



African
Artists'
Foundation

nigeria now

Joseph Eze . Ike Francis . Taiye Idahor . Obinna Makata
Chike Obeagu . Demola Ogunajo . Richardson Ovbiebo . Alafuro Sikoki
Stephen Arueze Ubaka . Bob-Nosa Uwagboe . Uche Uzorka

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www.africanartists.org
www.aafgallery.com
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Nigeria Now

Emerging Trends of Contemporary Art in Nigeria

Contemporary art in Nigeria is at the cusp of an explosion. Over the last two decades, there has been a paradigm shift in artistic practices in the country and in the embrace of new modes of expression. A new generation of emerging artists adopt a conceptual framework and the tools to use art as a vehicle for cultural expression and social change. Gone are the compartmentalized restrictions of medium specificity and a strict embrace of a mastery of technical skill. Contemporary artists in Nigeria today adopt a hybrid discipline of artistic forms, one where the conceptual threads of their message are articulated, debated, and made paramount.

Nigeria Now includes the work of eleven Nigerian artists who collectively represent the dominant movements in contemporary art in Nigeria today. These artists examine the social and political landscape of Nigeria and of the African continent. They question the role of the African artist in a global environment. They look to the influences of technology and the digital revolution and its impact on collective world view. Moreover, they look to the history of art in Africa and its preconceptions, and they reflect on the tension between traditional African art practices and values and their relevance in contemporary society. They look to the past and to the cultural history of Nigeria; they look at the present and current social ills. They envision a different future and actively take part in its construction. With the fast pace of change occurring in Nigeria today, including the expansion of urban population centers and an explosion of development and technology that is dissolving barriers and leading to new types of interactions, *Nigeria Now* reflects on the political, social, economic, environmental, and personal implications of our actions in Nigeria today.

Participating Artists: Joseph Eze, Ike Francis, Taiye Idahor,
Obinna Makata, Chike Obeagu, Demola Ogunajo,
Richardson Ovbiebo, Alafuro Sikoki, Stephen Arueze Ubaka,
Bob-Nosa Uwagboe, Uche Uzorka

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Bio + Art

Joseph Eze

Born in 1975 in Nigeria, Joseph Eze is a mixed media artist who incorporates painting, sculpture, and installation techniques. Eze graduated from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 2001 with a Second Class Upper Degree in Fine and Applied Art and a concentration in painting. Eze's work in *Nigeria Now* incorporates large scale painting with textual fragments in a conceptual approach that examines the boundaries between traditional and contemporary Nigerian culture. Eze has taken part in over ten exhibitions to date and three solo exhibitions, including *Inside of Me* (Castedown Gallery, Lagos, 2002), *What They Did Not Teach Me in Art School* (Tribes Art Gallery, Lagos, 2009), and *Hyphen* (Nike Art Gallery, Lagos, 2011). International exhibitions include the *Independence Exhibition* (Galerie Benedicte, Vienna, 2012) and *Art Monaco* (2012). Eze was also a finalist for the 2012 National Art Competition in Nigeria. Eze lives and works in Lagos.



Cross Pollination (2012, Mixed media on canvas, 72 x 79 inches)



The Roost (2012, Mixed media on canvas, 47 x 70.5 inches)



Still Life with Four Branches (2012, Mixed media on canvas, 47 x 55.5 inches)

Ike Francis

Ikechukwu Francis Okoronkwo was born on the Lagos mainland of Nigeria in 1970. He graduated as a sculptor from the University of Port-Harcourt in 1995 and earned an M.F.A. in painting in 2001 from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, under the tutelage of Prof. Chike Aniakor. Francis had been influenced deeply by the conceptual expressions of Professor El Anatsui and the thematic depth of Professor Chike Aniakor, both of whom he encountered during his stint at Nsukka in Eastern Nigeria. It is the combination of these encounters with masters, and a dogged passion for the art, that defines his present conceptual direction.

Francis has participated in many exhibitions, workshops, and biennales within and outside Nigeria. He was among the Nigerian contingent in the 2008 DAKAR'T Off, and participated in a group exhibition in the Joseph D. Carrier Gallery at Columbus Centre, (Toronto, Canada). Francis was one of the exhibited artists in the 2010 Biennale de l'Art Africain Contemporain. He participated in the 2010 Interventions Workshop at Greatmore, was workshop facilitators at The Harmattan Workshop Agbarha-Otor and Art is Everywhere in Enugu, Abuja and Zaria, and has recently facilitated an art competition/workshop for the National Art Competition with the African Artists' Foundation. He also recently concluded an artist workshop at the Triangle Art Centre (New York). Francis teaches mixed media, painting and drawing at the University of Port Harcourt.

His works are ideations from the architectonic of designs on radio/computer motherboards [circuit boards] as a metaphor of cities and its people with an alternative status of NETIZENS. He uses circuit boards as a city microcosm with its concomitant changes in paradigms, shifting ethos, emergent physiognomy and attitudes.

Our present experience with the Internet and other communication gadgets presupposes human beings as creatures that are inextricably interwoven with gadgets they have created for space/time transgression. Hence in our contemporary world we are simultaneously individual beings as well as landscapes of our world which we traverse without barriers as Netizens. He also scrounges dump-sites for discards from computer/radio interiors and the print/info-tech world as a metaphor for shrinking global spaces and enlarging individual connections via the internet experience and the making of a global village. Presently his works assume more of a three dimensional quality with a tactile beauty derived from beads of diodes, transmitters, etc. These designs and items are found on radio/computer interiors. From this backdrop he explores the plastic possibility of the Net and Netizens as an emergence of alternative global experiences of the human condition; alternative citizen's status, new social connections, extending democracies, new narratives on imperialist manifestations and power relationships within the global milieu and their negotiations.



