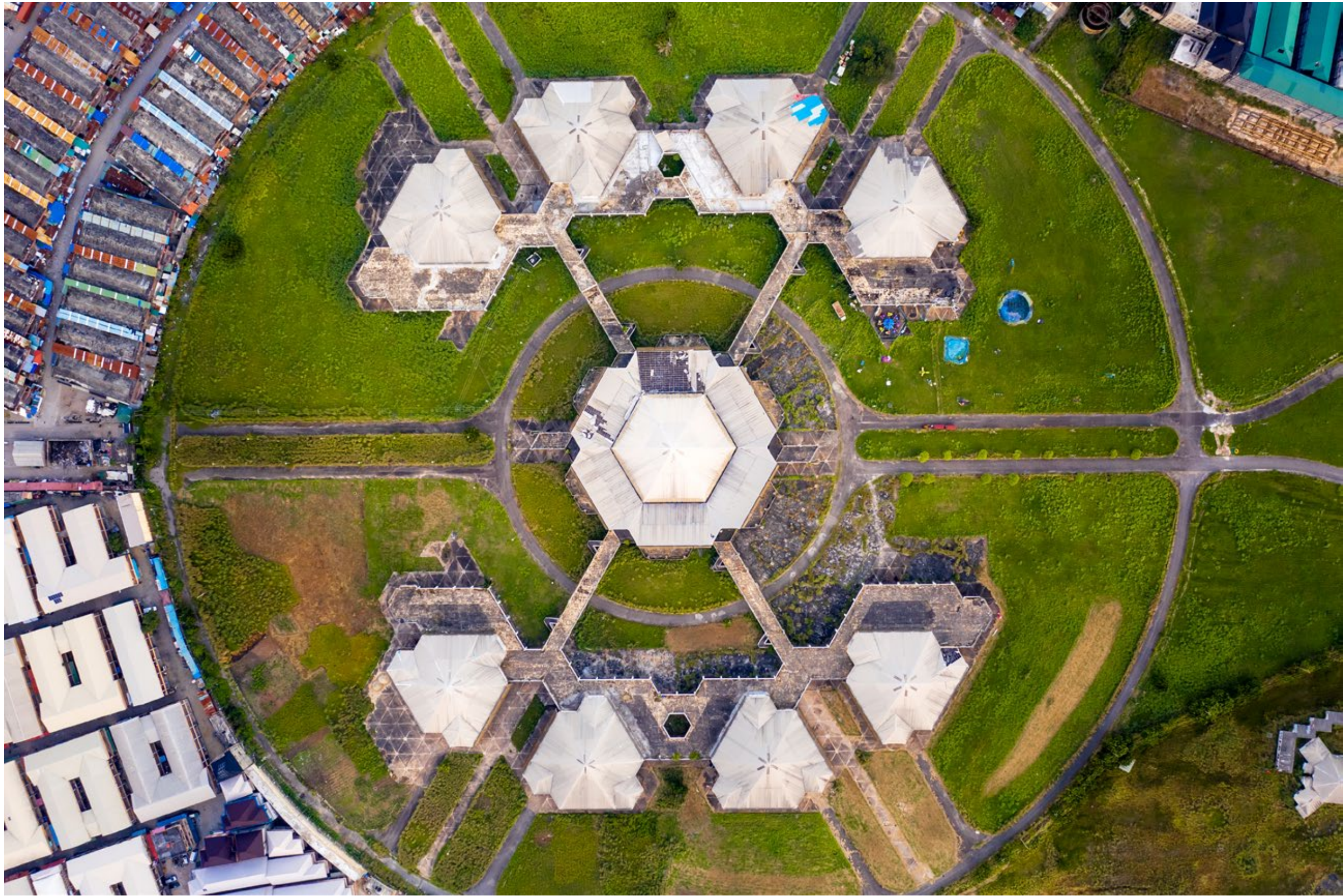
**Eko Living**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2021  
36 x 24 inches





