



Pure Water Chika Idu

Cover work: **Fluid**, 2026, 50 x 37cm

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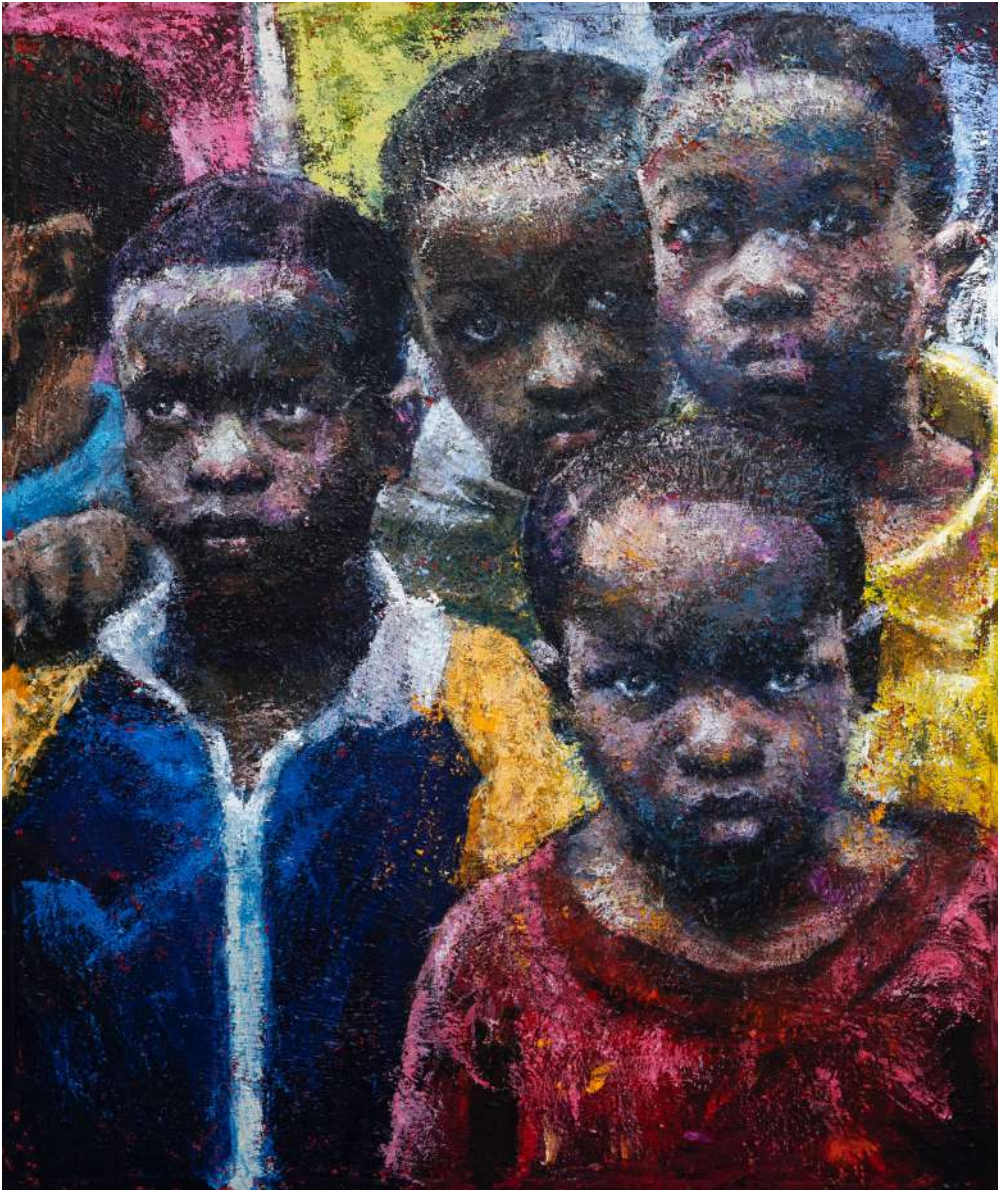
Pure Water

SMO Contemporary Art is pleased to present Chika Idu's latest artworks with an exploration of submerged figures suspended within clear blue waters. The figures drift with intention, exploring a pristine and pure underwater world of wonder and harmony. The water is thick with painterly movement through layered palette-knife gestures. These experimental impressions mimic the shifting currents and refraction of light beneath the water's surface, a pristine world that is powerfully juxtaposed against a series of intense portraits of women and children in the flow of life's challenges and questions.

Idu's world is grounded in a fascination with the human figure. His portraits draw the viewer in through the arresting gaze of his subjects. They appear composed, yet their expressions drift between intimacy and playfulness, questioning and resoluteness, inviting a reciprocal exchange between the subject and viewer.

Pure Water introduces a critical and ironic reference to Idu's aspiration for a pristine, balanced world, while the term also refers to the plastic "pure water" drinking sachets, used to quench the thirst of millions of Nigerians within heavily populated and polluted city centers. These water sachets clog up the drains and waterways, becoming an environmental hazard which affect people's quality of life. These ubiquitous plastic sachets are far from "pure", representing objects of easy accessibility and necessity, especially within coastal and riverine communities.

Even though Idu's artistic process includes sketching children at play within polluted waterways, he renders his figures immersed in crystal clear waters, offering his subjects freedom and escape. Through the fluidity of their light speckled under-water reverie, Idu creates scenes of youthful innocence, rendering figures that have the capacity for liberality and adventure, despite life's uncertain currents.



The Assembly, 2026, 150 x 120 cm, Oil on Canvas



Idu's visit to the island of Martinique in the Caribbean deeply influenced the artist's exploration and interpretation of the historic trans-atlantic slave trade, set against the current geo-political pressures of global migration across the oceans of the world. His work responds to enduring stereotypes and memories of statues and monuments of racist "heros" positioned towards the open sea. Idu brings into focus both historic and modern stories of African men, women and children, lost at sea while seeking better opportunities. Idu's figures drift between generations and places. For the artist, the water becomes a space through which histories are re-imagined.

In *Pure Water*, Idu's figures and portraits claim liberality and innocence, drifting towards freedom despite all odds. These black bodies are no longer confined, and their spirits have become one with the elements. The artist transforms his personal recollections into a broader musing on pure waters which can be imagined and attained.

A short film by SMO Contemporary Art accompanies the exhibition, offering insight into Idu's ideas, process and practice.



Chika Idu

(born in 1974) is a contemporary artist from Umunede in Delta State, Nigeria. He majored in Painting at Auchi Federal Polytechnic, Edo in 1998. He was instrumental in the creation of the Defactori Studios and Nigeria's first Water Colour Society of Artists (SABLES).

His works are a reflection of his fascination with how light particles are reflected in water, mist, fog, and dust. His paintings are known for their dense texture and diffused hazy rendering which he calls "light against visual distortion."

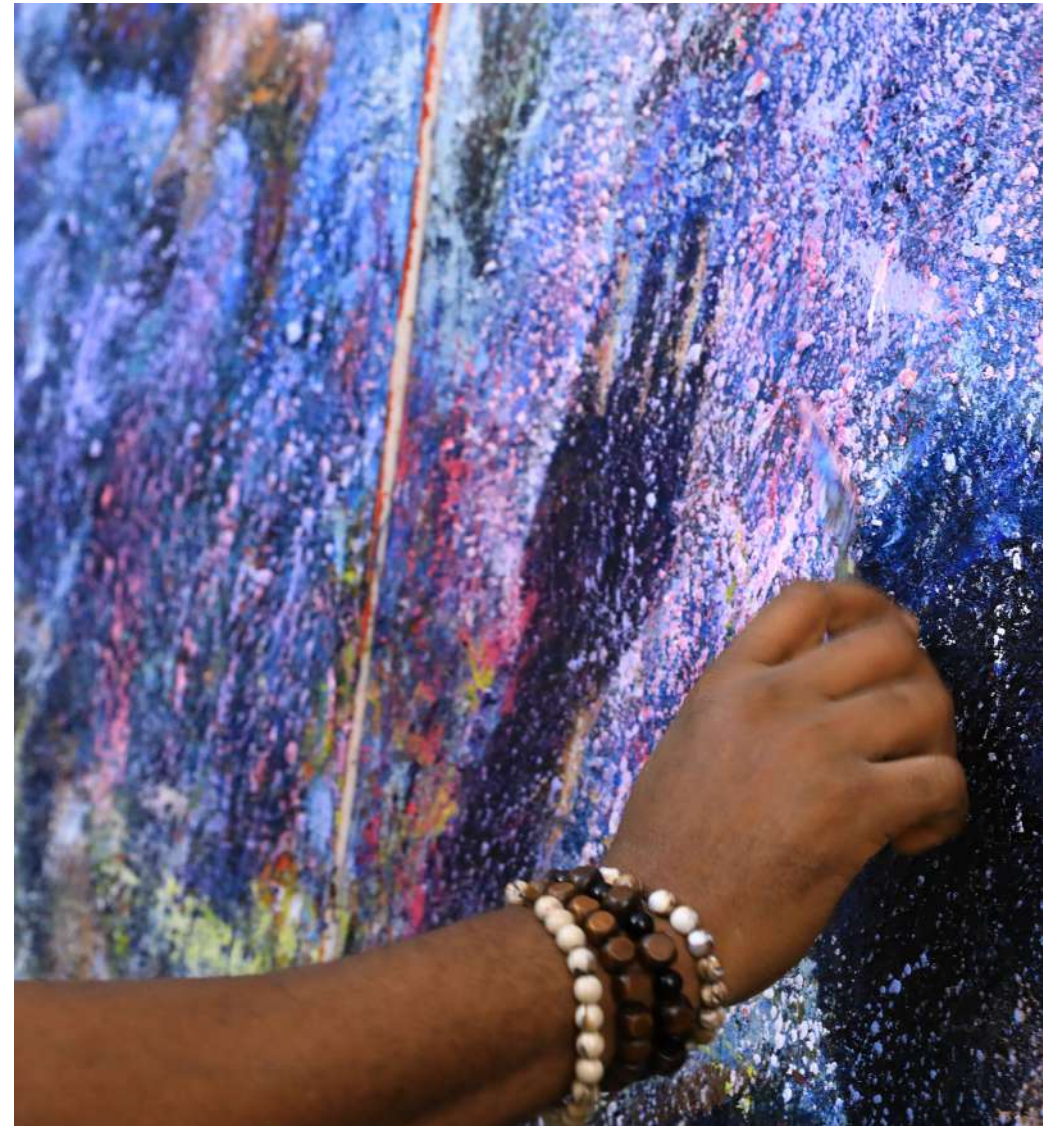
His works explore the influence of cultural and societal issues and how they impact women and children. Idu is committed to environmental sustainability and through his art, raises awareness on the risks and pressures faced by children living within fragile coastal communities. Idu creates charged works that draw the viewer into intimate encounters. His paintings are characterised by their striking figuration and sensitivity to the emotional possibilities of the human face and body. Through his evolving visual language, Idu asks us to remain attentive and invite us to be ever wondrous in life.

The Eye Beneath the Surface and its Coils

Chika Idu (b. 1974) is a multi-media artist from Delta State, Nigeria. He studied Painting at Auchi Federal Polytechnic in Edo State, graduating in 1998. In this exhibition, his works explore how light interacts with water and the impressions it creates. At the heart of these pieces is a focus on ecocriticism¹ directed towards environmental justice and stewardship. Artists from the Auchi Polytechnic, his alma mater, have the reputation for skillful use of colour. Today, however, critics look beyond formal qualities to consider how images embody culture and society. Thus, this essay examines Idu's work within that broader critical context of the "image turn".²

This essay uses the "Python's Eye"³ method to interpret Idu's art, and Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which helps discuss environmental topics and relationships.⁴

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1. Frank A. O. Ugiomoh, "The Colour of Our Hearts is the Colour of our City: Dimensions of Eco-visibility in Nigeria", *Methods in Ecocritical Art History*, eds. Olga Smith and Andrew Patrizio, (Manchester University Press, 2026) 168-173.
 2. Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013) 12-22.
 3. Professor Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa, "The Python's Eye: The Past in the Living Present," Inaugural Lecture Series, University of Port Harcourt, 1 (December 7, 1997); and Frank A. O. Ugiomoh Inaugural Lecture of the University of Port Harcourt, 92nd, "On African Art and Identity Blogging: A Historical Perspective." (August 31, 2012), where I initially discussed the Python's Eye art historical prospects. Alagoa's Python's Eye metaphor inspired the Python's Eye art historical method of African Art History in an ongoing book endeavour. Alagoa's thought was anchored on an Igbo (Ikwere) adage, "Anyia diali bu anya eke", translated, which says that "The eyes of the man with local roots is (as penetrating as) the python's eye; the allusion is that the coiled repose of the python has its head on the coil and endowed with a panoptic vision. Thus, the Python is regarded as a repository and facilitator of memory. Hence, it is an attribute of the well-groomed son of the soil with local roots. Memory is key to historical practice.
 4. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory (ANT)*, (Oxford: University Press, 2007).





The Python's Eye is a method of looking at art that focuses on layered viewing, memory, and the idea that different times and meanings can exist together in a single image in the concepts "polytemporality" and "polychronicity". Actor-Network Theory (ANT), developed by Bruno Latour, views both humans and non-human elements as active agents within a network of environmental relationships, showing how different actors—including objects, environments, and people—interact to create meaning and effects. Briefly outlining these two theories will help clarify the critical stakes that follow.

The Python's Eye is a way of seeing that does not follow a straight path from surface to meaning or from past to present; it is unlike traditional Western art history method that is lineal and teleological, and developed for Western art history.⁵

Memory plays a key role, as the Python's Eye approach is both recursive, and identifying repeated pasts within the artwork (polychronicity), and detecting the reality of different times and contexts in an artwork and how such presences can shape or defer meaning in an artwork. The Python's Eye does not force a choice between history and the present, beauty and violence, or memory and imagination, in the manner of linear criticism. Instead, it recognises that all these elements can exist together in a single artwork. For example, when looking at "Play Time", one of Idu's paintings where a child's body floats just beneath the shimmering surface of the water, the method might notice how the present innocence of play overlays memories of past hardship, and how the sparkling surface both reveals and conceals deeper histories. This approach encourages viewers to sense multiple narratives and layers of meaning within a single image, rather than settling on a single fixed interpretation that emerges from a linear gaze.

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5. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory (ANT)*, (Oxford: University Press, 2007).

With Latour's theory, critics trace symbolic connections within an artwork instead of assuming that symbols are always already present. Actor-Network Theory (ANT) challenges the idea that only humans have agency or act on the environment. Instead, ANT asks us to see non-human elements—such as water, plastic sachets, paint, and even light—as active participants in the creation of meaning. For example, a water sachet has agency too: water, plastic, and people all play roles in a network of associations, each influencing the others, even though their contributions differ. Viewing non-human elements as agents changes our interpretation of Idu's paintings.⁶

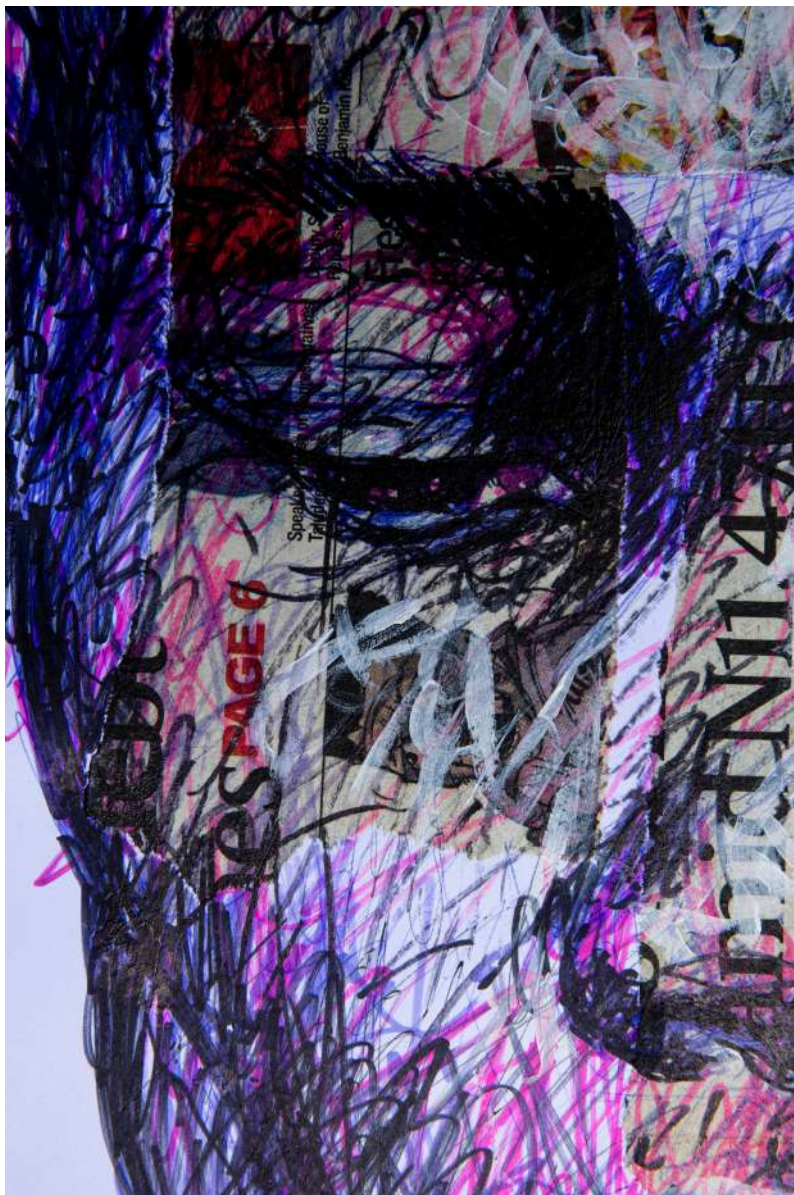
The water is not just a setting for human figures, but an active player that shapes the experience of the bodies it surrounds. The plastic waste is not just an environmental discard and threat in the background, but an active power that impacts lives, memories, and the very look of the paintings. This approach encourages viewers to notice how every element—human and non-human—interacts to create the layered meanings in Idu's work, making us more attentive to the relationships that shape both the environment and the artwork itself.

