



FIRST ALLY





**FIRST ALLY**





THE FEMI AKINSANYA ART COLLECTION  
FAAC



Curated by  
Sandra Mbanefo Obiako





## ARTISTS

Ade Adekola • Alimi Adewale • Babajide Olatunji  
Bob Aiwerioba • Bob Nosa Uwagboe • Bruce Onobrakpeya  
Duke Asidere • Edouard Blondeau • Edwin DeBebs  
Gbenga Offo • Gerald Chukwuma  
Solomon Irein Wangboje • Isaac Emokpae  
Kenny Adamson • Kolade Oshinowo • Kunle Adeyemi  
Lekan Onabanjo • Lemi Gharioku • Mike Omoighe  
Muraina Oyelami • Ogbemi Heymann • Olumide Onadipe  
Polly Alakija • Raoul Olawale da Silva  
Reuben Ugbine • Susanne Wenger • Tayo Adenaike  
Tola Wewe • Uthman Wahab • Akande Mautin •  
Dele Akinlade • Haneefa Adam • Joshua Nmesirionye  
• Kehinde Sanwo • Pita Ohiwerei  
Pius Emorhokpor • Segun Fayemi











# CONTENTS

Foreword by Olufemi Akinsanya	15
Preface by Ebenezer Olufowose	17
Curatorial Introduction	19
Our Vision	27
Our Team	55
Our Culture	85
Our Enviroment	105
Artist Bios	128



# Foreword

Art has the power to lead us towards better tapping into, exploring and appreciating the deeper, higher, more noble aspects of our being; and our place and role in relationships with others and the world. Art can lead some to thinking outside the box, innovate, dream big dreams and take practical and creative steps towards those dreams. Art also has the power to heighten our awareness and be more in tune with the world around us: our history, our present, and our future. Above all in my own case, Art has offered me a passion through which I have experienced some fulfilment and happiness. And arising from this, has been a desire for finding practical means of affording access to, and sharing my art collection with others for their own pleasure and enjoyment.

It is a therefore a great pleasure for me to collaborate with First Ally in its art-in-the-workplace showcase. On a more personal level, I have known Ebenezer Olufowose, First Ally's Co-Founder, Managing Director and CEO, for upwards of 30 years, and we have had many fruitful professional collaborations. And all along, by proximity and relationship, Ebenezer had been a quiet witness to my love of art and collecting. So, I am especially delighted for the opportunity

to now convert him from “passive witness” to “active conspirator” through the wonderful display of 50 artworks from my collection in First Ally's beautiful new corporate space.

I trust that these works will both provide a rich tapestry of intellectual stimulation, as well as heighten the art appreciation of our esteemed clientele and the staff. I would also hope this will serve as a token gesture of strong support for, and promotion of the finest of black diaspora artistic creativity, which is a most effective avenue for underlining black diaspora contribution in today's world. Finally, I hope the First Ally art showcase will encourage other collectors (Nigerian collectors especially) to progressively explore similar and other means for sharing their own artworks with the public.

Femi Akinsanya  
Chairman  
First Ally Capital





# Preface

As a dynamic and forward-thinking organisation founded in 2014, the First Ally brand has commanded attention for its achievements within the short time of its establishment. One of these achievements is the movement to its own corporate headquarters located at Plot 287, Ajoye Adeogun Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria in June 2020. It is therefore with great joy and with a heart filled with gratitude to the Almighty God that I write the Preface to this Art Catalogue.

First Ally Capital is proud to showcase the stunning modern and contemporary artworks loaned from the Femi Akinsanya Art Collection FAAC, at our new corporate headquarters. These art pieces represent some of the best works of art from artistic pioneers as well as leading and emerging artists from Nigeria and the African Continent.

Our Group is driven by excellence and integrity through commitment to ethical behaviour, innovation and quality. As such, not only do the art pieces beautify and transform our space, they also stimulate our drive for innovation and excellence; they whet our appetite for continuous improvements; they reinforce our commitment to making First

Ally the best place for smart, inquisitive and ambitious people to thrive; and they resonate well with our core objectives of providing innovative financing solutions and enabling growth. We trust that our clients and other stakeholders will appreciate these beautiful artworks as much as we do.

My thanks go to our Chairman, Mr Olufemi Akinsanya, for generously loaning us these exciting artworks from his Collections. We are hugely indebted to him for his wonderful support to the First Ally Group. My gratitude also goes to Mrs Sandra Mbanefo Obiako for the beautiful display of professionalism in curating this corporate art collection in our office. It was a great delight working with her on this very important assignment.

Ebenezer Olufowose  
Managing Director/CEO  
First Ally Capital Limited







# A Beautiful Harvest: On Curating A Corporate Art Collection

I was quite elated when at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in Lagos, I was contacted by Ebenezer Olufowose, the Managing Director of First Ally Capital, to curate the art in the company's new corporate headquarters, with a selection of works from the rich collection of one of Nigeria's leading art collectors, Femi Akinsanya.

## **Background:**

Femi Akinsanya, the Chairman of First Ally Capital, is as an important art patron whom I have known for close to twenty years. He is a notable collector of traditional, modern and contemporary art, and has supported many young emerging artists in the Nigerian creative space as well as led important artistic projects. We worked together in 2011 on the launch of his impressive book, *Making History: African Collectors and the Canon of African Art – The Femi Akinsanya African Art Collection by Sylvester Okwunodu Oggechie*, presenting his impressive museum quality collection of traditional African artworks. The book was presented alongside an exhibition by the same name curated by Prof. Ogbechie at the Wheatbaker in Ikoyi.

We also worked together on a charity exhibition in 2016 by the Save our Art, Save

Our Heritage! Campaign (of the AOT), which helped to restore some of the monumental sculptures in the sacred groves art park in Oshogbo, which is an important UNESCO World Heritage Site. I am honored to have the opportunity of working with him again this year, and to be entrusted with the rare privilege of selecting works from his rich collection for First Ally Capital's maiden art display.

Femi Akinsanya's noteworthy and generous loan of some of his best artworks should be seen as an excellent example of how collectors can share their treasures with a wider audience, and in so doing, influence greater art appreciation in society, while allowing art to inspire a new generation of collectors and patrons, thus strengthening the creative industry.

## **Philosophy**

Research has shown that art in the workplace has a powerful positive effect on employees and clients. Art in the workspace helps communicate key brand messages, highlights local culture, reduces stress, fosters wellbeing, and elevates employee performance, mood, and bolsters interpersonal bonds between employees and clients.

In curating the First Ally Capital Collection, it was critical to select works which enhance staff and client wellbeing while celebrating the wealth of creativity in Nigeria, through a broad diversity of media and artists. It was also vital to pick works which align with the corporate values and vision of the organisation.

First Ally Capital's focus on "providing innovative financing solutions and enabling growth" needed to be reflected in the art selected for its state-of-the-art corporate space; artworks which align with a spirit of trust, integrity, professionalism, teamwork, innovation and quality.

With this in mind, I chose works which not only have historical value and important provenance, and are excellent examples of the vibrancy of our creativity, I also selected pieces which through their color, form, symbolism, texture, composition, and aesthetic vibrancy would heighten our sense of national pride, and deepen our interest in collecting and preserving our artistic heritage.

### **The Femi Akinsanya Art Collection ("FAAC")**

The Femi Akinsanya Art Collection has a rare diversity of traditional, modern, and contemporary works which Femi Akinsanya has documented with clarity and rare

commitment over the years. For the First Ally Capital project I chose works spanning fifty-eight years of artistic expression (from 1960 to 2018), and which are some of the finest modern and contemporary artworks from Nigeria.

The fifty works in the First Ally Capital Collection include different mediums such as paintings on canvas, paper and mixed media, etchings, photography, and a wooden sculpture. With the placement of works in the building, I took into consideration the physical layout (including furnishings, lighting, ventilation, wall space), the activity and specialisation of each area, as well as the access and general flow of people moving through the space.

In the catalogue, the works have been broadly classified into four sections: *Vision* which explores First Ally's intrinsic values; the collections' powerful portraits reflecting the *Team*, celebrating the character of the First Ally community, touching on competition, trust, integrity, tenacity, client focus and professionalism, *Culture* which showcases the rich tapestry of Nigeria's traditions, folklore, language, ethnicity, and cultural practices, taking us on an exciting journey across the country and lastly, *Environment* highlighting our landscapes and the stunning beauty of our nature, alongside the iconic and historic character of our architecture.



## In Detail

The 1968 *Conversations for Four* by modernist Solomon Irein Wangboje, one of the first graduates of the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria's famous Zaria Art Department, is the oldest work in the collection; Wangboje became one of Nigeria's first modern printmakers. From the same school, we have a beautiful small additive plastograph, *Dada (Blue Dread Locks)*, by Prof. Bruce Onobrakpeya, one of Nigeria's most important experimental artists, and one of the famous pioneer "Zaria Rebels", who graduated at the height of the independence movement in Nigeria.

The 1989, Akam Dikwa Ocha (My Hands Are Clean) painting by Tayo Adenaike, one of Nigeria's master water colorists from the Nsukka school, is a classic piece "where organic forms suggest emotional and imaginative psychological spaces".<sup>1</sup> From the 1990's, we have two oil on canvas works by Edwin Debebs, depicting a marine landscape from his Delta homeland, as well as an iconic Durbar scene.

From the famous Oshogbo Sacred Art school, we have two paintings by Muraina Oyelami, an unusual 1969 oil on board work depicting

animals, and a more recent 2015 "Habitable Slums" work, which hangs in the entrance foyer.

Some works which reference urban architecture are a 1990 Kenny Adamson painting of the historically popular *Docemo Street* on Lagos Island, which from the 1960's was well known for the sale of household appliances and tools<sup>2</sup>. Four small paintings by Kehinde Sanwo, depict colonial architecture in historic neighbourhoods in Abeokuta. An untitled work by Pita Ohiwerei, depicts a typical street scene one can find in the many iconic small towns dotted across mid-western Nigeria. These works, along with Lekan Onabanjo's, tree lined street scene, adorn the walls of First Ally's property department.

Two etchings, *New Mother* by Olisa Nwadiogbu, with typical figuration and symbols of motherhood, and *The Beautiful Harvest* by Kunle Adeyemi, are fine examples of intricate metal foil deep etchings. The *Men in Suits II* is a giclee print of an etching by Pius Emokphohor, who was mentored by Nigeria's Prof. Bruce Onobrakpeya.

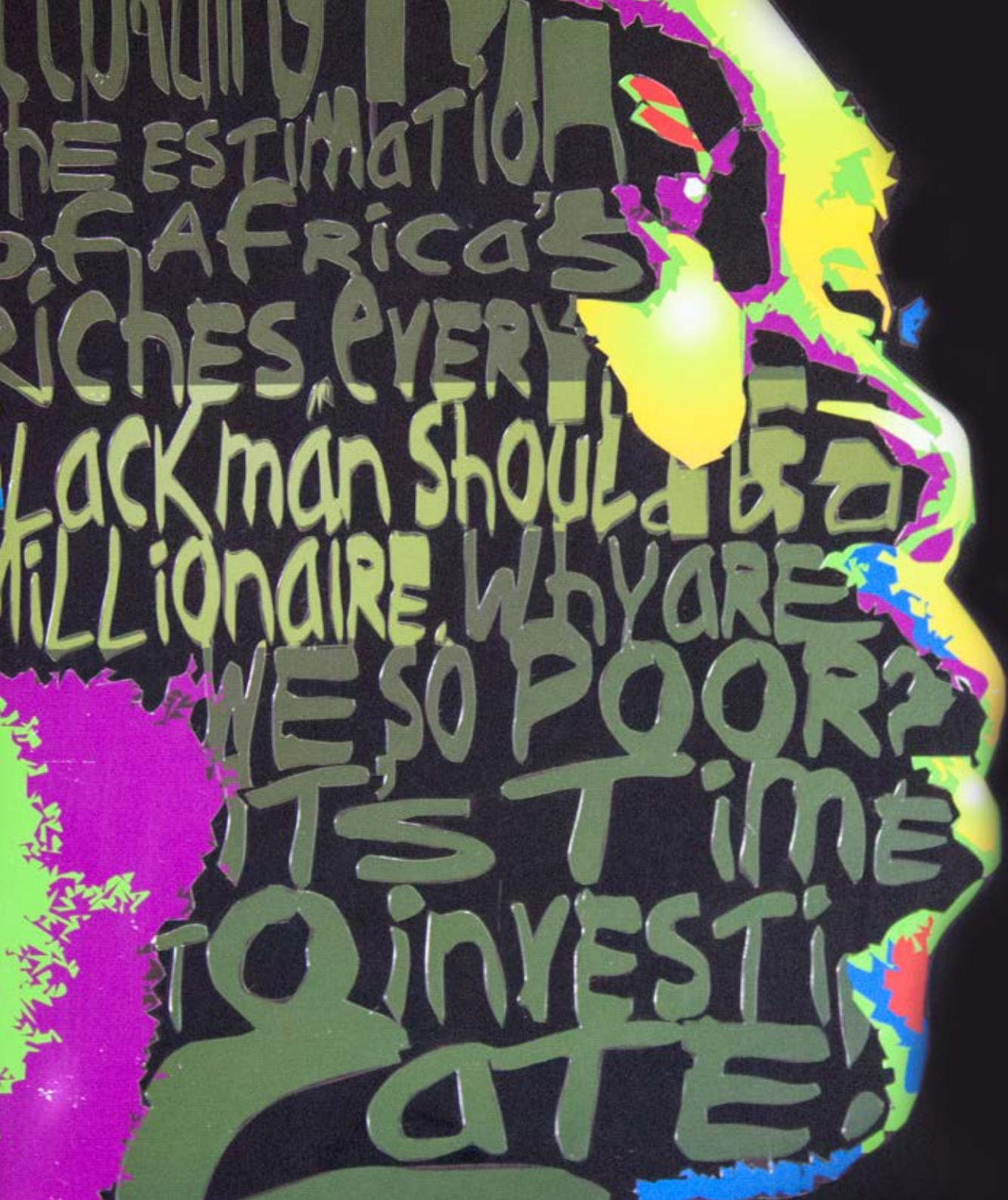
A number of works celebrate Nigerian traditional culture including Joshua Nmesirionye's beautifully rendered,

---

1 Tayo Adenaike, from the archives of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, [www.africa.si.edu](http://www.africa.si.edu)

---

2 History of C. Woermann, [www.woermann\\_nigeria.com](http://www.woermann_nigeria.com)



THE ESTIMATION  
OF AFRICA'S  
RICHES EVERY  
BLACK MAN SHOULD BE A  
MILLIONAIRE. WHY ARE  
WE SO POOR?  
IT'S TIME  
TO INVESTI  
ATE!