**Modernist**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2020  
36 x 24 inches





**Trade Fair II**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2020  
24 x 36 inches





**Lone I**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2018  
24 x 36 inches





**A Picture In A Picture...Lagos Island**

Giclee Print on Metal

2016

24 x 36 inches





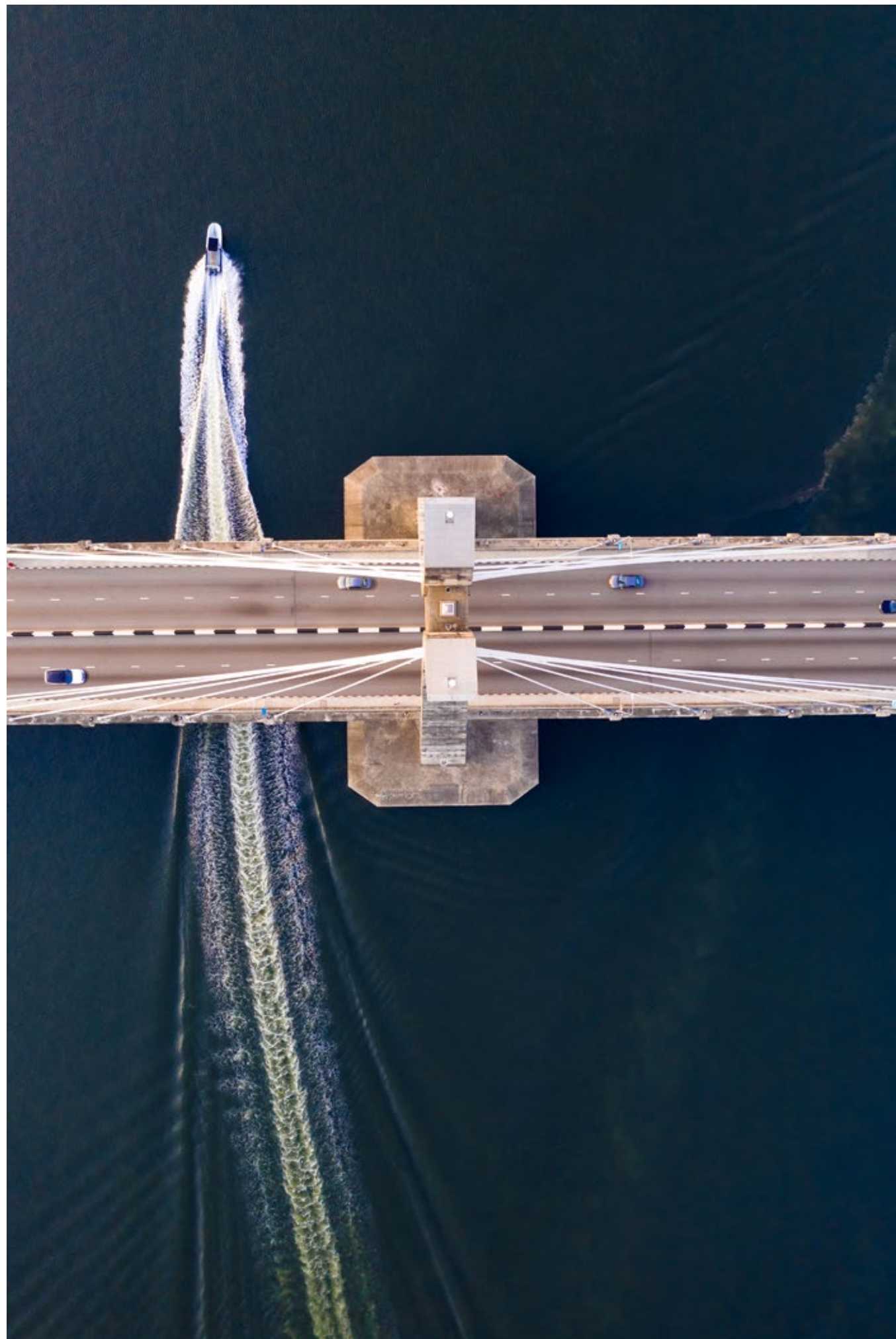
**Military Art**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2020  
24 x 36 inches