Chika Idu's water looks peaceful at first. In "The Life We Know" or "Rays" figures drift under clear blue surfaces, as if they are in a calm world far from the chaos above. Their bodies seem weightless, floating, moving, pausing, and watching. But this calm is misleading. The water hides, remembers, and carries deeper troubles beneath its surface.

This is where the paradox of "Pure Water" appears. The title suggests clarity, balance, and renewal, but it also evokes the plastic sachets of drinking water found recklessly discarded everywhere in the environment in Nigeria.

6. Linear teleology is a method of art history initiated by G. W. F. Hegel in his *Philosophy of Fine Art*. It views the evolution of art as a straight progression that manifest as periods and where past period is relegated to a background. Teleology is derived from the Greek word *telos* - end or goal, which drives artistic evolution or progression.





These sachets meet people's needs, but when discarded, they clog drains and waterways, exacerbating environmental problems. So, "pure water" is never just pure. It is both an idea and a reality shaped by the very issues that make it necessary.

This contradiction is a key way to approach Idu's paintings. Instead of just asking what the submerged figures mean, we can ask what kind of attention their suspension calls for. The figures do not belong to one time or feeling. They seem to move between innocence and experience, vulnerability and freedom, memory and possibility. Their bodies are in water, but the water itself is always changing. It is environment, material, memory, passage, and metaphor all at once. This is where Idu's water fits the Python's Eye approach as polychronic semiology.⁷

The painted surface itself seems to move. Layers of palette-knife strokes and found materials create effects that suggest currents, shifting water, and light bending under the surface. The artist's gestures do not just show water—they act like water. The surface becomes part of the meaning, not just a background for the image.

This matters because the surface of these paintings is connected to what is underneath. The clear blue water suggests escape, especially for children who live near polluted waterways. In the Curatorial Brief, the artist starts with children playing in dirty water, but in the paintings, they appear in clean, clear water. This change is not about denying reality or escaping it. Instead, it is an act of imagination.

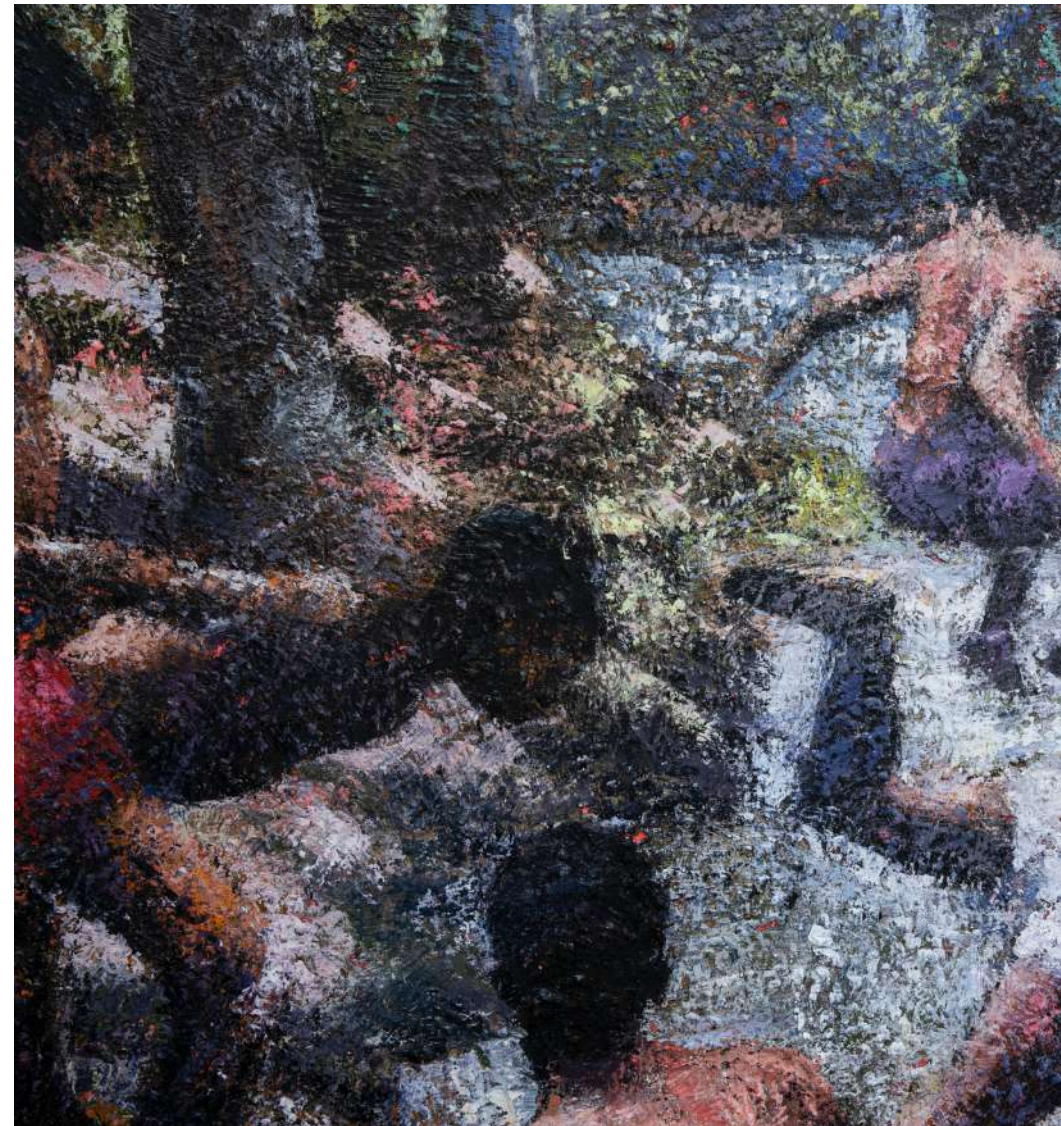
⁷ Frank A. O. Ugiomoh and Ndubuisi Ezeoluomba, "El Anatsui: Catering to Environmental Subjectivities in Diverse Aesthetic Layerings", *El Anatsui: The Man, the Myth, the Legend at 80 and counting*, eds. Greg Mgbajorgu and Chikaorgwu Kanu, (Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited, 2026) 283-201.

With the Python's Eye, how time is layered is paramount. The clean water in the painting does not erase the memory of polluted water; instead, it brings it back.

Reality and hope are mixed together. The remembered environment becomes the imagined one, and the imagined one keeps the memory of why change was needed. The painting moves between what exists and what could be, and also returns to what is still unresolved.

This back-and-forth movement is key to how Idu sees water. He paints water not as a way to escape history, but as a way for history to flow and change. His visit to Martinique added another layer of meaning to his experience. Martinique, an island in the Caribbean with a history deeply marked by slavery and colonialism, stands as a powerful reminder of the Atlantic slave trade and its ongoing impact. By traveling there, Idu connected his own experience to this region shaped by forced migration and the movement of people across the ocean. In his art, the memory of the trans-Atlantic slave trade intersects with today's issues of ocean migration. The sea is no longer just a place on a map. It becomes a vast archive, holding stories of bodies, journeys, departures, deaths, crossings, and unfinished histories.

Thus, this is not just a shift from history to contemporary art. Instead, different histories are active at the same time in the water metaphor. The bodies of those lost in the slave trade, today's migrants, and Idu's women and children are not the same, but each has a place in an ongoing story of movement, displacement, vulnerability, and the search for freedom. Idu's figures drift through both water and time. The curatorial text says they move "between generations and places," with water as a space for re-imagining history. Here, memory is not just looking back. It shapes how we see the present and imagine the future.



8. Polychronic semiosis is the search for meaning in an artwork within a multilayered time.



Latour's *Reassembling the Social*⁸ asks us to see the exhibition as a network of elements: body, water, plastic sachet, drainage system, river, migration, ocean, slave trade, memory, movement, painting, and viewer. The plastic water sachet is not just a symbol—it is part of a chain of effects. Water is not just scenery; it shapes human life. The ocean is not just a background for migration; it is an active historical route. The painting itself is part of this network. We are asked to consider the relationships that water brings together.

Latour's "Politics of Nature"⁹ challenges the usual divisions between science, nature, and politics. In this context, water is not just "nature." The plastic sachet, human bodies, migration, and memory are all part of society and are connected. The Python's Eye observes these links, while Latour's ideas help us see how we often ignore the environment. This connects to environmental justice and ecofeminism, raising questions about who bears the burden and how it is shared.¹⁰

Idu's "water" is political because it does not remain merely natural. Instead, politics is already present in the painting, moving through water, bodies, materials, and histories. In these contexts, the Python's Eye is the main method, and Latour's theory is one tool for understanding the ecological themes.

Recent feminist environmental theory highlights how gender, race, class, colonialism, labor, and ecological harm are connected. In this exhibition, women and children—especially black bodies in polluted, coastal communities—are central. One example is Idu's painting "Floating Dreams," which shows a young girl half-submerged in water, her face emerging from a swirl of painted ripples mixed with fragments of plastic sachets.

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9. N. Brencherki, "Actor Network Theory" *International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*, (New York: Wiley, 2017), <http://doi.org/10.1002/971118955567.wbieoc002>.

10. Latour, *Politics of Nature*, *ibid*.

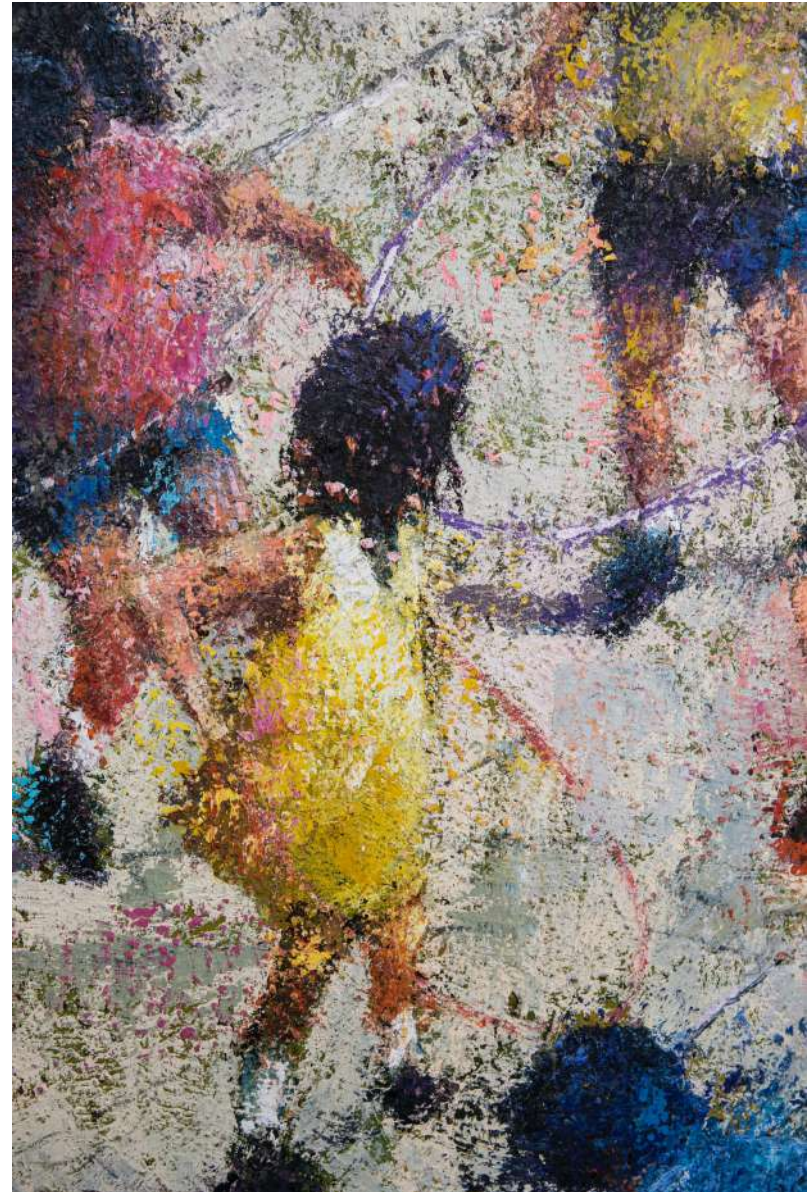
The painting uses shimmering light and floating debris to underline the tension between vulnerability and resilience: the girl is both threatened by pollution and transformed by her imaginative presence within the water. This visual connection between the child and the polluted environment draws out the intersection of ecological harm, gender, and race, emphasising that the burden of environmental crisis is not distributed equally.

Considering “Ray” the submerged bodies are neither lost nor merely rescued. They drift through time. They are repositioned. Underwater, the black body is released from some of the visual conventions through which Blackness has historically been represented. The bodies in Idu’s paintings are not presented primarily as victims of history. They gaze, play, drift and inhabit. Their suspension enacts another possibility: a Black subject capable of occupying an imagined space beyond confinement. The Curatorial text suggests that these Black bodies are “no longer confined” and that their spirits become one with the elements.

Now, regarding ecocriticism within a broad frame, some ecocritical studies focus on how gender and environmental justice intersect, especially for vulnerable groups in the Global South.¹¹ Women and children living near polluted waterways often face the harshest effects of these networks. Latour’s idea of agency reminds us that not everyone in a system faces the same consequences. Agency and power are not the same, and it is important not to ignore historical inequalities when looking at ecological relationships.

11. Jennifer L. Lawrence, et al., “Feminist Approach to Environmental Politics” (online, 2024) *Contemporary Political Theory*, (2025) 24:81-97 <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-024-00707-y>

12. Olga Smith and Andrew Patrizio, “Introduction: Bodies”, *Methods in Ecocritical Art History*, eds. Olga Smith and Andrew Patrizio, (Manchester University Press, 2026) 107-111.





As mentioned earlier, the Python's Eye method helps critics and historians notice the complex details in Latour's theories. One useful idea is "ambush perception" from Gestalt psychology, which warns us not to rely only on our first impression when looking for meaning in art.¹²

Ambush perception does not always show up in the main subject of an image. Meaning can come from unexpected places. An image that first looks innocent may reveal a history of slavery. A beautiful landscape might actually show an ecological crisis. A scene of childhood freedom could hint at the dangers of living by the coast. Hence, the critic or audience needs to stay alert to what appears at the edges, in the depths, and across different times in the image.