*Dance Spirit (II)*, alongside Mike Omoighe's paintings inspired by the masquerade in the village square, and scenes from the royal court of the Benin Kingdom. Another rich cultural sport is depicted in Kenny Adamson's painting of an exciting moon lit traditional wrestling match in the midst of a cheering community, highlighting the multiple layers and complexity of competition and winning. Bob Aiwerioba's painting of northern horsemen and Edwin Debebs' oil on canvas of the Durbar, showcase Nigeria's nomadic northern culture.

*Ogun Omode*, by Akande Mautin, draws inspiration from the famous Yoruba proverb, *Ogun omode kole sere fun ogun odun*, which means "twenty children cannot play together for twenty years," illustrating how "your circle of friends keep changing, only a few of your childhood friends will still remain you friends many years later"<sup>3</sup>.

The powerful portraits all in some way reflect the diversity, trust, innovation and inspiration behind First Ally's vision. Some iconic faces in the collection include Dele Akinlade's 1997 portrait of an old sage smoking a pipe, and the hyper-realist charcoal and pastel

*Tribal Mark Series IV* work by Babajide Olatunji, one of Nigeria's celebrated emerging artists in the international art market.

Lemi Gharioku's powerful portrait of the famous afrobeat legend, Fela Anikulapo Ransom Kuti, with the wording "every black man should be a millionaire" etched across his visage, was strategically hung opposite the *MoniNow* department, which focuses on empowering Nigerians with the provision of salary-backed loans on a digital platform to realise sustainable development and wealth creation in Nigeria.

Gbenga Offo's guitarist is a powerful portrait, depicting the artist's signature cubist style with large exaggerated eyes. *Rita* is a classical portrait of a young woman (the Artist's daughter) reading a book sitting next to a bouquet of exotic flowers, painted by British-Nigerian artist, Polly Alakija. *Ogbono Soup*, by Haneefa Adam, is a tongue-in-cheek photographic portrait of an iconic African woman with large head-wrap, created out of the ingredients used in the spicy traditional ogbono soup. The latter two works hang in the lunchroom, hopefully providing mental stimulation while First Ally teammates lunch and converse.

The female form, an inspiration of artists through the ages, is well represented in the colorful and stylised portraits by Tola Wewe,

---

3 Ogun Omode translation by Babatunde Daniel, from [www.quora.com](https://www.quora.com/What-is-an-example-of-an-interesting-saying-proverb-in-the-Yoruba-language-What-does-it-mean-in-English), *What-is-an-example-of-an-interesting-saying-proverb-in-the-Yoruba-language-What-does-it-mean-in-English*, 2018

Alimi Adewale's *Seated Woman*, and *Mirror Mirror* by Emma Isiuwe, and Bob Aiwerioba's Tiger Lady alongside the sleek, geometric sculpture of the female form *Woman* by Reuben Ugbine, the only three-dimensional piece in the collection.

The complex energy inherent in community life are reflected in the group portraits which make up the section, *Our Team*. Kolade Oshinowo's poignant 2004 oil on canvas painting, *The One They Left Behind*, depicting migration, with a mother and her three children in the foreground, explores the transience of life. Isaac Emokpae's painting, *Good Character Always Shines Through*, is a group portrait of characters with balloon heads, interrogating the complex philosophical theme of duality, inspired by the works of his famous father, Erhbor Emokpae, and the philosophers, Leibniz and Santayana. Uthman Wahab's *Fab Are Us* oil on canvas work depicts vibrant group dynamics, while also interrogating the "other", in his rendering of fat ballerinas, used as a metaphor for inclusion and diversity in society.

Animals also come to the fore in numerous works which reflect mythical scenes and our rich biodiversity, a bridge to interrogating our wealth of African proverbs and symbolism. Raoul Olawale da Silva's abstract large work at the entrance depicts the portrait of a man with a bull in the midst of accouterments of success

such as a figure playing golf, an interesting counterpoint to Bob Nosa Uwagboe's "grabbing the bull by the horns" hanging in the Dealing Room. Ogbemi Heyman's tongue-in-cheek *Chairman* painting, interrogates the essence of competition and winning by depicting a monkey eating a banana, while being pursued and surrounded by a group of fellow monkeys. While Susanne Wenger's print of a 1960 work, the *Iwin series*, depicting two figures sitting on a leopard, is an iconic work which draws on the traditional symbols form the Oshogbo Sacred Art movement.

The collection includes two photographs from Ade Adekola's *Bar Beach* series, in which the artist "explores nostalgia and memory; colour, the colourful and the spectacular"<sup>4</sup> The magnetic *Dancing in the Rain* photograph by Edouard Blondeau, who has worked extensively across Africa, interrogates time, motion and movement, and was shot during a rain storm in Oyo.

The collection also includes some fine examples of contemporary mixed media artworks including Olumide Onadipe's *Monocular* wall hanging, created out of melted, twisted and woven plastic bags, and Gerald Chukwuma's carved wooden slats, depicting typical Nigerian iconography,

---

4 The Ghosts of Barbeach by Ade Adekola, 2018, [www.galleryB57.com](http://www.galleryB57.com)

including the famous Uli and Nsibidi symbols, which became the bedrock of the Nsukka Art School.

I trust that the fifty works in the First Ally Capital Art Collection will lift your spirits as they celebrate the depth and breadth of creativity emanating from Africa. The collection showcases our unique culture, our rich traditions, our beautiful landscapes, and the diversity of our people . As these works celebrate the spirit of excellence, innovation and determination, which are at the heart of the Corporation's intrinsic values, they should also ignite and heighten the art appreciation of staff and valued clientele, and increase our interest in learning more about the exciting world of modern and contemporary African art.