Emergent Netizens (2010, Mixed media, 9 panels, 24 x 24 inches each)



Interconnecting Metaphors II (2011, Mixed media, 26 panels, 10 x 10 inches each)



Taiye Idahor

Taiye Idahor is inspired by everyday life and the ever changing culture of her space; hence her work challenges and questions the reason for these changes. In using waste objects in her work, she mockingly points a finger directly at the materialistic culture that has eaten deep into the world and now defines the character of her city and home (and even the art she makes). Idahor states: "With these mundane waste objects, I am examining the relationship between women, beauty, tradition, waste materials and modernity as they co-exist in today's Africa. more specifically Lagos, where the line that differentiates them is gradually (or rapidly in some cases) fading, creating new cultures and new ways of living."

Her long time interest and desire to recycle may be the main reason she involves these objects in her work, as they are a reflection of how values and culture are being replaced and even lost on account of the industrialized world that we live in today and the high influence of Western society on Africa. Consequently, these supposed wasted objects are transformed and brought into a new light and then presented in another context rather than be rejected for what they had become, questioning the new culture of life we see today in Africa as it searches for the meaning of the African identity, if it does still exist.

Taiye Idahor is a mixed media and installation artist. Idahor graduated from the Yaba College of Technology in 2007 with a concentration in sculpture. Idahor was a finalist in the National Art Competition in 2011. Idahor lives and works in Lagos.







Change of Name series (2012, Mixed media on board, four panels, 24 x 24 inches each)

Chike Obeagu

Chike Obeagu is a mixed media artist who uses techniques of photo-collage and painting to comment on the social and political environment in Nigeria today. Obeagu obtained his BA and MFA degrees from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Obeagu is the Co-Founder and Creative Director of FABA (For Artists By Artists) Studios, a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting emerging talent in Nigeria.

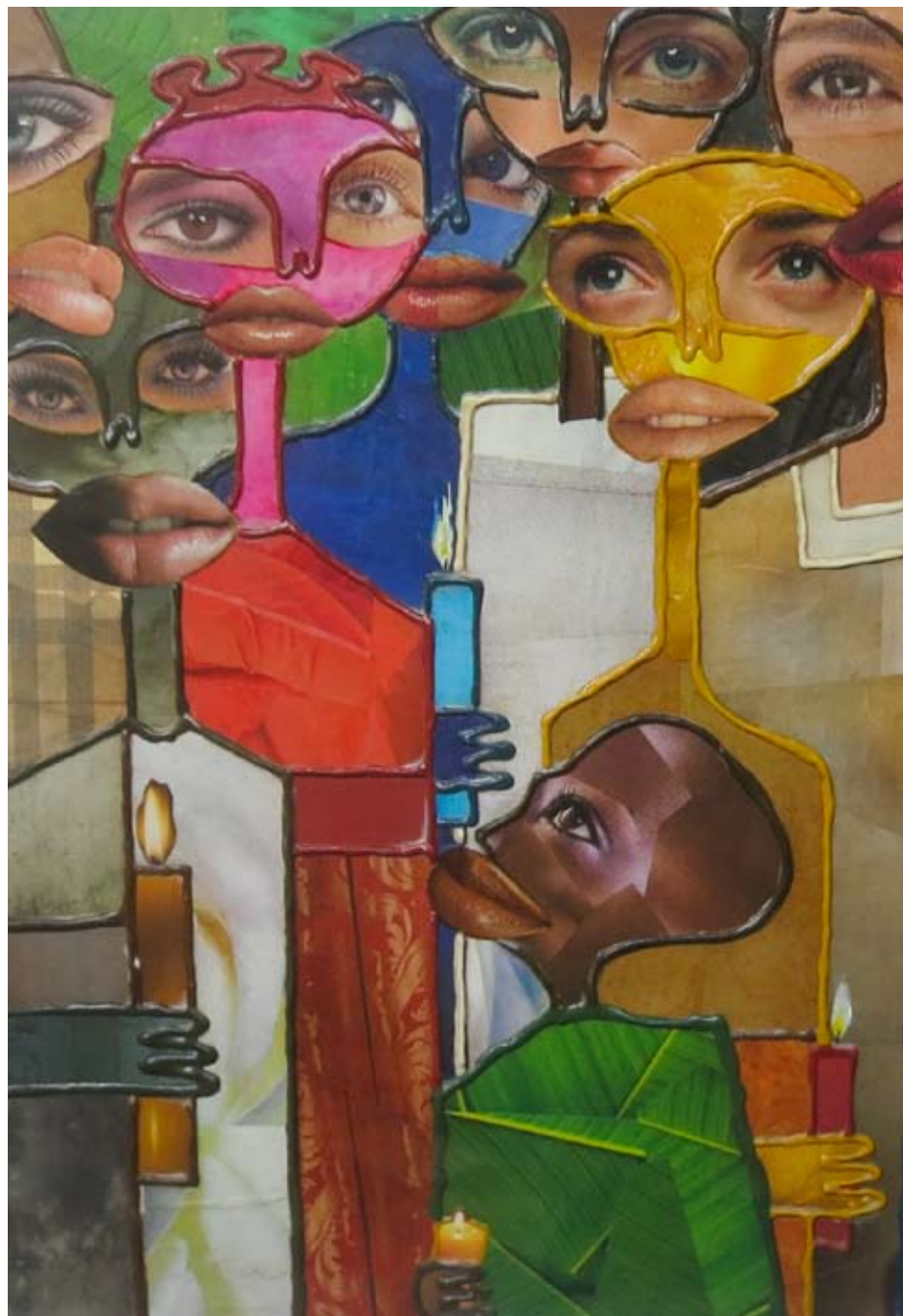
He has won numerous grants and awards and has participated in exhibitions, residencies, and workshops in Nigeria, Senegal, Italy, South Africa, USA, UK, and China. Obeagu won First Place in the National Art Competition in 2011 for his collaboration with artist Uche Uzorka. He is an instructor with the Art is Everywhere Project and presently teaches visual and creative arts at the Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State. Obeagu lives and works in Abuja.