How does the water ambush the viewer? The water first attracts us with its color, brightness, and movement. Then it makes us think about what water means to people who live near it, rely on it, travel across it, pollute it, remember through it, or lose loved ones in it. The aesthetic flare of these paintings does not hide their critical message. Instead, it helps us notice the questions they raise.¹³

This could explain why the figures' gazes matter so much. Idu's portraits invite viewers into a two-way exchange: the subjects look calm, but their expressions move between intimacy, playfulness, questioning, and determination. The viewer cannot just watch from a distance—the gaze is returned in what Bourriaud, Downey discusses in the politics of Relational Aesthetics.¹⁴

13. Ambush perception occurs when an artwork seems to project an image that brings about false interpretation and suddenly a secondary image breaks through the viewers consciousness, where the whole becomes something other than its parts. Cf. John O'Dea, "Art and Ambiguity: A Gestalt-Shift Approach to Elusive Appearances," in Fabian Dorsch and Fiona Macpherson (eds), *Perceptual Constancy and Variation*, in Fabian Dorsch and Fiona Macpherson (eds), *Phenomenal Presence* (Oxford, 2018; Online edn. Oxford Academic, 21 June 2018), <http://doi.org/10.1093/oso/978099666416>, 58-76, accessed 2/6/2026.

14. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002); Anthony Dawney, "Towards a Politics of (Relational) Aesthetics," *Third Text: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art*, 86 vol. 21: 3, (2007) 267-275

Here, the Python's Eye is about exchange, not just observation. It does not treat the subject as just an object to study. Instead, the subject becomes part of the interpretation. The painting does not just present itself to the viewer; it asks the viewer to consider their own perspective.

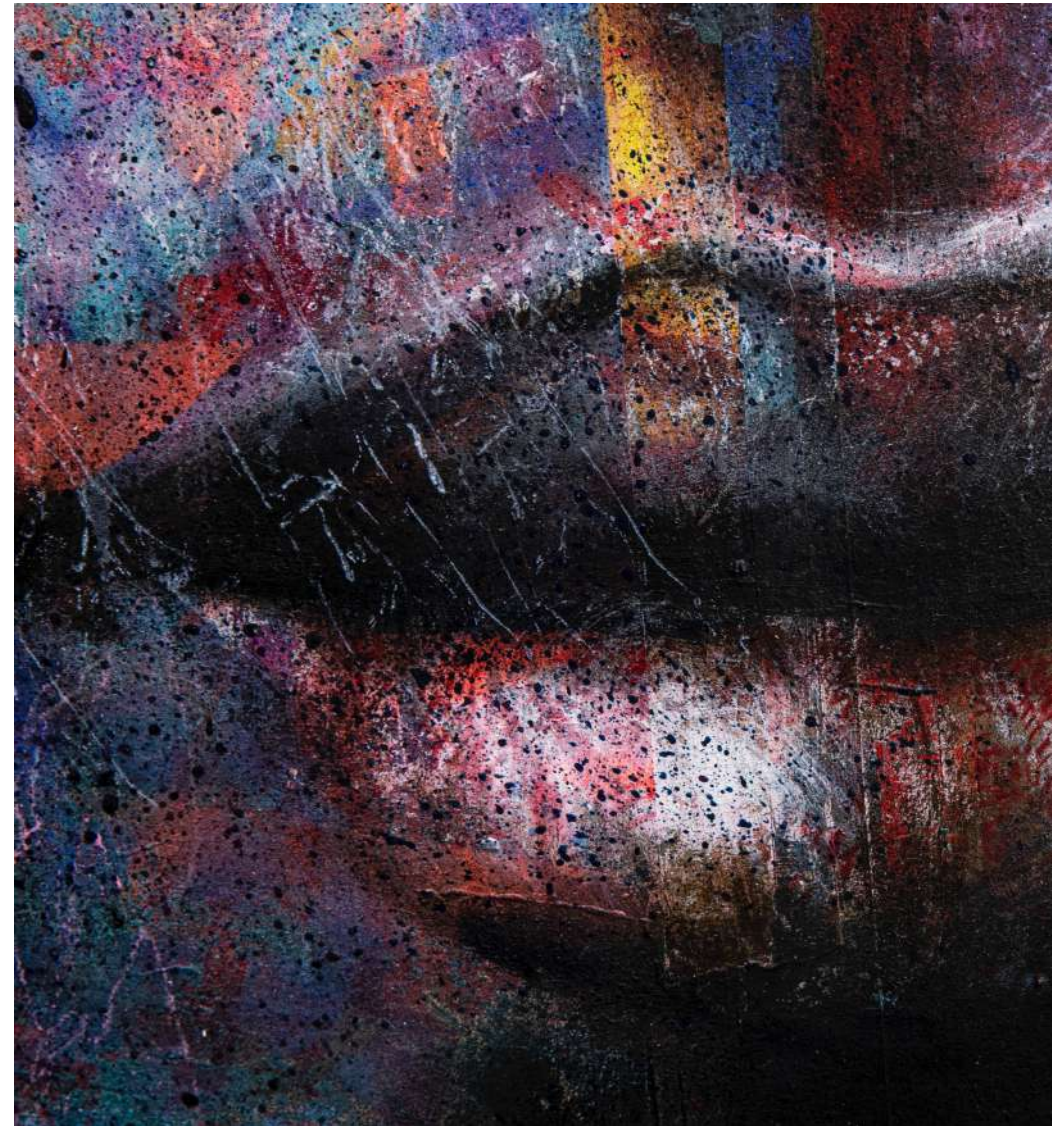
This is especially important for how a Black subject, women and children are shown. In Idu's watery scenes, their presence is not just about innocence. They live in a world shaped by social, ecological, historical, and political forces, but they also have imagination, movement, and hope. Childhood here is not just a symbol of purity—it is a place where a different future can be imagined.¹⁵

The contradiction comes back: pure water and polluted water; remembered violence and imagined freedom; historical and liberated bodies; surface and depth; past, present, and future. Idu does not try to solve these opposites. His paintings keep them in balance. Maybe this suspension is what Pure Water is really about. To suspend means to interrupt what is expected. A body that would sink now floats. A memory from the past enters the present. Pollution is turned into imagined clarity. A thrown-away plastic object becomes a sign of need, inequality, and environmental impact. A painting becomes both surface and depth.

This suspension is the underlying allegorical mainstay that "Pure Water" enacts. Hence, the Python's Eye method is not to straighten things out linearly, but to follow the twists and turns presented by reality/phenomena. It sees that meaning can come back, change, and show up again. Memory is active, time is layered, and perception connects the body to its environment.¹⁶ In this way, Idu's water is not just a background. It becomes a living part of the artwork, carrying bodies, histories, actions, and possibilities all at once.

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15. Symbolismhub.com The Profound Symbolism of The Child: Exploring the Deeper Meanings Behind Innocence and Purity. <https://symbolismhub.com/the-profound-symbolism-of-the-child-exploring-the-deeper-meanings-behind-innocence-and-purity/>. Accessed 21/8/2026.

16. Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2001) 17.





The ecological question is tied to the historical one. Environmental justice is also about who gets to live in, move through, and imagine a healthy environment. Polluted waterways in coastal and river communities are not just abstract problems—they are real conditions people live with.¹⁷ The clear water in Idu's paintings is not just a fantasy. It is an ethical question: what would it mean for vulnerable people to breathe, move, play, and be free in their environment?

Pure Water ultimately refuses to offer a final answer. Instead, it presents water as a space full of possibilities. Water remembers the past but keeps changing. It can support life or threaten it, separate continents or connect histories, hide bodies or set them free, take in waste or offer renewal.

As Achille Mbembe appropriately notes, to think of time as entanglement is to move beyond the limits of linear history. Across the *longue durée*, African societies have inhabited diverse, intersecting and sometimes divergent temporal trajectories—realities that resist reduction and demand a more complex reading of the present.¹⁸ The present is not detached from what preceded it; different times coexist within the ordinary, the material and the lived. Idu's paintings live within these contradictions instead of trying to solve them.

With the Python's Eye polychronic semiosis, we encounter "Pure Water" and its present baggage in the contemporary: it is more than just thinking about water. It is a way to explore how one image can hold many times, memories, and realities all at once in a visual interpretation and the search for meaning and its multiple symbolic contexts in society in the present.

17. Frank A. O. Ugiomoh, "Pale Reflections and Fables of Life: George Osodi's Real People of the Niger Delta in Nigeria," *Camera Austria International*, 106 (2009), 23-34.

18. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 16

In conclusion, the clear water is not empty—it is filled with history. Under its “pure” look, we see that Idu’s “Water” is more than just a background or a metaphor. It is a space where bodies, materials, memories, histories, and environments interact. With the Python’s Eye, method we see many times at once – polytemporality and polychronicity: the polluted present meets the remembered past, and the hope for a pure future enters today’s reality. Latour’s ideas help us trace these links, feminist ecological thought asks us to look at their unequal effects, and environmental justice asks who must live with these outcomes.

I hope you have a meaningful experience with Chika Idu’s thought-provoking art birthed in the environment.

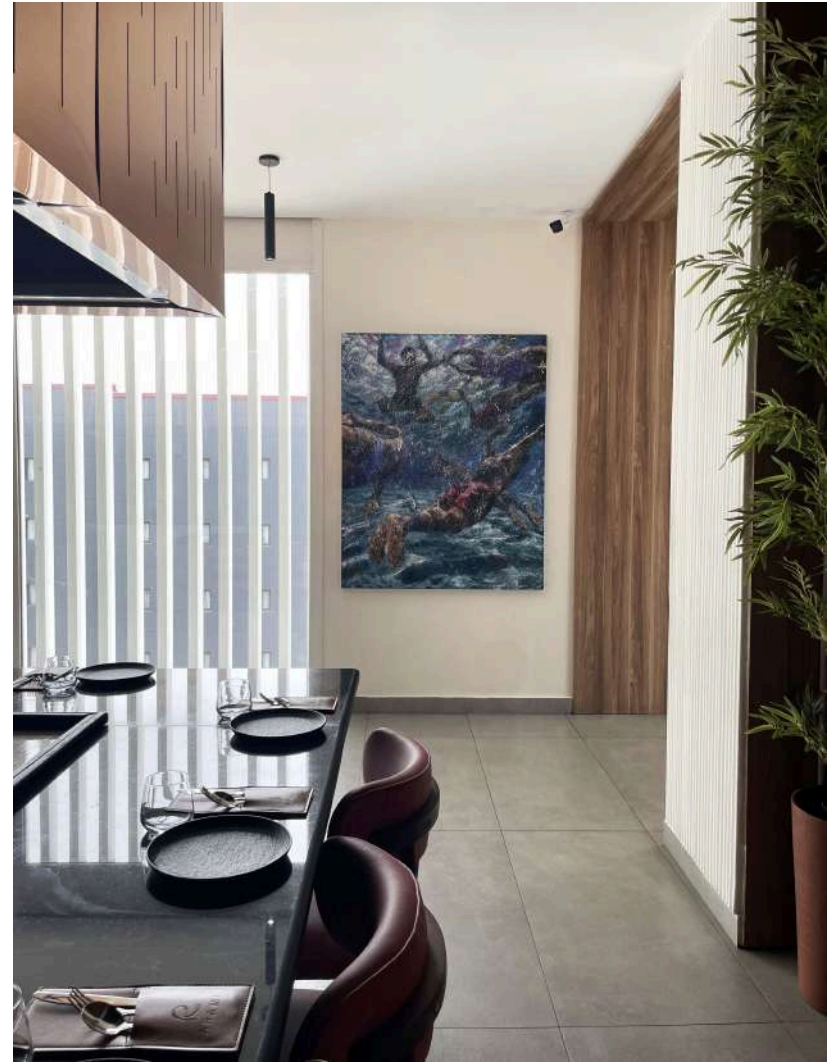
Frank A. O. Ugiomoh PhD., *Independent Scholar, Retired Professor of History of Art and Theory from the University of Port Harcourt.*





Installation of *Convergence* (Diptych), 2022-2025, 150 x 120cm each and *Osondi Owendi*, 2026, 150 x 120 cm, Oil on Canvas

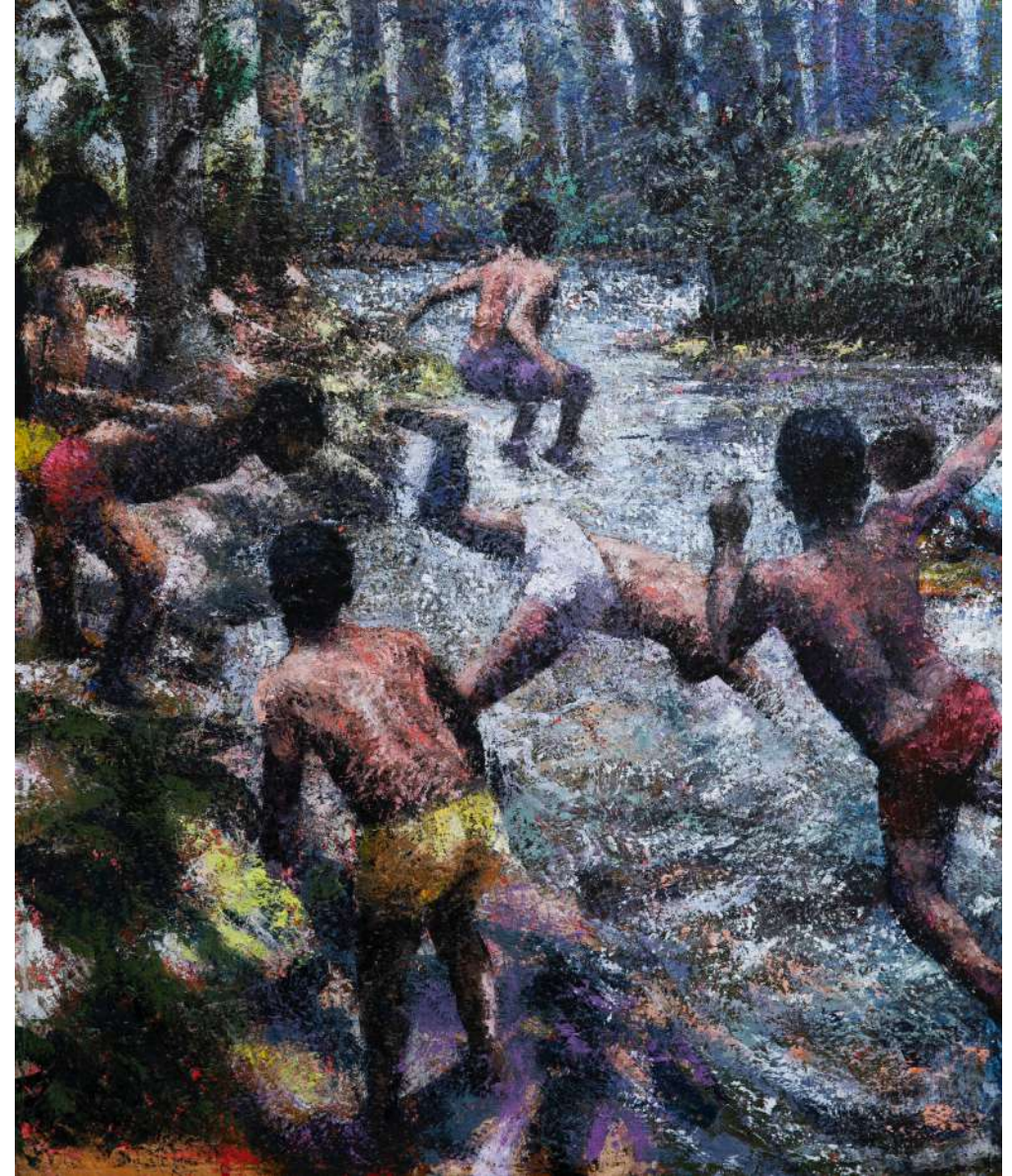
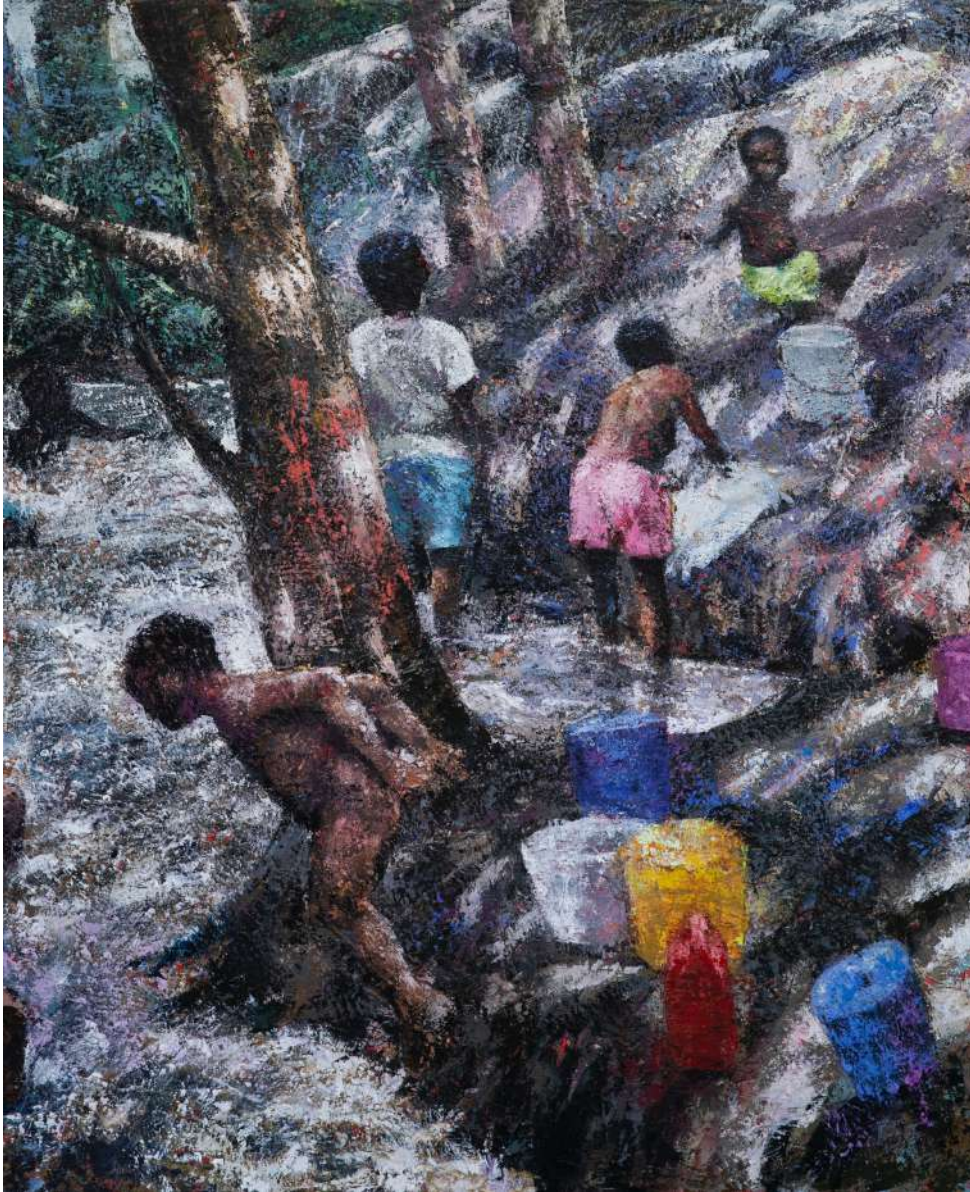
The Underwater Series