Sandra Mbanefo Obiogo  
Curator  
SMO Contemporary Art



VISION

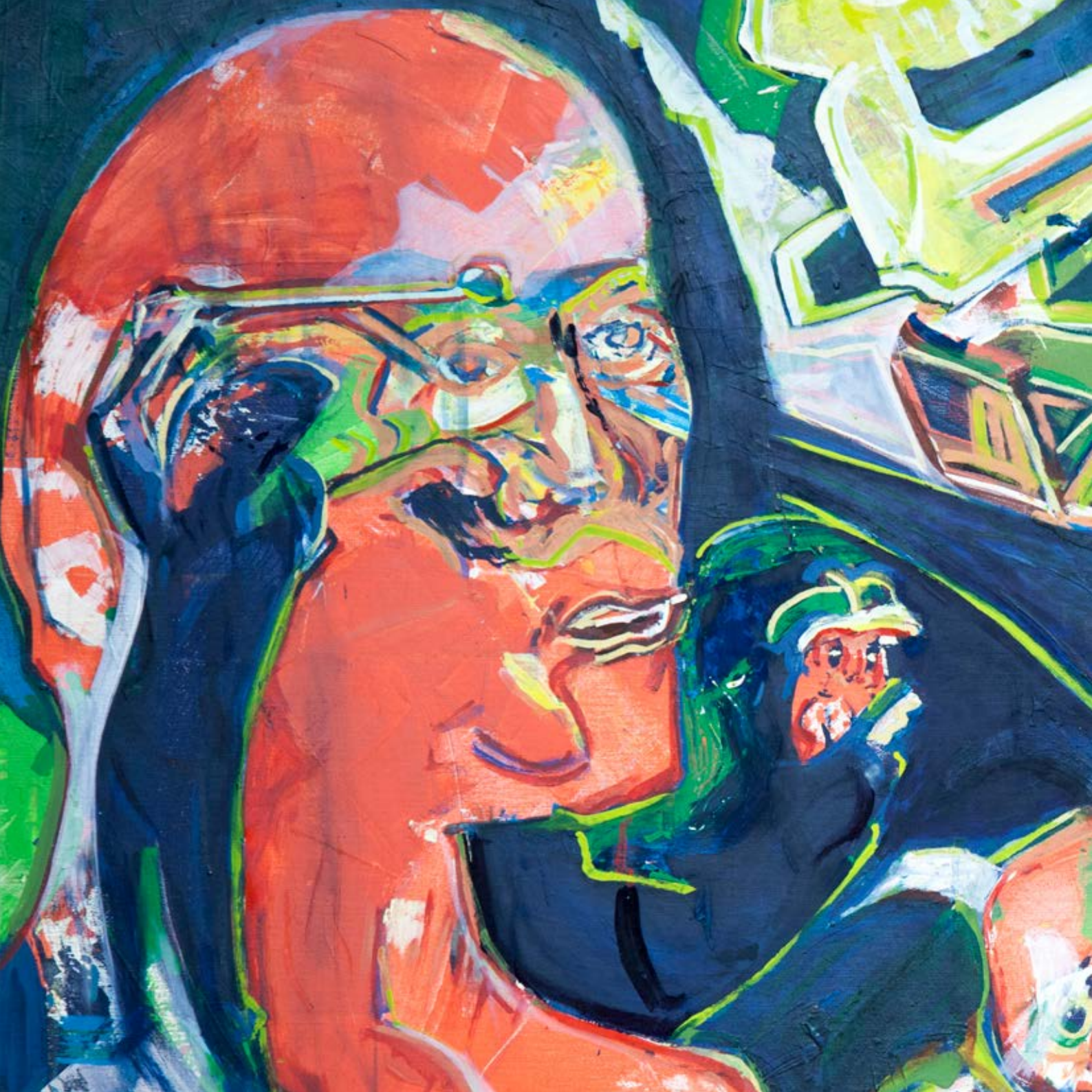




























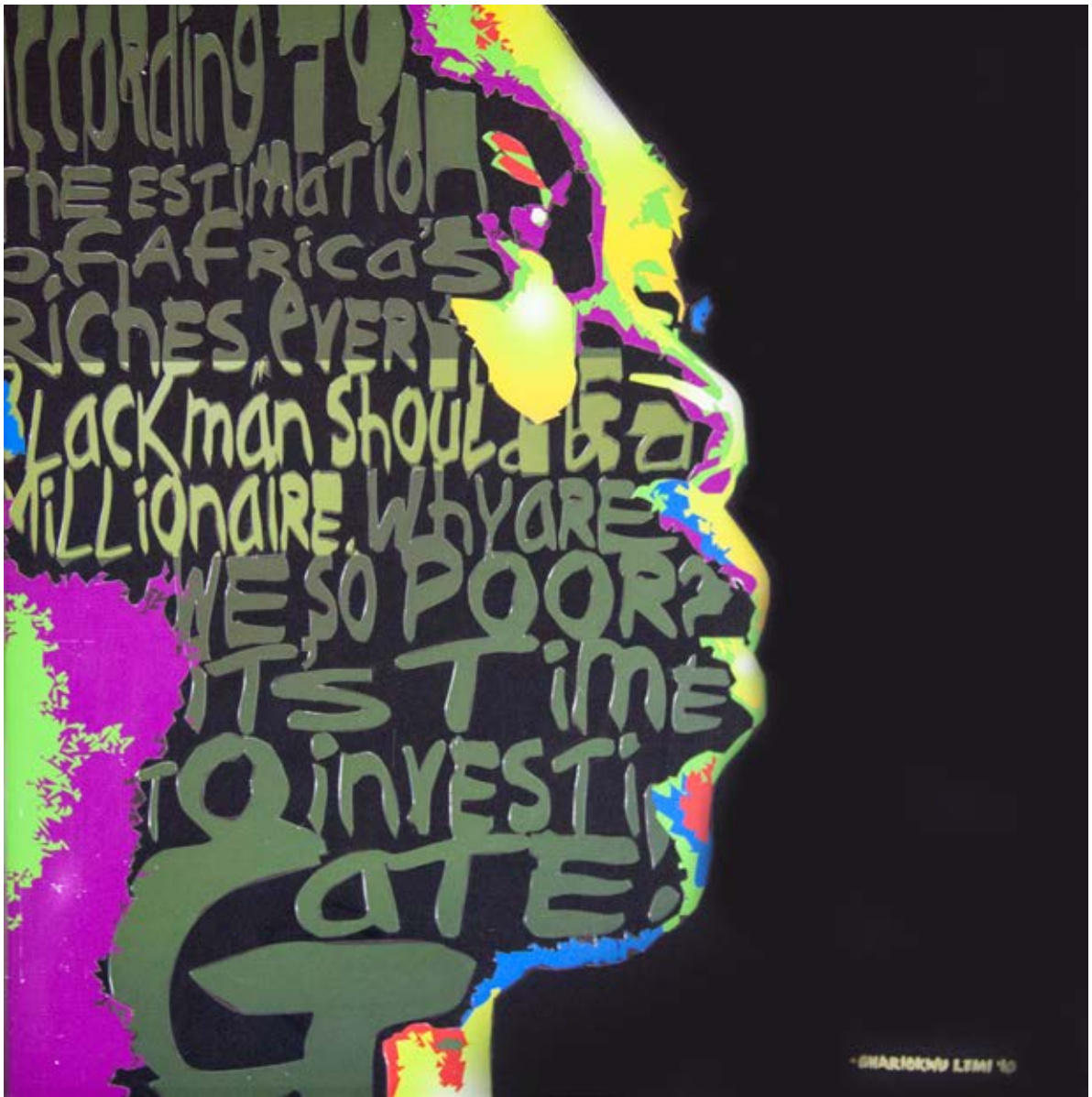


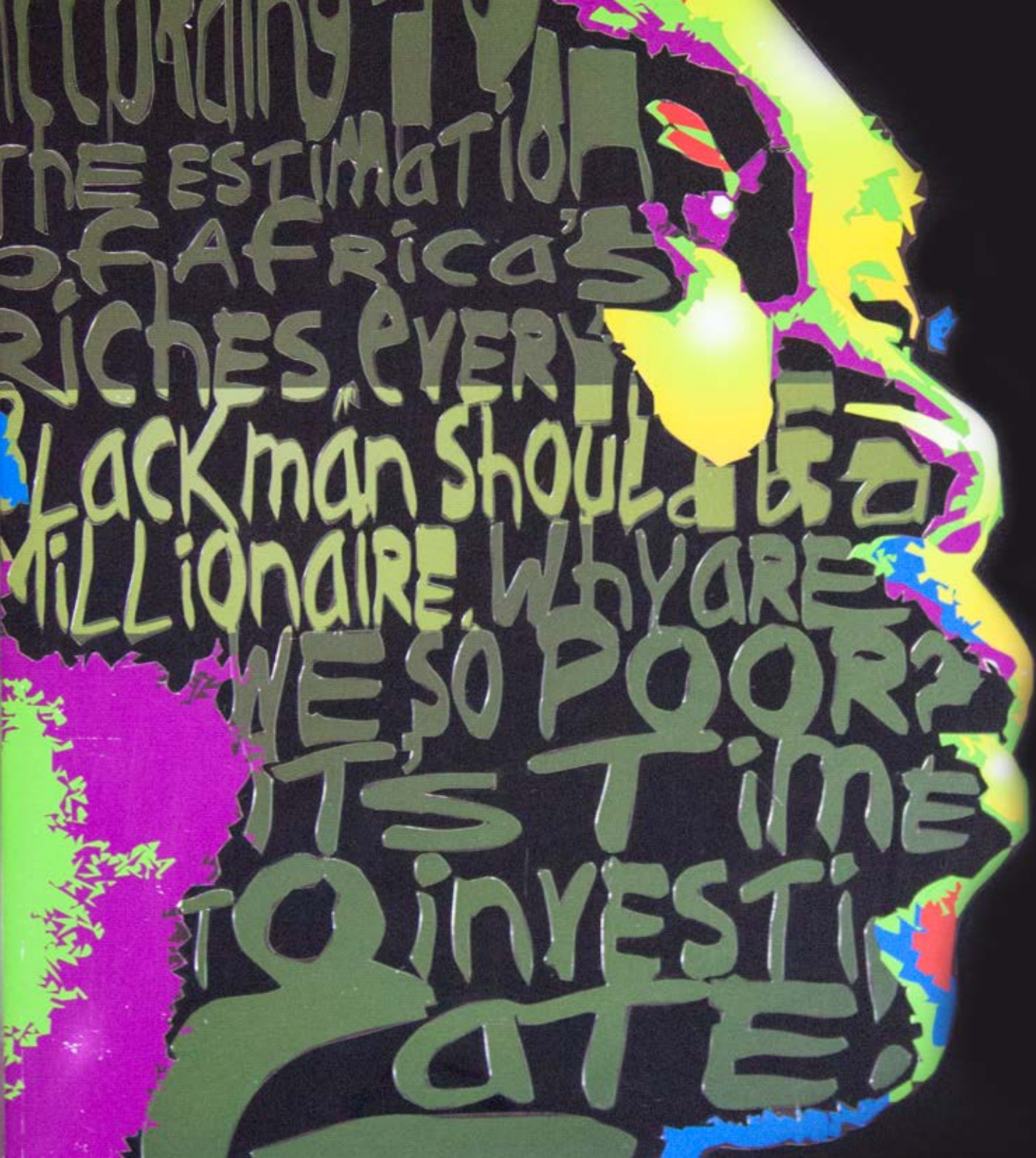












THE ESTIMATION  
OF AFRICA'S  
RICHES EVERY  
BLACK MAN SHOULD BE A  
MILLIONAIRE. WHY ARE  
WE SO POOR?  
IT'S TIME  
TO INVESTI-  
GATE!























MARTIN SH  
NO 31 October 1991

Amazon Vantage Wallpaper 2  
roll, £52 per 10m roll.  
019500 or  
anderson-uk.com  
and W6756-02 from  
Little, £58 per 10m roll.  
123 or  
rneandlittle.com  
Mustard by Mini  
per 10m roll.  
erns.com

































# TEAM



























































Ade Adekola, Bar Beach 19 (Ghost of Bar Beach Series), Photography (E 10), 27.5 x 41 in, 2018