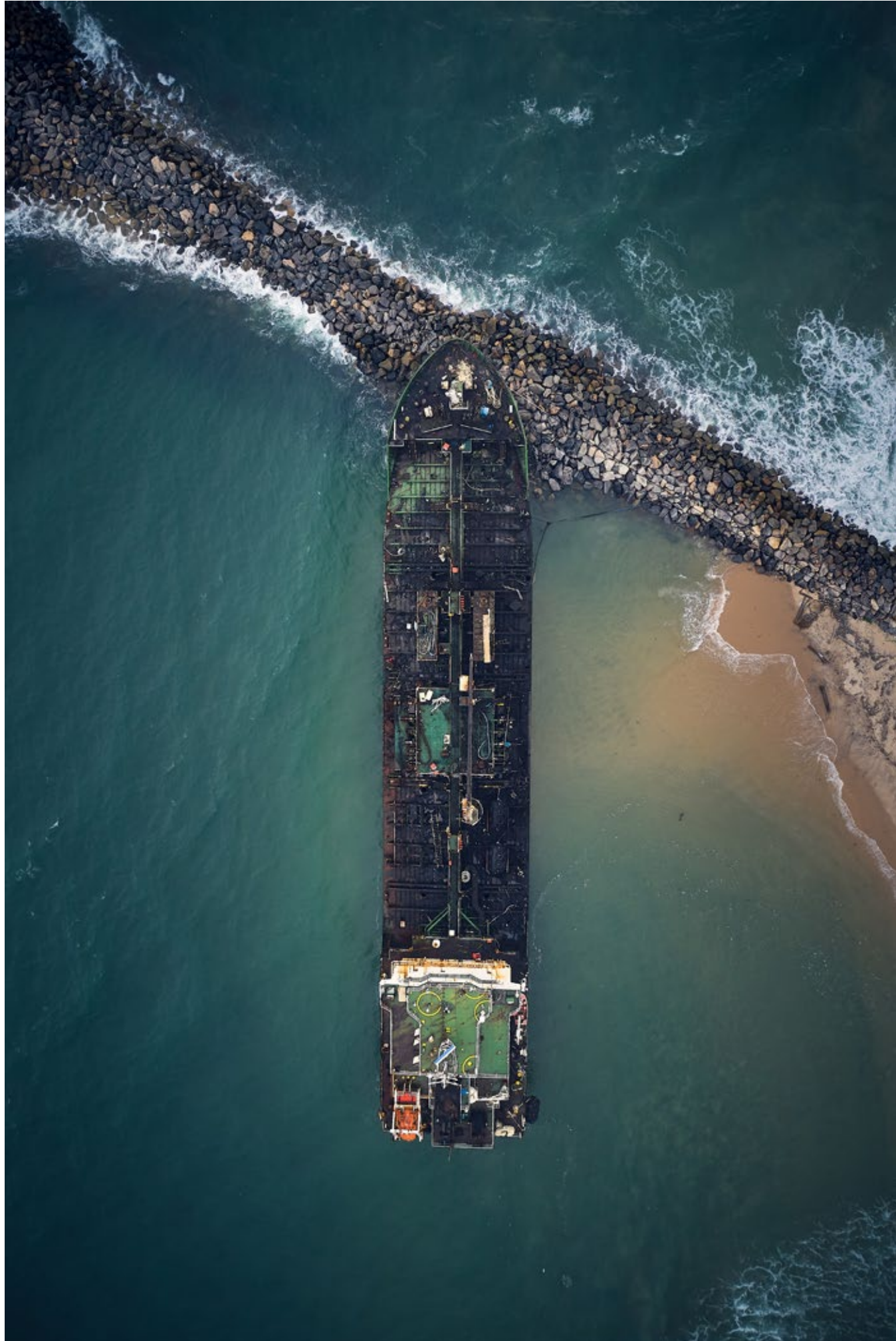
**Launch Out**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2020  
36 x 24 inches