Installation of A Familiar Place, 2026, 150 x 120 cm, Oil on Canvas



Catharsis (Triptych), 2026
210 x 150 cm each
Oil on Canvas

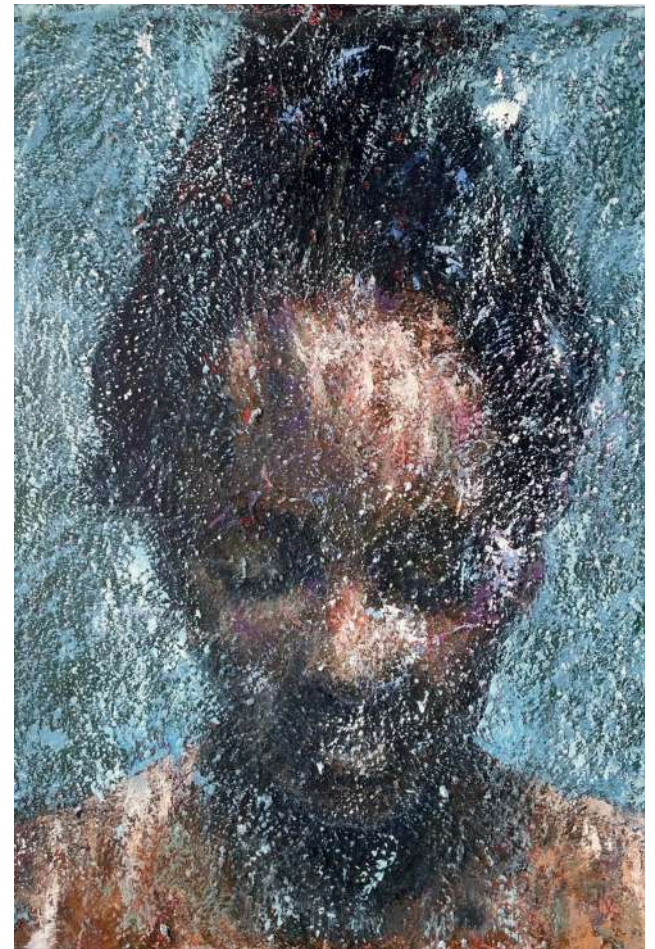
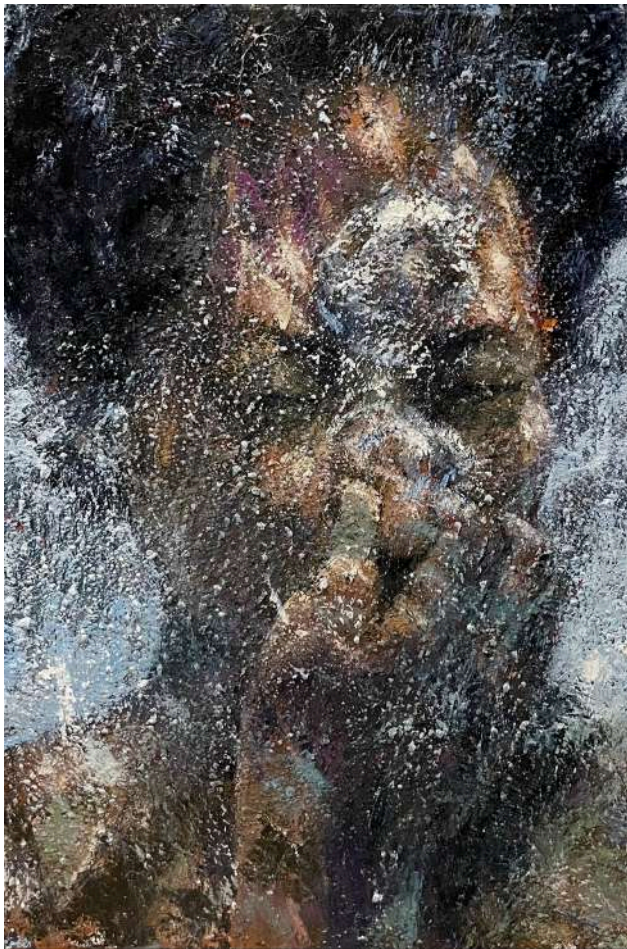


Convergence (Diptych), 2022-25
150 x 120 cm each
2022 - 2025

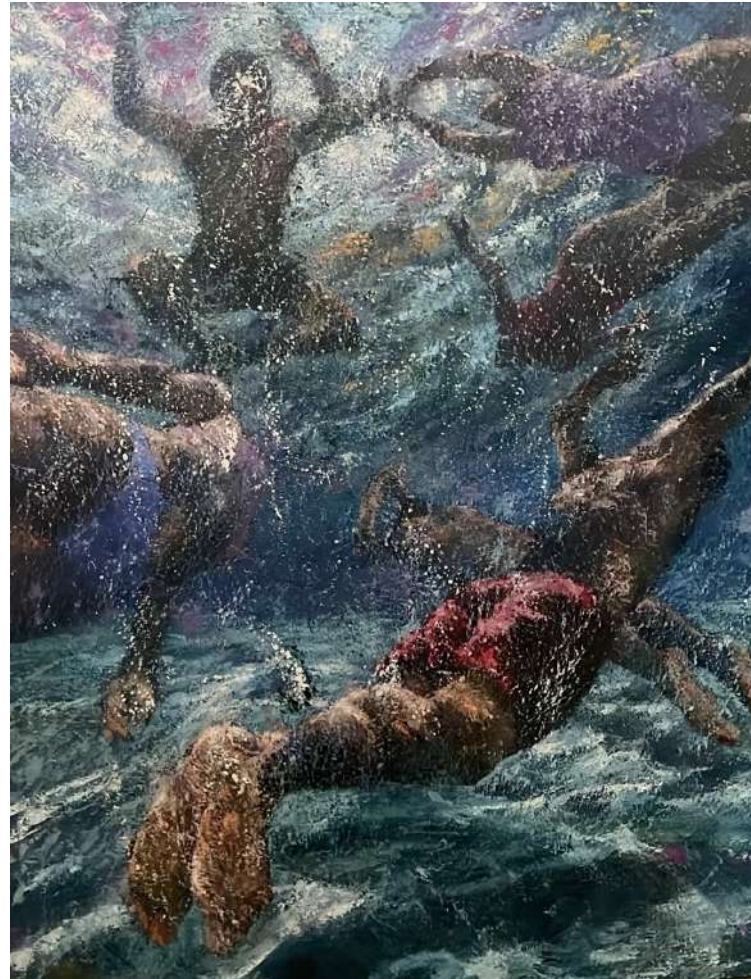
Connecting Current, 2026
120 x 90 cm
Oil on Canvas



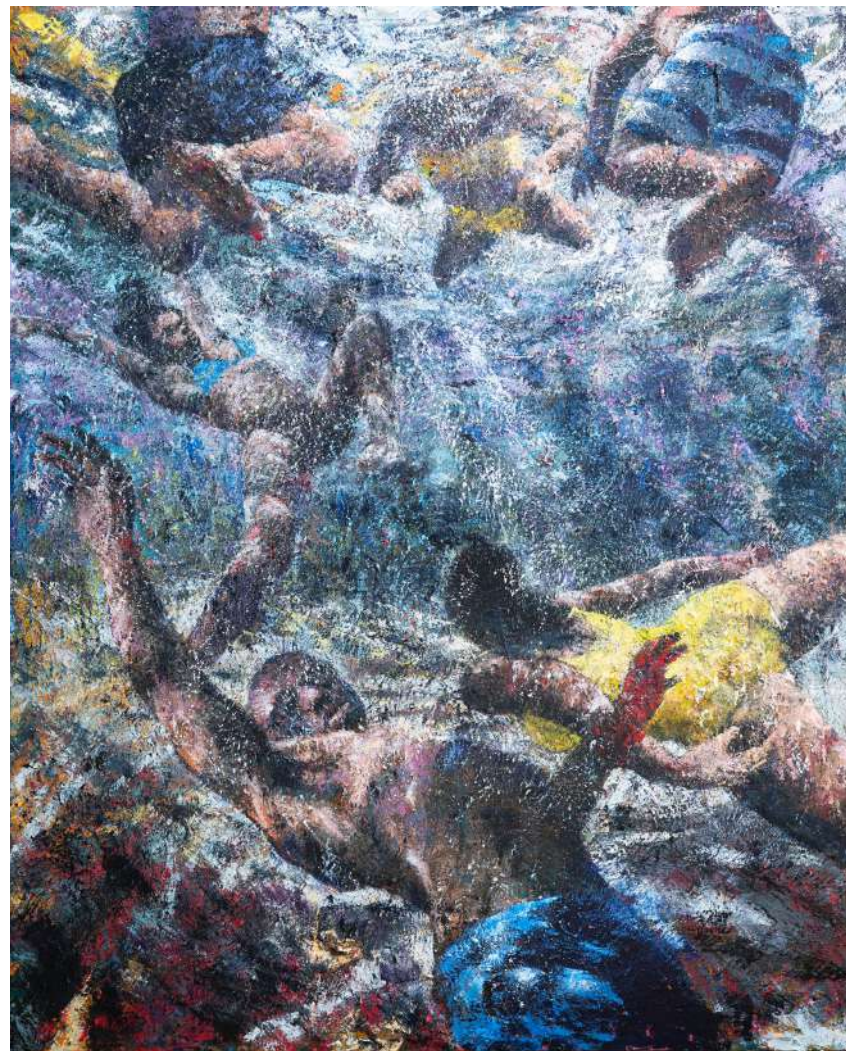
Hold and Hold II, 2026
92 x 71 cm each
Oil on Canvas



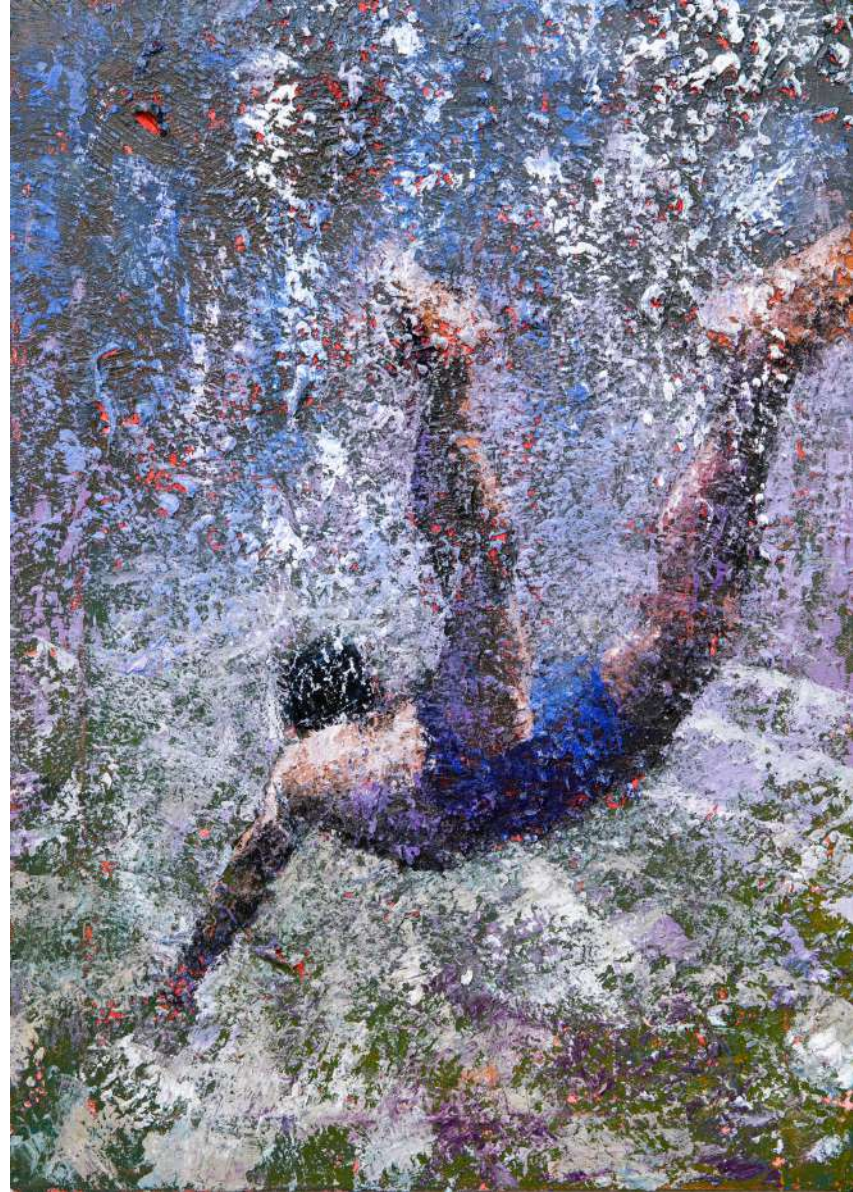
A Familiar Place, 2026
150 x 120 cm
Oil on Canvas