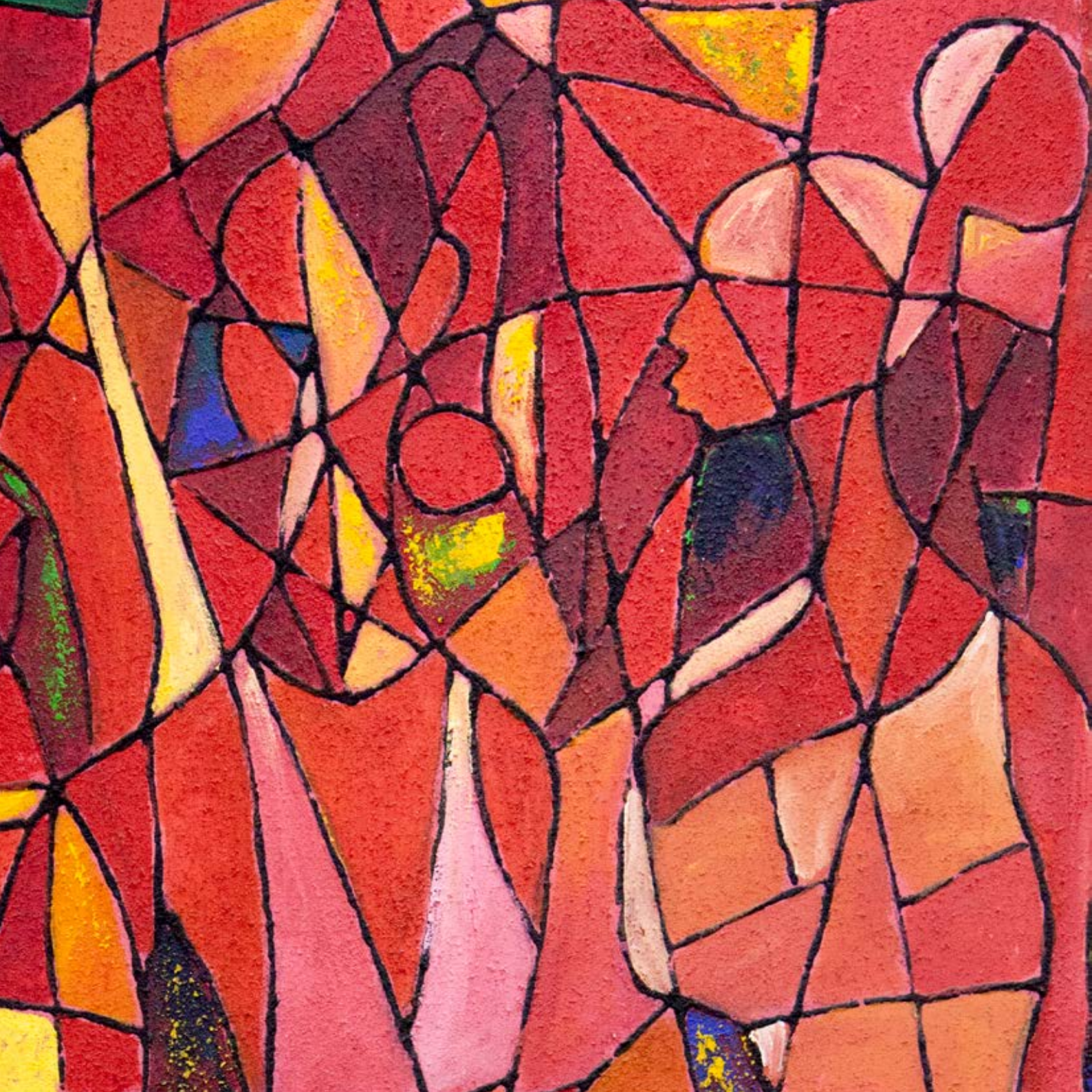




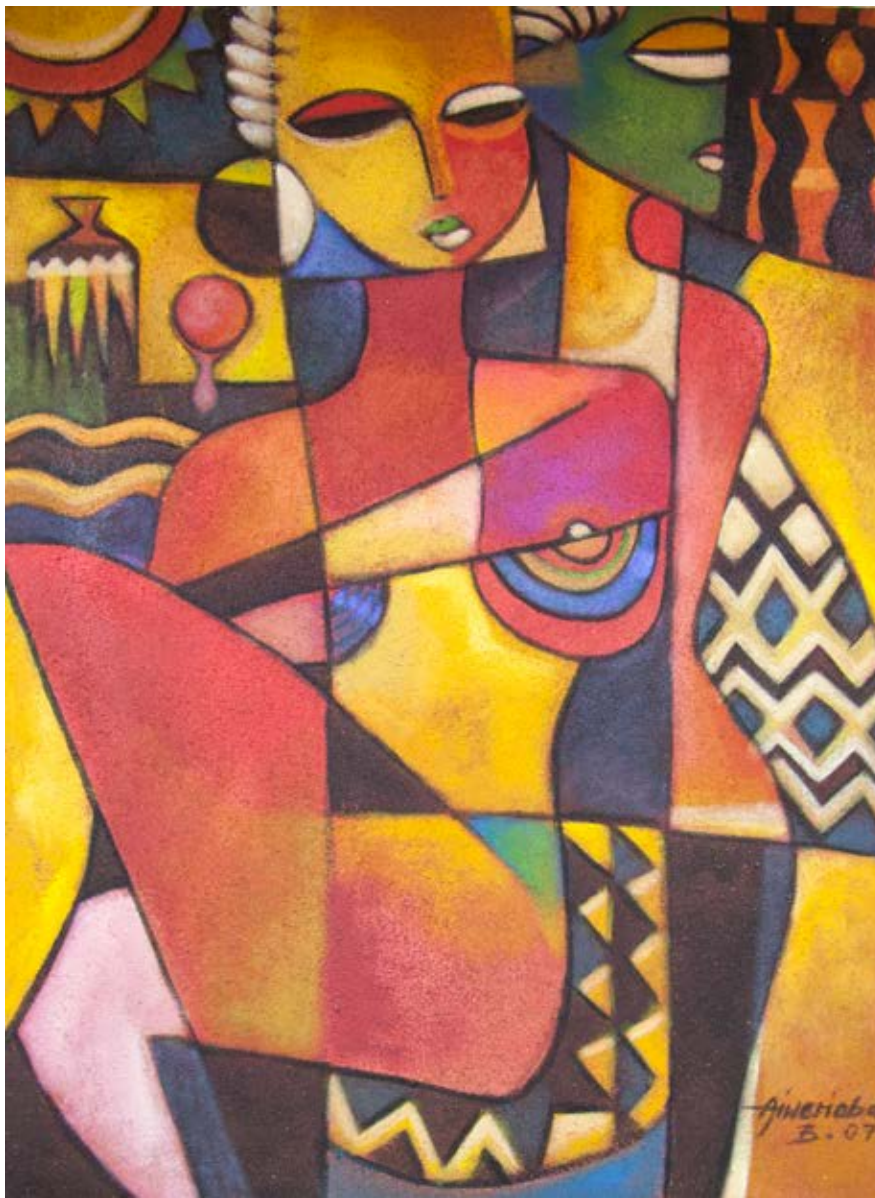




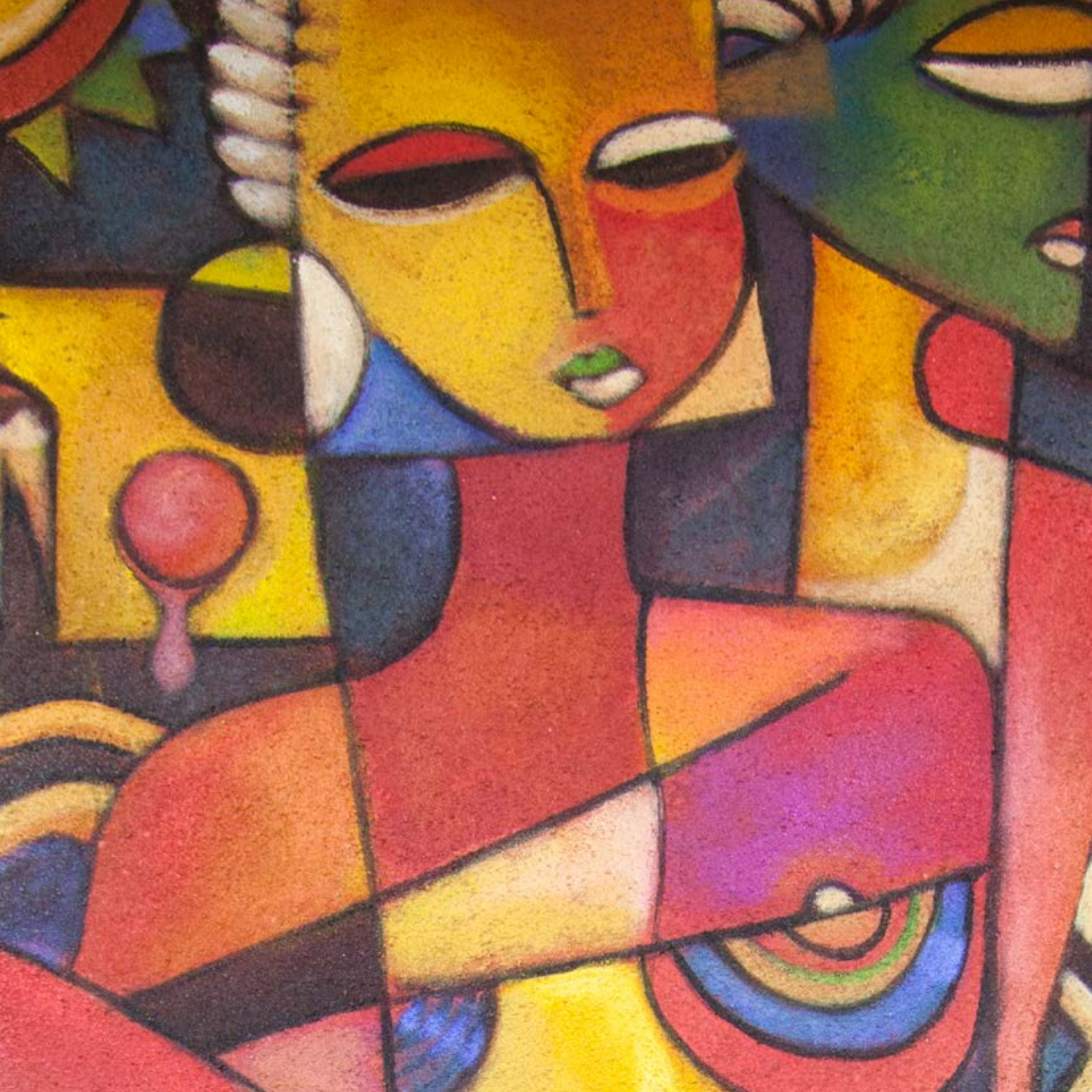










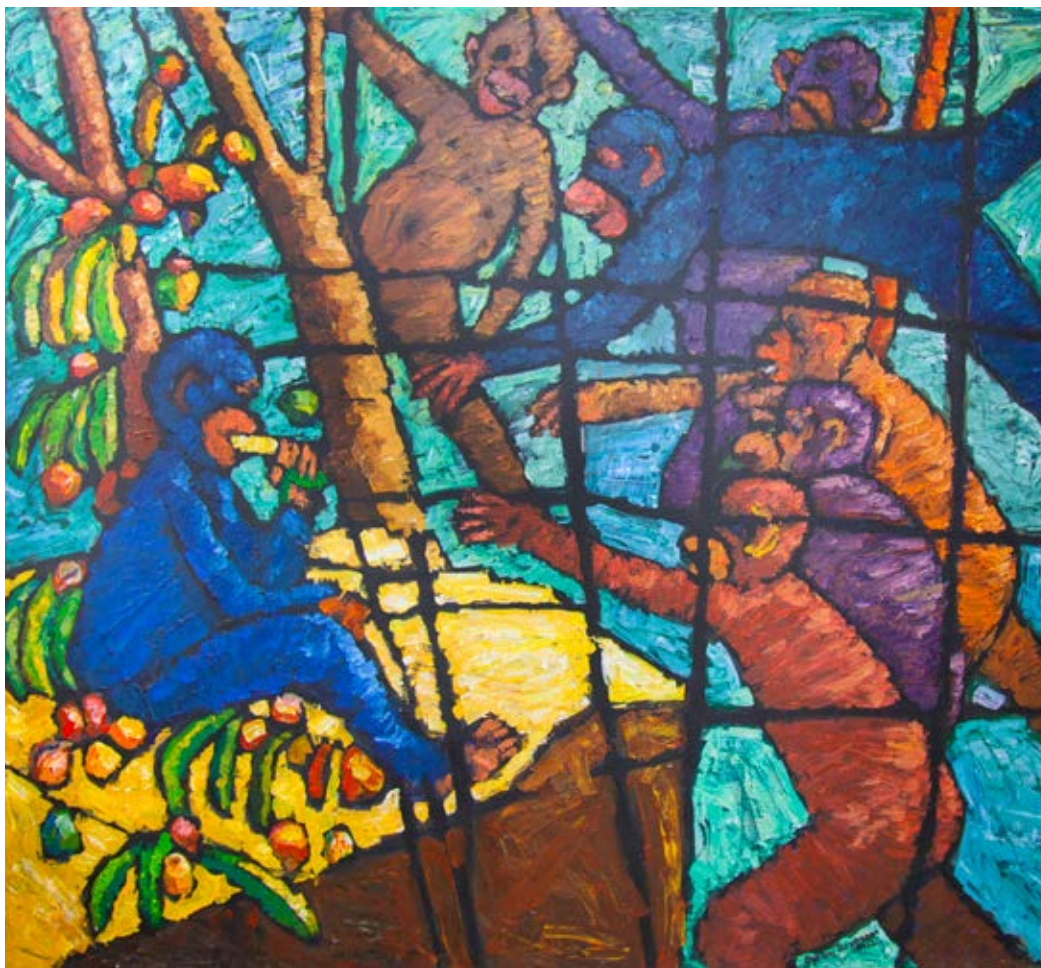








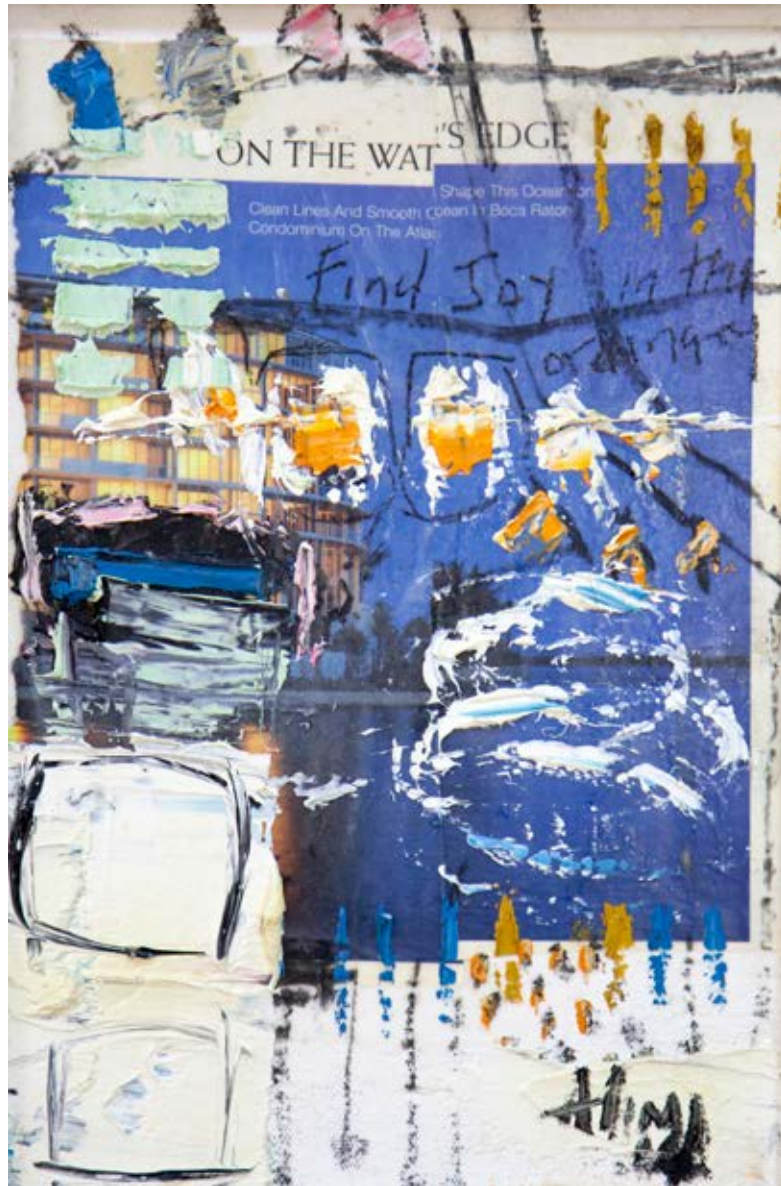














# ON THE WATER'S EDGE

Shape This Oceanfront  
Clean Lines And Smooth Ocean In Boca Raton  
Condominium On The Atlantic