**Axes**  
Giclee Print on Canvas  
2020  
60 x 40 inches





**Auket Emerald**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2020  
36 x 24 inches





**My World Of Peace**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2016  
24 x 36 inches





**Lone III**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2020  
24 x 36 inches



# Famuyiwa Oyebola Adedapo

B: 1987

## Education

**2009** - B.Sc (Elect/Elect Engineering), University of Ibadan.

**2016** - FotoFactory.Lagos Workshop

**2017** - The Now Collectives Masterclass

**2018** - The Now Collectives Workshop

**2019** - The Now Collectives Workshop

## Group Exhibitions

**2009** - Life in my City Competition, ROCANA Nigerian Ltd

**2011** - The Creative Expo, British Council

**2012** - Etisalat Amateur Competition, African Artists' Foundation (AAF),

**2019** - "China-Nigeria Friendship in Pictures" Photography Competition,

## Awards

**2009** - Finalist, Life in my City Competition, ROCANA Nigerian Ltd

**2012** - Finalist, Etisalat Amateur Competition, African Artists' Foundation (AAF)

**2019** - Finalist, "China-Nigeria Friendship in Pictures" Photography Competition

## Personal Projects:

1. Street Photo Series - Documenting the different lifestyles of people in Nigeria on the street.
2. Nigeria at 53 - Documented 53 different Nigerians from various works of life holding the national flag as a form of patriotism towards the 53rd independence celebration of Nigeria. **(2013)**
3. Nigeria at 54 - Documented 54 different Nigerians from various works of life playing with a local drum designed with the national flag as a form of patriotism towards the 54th independence celebration of Nigeria. **(2014)**
4. Evolve - Fine Art images of places and spaces within and outside Nigeria