Oga (2007, Mixed media photo-collage, 57.5 x 42 inches)



Table for Two (2012, Mixed media photo-collage, 24 x 29 inches)



Parable of the Ten Young Women (2010, Mixed media photo-collage, 21 x 21 inches)



National Cake (2010, Mixed media photo-collage, 23 x 29 inches)



This Burden I Bear (2010, Mixed media photo-collage, 24 x 28 inches)

Richardson Ovbiebo

Richardson Ovbiebo is a sculptor and installation artist whose work reflects the tension between the public and private in Nigerian society, incorporating such diverse elements as doors, locks, wheels, mirrors, shoes, and mannequins. Ovbiebo's work concentrates on the social dynamics or constructs that emerge from his environment and the roles individuals play as mirrors of their environment. He describes his practice as an investigation into how people's actions and inactions seem to be a result of a systemic construct. Ovbiebo graduated from the Yaba College of Technology with a major in sculpture. Ovbiebo won the Fashion Designer's Association of Nigeria Award for Best Design Inspired by Fashion, and he was nominated for Nigeria's Future Award in 2010. Ovbiebo lives and works in Lagos.



Bolla (2011, Mixed media sculpture, dimensions variable)

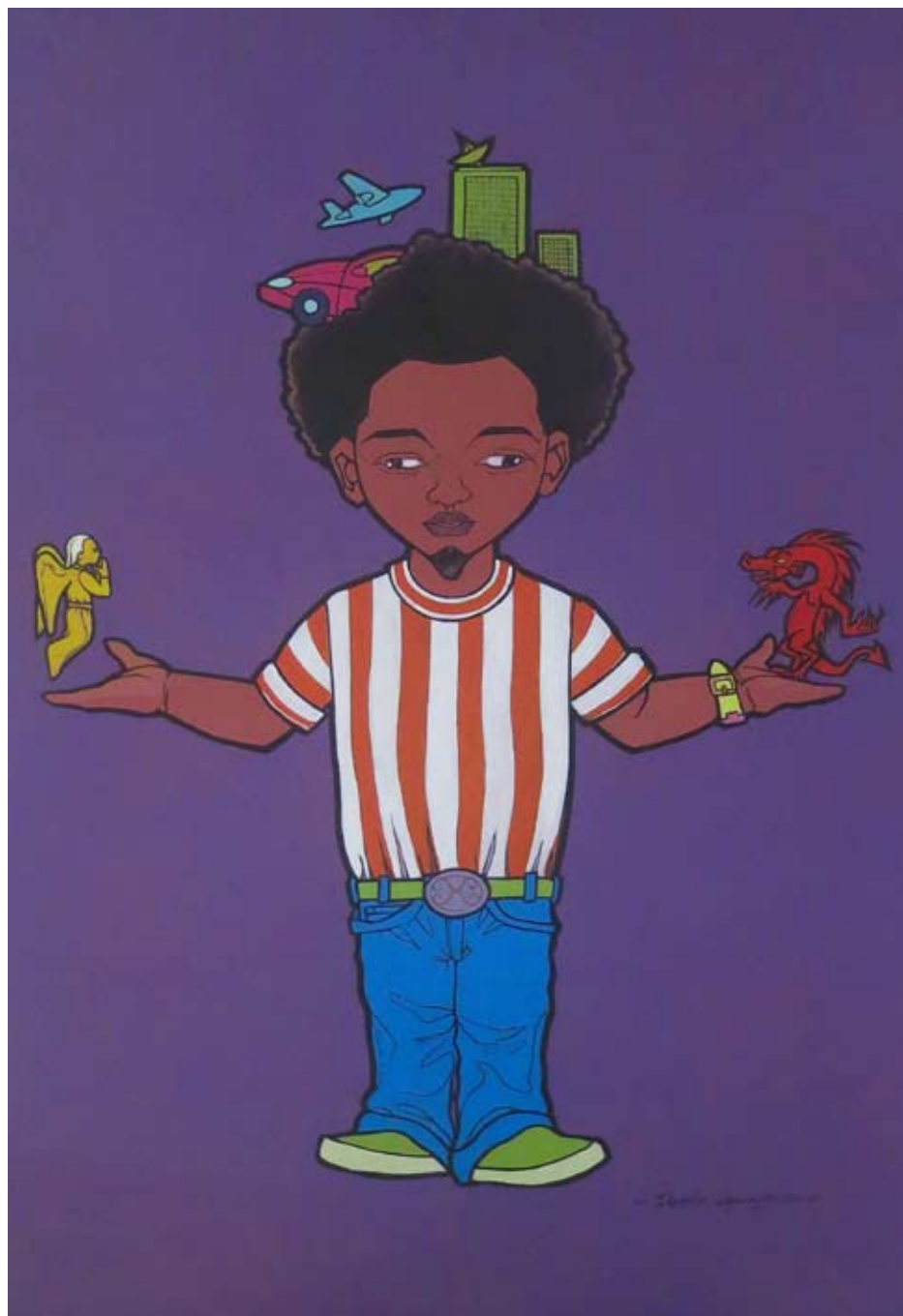




Life Line (2011, Mixed media sculpture, 78 x 18 x 18 inches)

Demola Ogunajo

Demola Ogunajo was born in 1973 in Ibadan, Nigeria. He graduated from Obafemi Awolowo University in 1994 with a degree in Fine Arts. Ogunajo's practice incorporates painting techniques, referencing a pop-art aesthetic and a graphic design sensibility. Ogunajo works and lives in Lagos.