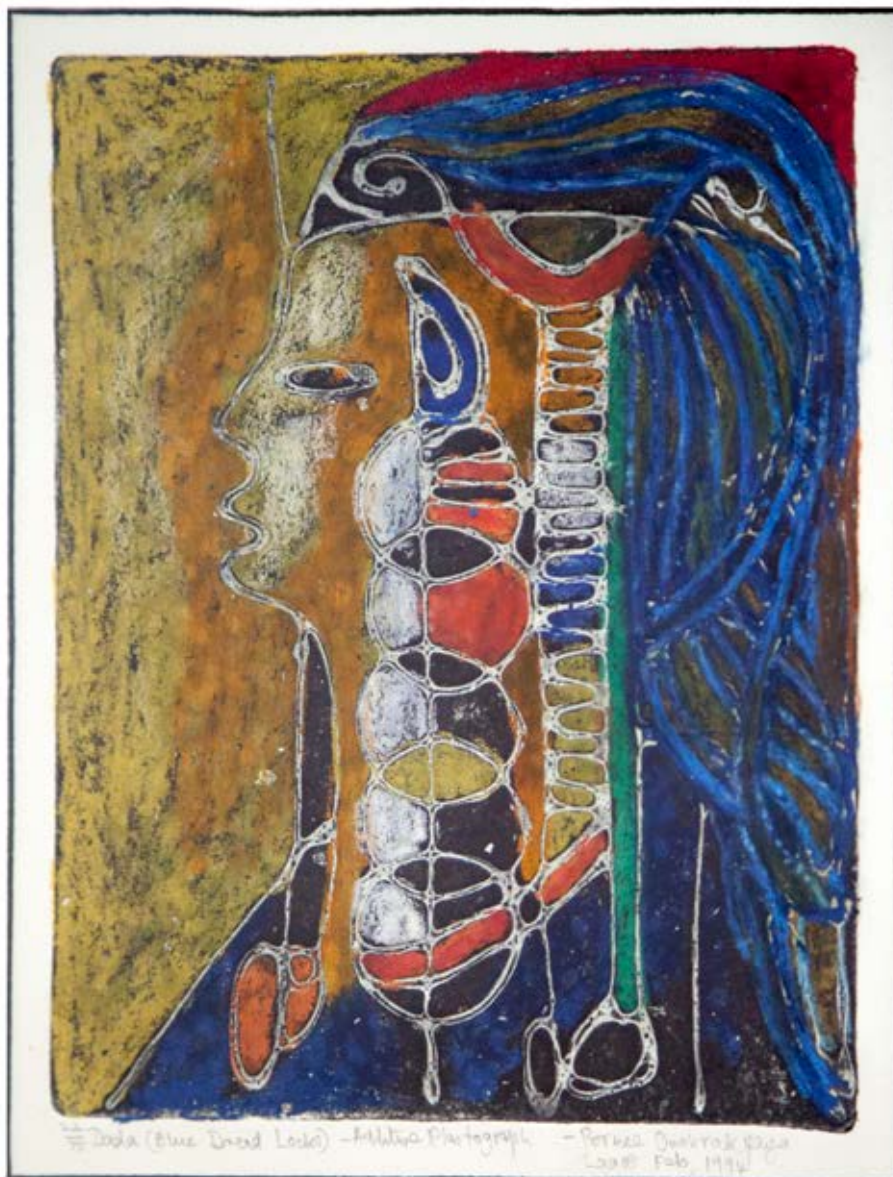
Find Joy in the  
Ocean







CULTURE







































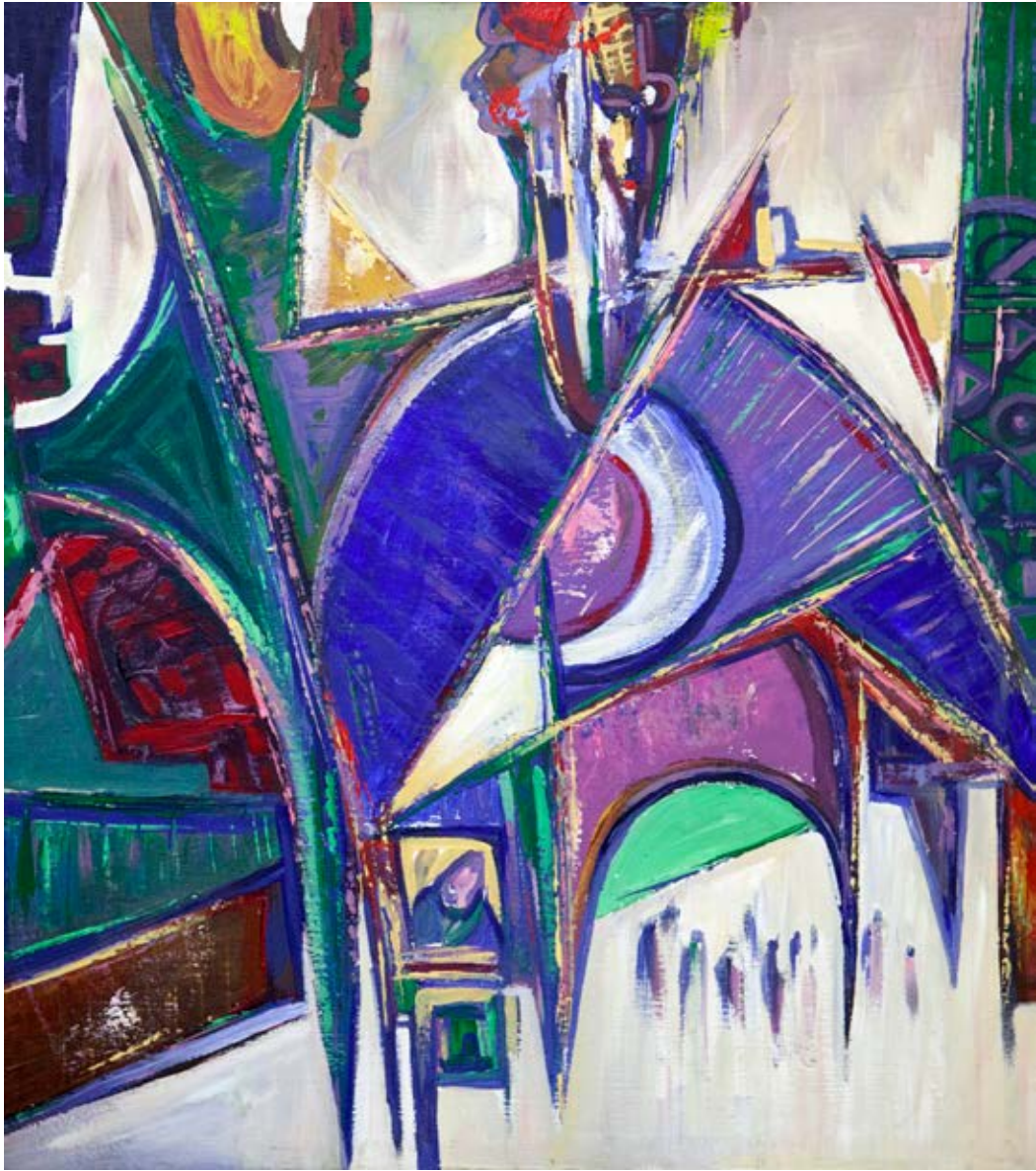




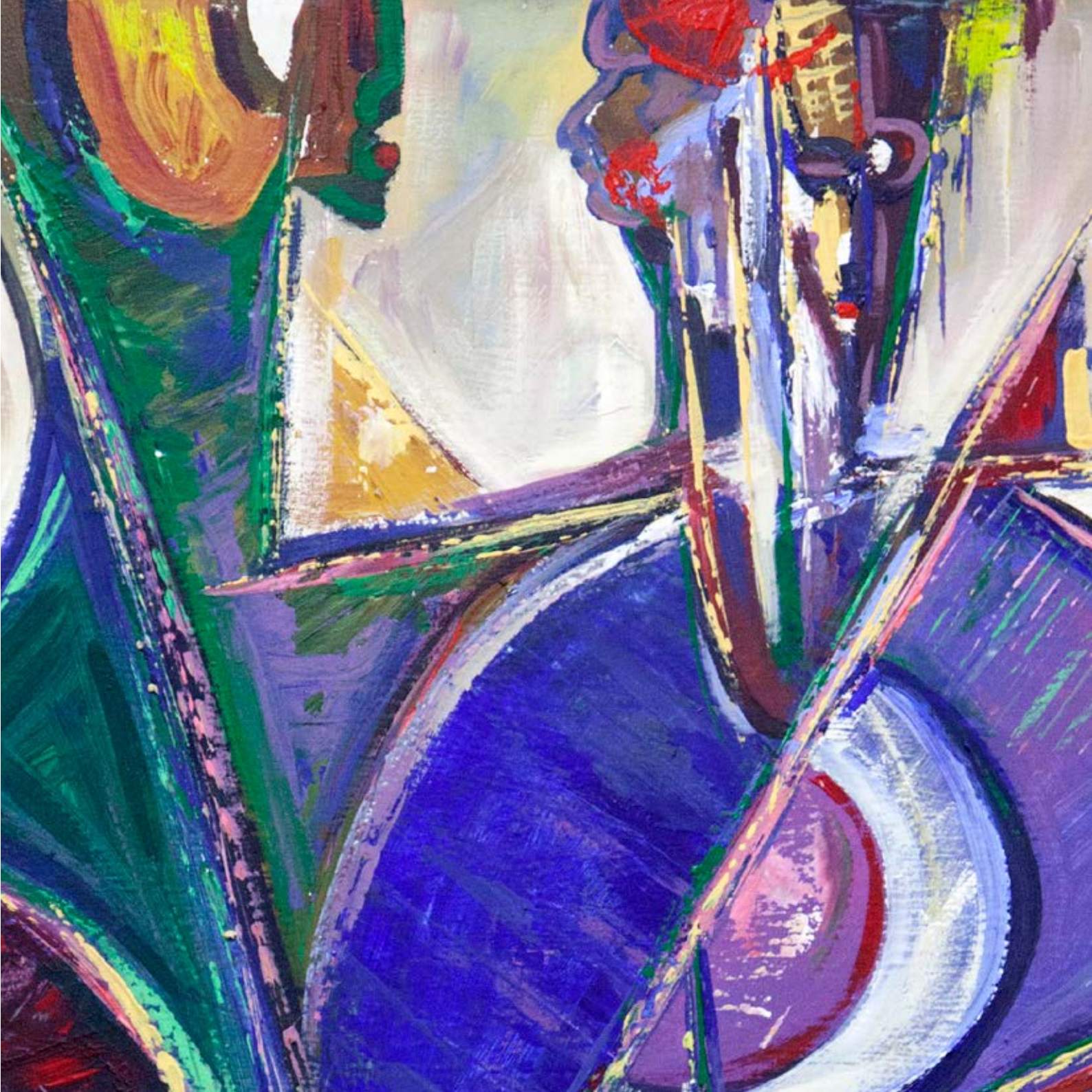






























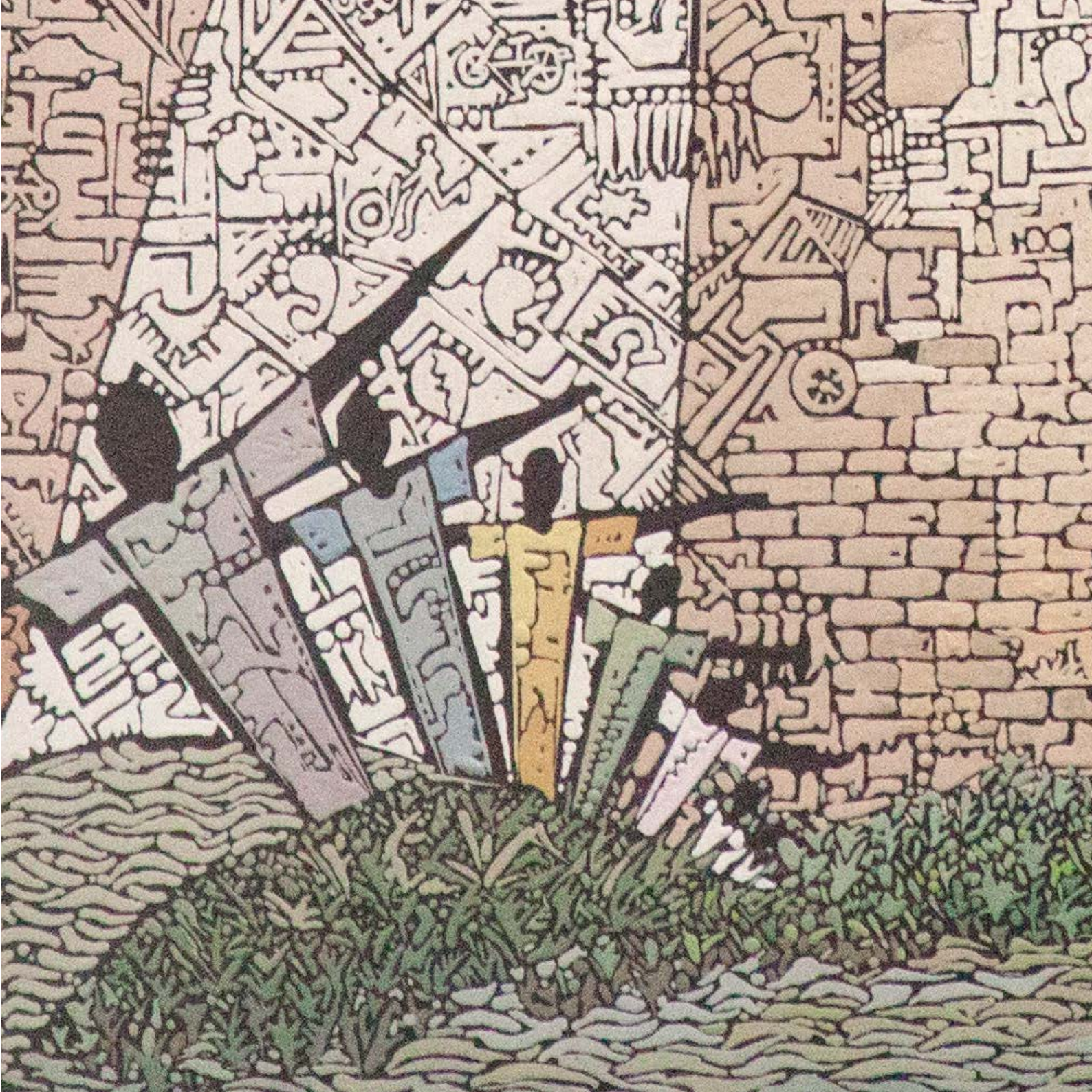


















ENVIRONMENT







Kehinde Sanwo, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Abeokuta, Oil on canvas, 12 x 10 in, 2006







Kehinde Sanwo, Ikereku Neighbourhood I, Abeokuta, Oil on canvas, 12 x 10 in, 2006