The Blue Quiet, 2026
180 x 150 cm
Oil on Canvas



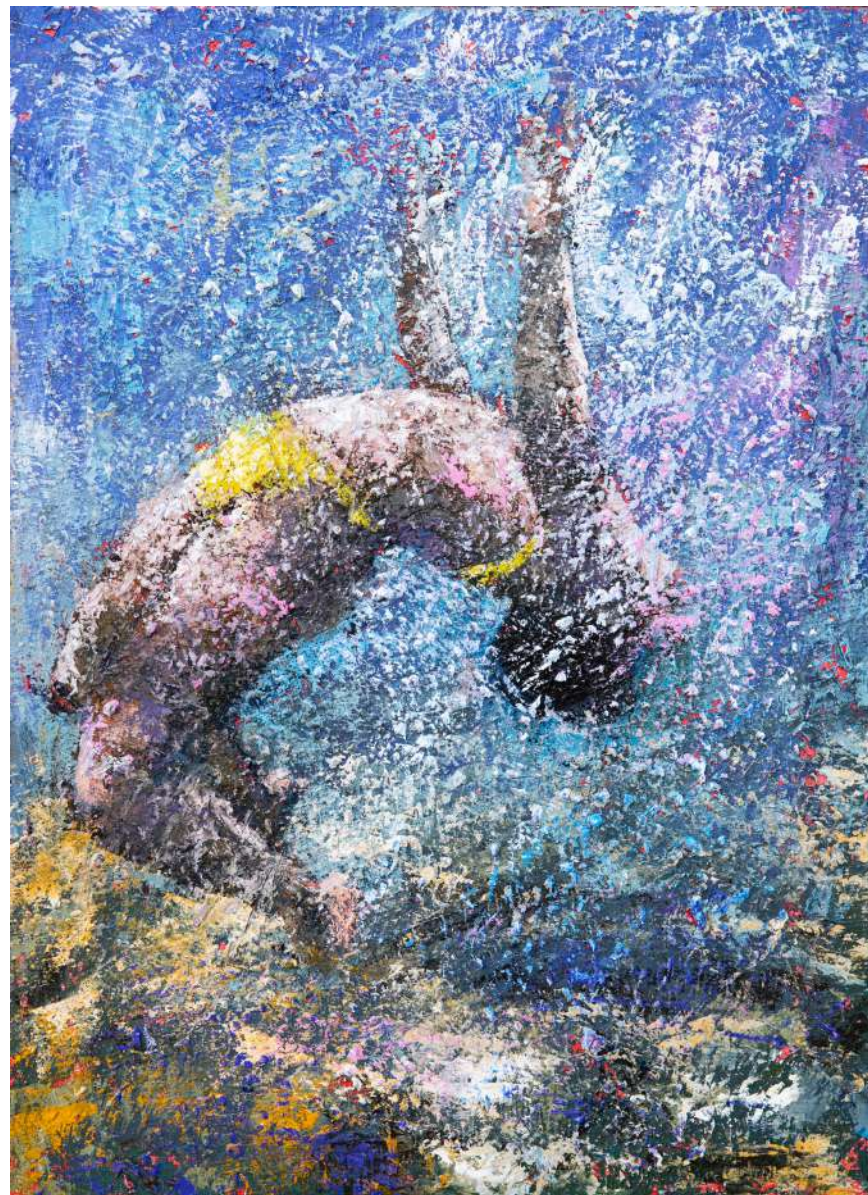
Fluid, 2026
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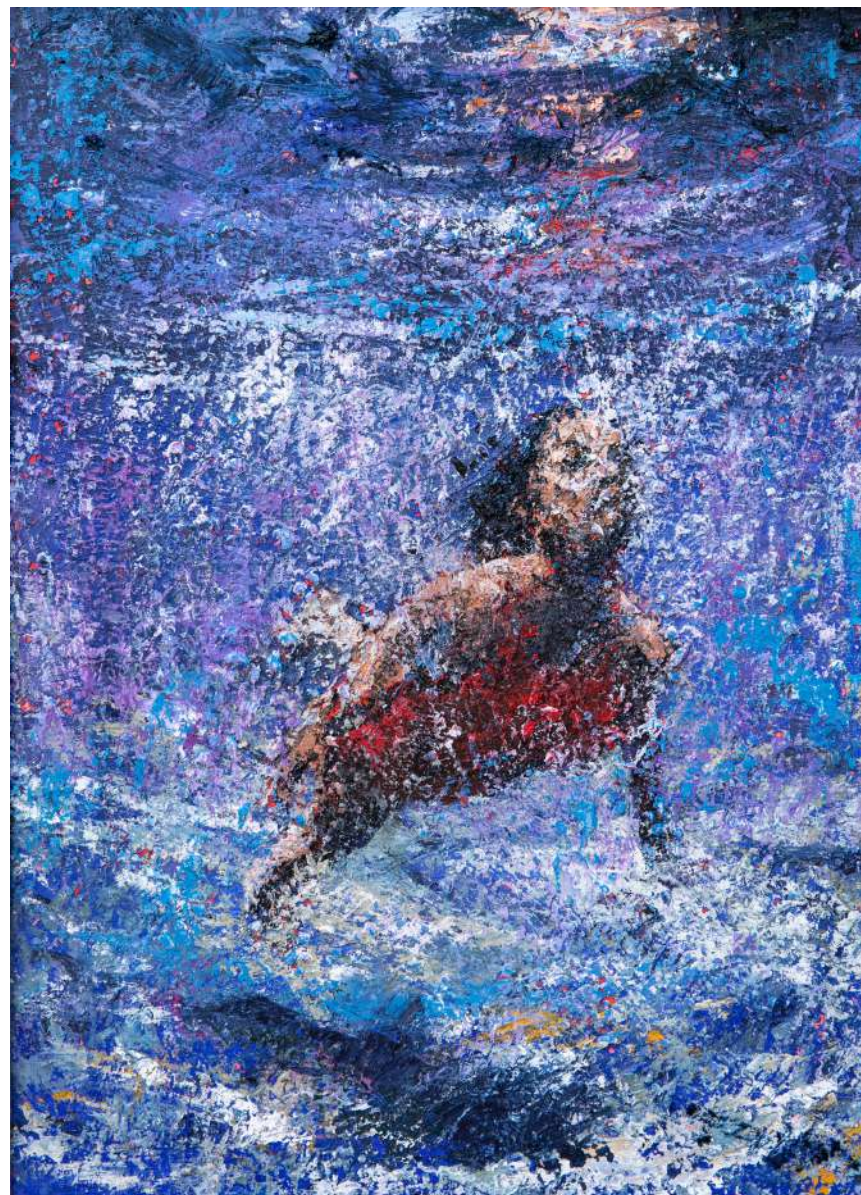
Fluid II, 2026
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Fluid III, 2026
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Fluid IV, 2026
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Fluid V, 2026
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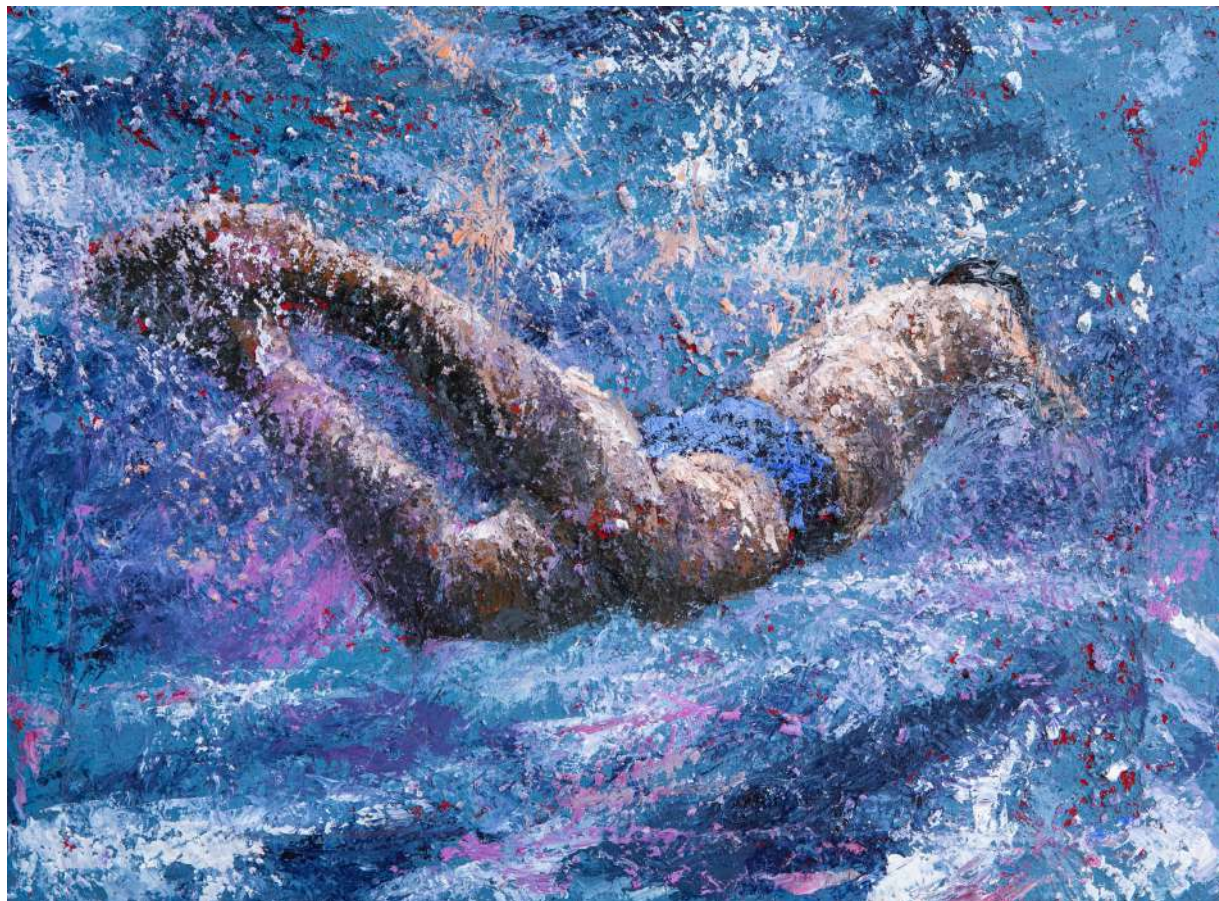
Fluid VI, 2026
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Fluid VII, 2026
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Fluid X, 2026
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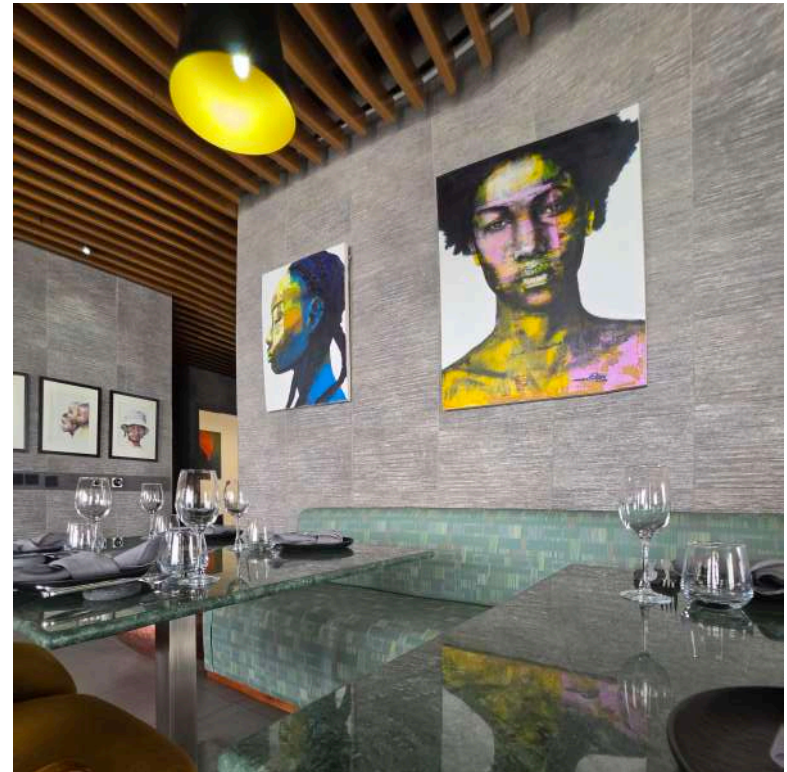




"I paint acrylics upstairs, I paint oil downstairs and I paint watercolor in another room. The acrylic is a completely different approach including stenciling.. very different, the oil on canvas is texturized, you can see that there. I always paint the background red because I know I'm going to intentionally or accidentally leave some reds, it won't all be covered... some of it will remain. First, I make my own primer. There are stages of priming; It starts with white, and the red is the last stage. Then I begin the composition, which takes quite some time. I have to also create depth and perspective. It's like a dialogue."