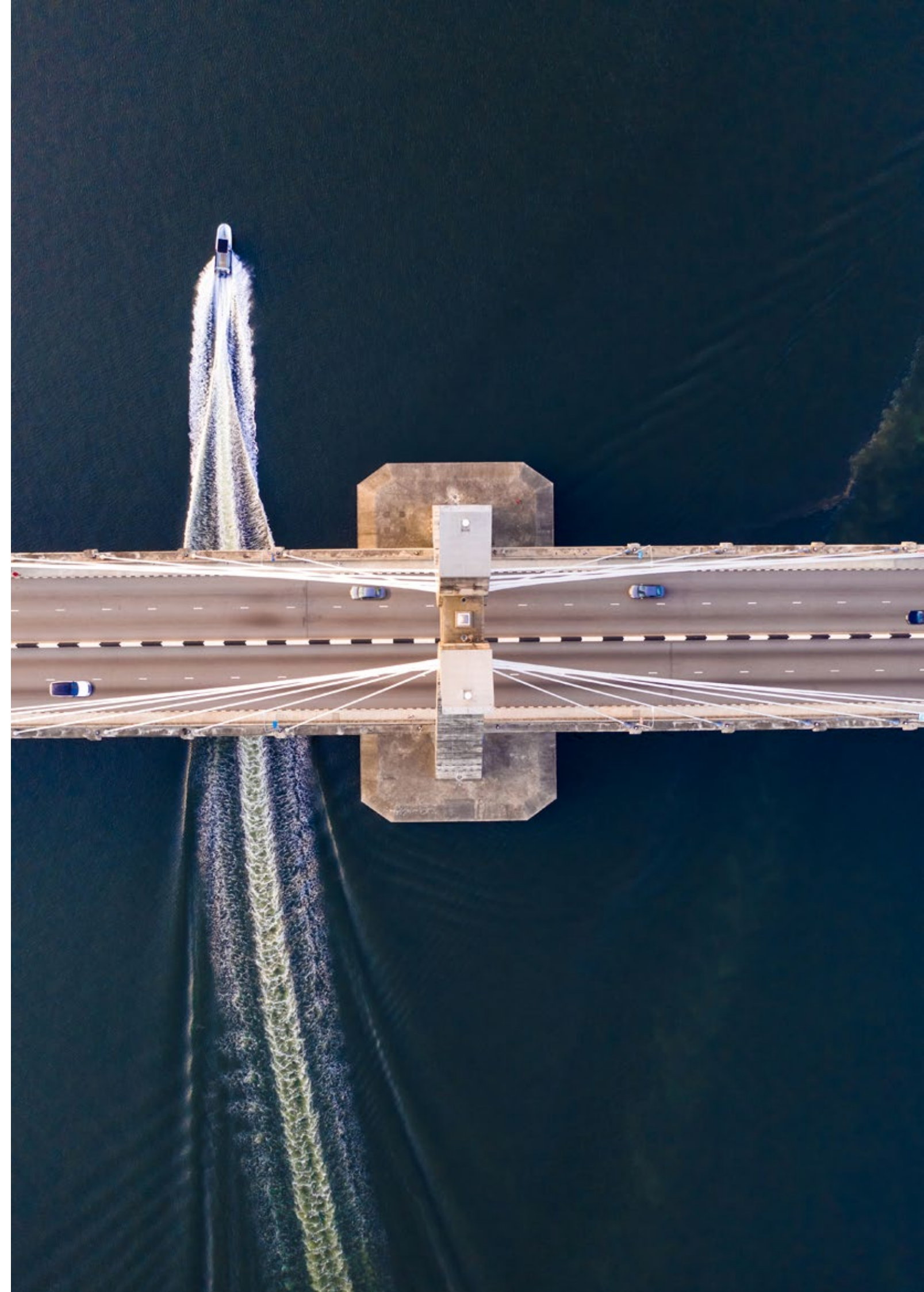
## This is Lagos

Lagos is a city with a pulsating heartbeat. It moves at a crescendo that is ambitious to keep up with. Here you will encounter a cacophony of horns and music blaring, drivers and bus conductors yelling in the sodden heat, market stalls bustling and preachers performing prayers on pulpits. In just about every way, Lagos reflects the vibrant chaos of a megacity – the tendency to charmingly entice, wrapping arms around ambition and hustle, while simultaneously spitting out dreams, like the bitter pit of a fruit.

What is especially fascinating is how Lagos functions like a long-term marriage between development and decay. I think of Victoria Island for instance, with its ever-developing peninsula, comprised of gleaming constructions with the similitude of skyscrapers. These futuristic buildings sprout out of land reclaimed from the Atlantic Ocean. Its branches distend in a showcase of how cosmopolitan and exuberant the city can be.

And yet it contrasts with neighbouring and further parts of the city, many of which possess a sort of dilapidated beauty. There is Festac town for example, which lies along the Lagos -Badagry expressway. Festac was created in 1977 to host the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, as well as to relieve Lagos of its housing pressure. Presently it is one of numerous parts of Lagos that exists in the shadow of its former glory.

One may string substantives and adjectives together to unravel the complex totality of the city, but where words alight, visuality continues in the quest for memorialisation. Bernard Kalu's images provide a sensory overload of quotidian conditions for the majority of Lagosians. His photographs shed light on certain nuances, themes and moments that experienced Lagosians will glean. A vivid image of steaming piles of garbage at the *Olusosun* landfill in *Ojota*, depicts a city suffocated by the harshness of pollution. The artist's images are stylistic, but without sugar-coating, as he cannily catches some of his subjects in performance. The conductor of a *danfo* bus in *Iyana*





*Ipaja* calling out for passengers, roadside markets that illustrate that this is a city that has a pattern to its disorder and that its inhabitants ingeniously function under the mechanism of informal transactions.

Kalu has a penchant for capturing reflective surfaces, from pools of water and oil slick that resemble floating sheets of glass, to the lens of a pair of sunglasses. This repetitive pattern makes one contemplate if he is asking the city to further articulate itself to us from different vantage points. His use of the device of observation is also clever because it appears two-dimensional, thus extending the onus to the viewer by posing the question- *Are you an actor, playing a part in the grand production of the city?*

In contrast to Kalu, Oyebola Famuyiwa's images are from an eye-level that is intriguing and expansive. Elements of the city that are characteristically dysfunctional are from this perspective almost rhythmical. A picture of a net cast broadly into Five Cowries creek by a fisherman has an elegance to it. Cars in standstill traffic at the Broad Street and Martin Street intersection of Lagos Island, from upwards, appear in a soldierly arrangement. Without the hectic minutiae of Lagos, usual frustrations like the manoeuvring of *okada* riders with their loud engines or engagement with vendors with marginal forms of employment are muted.