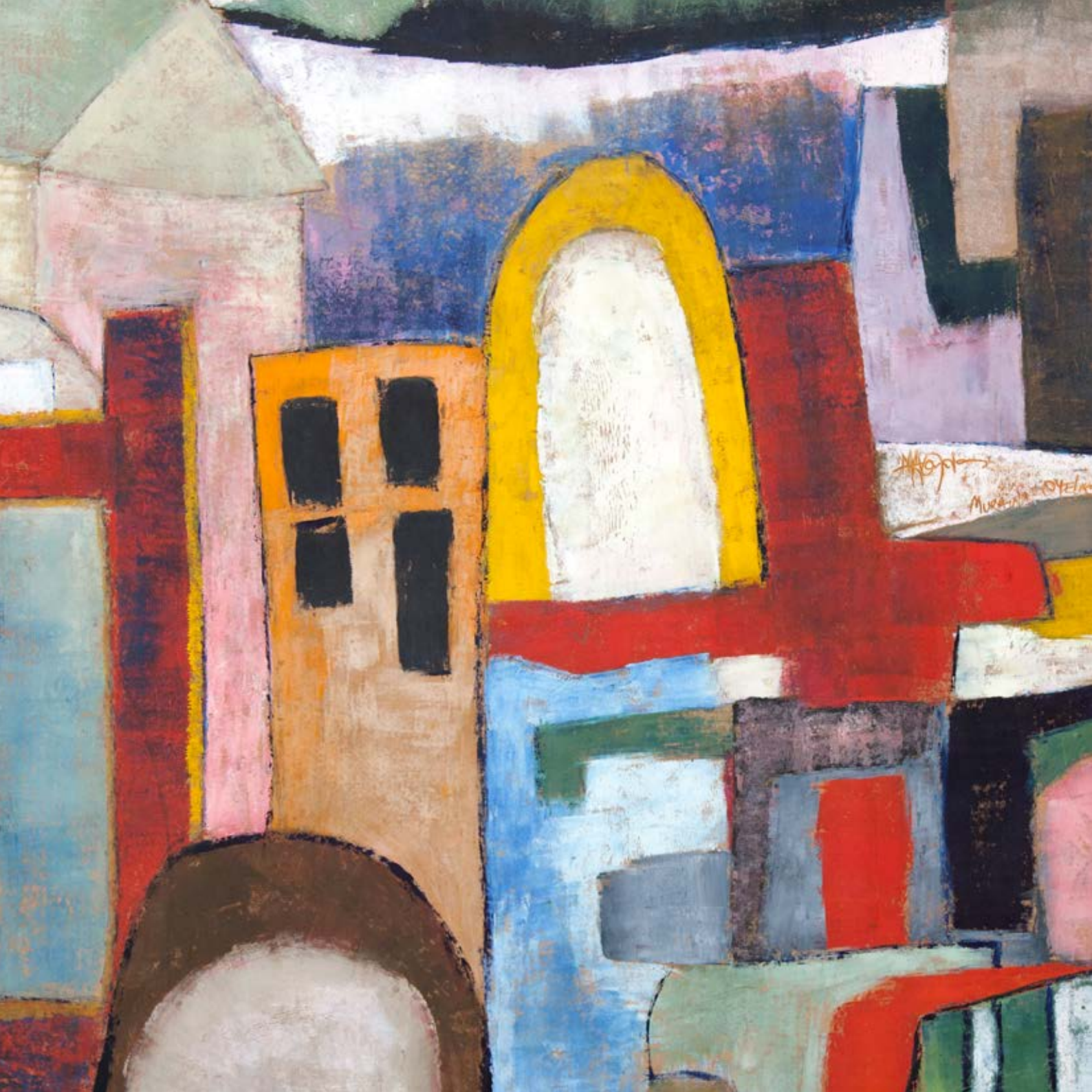


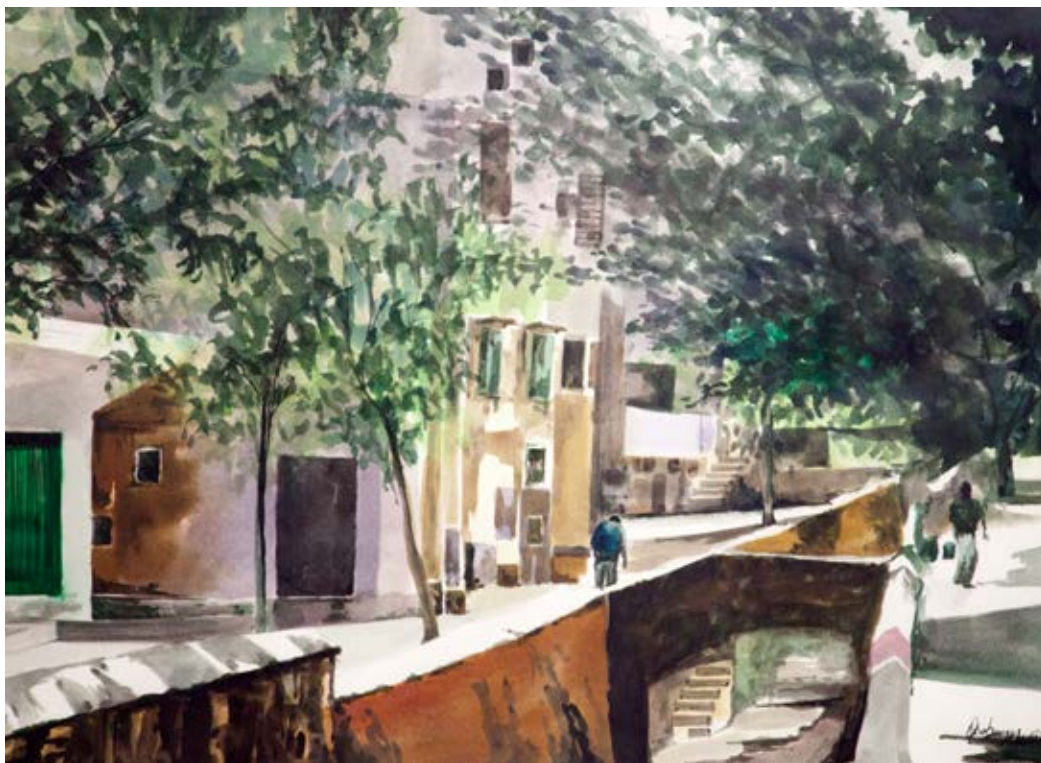




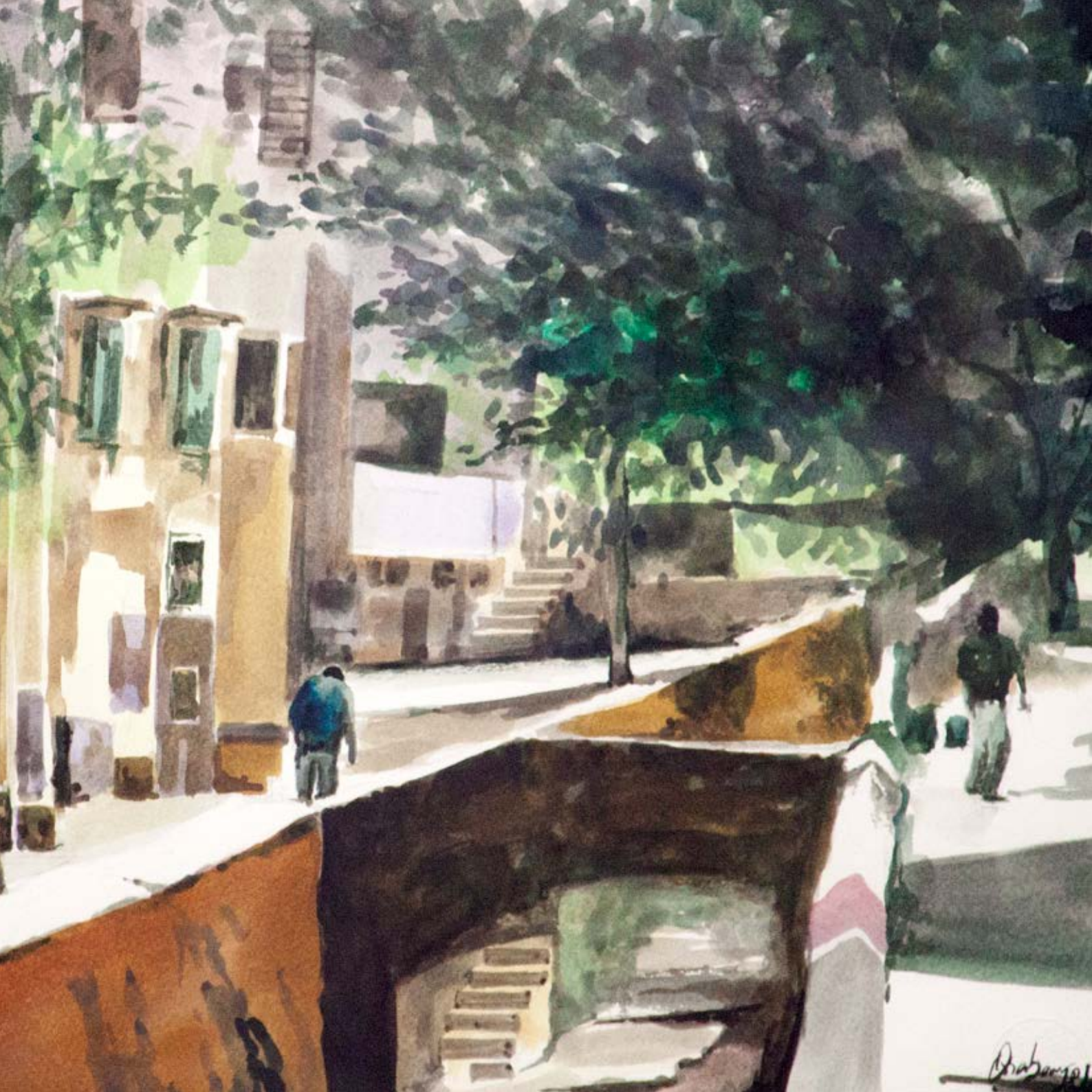












Drabangal





























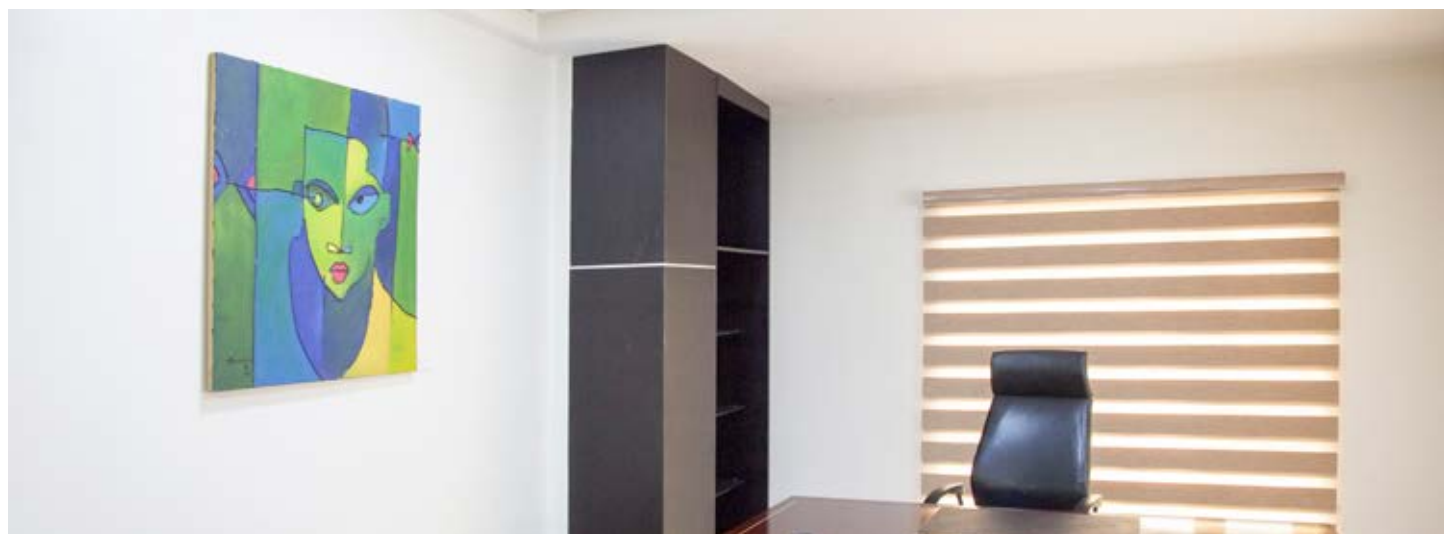




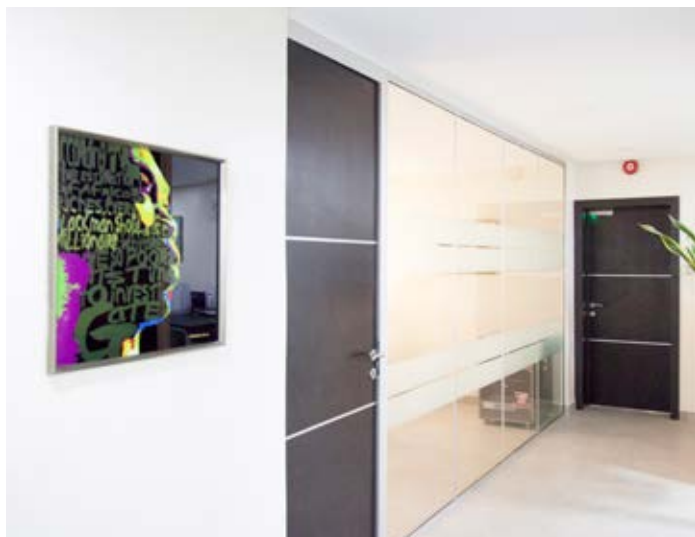
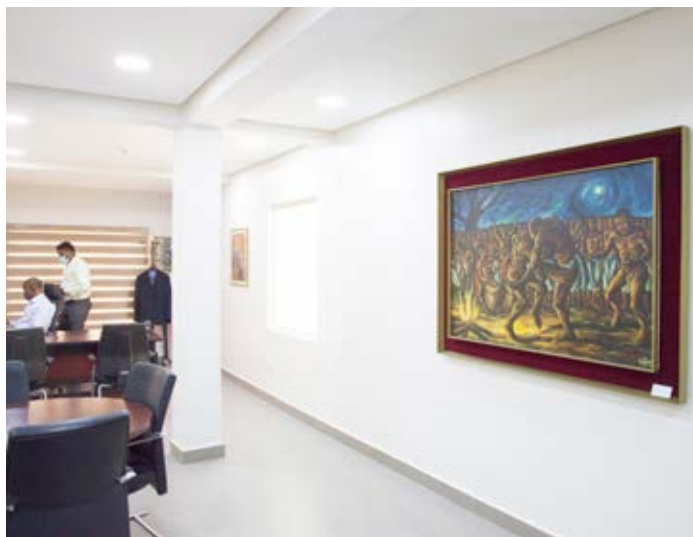
















ISANG BARALOLA OGUN  
IKERERU AGENRUTA





### **Our Vision**

“To become a partner of choice, providing innovative financing solutions and enabling growth.”