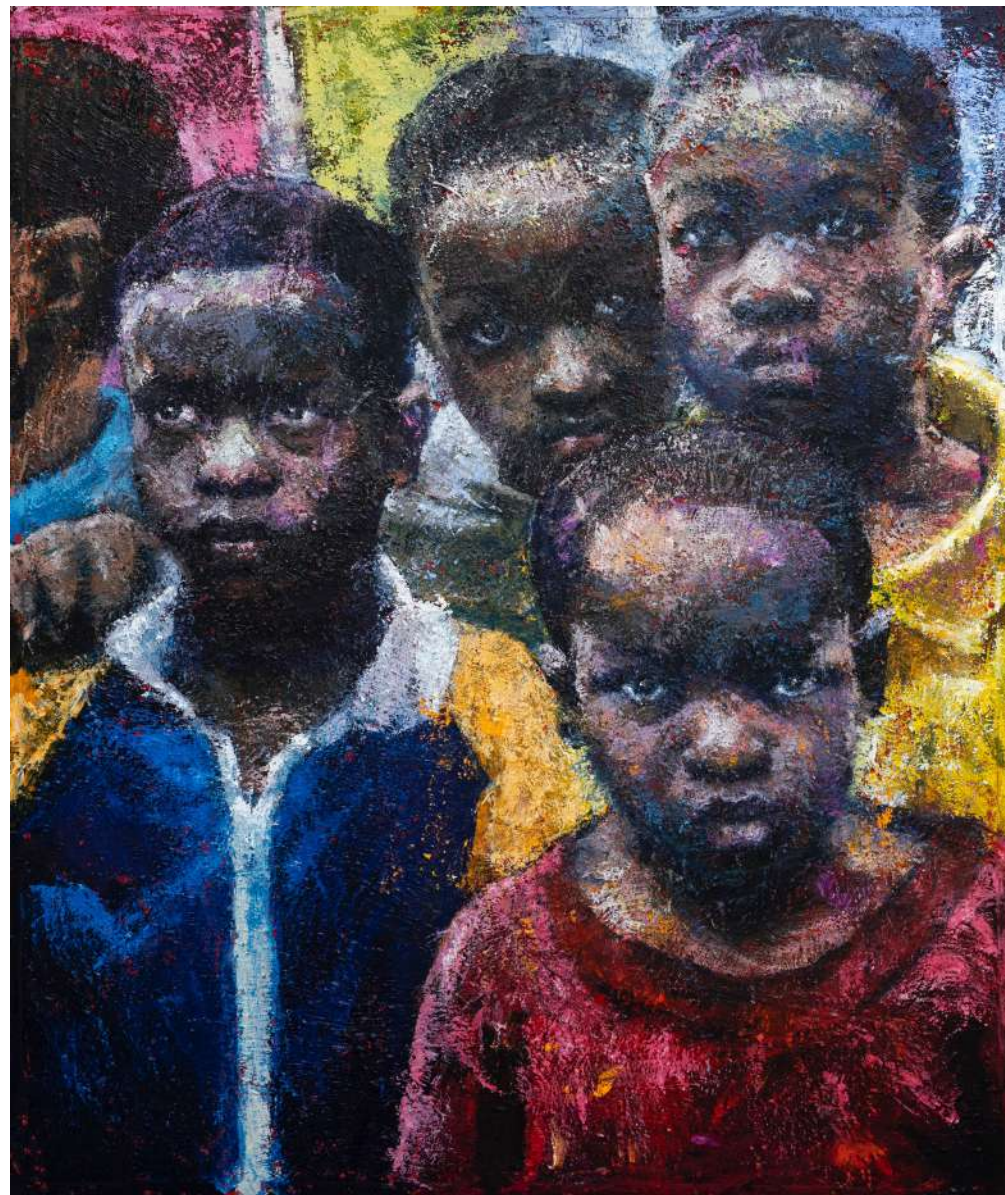
Chika Idu

The Portraits

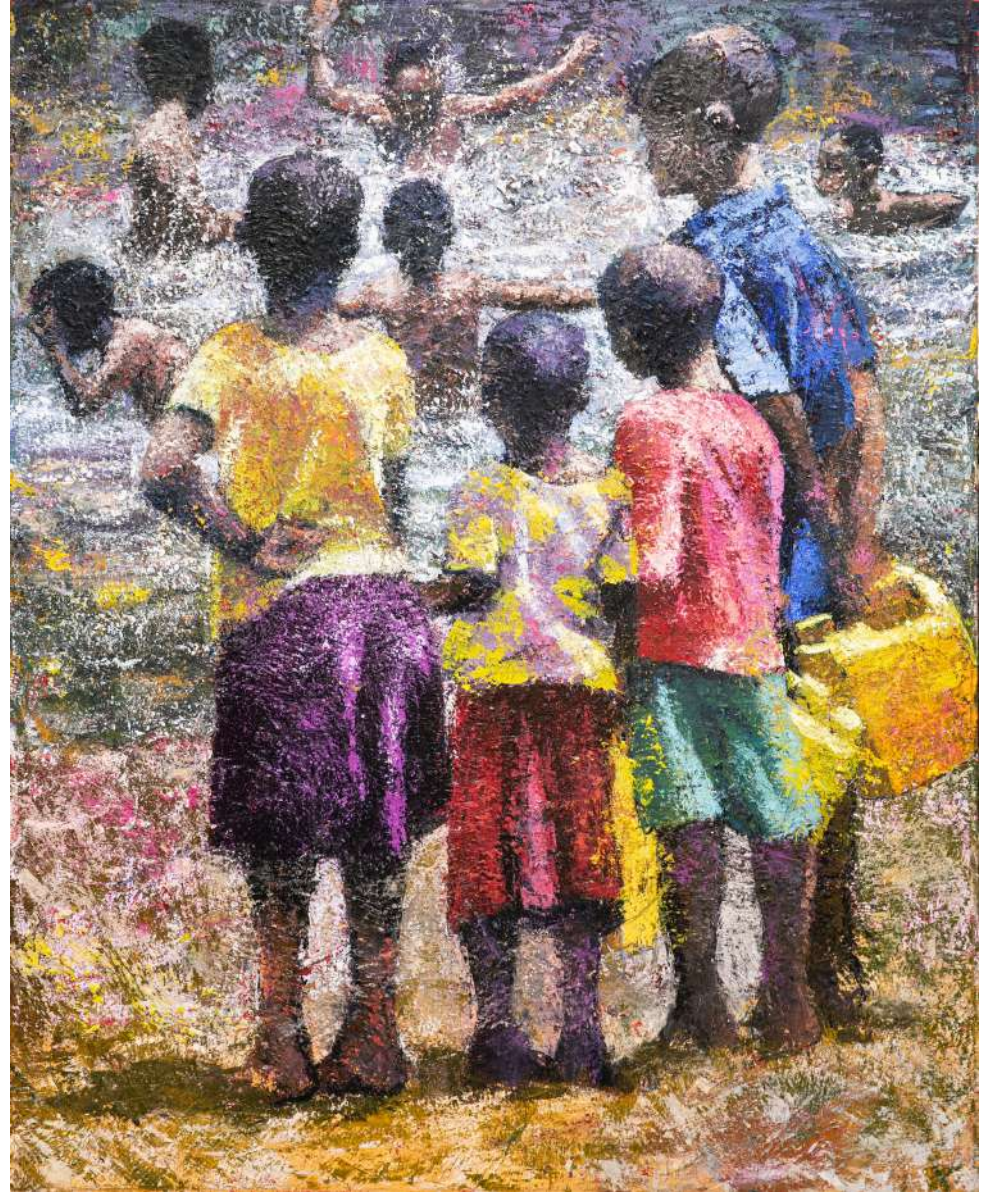


Installation image of *How I Speak To me 2*, 2025, 90 x 72cm
and *Dove*, 2026, 120 x 90 cm, Acrylic on Canvas

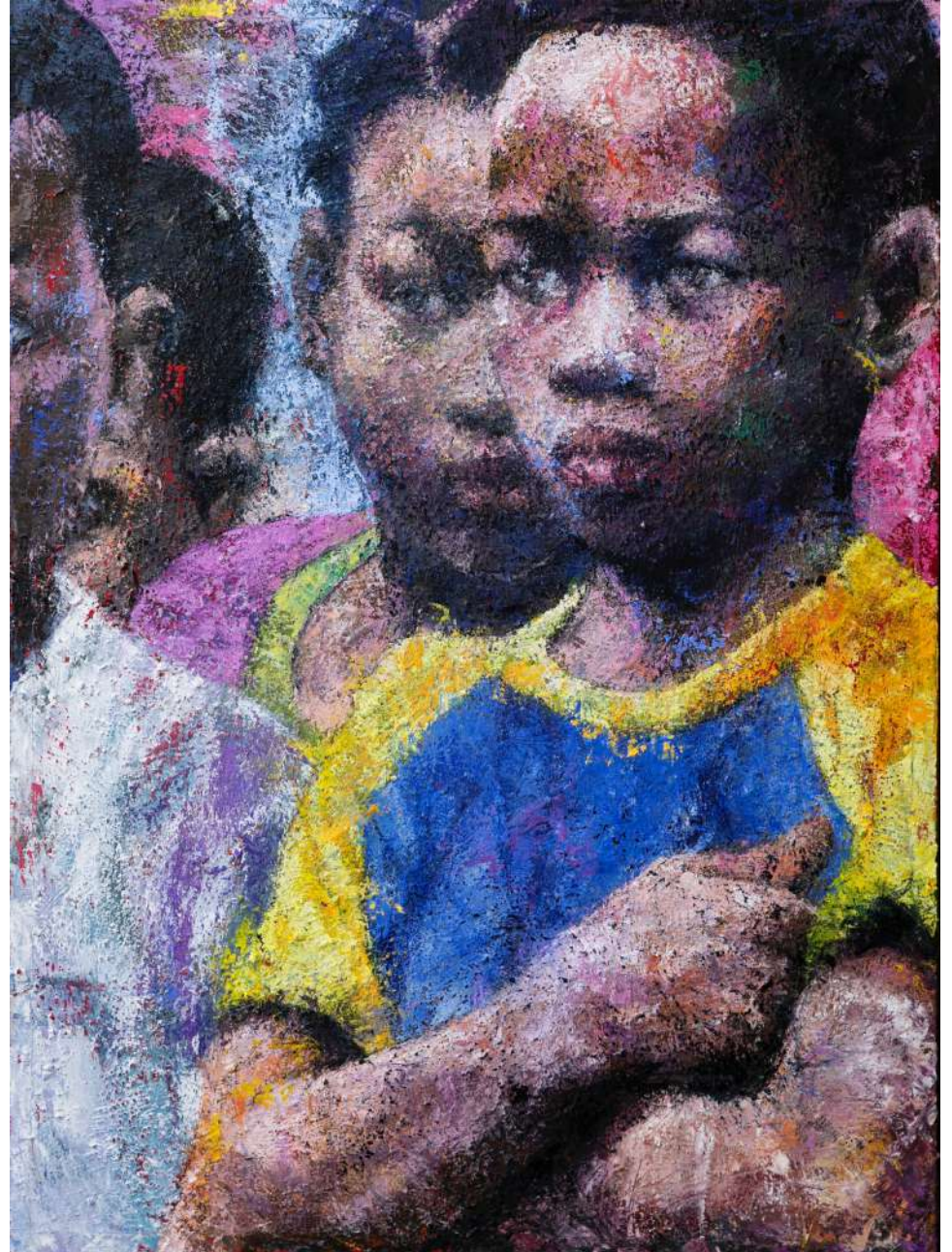
The Assembly, 2026
150 x 120 cm
Oil on Canvas



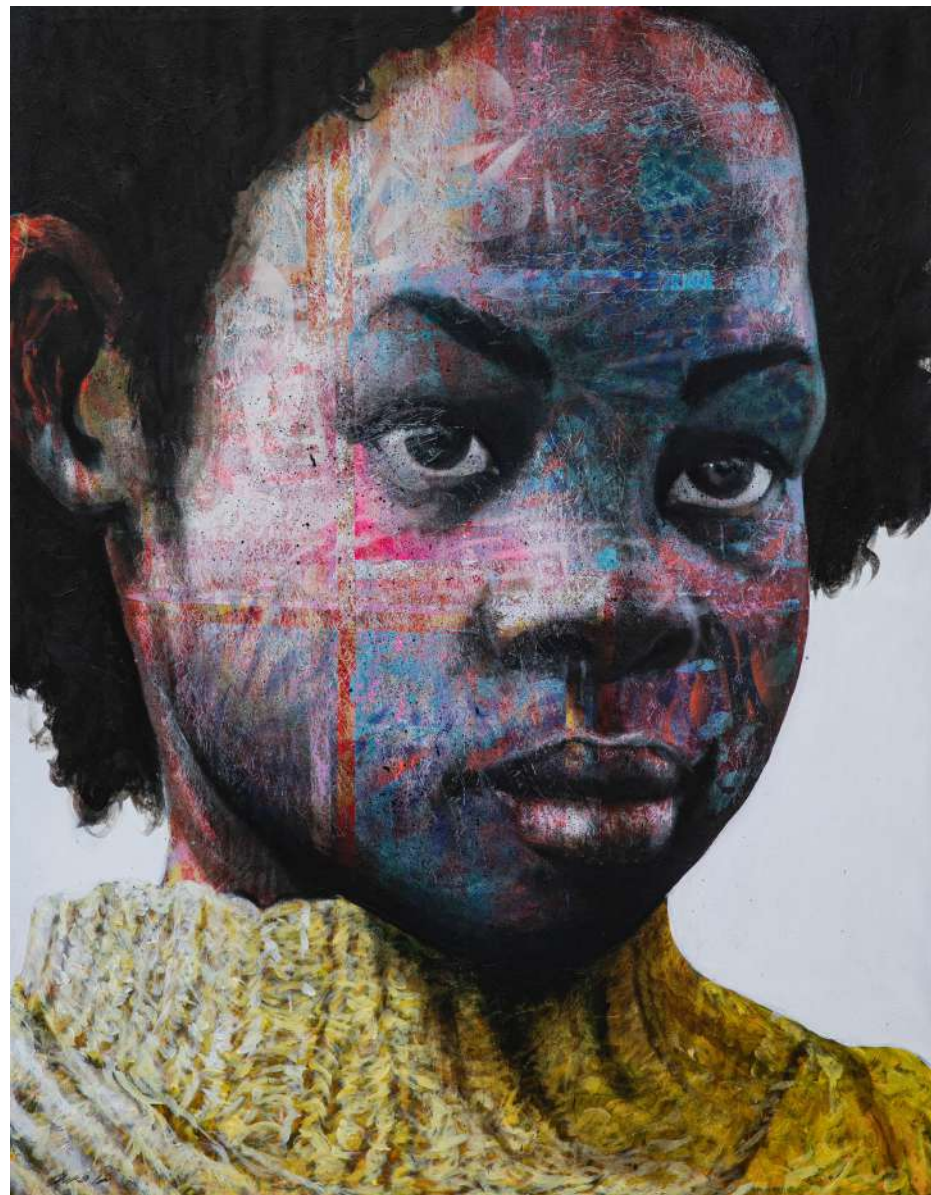
Osondi Owendi, 2022
150 x 120 cm
Oil on Canvas