One may purport that Lagos, from such an aerial standpoint, filters reality and robs the city of its atmosphere - but that conclusion is conceivable premature. Famuyiwa does not erase the truth of the city. As part of this body of work, he presents an image taken close to Tinubu Square, Lagos Island, from a windowless and abandoned building that looks out onto much grander and well-maintained constructions. The curation also includes an image of the National Theatre, a poorly maintained yet resilient cultural relic. Famuyiwa's offerings to the viewer are pictorial demonstrations of how we Lagosians speak of our home city, which is with awe and resignation in tandem.

Kalu and Famuyiwa have conveyed a truth through their distinct practices. Lagos is a city that refuses to conceal its multiple identities. It is no surprise that we, its long-time inhabitants, have both a satirical and matter of fact reputation for saying, *this is Lagos*.

Asibi Danjuma

Art Writer and Founder of PHILOS Art & Booksellers







# Bernard Kalu



Bernard Kalu (born 1989) is a documentary photographer based in Lagos, Nigeria, with a passion for humans and the stories they tell simply by existing. His work aims to explore life and humanity.

Photography is drawing with light and he's adopted it as a tool to not only tell stories but preserve today for the future. Bernard began working in photography in 2014, exploring street documentary and creative twists to wedding photography- with Auxano Photography, now Verteller Studios. He is a certified Canon Miraisha master storyteller, VII Academy Foundry alumni, first runner up in the 2017 NATGEO Portfolio Review and has been on assignment with a number of organizations within and outside Nigeria. To mention a few, The Lancet, Bloomberg, IFAD, NBNL, MyAfricanPassport Inc. and so on. Also, he is a member of Diversify Photo (a global collective of BIPOC visual Journalists) and African Photojournalism Database (APJD) (a joint project by World Press Photo and Everyday Africa) and the convener of the SPWWBK (Street Photography Workshop with Bernard Kalu) through which he engages and mentors a good number of upcoming visual storytellers.

He had his first exhibition early 2017 at the Revolving Art Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria. Furthermore, he is an official Fujifilm Global X-Photographer. More recently, he has begun focusing on raising awareness about environmental and social issues in his home country, Nigeria.





**Outlier**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2016  
24 x 36 inches





Lagos - the city in which I was born, 'bread' and 'beansed', (translates to bred and raised). This city is one whose definition is inexhaustible and likewise, ever involving. For me, this body of work focuses on the people of the city, because I believe people make places.

Moreover, this selection of work is a testament to my connection with this city. An in-depth gaze within the seemingly ordinary, to find that extraordinary; a fictional rendition of reality. 'The streets are always posing, waiting on whom to capture her' is something I say. Yet more than just street imagery of Lagos, this body of work is a self-portrait of all of us who have come to know and love this city. So it's my hope that as you take in these vibrant colours and energy of Lagos, you may, in addition, find some meaning that resonates with you.

My journey into photography, in this case street photography, began in an oblivious manner. It was a sincere ploy to escape my boredom and fight for my mental health. At the time - plagued with the many questions of adulthood and with little to no answers, I got my hands on a camera, which serendipitously began this path for me.

Looking back and connecting the significant moments in my life, this art medium has been a gift that keeps on giving. Every time I walk through the streets to create art, that walk inadvertently becomes a journey inwards. The energy and mood of each scene is broken down into shadows, highlights, composition - textures and colours - revealing an essence that not only connects to my past, but resonates with the present while carrying in it some glimmers of hope for the future.