### **Our Mission**

“Creating opportunities that foster growth.”

### **Our Core Values**

- **Trust** - We ensure that all stakeholders can fully depend on the integrity, ability, and character of our people.
- **Client Focus** - We always put the interests of our clients above all other considerations.
- **Integrity** - Our people demonstrate the highest standards of ethical principles and soundness of moral character.
- **Professionalism** - Our people are known for excellence and competence in their dealings with stakeholders.
- **Teamwork** - We work as one cohesive group in delivering value to all our stakeholders.
- **Innovation** - Our people are forward thinking and dynamic, using modern systems and technology to deliver cutting edge services.





# THE FEMI AKINSANYA ART COLLECTION FAAC

The Femi Akinsanya Traditional African Art Collection is a premier collection of African art located in Lagos, Nigeria, consisting of sculptures from all major regions of Nigeria along with canonical examples of artworks of Yoruba, Igbo, Urhobo, Cross River and Benue origins. It also includes interesting examples of bronze and brass sculptures from the late-dynastic and 20th Century interregnum periods of art from the Edo Kingdom of Benin.

The traditional art collection comprises artworks that are mainly sculptures in wood and metal (bronze, brass, copper alloys, and iron) from various regions of Nigeria. The Femi Akinsanya Modern & Contemporary Art Collection is mostly located in Lagos, Nigeria with few pieces in American and European locations. The collection includes paintings (canvas, paper and other materials), sculptures in wood, bronze and other metals, by mostly Nigerian contemporary artists and others from around the world.

*“I have something that is bigger than me. I am collecting pieces that are objects of history. I have acquired this obligation of custodianship and I will do my best to carry out that responsibility.  
It is an awesome responsibility.”*

Olufemi Akinsanya  
Chairman, First Ally Capital







SMO Contemporary Art Ventures (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 programme 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 heterogeneous 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.

# Artist Bios

## **Ade Adekola.** *Page 70, 71*

Ade Adekola is a Nigerian-born Architect turned contemporary artist whose work spans a variety of media: photography, installations, and interactive art. As an experimental photographer, he uses alternative techniques to celebrate the many possibilities offered by technology through post-production. His work is colourful and often uses overlapping images. His innovative compositions add new perspectives to African photography. He currently lives in Lagos.<sup>1</sup>

## **Akande Mautin.** *Page 106*

Abiola Mautin Akande is a Nigerian contemporary artist (born 1978) and a pioneer member of the Araism Movement, an evolving art movement in Nigeria that promotes a distinctive art technique referred to as Araism. He graduated with a degree in Fine Arts from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State (2004) and is Chief Executive and Curator of September Studios and Art Gallery. With many group exhibitions to his credit, Mautin has his works in collections of prominent Nigerians. He also has works amongst the nation's national art collections in the National Art Gallery, Abuja.<sup>2</sup>

## **Alfred Olusegun Fayemi (Dr.).** *Page 64*

Alfred Olusegun Fayemi (born 1941) is a Nigerian artist and author with a passion for Africa. He works with mixed media and currently uses primarily fabrics and occasionally, decorated paper and acrylic paint to create works that are unique in content, emotional intensity, composition and expression. His photographs have been published in magazines, newspapers and books and are also the source of his three books of photography: *Balancing Acts: Photographs from West Africa* (1992), *Voices From Within: photographs of African Children* (1999) and *Windows to the Soul: Photographs Celebrating African Women* (2003).<sup>3</sup>

## **Alimi Adewale.** *Page 44, 82, 126*

Alimi Adewale (born 1974) is a self-taught Nigerian artist who works in painting, sculpture, and installation. He graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Ilorin in 2002, and has developed an extensive knowledge of art by attending various art residencies and workshops around the world. Alimi's works have been shown in exhibitions and art fairs, some of which include New Sculpture and Painting – i konstmuseet, grafikrummet



Galleri Astley Sweden (2019), Becoming a person of Texture Lagos (2019), and 1-54 Contemporary Art Fair New York & London (2018). He also has works in major local and international private collections.<sup>4</sup>

**Babajide Olatunji.** *Page 40*

Babajide Olatunji (born 1989) is a self-taught artist who originally trained as a botanist. With numerous exhibitions in Lagos and London, and art fair participation in a number of cities globally (New York, Basel and Cape Town included), his paintings have been acquired by several private collections in Switzerland, US, UK, Nigeria and Turkey, and the Mott-Warsh Collection in Flint, Michigan. In 2017, Olatunji was selected for inclusion in the curated element of the Royal Academy Summer Show in London, UK.<sup>5</sup>

**Bob Aiwerioba.** *Page 36, 76, 104*

Bob Aiwerioba was born in 1967 and is a graduate of Auchi Polytechnic. His broad oeuvre covers themes such as cityscapes, and the beauty and strength of the African woman. His canvases are drawn together by their mood and rich and varied textures. Bob Aiwerioba is widely exhibited and his work can be found in several important collections.<sup>6</sup>

**Bob Nosa Uwagboe.** *Page 66*

Bob Nosa Uwagboe (born 1974) is a multidisciplinary artist and leader of the

Protest Art Studio with a HND in Fine Art from Auchi Polytechnic, Edo State. He uses art as a tool to raise pertinent issues in order to begin the cycle that will incite social change. He works with a variety of materials – acrylic, spray paint, crayon, charcoal and oils – and incorporates everyday objects and materials, including artificial hair, clothes, ropes, sacks and sand. He has participated in many group and solo exhibitions, some of which include: Beyond Figuration at Omenka Gallery, Lagos (2001), The Last Picture Show, Muson du Parti in Cameroon (2009), and Recent Works by Bob-Nosa Uwagboe at the Pan-African University, Lagos (2009).<sup>7</sup>

**Bruce Onobrakpeya.** *Page 86*

Bruce Onobrakpeya MFR (born 1932) is respected as one of the leading printmakers in the world. He attended Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, now Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1957 with a Federal Government scholarship and belongs to the first generation of graduates from the institution. Onobrakpeya's work draws on traditional folklore and mythology, Christians and events in daily life. He is a founding member of the Zaria Arts Society, which was formed in 1958, and later known famously as the "Zaria Rebels". Bruce Onobrakpeya's first one-man exhibition was held in Ughelli in the Niger Delta. Since then, he has held numerous exhibitions and received several awards locally and internationally.<sup>8</sup>

**Dele Akinlade. *Page 42***

9

**Edouard Blondeau. *Page 48***

Edouard Blondeau is a French-born technology executive with a fondness for music and art. He is a self-taught artist whose medium is primarily photography. He has lived in various countries in Asia (Singapore), Middle East (Yemen) and Africa (Uganda, Nigeria) during which he explored and documented his environment. He had a solo exhibition titled “In Motion” (2018) to mark the conclusion of his stay in Lagos where he explored the concept of motion and time. His latest series takes him back to his home country, France, and explores Lagos through a motion blur lens to question the notion of visual impairment.<sup>10</sup>

**Edwin DeBebbs. *Page 102, 120***

Edwin Bebethheidoh is a Nigerian painter (born 1960) with a HND from Auchi Polytechnic (1980), an MA and a PhD in art from the University of Missouri, Columbia, USA (1986). He works as a freelance artist in Lagos and is a member of the Society of Nigerian Artists (SAN). He has had solo and group exhibitions such as: Particularization, Whitney Young Resource Center, Lagos (1988), Creative Dialogue: SNA at 25, National Theatre, Lagos (1989) to mention a few.<sup>11</sup>

**Emmanuel Isiuwe. *Page 46***

Emmanuel Isiuwe (born 1968) is a Nigerian painter with a Higher National Diploma in Fine Art from Auchi Polytechnic. He works with mediums such as watercolour, acrylic, oil on canvas, charcoal and pencil work. He has taken part in several joint exhibitions locally and internationally, some of which include the Hellenic Images, 54 Nigerian masters (2007) held at the Greek embassy Lagos, The exposition de’art held at the Republic of Benin, French Cultural Center (2004) and a joint exhibition with his wife, who is also an artist, held at Didi museum in 2013 titled, “Our World, Human and Equestrian Life”. His works can be found in private and public collections in Nigeria and across the world.<sup>12</sup>

**Gbenga Offo. *Page 32***

Gbenga Offo (born 1957) is one of Nigeria’s leading contemporary artists. He graduated as best Art and Graphics Student from the Yaba College of Technology in Lagos in 1984. He worked for a decade as an illustrator for leading advertising agencies Lintas and Insight Communications, before becoming a full time studio artist in 1996. Offo has taken part in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the United Kingdom, United States, and in his native Nigeria, and his works are in many leading corporate and public collections.<sup>13</sup>



**Gerald Chukwuma. *Page 122***

Gerald Chukwuma (b 1973) is a celebrated visual artist and furniture designer with an enthusiastic local and international following. He graduated from the prestigious Nsukka Art School, University of Nigeria, with a first class degree specializing in painting. He began his career as a painter before expanding his work into mixed media relief sculptures and designing afro-contemporary furniture. Chukwuma has taken part in 20 exhibitions in the last decade in Nigeria, Cameroon, France, Denmark, Holland, and the United States and his works have become auction favourites. His thematic focus is on the complications of life and its impact on everyday people.<sup>14</sup>

**Haneefah Adam. *Page 50***

Haneefa Adam (born 1991) is a self taught multidisciplinary artist with an MSc from Coventry University. Her work typically explores issues related to identity, culture and representation in society, with her personal experiences and observations serving as a focal point. Haneefah is known for her contemporary work with an eclectic selection of media, ranging from painting, to photography, experimental digital and food art. Her work has received significant coverage from a number of international publications including CNN, BBC and New York Times. Haneefah currently lives and works in Nigeria.<sup>15</sup>

**Solomon Irein Wangboje. *Page 56***

Solomon Ona Irein Wangboje (born 1930) was a Professor of Art Education who graduated with a diploma in Fine Art from the then Nigerian College of Art, Science and Technology (NCAST), Zaria (1959) - now Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, a Master of Fine Arts degree (MFA) in Printmaking from Cranbrook Academy in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, U.S.A (1961) and a doctorate degree in Art Education from the New York University (1968). Wangboje worked as a graphic artist for the Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos; he also served as a designer and arts supervisor with the Nigerian Television Service also in Lagos. He died in 1998 and will be remembered for his inspiring creative work and his role in the development of Modern Art in Nigeria.<sup>16</sup>

**Isaac Emokpae. *Page 62***

Isaac Emokpae (born 1976) is a Nigerian visual artist who studied art at the University of Lagos under Professor Abayome Barber. He focused on painting at University but has worked in fashion photography and journalistic photography for most of his working life. Isaac has won awards such as the UNESCO "Save of Treasures" art competition in Troyes, France (1996) and the Hasselblad Masters (Semi Finalist Award) for Photography (2007). His works have been featured in group and solo exhibitions such as Transparent, Rele Art Gallery, Onikan, Lagos

(2017), Duality, The Wheat Baker, Ikoyi, Lagos (2014), Reconstruction in Reverse - OmenkaGallery, Ikoyi, Lagos (2010), to mention a few.<sup>17</sup>

**Joshua Nmesirionye.** *Page 94*

Joshua Nmesirionye is a Nigerian contemporary artist with a National Diploma in General Art from Federal Polytechnic Auchi (1996) and a Higher National Diploma from Federal Polytechnic Auchi (1998). He tells stories through the textured surfaces of his canvas and accentuates his figures with chalk and pastels. He gets his inspiration from people and the environment around him as well as impressionist masters like Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro.<sup>18</sup>

**Kehinde Sanwo** *Page 110, 111, 112, 113*

Kehinde Sanwo (born 1963) is an Architecture and Landmark documentarist. He graduated with upper credit in Higher National Diploma (HND) Painting from Yaba College of Technology, Lagos (1987). His works are an intersection of art and history serving as an archive for Nigeria's modern history and daily life. In 1996 he was inspired to document the Brazilian Architectural heritage in the City of Lagos that resulted from the Slave Trade - culminating in his first solo exhibition titled 'Legacy' in Lagos. Kehinde Sanwo is a member of The Society of Nigerian Artist (SNA) and the current Vice President of the Guild of Professional Fine Artists of Nigeria.<sup>19</sup>

**Kenny Adamson.** *Page 68, 100*

Kenny Adamson (born 1952) is a Nigerian contemporary artist with a degree in Fine Art from the Yaba College of Technology, Lagos State. He is an internationally celebrated painter, sculptor and inventor of political cartoons. He has handled a lot of commissioned artworks for the Federal Government of Nigeria, various State Governments as well as Private establishments. He has participated in several exhibitions, some of which include: "Give a Little, Take a Little," Didi Museum, Lagos (1990), "Kenny Adamson and Adamu Ajunam," Didi Museum, Lagos (1983), French Embassy, Lagos (1983), "Art for VIPs," British Caledonian VIP Lounge, Gatwick Airport, London (1985).<sup>20</sup>