I Chose (1) (2010, Acrylic on canvas, 35 x 57 inches)





Decorative Piece (Twin Angels I and II)
(2010, Acrylic on canvas, two panels 35 x 47 inches each)



I Chose (2) (2010, Acrylic on canvas, 35 x 57 inches)

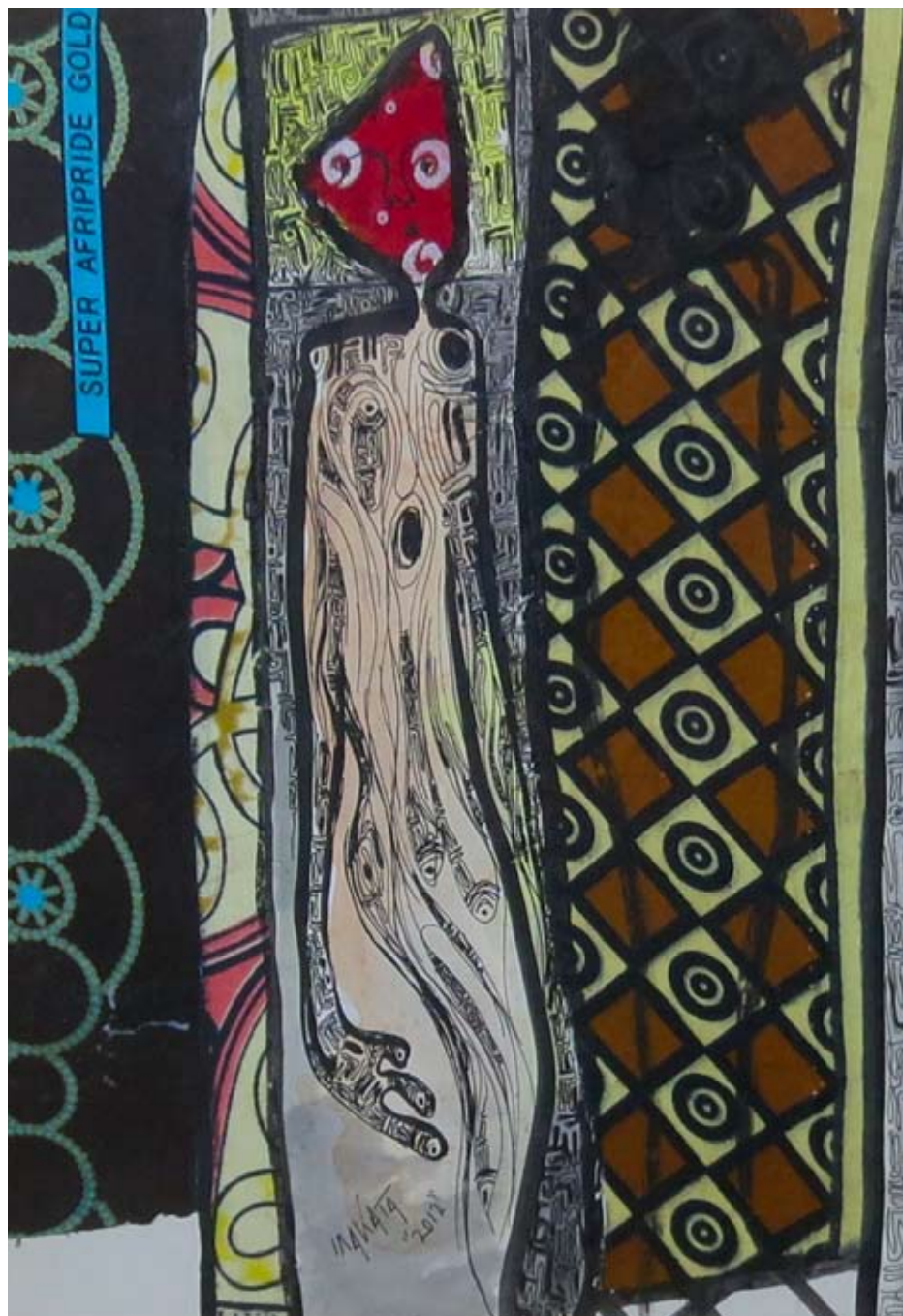
Obinna Makata

In Obinna Makata's mixed media collages, diverse visual elements such as ink drawing and cut fabric are used to form a combination of ambiguous bodies and intricately designed patterns. If Obinna Makata's collages could be prematurely and stereotypically classified as "African" art, with their geographically specific patterns, colours and elongated figures so common in what Western art institutions not so long ago termed "Primitive" art, they are unabashedly conscious of their designation as such. Makata's collages ambivalently force such signification to the forefront of the discourse of contemporary art in Africa and use the preconceptions of "African" art as a driving conceptual framework. Makata describes his collages as "broken pieces of African culture", a response to the omnipresence of foreign influence that continues to threaten traditional value systems and artistic processes that are unique to the Continent. For Makata, his work is not about a specifically "Nigerian" experience or a personal experience as such. It is about referencing "Africanicity" as a visual metaphor.