**Ululation**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2016  
24 x 36 inches





**Stance**

Giclee Print on Metal  
2016  
24 x 36 inches





**Swagger**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2016  
24 x 36 inches





**Prescience**

Giclee Print on Metal

2017

24 x 36 inches





**Recon**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2014  
24 x 36 inches





**Galácticos**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2014  
24 x 36 inches





**Dispirited**  
 Giclee Print on Metal  
 2017  
 24 x 36 inches





**Firegirl**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2017  
24 x 36 inches





**Soliloquy**

Giclee Print on Metal

2016

24 x 36 inches





**Metamorphosis**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2016  
20 x 30 inches





**Forgotten**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2017  
24 x 36 inches





**Apocalypse**  
Giclee Print on Metal  
2018  
24 x 36 inches



# Bernard Amadi Kalu

B: 1989

## Education and Certifications

**2011** - BEng. Computer Engineering, Enugu State University  
**2017** - Certificate In Story Telling/Photography, Canon Masterclass  
**2018** - Now Collective Photography Masterclass with Sabina Mladin  
**2019** - Certification in Photojournalism, Foundry VII Academy  
**2019** - Certification in Film making, Mirasha Canon Program  
**2020** - Documentary/Storytelling for NGOs' with Ed Kashi / Raw Society  
**2021** - New Approaches to Storytelling with Maggi Steber / Raw Society  
**2021** - Intimacy and Empathy in Personal Projects with Nancy Borowick / Raw Society

## Experience

February 2017 - Present: Lead Documentary Photographer, Sustvibes  
December 2018 – Present: Photographer, Verteller Studios  
August 2012 – November 2018- Lead Photographer, Auxano Photography  
July 2010 – January 2011 - Intern Vendor Manager, Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Ltd.  
April 2010 – July 2010 - Intern, Automated Processing Ltd

## Exhibitions

**2020** - ARS ELECTRONICA, Festival for Arts, Technology and Society (Group exhibition)  
**2020** - WWDPHC EXHIBITION, Italy (Group exhibition)  
**2020** - New Nigeria Studios, ARTX Lagos (Group Exhibition)  
**2017** - Exploring the African Voice in Visual Representation, Revolving Arts Gallery, .

## Stories and Commissioned Projects

1. Communitrees Project for Sustvibes and The British High Commission, Lagos  
2. VCDP project for International Fund For Agricultural Development (IFAD)  
3. Fin-tech story for Bloomberg - <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-03/africa-s-most-populous-nation-missed-the-mobile-money-revolution>  
4. COVID-19 in Nigeria: a disease of hunger for Lancet Medical - [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(20\)30220-4/5](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(20)30220-4/5).

Black Soot for Lancet Medical [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(18\)30303-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(18)30303-5/fulltext)  
6. Fish Smoking in Lagos for Lancet Medical [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(18\)30424-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(18)30424-7/fulltext)  
7. Landfill Fury for Lancet Medical [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(18\)30204-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(18)30204-2/fulltext)  
8. Felabration 2018 <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/nigeria/articles/femi-kuti-celebrates-felabration-life-music-and-nigeria/>

## Awards and Recognition

1. Official Fujifilm X-Photographer **2021**  
2. 1st Runner up – National Geographic Photography Portfolio Review **2017**  
3. Nomination, 25 under 25 SME Competition, Photography category









## 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 (SMO) is an international art platform, showcasing a unique portfolio of modern and contemporary art from Africa and the Diaspora to a global audience. Based in Lagos, Nigeria, SMO curates exhibitions, as well as public and private art events of leading and emerging talents for a diverse audience. SMO is dedicated to artists of all generations who have been instrumental in shaping West Africa's contemporary art canon and who became crucial in establishing a unique narrative of the continent. The SMO program sheds light on forgotten talents who have paved the way for new identities in contemporary art while encouraging a vibrant and continuous discourse around their oeuvres.

Regular exhibitions at diverse and unconventional gallery spaces, often affiliated to ecosystems of design, fashion and hospitality, underpin SMO's vision to engage with large and heterogenous audiences. The platform curates private and public creative events at international venues, and showcases a dynamic portfolio of contemporary art at local and international fairs. Specialized in art advisory services SMO Contemporary curates and manages important private and corporate art collections with a great commitment to documentation, preservation and communication.

[www.smocontemporary.com](http://www.smocontemporary.com)





## THE WHEATBAKER lagos

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), *Dis Lagos Life, Towards The Light* (2020), *Particles in Motion* (2021)





## 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.





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