**Kolade Oshinowo.** *Page 72*

Born in Ibadan in 1948, Kolade Oshinowo attended Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, where he specialized in painting. He currently holds the post of Chief Lecturer in Painting at Yaba College's School of Art, Design and Printing. Oshinowo is widely recognised for his naturalistic representations of the human figure, and his close observance of traditional Nigerian dress. Textiles are of great symbolic importance to the artist, particularly in relation to the female form: "[they express all] the beauty and challenges of womanhood".<sup>21</sup>



**Kunle Adeyemi. *Page 90***

Kunle Adeyemi (born 1959) is a Nigerian contemporary artist with a HND in Painting from the Yaba College of Technology, Lagos State, an MFA in Graphic Design specializing in Printmaking from the University of Benin, Benin City and a Post Graduate Diploma in Education from the Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos State. He works in media such as - Typography, Graphic Reproduction, Etching & Engraving, Graphic Design, to mention a few. He was Chairman of the Exhibition Committee, Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA) (1988), Chairman of the Lagos State chapter of the Society of Nigerian Artists (1996 - 2003) and former Vice President of the Society of Nigerian Arts, Nigeria. He has won many awards and had over 100 group exhibitions and over 14 solo exhibitions to his credit.<sup>22</sup>

**Lekan Onabanjo. *Page 118***

Lekan Onabanjo is a renowned watercolour artist with a Higher National Diploma in Painting from the Federal Polytechnic Auchi (1992) who discovered a way to take watercolours and turn them into expressive forms. His inspiration to create art comes from his adventurous spirit and desire to express. With his artworks, he challenges the viewer by incorporating both naturalistic and abstract approaches in their creation.<sup>23</sup>

**Lemi Abiodun Ghariokwu. *Page 38***

Lemi Abiodun Ghariokwu (born 1955) is a self-trained artist who works in a variety of styles, often using vibrant colors and individual typefaces of his own design. His art is said to be rebellious, comical, political, even erotic but most of all he is a genius in pictorial narration, realism and iconicity. He is famous for his captivating and intricate record sleeves designs and he never fails to give life to lyrics through his pictorial images. He created and mastered 26 of Fela's album covers and has also designed covers for the likes of Osita Osadebe, James Iroha, Bob Marley, Lucky Dube and so on.<sup>24</sup>

**Mike Omoighe. *Page 96, 98***

Mike Omoighe (born 1958) graduated with a degree in art from the Yaba College of Technology (Yaba Tech)(1978), he also received a HND from Auchi University (1980) and a Certificate in Polytechnic Management from the University of Lagos. In 1994, he got his Masters in Communication Arts from the University of Ibadan & a Masters in Fine Art from the University of Benin (2014). He has been working as an academic at Yaba Tech for over twenty years and has mentored a continuous flow of young Nigerian artists. His pieces are often large and colorful and convey complex layered histories, meanings and explorations through abstract forms and vibrant strokes.<sup>25</sup>

**Muraina Oyelami.** *Page 116, 124*

Muraina Oyelami is one of the pioneer artists of the famed Osogbo School of Art. Oyelami was a participant in historic workshops organized in the town by Ulli and Georgina Beier in 1964. He studied technical theatre at the University of Ife, specializing in theatre design; and later taught traditional music at the same institution (1975 – 1987). A studio artist for over 50 years, he is often described as a poetic painter, and his work straddles the realms of his Yoruba culture.<sup>26</sup>

**Ogbemi Heymann.** *Page 80*

Ogbemi Heymann is a Nigerian Contemporary painter (born 1967) with a Diploma in Mass Communication from the School of Professional Studies of the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) Benin; and a Higher National Diploma in Painting from Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi (1996). His works take a critical look at environmental, political and societal issues and he is known for his Ape and Paper series, which he has been exploring for over a decade.<sup>27</sup>

**Olisa Nwadiogbu.** *Page 88*

Olisa Nwadiogbu (born 1960) is a Nigerian Painter, Sculptor, Printmaker, bronze caster and cultural activist. He graduated from the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu State with a HND in painting (1985) and an ND in General Art (1982). He works with media such as oil colors, acrylic, watercolors,

metal foils, glue, resin, bronze etc. His works are influenced by Nigerian masters and African sculptures with themes that center on traditional and contemporary concepts in narrative statements influenced by the environment, politics and humanitarian dispositions. He has participated in several exhibitions all over the Country.<sup>28</sup>

**Olumide Onadipe.** *Page 52*

Olumide Onadipe was born in 1982. He holds a National Certificate of Education from the College Education, Akoka, a BE/BA in fine art from University of Nigeria, Nsukka and a Masters in art education from University of Lagos. Part of his broad oeuvre involves the use of beads to express using a cubist style. In his recent experiments with oils, the canvases assume an overall decorative quality with variegated leaf patterns, from which he cleverly reveals the forms and features of his figures. Olumide Onadipe is widely exhibited and is a member of the Society of Nigerian Artists.<sup>29</sup>

**Pita Ohiwerei.** *Page 114*

Award-winning artist, Pita Ohiwerei was born in 1963 in Nigeria. He attended Federal Polytechnic, Auchi, where he earned a distinction in painting. Working mainly in oils, Ohiwerei captures the female form, yellow buses and urban markets populated by scuttling pedestrians in his personal style he calls “scratchee”. Pita Ohiwerei’s broad



oeuvre also embraces watercolours and he has produced some accomplished portraits. He is widely exhibited and his works form part of several important collections across Africa, Europe and North America.<sup>30</sup>

**Pius Emorhokpor.** *Page 92*

Pius Emorhokpor was born in Delta state in 1962 and graduated with a degree in Fine Arts from the Yaba College of Technology in 1988. Besides working briefly as a designer/illustrator with *This Week* and *The African Guardian* magazines, Pius has worked closely with Prof. Bruce Onobrakpeya for many years, learning from the great master artist and developing his own distinctive style of plastography. His etching and polymerized technique on plate is reinforced with resin, onto which the artist builds and creates low relief surfaces. Pius' inspiration comes from traditional culture and typical scenes and Nigerian socio-cultural landscapes.<sup>31</sup>

**Polly Alakija.** *Page 34*

Polly Alakija (born in the UK 1966) moved to Nigeria in 1989. Between 2005 and 2011 she was based in South Africa. She now works from her studio in Lagos. Her work is included in numerous private collections in the USA, UK, France, Nigeria and South Africa and in several corporate collections. Polly's work has progressed over the years from being almost completely abstract towards works that are increasingly figurative. Her monumental

and accessible images lend themselves to public spaces. She is increasingly engaged in community and educational programs in an effort to promote a broad art platform reaching a diverse audience.<sup>32</sup>

**Raoul Olawale Da-Silva.** *Page 30*

Raoul Da Silva (born 1969) is an artist of Nigerian and Swiss origin. After his childhood schooling in Lagos he engaged in four years of an in-depth apprenticeship in cabinet making before completing an arts degree at the School of Applied Arts in Lucerne, Switzerland. His works range from colourful and large canvas pieces to highly political outdoor installations.<sup>33</sup>

**Reuben Ugbine.** *Page 28*

Reuben Ugbine (born 1956) is a Nigerian contemporary artist with a Diploma in Art from Federal Polytechnic Auchi and a Higher National Diploma in Sculpture from the Yaba College of Technology, Lagos (1979). His forte lies in woodcarvings and he is known to manipulate the concave and convex within his figurative or mask forms to create a jumping-off point for a reflective and insightful artistic practice. His works focus on themes such as social realism - human figures who seem to disclose the existence of various aspects of the Nigeria way of life. Reuben has had solo and joint exhibitions throughout Nigeria and in Lebanon, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and South Africa.<sup>34</sup>

**Susanne Wenger. *Page 78***

Susanne Wenger MFR, also known as Adunni Olorisha (1915 – 2009), was an Austrian-Nigerian artist, illustrator and comics artist who resided in Nigeria. Her main focus was Yoruba culture and she was successful in building an artist cooperative in Osogbo. She partnered with local artists in Osogbo to redevelop and redecorate the Osun Grove with sculptures and carvings depicting the various activities of the Orishas. Wenger was a leading advocate for the preservation of the Osun Grove. Due to her efforts, the grove was made a national monument in 1965, and was later inscribed as a world heritage site.<sup>35</sup>

**Tayo Adenaike. *Page 58***

Tayo Adenaike (born 1954) received a BA in Fine Art from the University of Nigeria Nsukka (1979) and a Masters in Fine Art with an emphasis on painting from the same institution. He is one of the master artists of Eastern Nigeria and his work draws strong inspiration from Igbo visual narratives such as the Uli tradition of linear design and the Nsibidi tradition. The images he creates are ethereal and philosophically complex. He has innate ability to convey emotion and challenge reality with his strokes whilst simultaneously maintaining a deep connection to aesthetic beauty. His style is often analogous to the complex realities and mastery of Salvador Dali.<sup>36</sup>

**Tola Wewe. *Page 74***

Tola Wewe was born in Okitipupa, Ondo state, Nigeria in 1959. He trained and graduated with a degree in fine art from University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in 1983 and later earned a Masters degree in African visual arts from University of Ibadan, Oyo state in 1986. Wewe enjoyed a brief stint as a cartoonist, before becoming a full-time painter in 1991. Since then, he has matured into one of Nigeria's leading contemporary artists. His style draws deeply from traditional Yoruba culture and centres around Ona symbols, folklore and mythology, which he fuses with elements of European art history.<sup>37</sup>

**Uthman Wahaab. *Page 60***

Uthman Wahaab (born 1983) is a multi-disciplinary Nigerian artist with a Higher National Diploma in Fine Art from the School of Art, Design and Printing, Yaba College of Technology, Lagos. He works in diverse media such as painting, graphics design, film, photography, sculpture and installation. His work currently focuses on the issues of identity, beauty, sexuality and cultural influences that inform technological change and social shifts in Africa. He has participated in many local and international exhibitions. Some of which include: Summer Series, Art Tafeta London (2017), The Drawing series, Sapar Contemporary Newyork (2017), ArtX live, ArtX Lagos Art Fair, Lagos (2016), TAFETA & Idaro arts, St Tropez, France August (2016) to mention a few.<sup>38</sup>





# References

1. <https://adekola.com/about/>
2. <https://m.facebook.com/akande.oldschool>
3. <http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n80109520/>  
<http://fayemiphotography.com/pages/about/>
4. SMO Contemporary Art / Anonymous
5. <https://www.babajideolatunji.com/studio-info>
6. <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/chief-bob-aiwerioba-living-legend/XAJiUxXDgL-iLg>
7. <https://arthouse-ng.com/artists/bob-nosa-uwagboe>
8. [SMO Contemporary Art](#)
- 9.
10. <https://www.facebook.com/events/kigali-center-for-photography/artist-talk-with-edouard-blondeau/596593064500548/>
11. <https://blerf.org/index.php/biography/edwin-debebs/>
12. <http://www.imagomundiart.com/artworks/emmanuel-isiuwe-lagos-high-rise/>  
<https://www.saatchiart.com/emmanuelisiuwe>
13. SMO Contemporary Art
14. SMO Contemporary Art
15. <https://haneefahadam.com/2017/07/26/first-blog-post/>
- 16.
17. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac\\_Emokpae](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Emokpae)
18. <http://aabru.co.uk/artists/joshua-nmesirionye/>  
<https://www.mutualart.com/Artist/Joshua-Nmesirionye/>
19. <https://www.artsy.net/artist/kehinde-sanwo>
20. <http://adedayoadejobi.blogspot.com/2013/04/kenny-adamson-master-sculptor.html?m=1>  
<https://blerf.org/index.php/biography/>



- adamson-kenny/
21. <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/21448/lot/118/>
  22. <https://kunleadeyemistudio.com/about-kunle-adeyemi/>
  23. <http://aabru.co.uk/artists/lekan-onabanjo/>
  24. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemi\\_Ghariokwu](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemi_Ghariokwu)
  25. SMO Contemporary Art
  26. <https://artxlagos.com/artists/muraina-oyelami/>
  27. <https://www.mutualart.com/Artist/Ogbemi-Heymann/08F5661CC41A3473#more>  
<https://thenationonlineng.net/ogbeme-new-art-new-temper-new-season/amp/>
  28. <https://www.saatchiart.com/olisanwadiogbu>
  29. SMO Contemporary Art
  30. <https://thoughtpyramidart.com/pita-ohiwerei/>
  31. SMO Contemporary Art
  32. SMO Contemporary Art
  33. SMO Contemporary Art
  34. <http://aabru.co.uk/artists/reuben-ugbine/>
  35. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susanne\\_Wenger](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susanne_Wenger)
  36. SMO Contemporary Art
  37. The Access Bank Collection/ Tola Wewe
  38. <https://www.saatchiart.com/uthman-art>





Editorial & Art Direction: Sandra Mbanefo Obiogo

Design & Layout: Majid Biggar

Project Management: Nneoma Ilogu

Research: Alexandra Maduagwu

Photography: Majid Biggar

© SMO Contemporary Art Ventures. 2020

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

All right reserved.

No part of this publication shall be reproduced, stored  
in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means  
without prior written permission of the publisher.