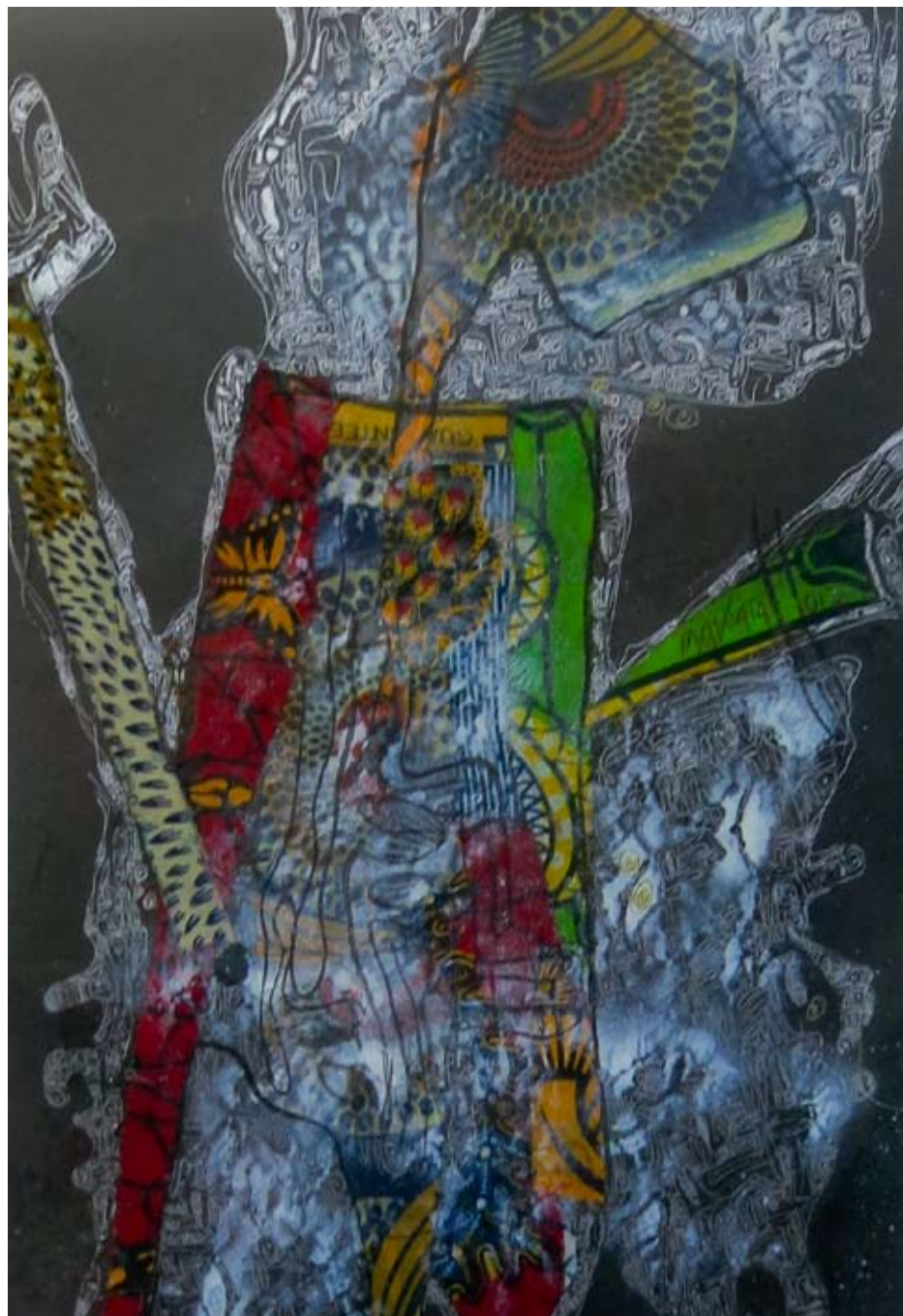
Makata graduated from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 2007, where he majored in sculpture. Makata is also the Founder and Creative Director of Mma-Nka Studio. Makata has participated actively in over fifteen group shows since 2003. His first solo exhibition, entitled Metahistories, opened at the African Artists' Foundation in September 2012. Makata will begin an artist residency at the African Artists' Foundation in Lagos in 2013. Makata lives and works in Abuja.



Elegy (2012, Ink and fabric on paper, 24 x 28 inches)



The Elder's Diary (2012, Ink and fabric on paper, 10 x 14 inches)



Black Jesus (2012, Mixed media on paper, 12 x 19 inches)