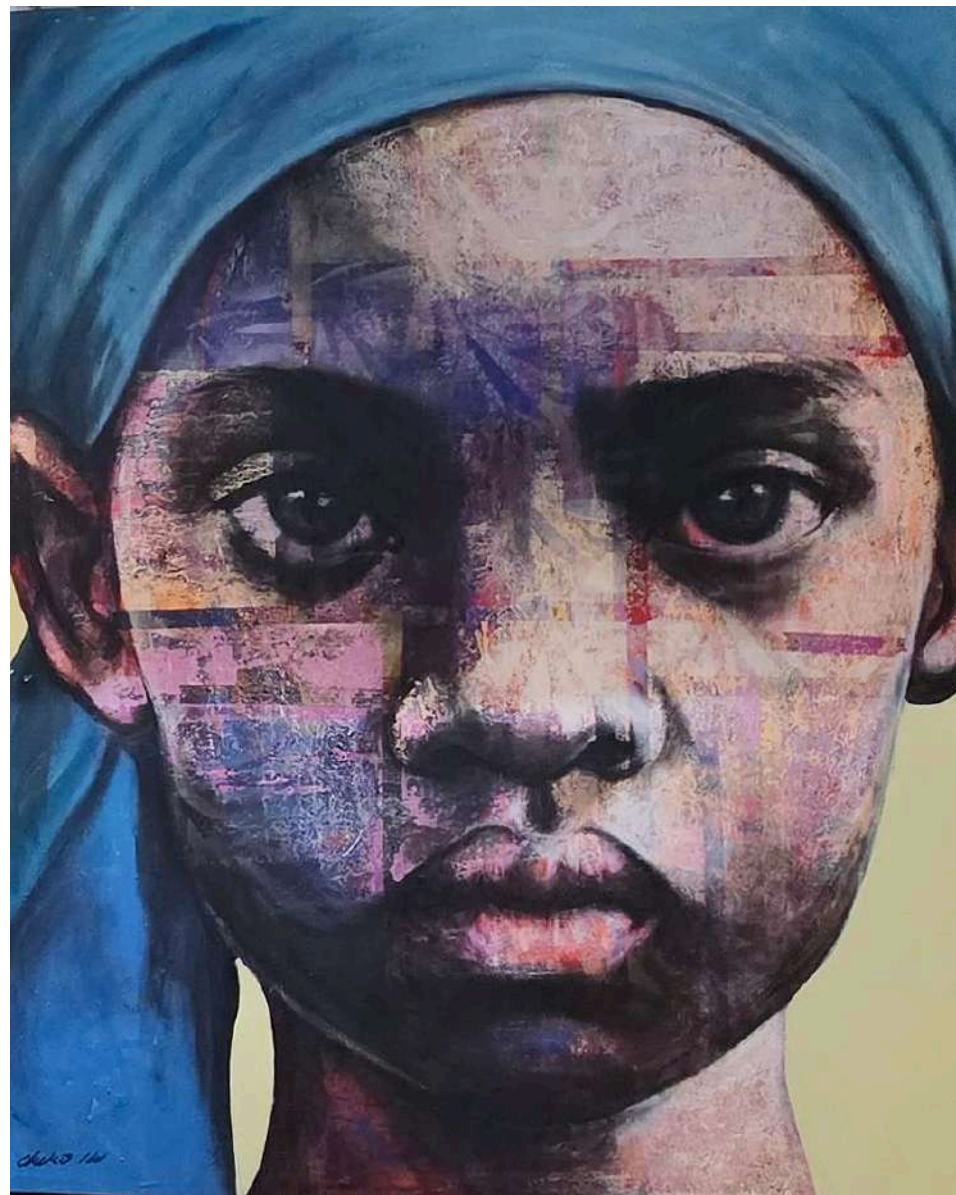
Just Us, 2023
120 x 90 cm
Oil on Canvas



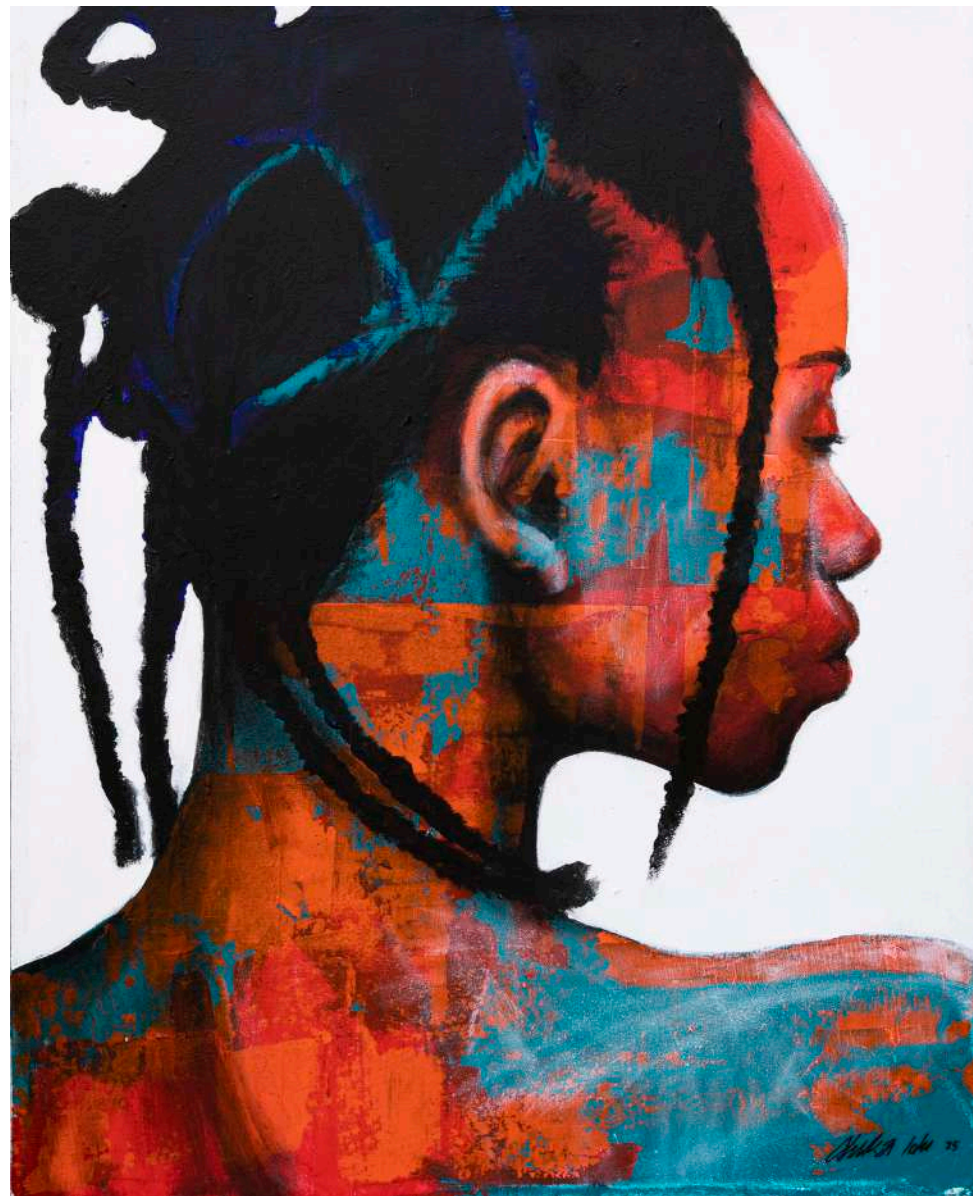
Joe, 2023
150 x 120 cm
Acrylic on Canvas



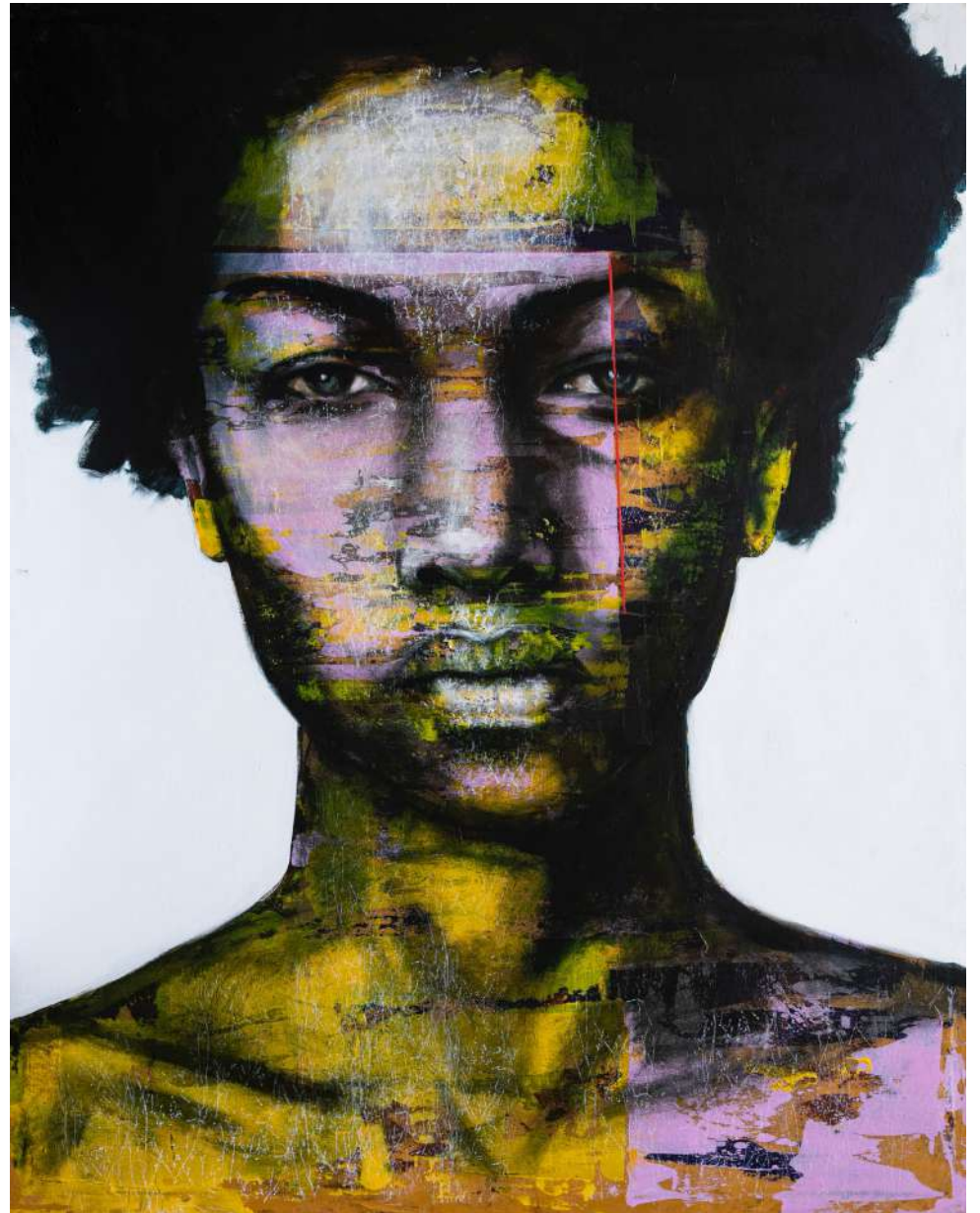
Face to Face, 2023
150 x 120 cm
Acrylic on Canvas



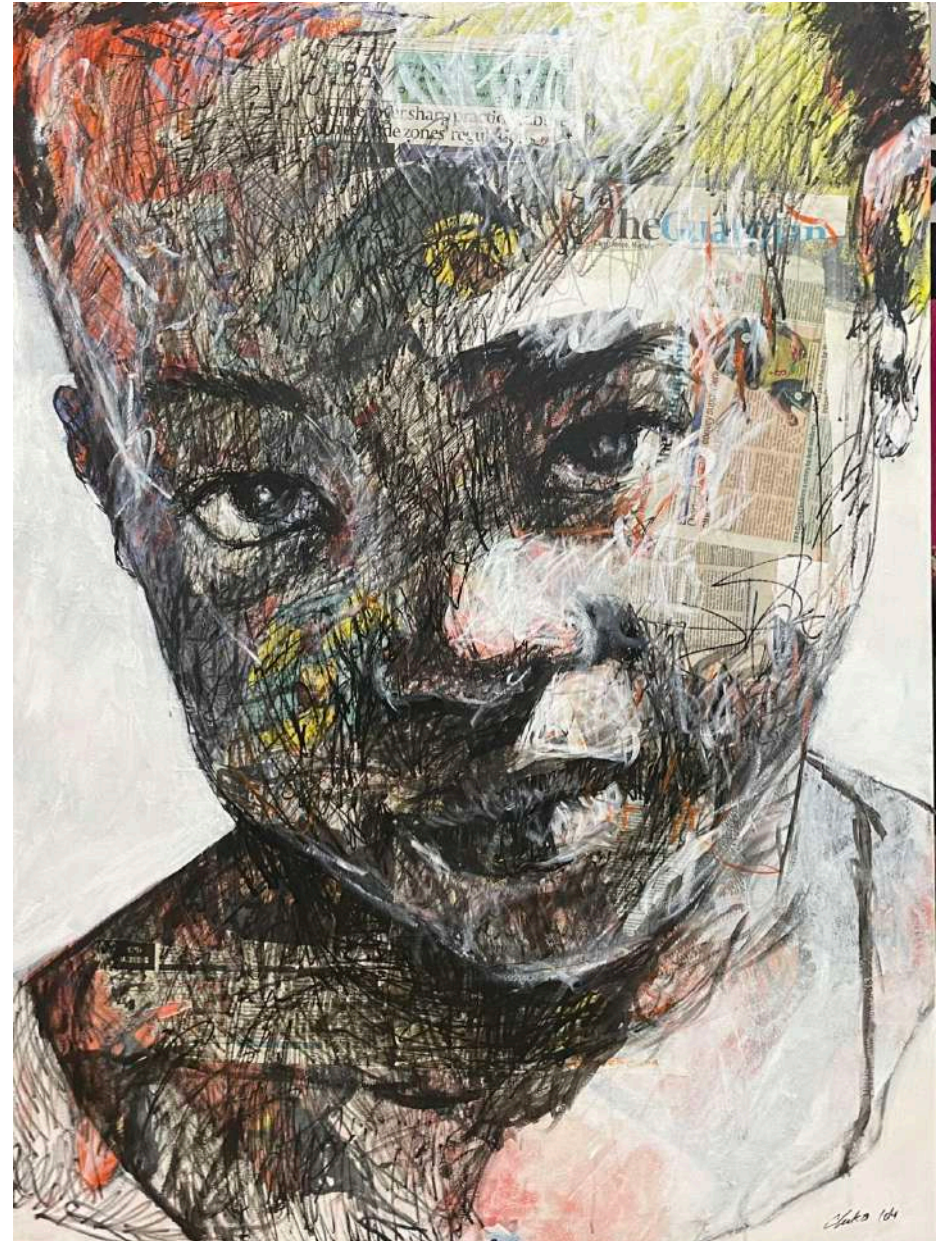
The Braided One, 2024
75 x 60 cm
Acrylic on Canvas



Dove, 2023
120 x 90 cm
Acrylic on Canvas



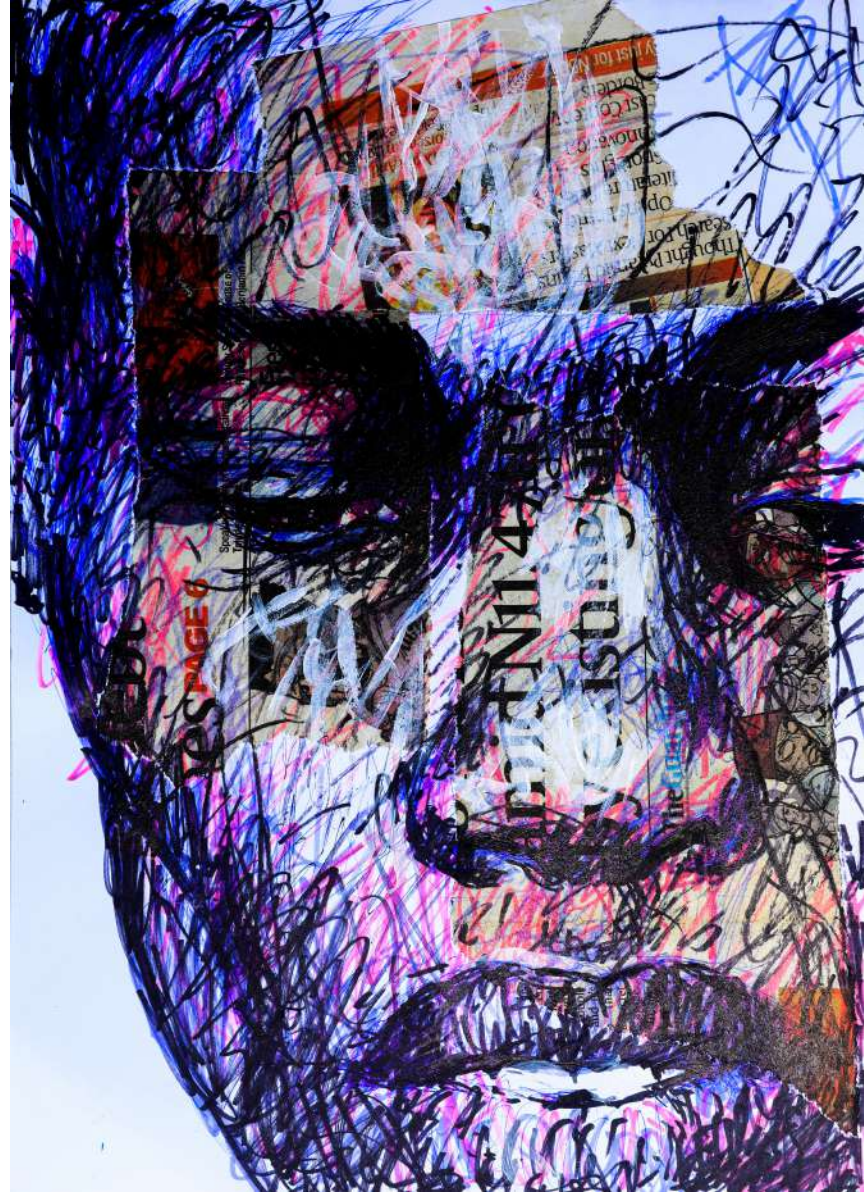
The Boy Named Happy, 2026
120 x 90 cm
Mixed media on Canvas



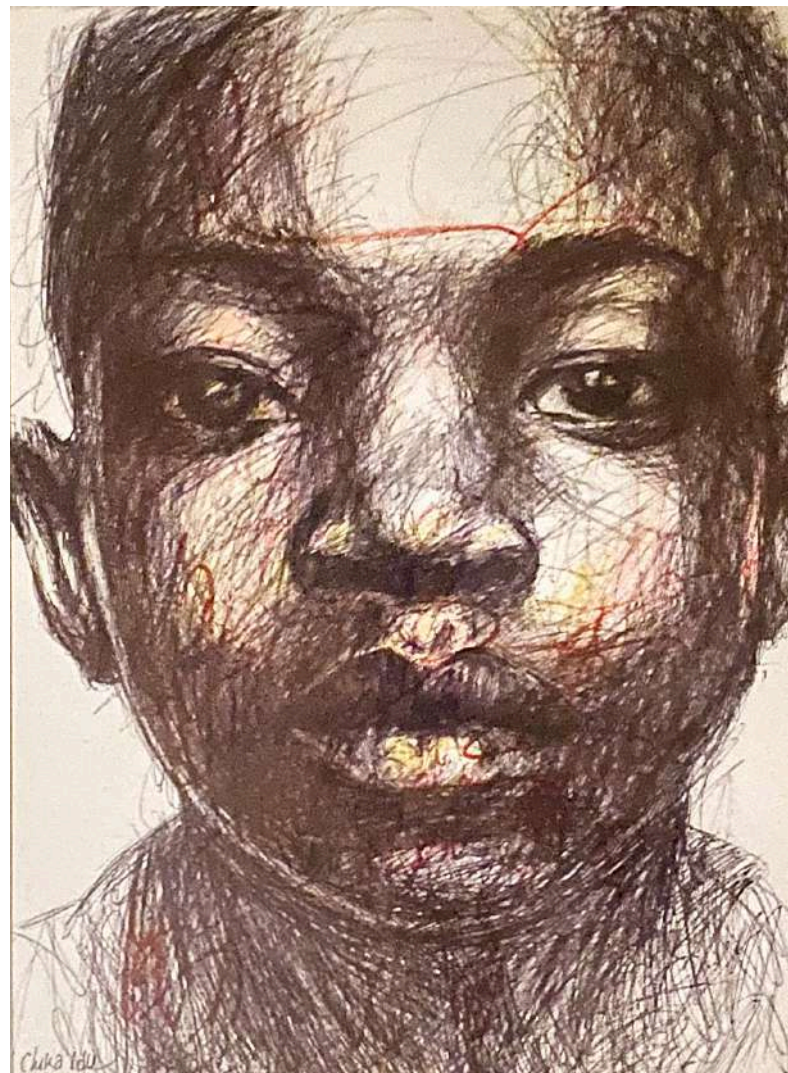
Study IV, 2026
31 x 22.5 cm
Mixed Media on Paper