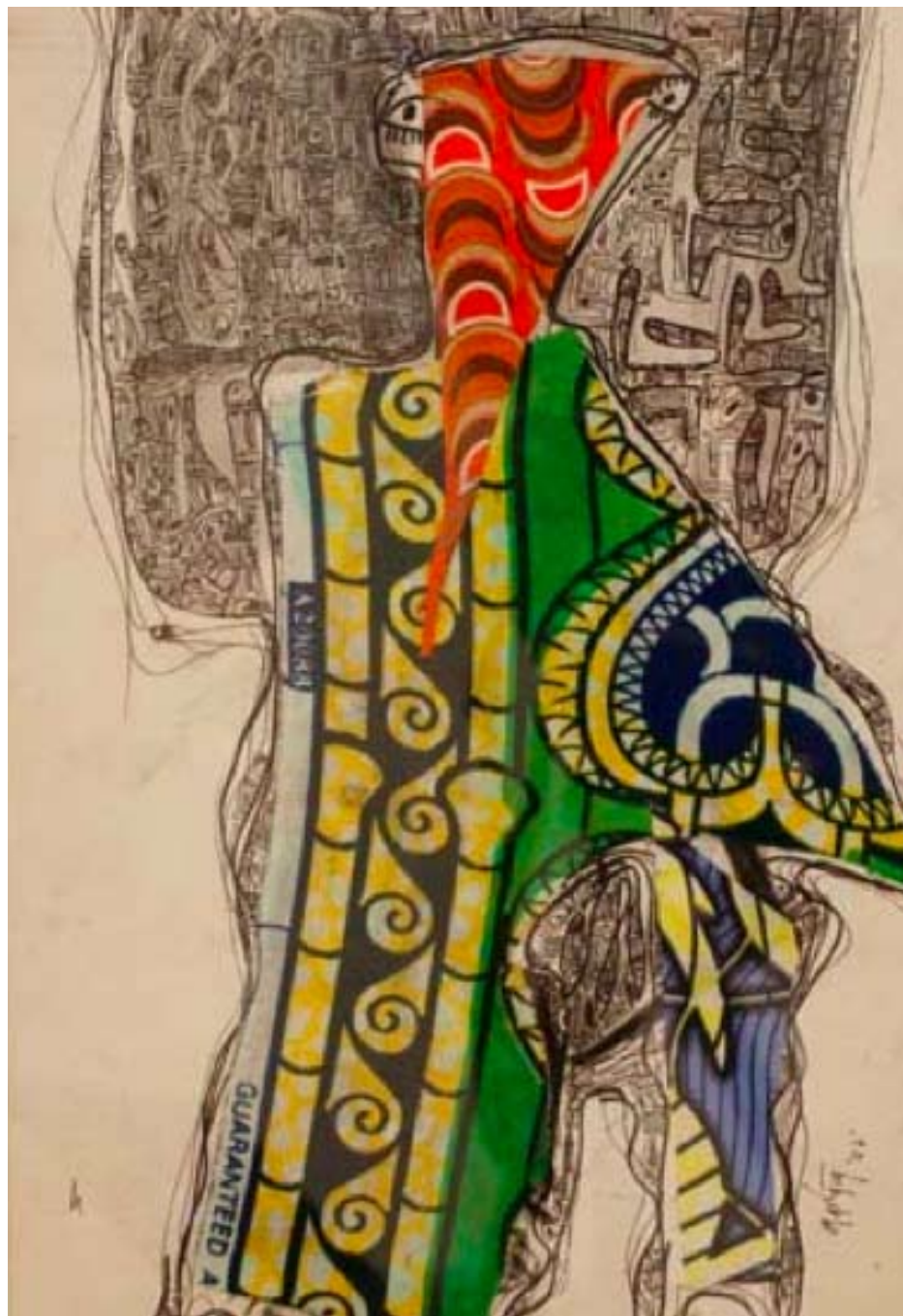
Untitled (2012, Ink and fabric on paper, 7 x 10.5 inches)



The Usher (2012, Ink and fabric on paper, 12 x 14 inches)



Pregnant in the Belly (2012, Ink and fabric on paper, 11.5 x 14 inches)

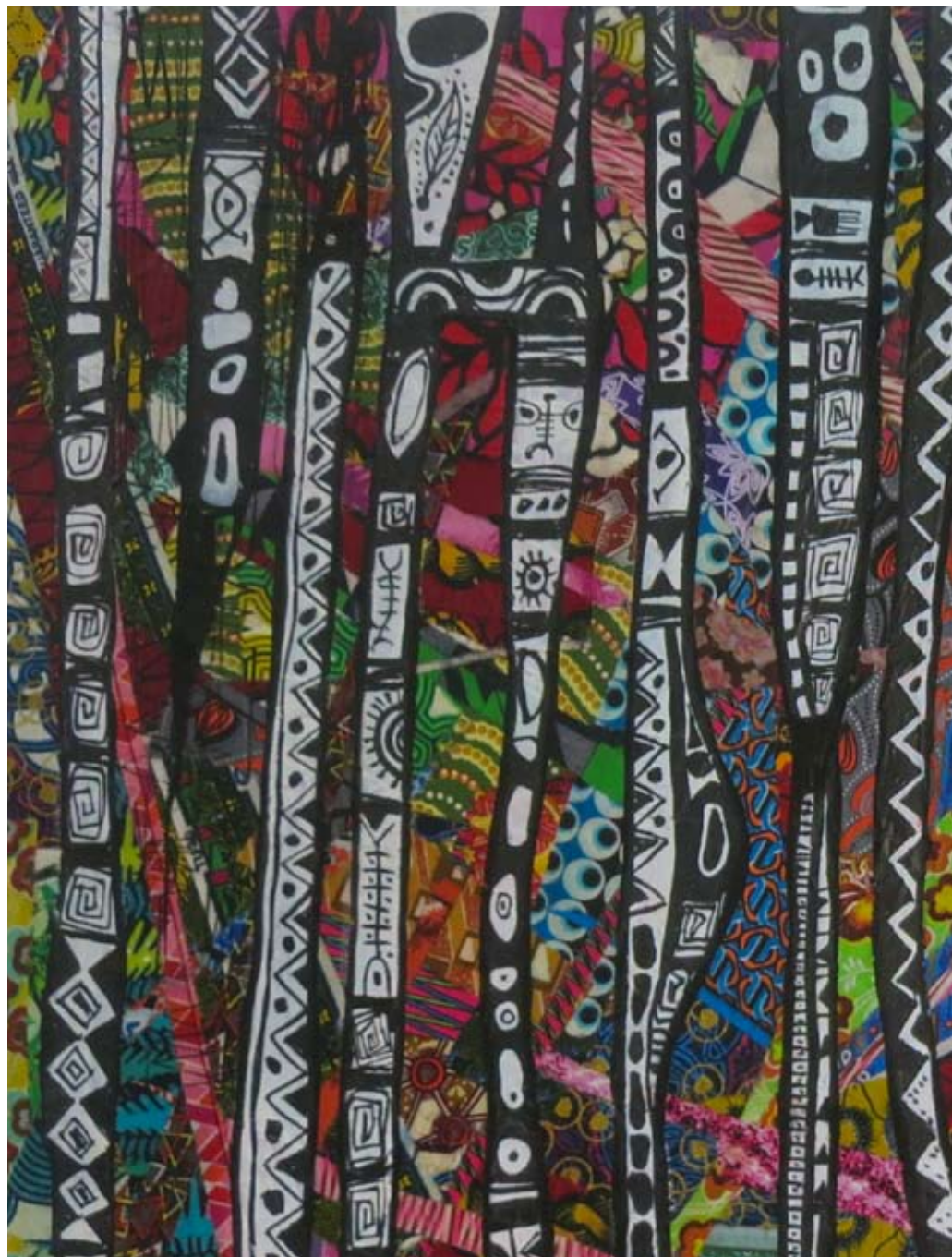


The Broken Tune (2012, Ink and fabric on paper, 10 x 16 inches)





Dried in the Water (2012, 47 x 34 inches, Mixed media on canvas, 47 x 34 inches)





Virgin Water (2012, Mixed media on canvas, 47 x 34 inches)





Rich Land with Poor People (2012, Mixed media on canvas, 29.5 x 35 inches)

Alafuro Sikoki

The Modern Evolution Suit (ModEv) is a critical assessment of the multiple roles assumed by many women in corporate society. As today's women climb the corporate ladder and contribute to the household pocket, the "second shift" continues as they return home to assume the roles of primary care-giver to their children, the cook and the wife.

ModEv explores this condition through the extrusion of the corporate suit. It shows the various functions that are hidden from plain sight as the 'corporate woman' navigates the combative cultural and socio-economic playing field in everyday life.

Alafuro Sikoki is an artist and an industrial designer whose works explore the dynamics between the object, user, and the environment. Sikoki graduated from the University of the Arts, Philadelphia, in 2006 with a Master's Degree in Industrial Design. She also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Authoring and Design from Coventry University, UK (2003). Sikoki won Second Prize at the 2012 National Art Competition for her project entitled *Cog*, which explores television consumption and media saturation in Nigeria today. Sikoki lives and works in Bayelsa and Lagos States.

Water No Get Enemy



Nigerianisms: Water No Get Enemy (2011, Inkjet print on canvas, 21 x 30 inches)

Body No
Be
Firewood



Nigerianisms: Body No Be Firewood (2011, Inkjet print on canvas, 21 x 30 inches)

Trouble Sleep,
Yanga
Wake Am



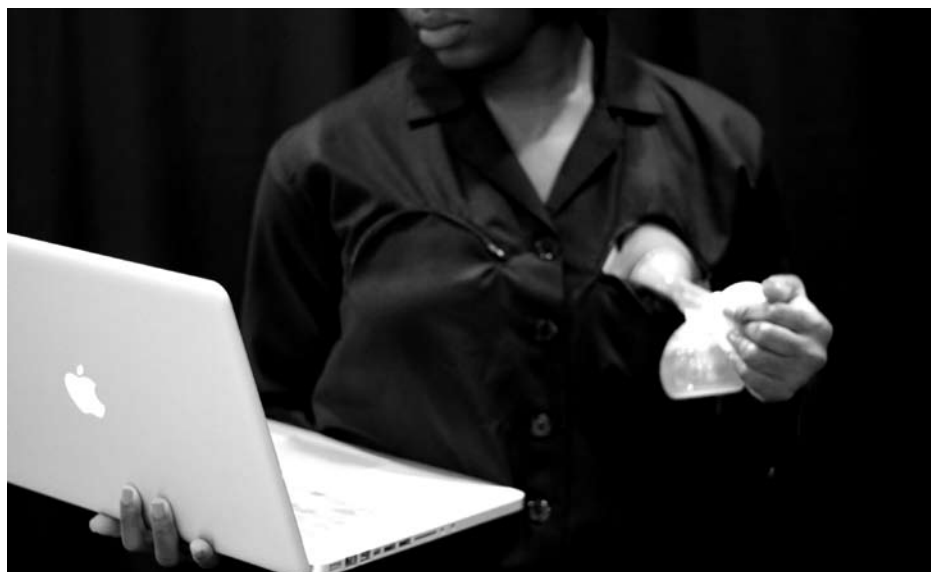
Nigerianisms: Trouble Sleep (2011, Inkjet print on canvas, 21 x 30 inches)





The Modern Evolution Suit (ModEv)
(2011, Four colour photographs, 16 x 24 inches each)





The Modern Evolution Suit (ModEv)
(2011, Four black and white photographs, dimensions variable)

Bob-Nosa Uwagboe

Bob-Nosa Uwagboe is a painter whose work examines the Nigerian social condition. Most recently, Uwagboe has begun to incorporate mixed media practices into his work, including materials such as human hair. Uwagboe investigates the dynamics of government corruption and individual experience in Nigeria, stating: "I use my art as a social and defensive weapon to fight bad leadership." Uwagbo graduated from the Federal Polytechnic Auichi in Edo State in 2004 with a speciality in painting. Uwagbo lives and works in Lagos.