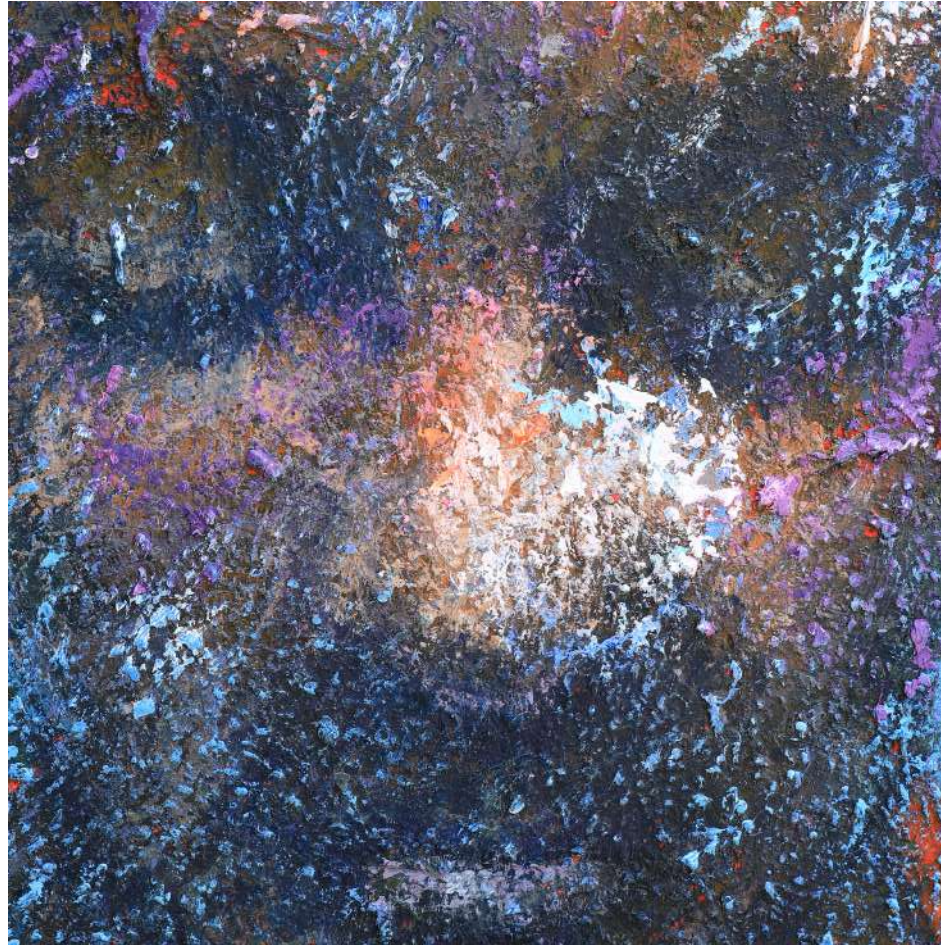


Study XI, 2026
31 x 22.5 cm
Mixed Media on Paper



Study III, 2023
38.5 x 28 cm
Ink on Paper

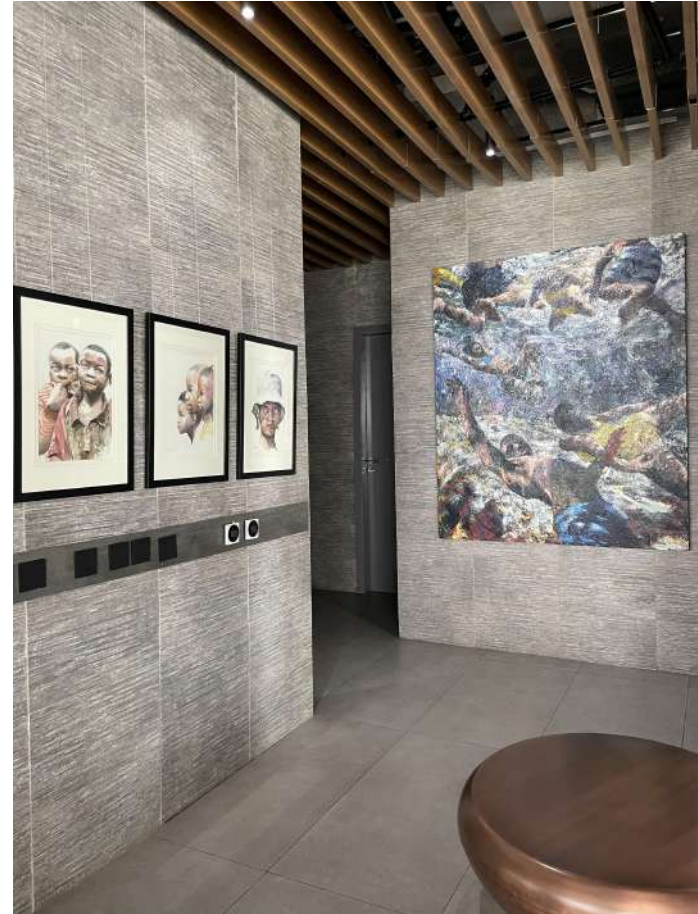




"The female child, where I grew up, carries a lot of responsibility. Many young house girls are taking care of other babies. You'll never see a boy sent to work as a house help. So, it's the female child that carries this burden... Usually my girl subjects have their eyes closed. It's like she's here, but she's not here. She's present, she sees, but does not see; she hears but does not hear. She is expected to not respond and just be absent."

Chika Idu

The Watercolours

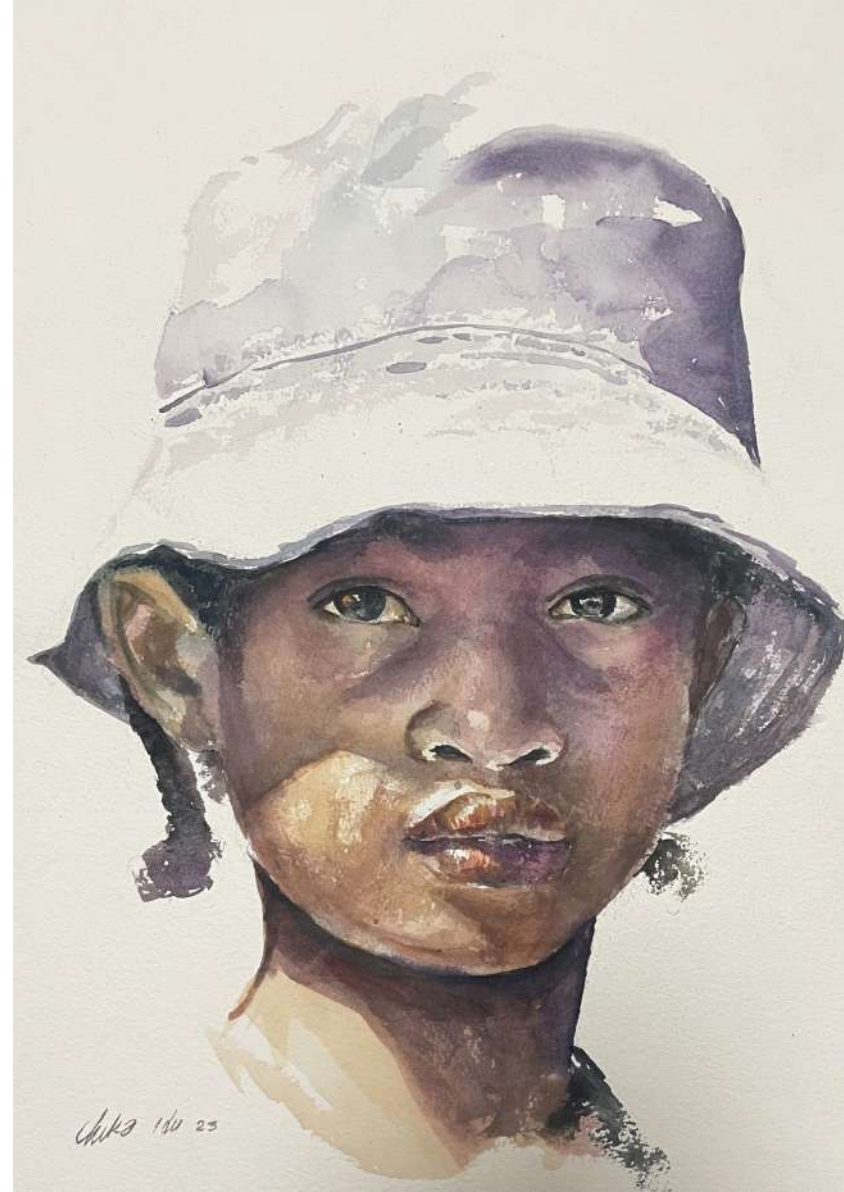


Installation of *2 of a Kind*, 2026, *Spectators*, 2023 and *Nwa Baba*, 2023, 42 x 29.5 cm, Watercolour on Paper and *The Blue Quiet*, 2026, 180 x 150 cm, Oil on Canvas

Two of a Kind, 2026
42 x 29.5 cm
Watercolour on Paper



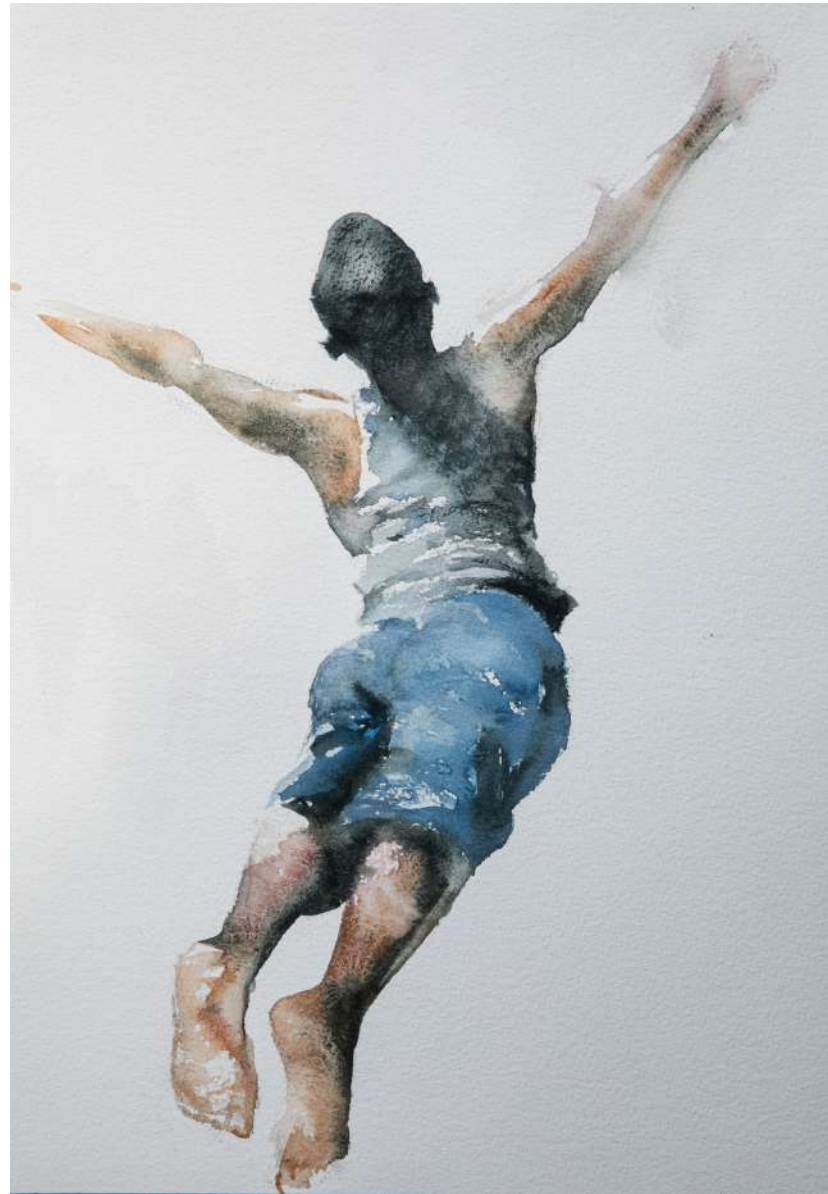
Nwa Baba, 2023
42 x 29.5 cm
Watercolour on Paper



Spectators, 2023
42 x 29.5 cm
Watercolour on Paper



State of Mind, 2023
42 x 29.5 cm
Watercolour on Paper



Playtime, 2018
148 x 122 cm
Oil on Canvas



"It's very enlightening, even educational when you observe the kids play in their element. You know kids can be very free, you can't program them. They just do what they want to do. So, sometimes, I just stay on the balcony and observe them. It's always something new. Children are very dynamic."

Chika Idu



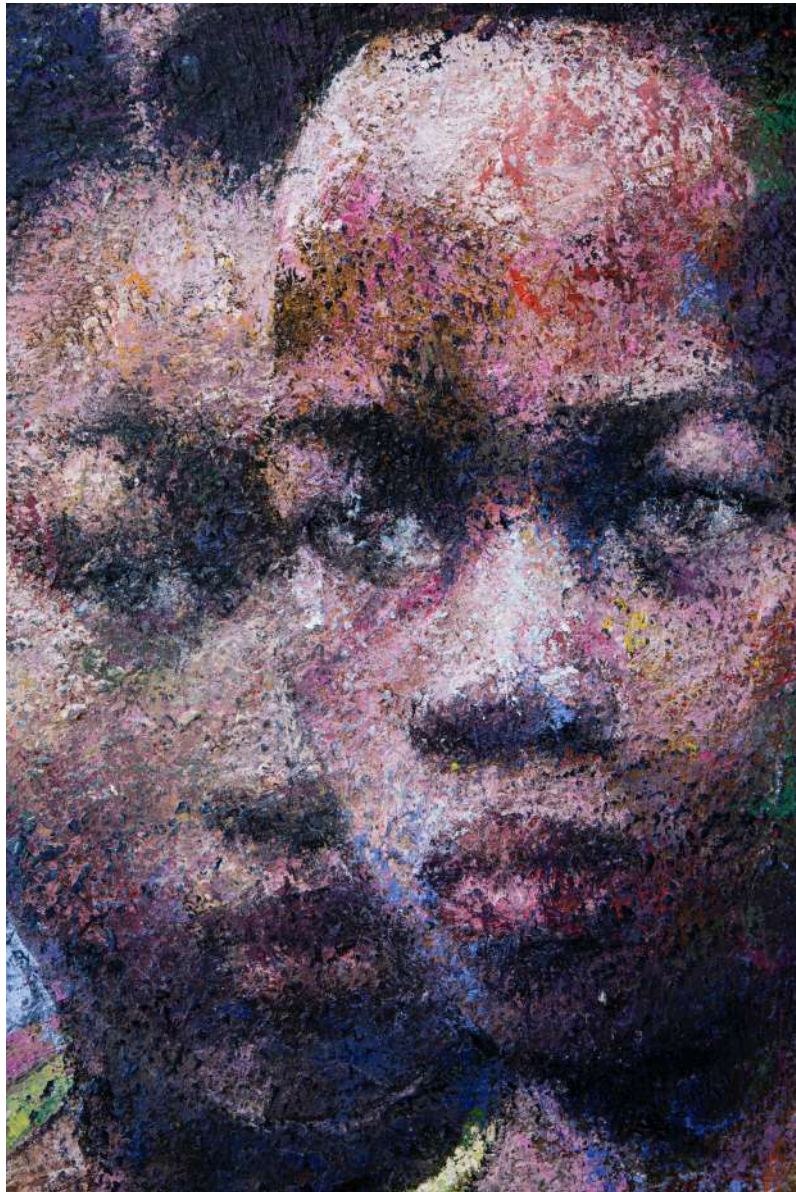
"Men don't have that kind of pressure. There's no stress on the man in religion, tradition, or culture. It's always the woman who has to conform and has to like step up."

Chika Idu



"I always try to learn, and I'm still learning... I also encourage my students try and improve themselves. There's always something to add. That is also a lesson for myself. I still challenge myself to say, how can I take this to the next level? So teaching has been a very good service to me. I grade my kids based on their development, their growth. I monitor their growth. So, if they are growing, that's a mirror for me."

Chika Idu



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. 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.

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