Good-bye (2012, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36 inches)





Sleeping by the gun on a bullet box with two eyes
(2012, Mixed media on canvas, 48 x 48 inches)

Stephen Arueze Ubaka

Born in 1977 in Lagos, Stephen Arueze Ubaka is a sculptor and mixed media artist who approaches discarded industrial parts as a metaphor for cultural rejuvenation. In his *Hope* series, Ubaka creates three-dimensional sculptural works out of spoons, hinges, springs, bolts, and electronic parts in the shape of a prototype motorcycle. Ubaka studied Fine and Applied Arts at the Federal collage of Education (Akoko, Lagos), where he obtained a Nigerian Certificate of Education in Textile Design and Sculpture. He also studied at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Yabatech Campus) for his B. Sc. Ed in Painting. Ubaka lives and works in Lagos.







Hope series (2009, Four mixed media sculptures, dimensions variable)

Uche Uzorka

Entering into an Uche Uzorka artwork is similar to the experience of entering a restricted public space. Throughout Uzorka's prolific body of work that includes painting, collage, cutting and pasting, charcoal, and ink drawing, the viewer is at once confronted with a dense mass of visual clutter while at the same time directed by the textual fragments that animate boldly from the canvas. Appropriating the signs and symbols of Nigerian street culture, Uzorka encapsulates the psychological energy that defines the city of Lagos. Uzorka's work suggests an unwillingness to conform to methods of civic control and an ambivalent attitude towards the urban environment.

Uzorka trained in Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, majoring in painting. Uzorka won First Place with Chike Obeagu in the National Art Competition in 2011. Uzorka is completing a year long residency at the African Artists' Foundation in Lagos and had his first solo exhibition at the Goethe Institut in Lagos in October 2012.



Waltz (2012, Mixed media collage on canvas, 48 x 60 inches)





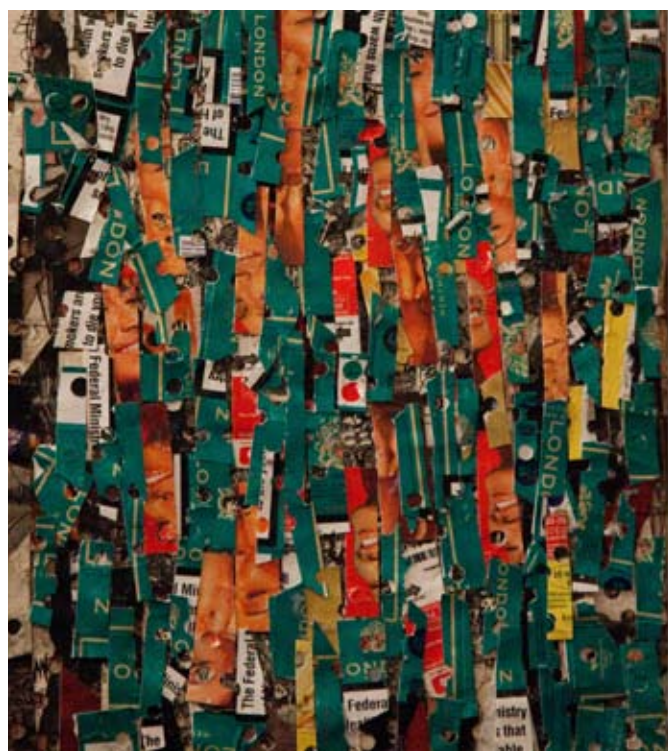
All That is Colour, All That is Bright
(2012, Acrylic and collage on canvas, 48 x 60 inches)



The Organic I (2011, Mixed media, Four panels, 10 x 12 inches each)



The Organic II (2011, Mixed media, Four panels, 10 x 12 inches each)





Elation (2011, Mixed media, Three panels, 10 x 12 inches each)





Power and Pleasure (2011, Mixed media, 16 plates, Dimensions variable)

About Art Africa Miami

Established in 2011, Art Africa's inaugural exhibition in Overtown Miami was the first of many exhibitions during the Art Basel Miami festivities. The inaugural artAfrica opening set a precedent as the largest showcase of contemporary artists from the African Diaspora during Art Basel and will continue growing with a larger showcase planned for December 5 - 9, 2012.

Art Africa Miami Arts Fair is a juried multidisciplinary exhibition of fine contemporary art from the global African Diaspora, situated in the epicenter of Miami's African-American cultural hub, Historic Overtown. The central idea of Art Africa Miami is to present an array of visual works that pay homage to the centrality of Africa and its descendant diaspora's artistic contribution to the modern world.

Our aim is to continue advancing artists from the African Diaspora, including artists from Africa, North America, South America, the Caribbean, and Europe. Art Africa Miami brings a vital and essential cultural service to the South Florida community, lending the Magic City a true international flair.

Art Africa Miami Arts Fair will be hosted in a tent/container hybrid model pavilion, which is sure to draw the curiosity of art enthusiasts, collectors, and aesthetes alike. This will give our fair goers and exhibitors an opportunity to experience an unparalleled body of work selected by a jury of art professionals whose contributions to the art world are extensive and of critical importance to both seasoned and emerging artists and galleries alike. Art Africa Miami is sponsored by The Urban Collective and The Miami CRA.

www.artafricamiami.com

About AAF

The African Artists' Foundation (AAF) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion and development of contemporary African art and artists. Established in 2007 and based in Lagos, Nigeria, the African Artists' Foundation aims to encourage the highest standard of art in Africa. The African Artists' Foundation serves a significant role in art and academic communities through organising art exhibitions, competitions, and workshops with the aim of unearthing and developing talent, creating societal awareness, and providing a platform to express creativity. By providing assistance to professional and emerging artists in Africa and support to international exhibitions and community outreach programs, the African Artists' Foundation views the contribution to a strong cultural landscape in Africa as a transformative element in driving social change.

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