

Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos (CCA,Lagos) is an independent non-profit making visual art organisation set up in December 2007 to provide a platform for the development, presentation, and discussion of contemporary visual art and culture. It seeks to create new audiences and to prioritise media such as photography, animation, film and video, and performance art which have been under-represented in Nigeria. CCA,Lagos supports the intellectual and critical development of different art and culture practitioners through talks, seminars, workshops and exhibitions. In addition it encourages and promotes the professionalisation of production and curatorship in Nigeria and West Africa collaborating with artists, curators, writers, theorists and national and international organisations.

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cca lagos

CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, LAGOS

Newsletter [N°11 January April 2011]

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Welcome

For any start-up, it is said that once they can survive the first three years the journey to sustainability becomes clearer, the subsequent two years tend to be transitional and from year five onwards, it is a straight homerun to longevity – well almost. CCA,Lagos' goal was to open and to remain open for at least a day. Not because we didn't believe we do could it, we could. However, in an unchartered territory for new forms of contemporary artistic production, in an environment where suspicion about 'trends' from 'outside' are harboured, in a place where little or no platforms exists where young artists can experiment and in the absence of consistent if any public funding, a dose of scepticism was understandable. Nevertheless, in December 2010 we proudly celebrated our third year. Our end of year exhibition *Green Summary* provided a benefitting context not only for working with several artists with whom we had engaged over the past three years, it also acted as an appropriate summary for our engagement with the themes and ideas around 50 years of Nigerian Independence.

In 2011 this 'transitional' period presents an opportunity to streamline yet deepen areas of interest. We intend to prioritise our interaction with the Nigerian Diaspora which includes an important number of extremely experienced and internationally active curators, art historians, artists, writers and other cultural practitioners, many who have started to visit or revisit their country of origin. This

should provide interesting dynamics which we want to be part of. We also intend to encourage and support initiatives that prioritise research and critical thinking as well as explore the printed page as a curatorial platform. Architectural theorist Tolu Onabolu as well as curators and writers Paul Goodwin and Yesomi Umolu will be some of our collaborators. We bring in new perspectives on

the local art scene by replacing our artists' focus with one that puts the spotlight on the collectors Sandra and Joe Obiagio. There is something liberating about 'forgetting' the rigidity of the calendar and implementing a 'flexible' yet structured programming policy that allows for trial and error in a forgiving manner. We collaborate with Nigerian artists Victor Ehikhamenor, and Mudi Yahaya to present new directions in their work.

Our international collaborations kickstarts with Tate Modern, London and curators Jude Anogwih and Kerry Greenberg's skills and knowledge exchange in Lagos and London which will result in a joint exhibition later in the year. CCA,Lagos is excited to present the first comprehensive survey of photographer J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, *Moments of Beauty* as a special curated part of ARS11 at Kiasma in Helsinki. And the major excitement for the Lagos art scene is the visit and talk of internationally acclaimed Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare. After a long absence, he will carry out research for a forthcoming project in Lagos in 2012 with CCA,Lagos as part of a collaboration with the world renowned Menil Collection, Houston. Menil curator, Kristina

Van Dyke will also give a lecture about the Menil and their curatorial programme.

The Library at CCA,Lagos remains our nerve-centre. The sustained generosity of so many institutions and individuals has contributed to its enormous growth. Our intern Moyo Oladunjoye has worked hard to make sure that we capture over 90% of our holdings digitally. In the coming months we want to increase our holdings especially of Nigerian art publications many of which are self-published.

As the year unfolds, I realise that none of this would happen without the support of the dedicated and committed individuals with whom I work. In addition, the confidence and support of our trustees has been unflinching. We gratefully acknowledge the generous financial support and the encouragement of internationally renowned artist El Anatsui's Afrika Studio which allows CCA,Lagos to remain an active and independent platform. My sincere thanks and wishes to everyone for a pleasant and productive 2011.

Welcome to our World.
Bisi Silva / Director

Forthcoming Programmes

J. D. 'Okhai Ojeikere: Moments of Beauty
ARS 11, Museum of Contemporary Art, Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland
 15th April – 27th November 2011

The Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos presents *Moments of Beauty*, a groundbreaking exhibition of work by the Nigerian artist **J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere**. Occasionally elegiac, but invariably elegant, the photographs in this exhibition reflect what the artist deems as "moments of beauty," referring to the ebullience of Nigerian life engendered by independence and decolonisation. The exhibition highlights the breadth and depth of Ojeikere's practice, chronicling his experiences as a visual artist and commercial photographer by presenting works that cover a range of subjects including architecture, education, fashion, social life and cultural festivals. This first comprehensive survey of Ojeikere's work to date, with over 150 works, marks the beginning of rigorous scholarship and engagement with the artist's practice, which spans more than half of a century. As such *Moments of Beauty* provides in-depth perspectives to the practice of an artist whose formidable archive has become an important anthropological, ethnographic, and artistic treasure.

asma as an independently curated part of the ARS 11 exhibition, Helsinki, Finland. ARS 11 is curated by **Pirkko Siitari, Arja Miller** and **Jari-Pekka Vanhala** from Kiasma.

A substantial monograph of Ojeikere's life and work is currently in production and being co-ordinated by CCA, Lagos. The richly illustrated exhibition catalogue of ARS 11 includes an insightful essay on Ojeikere's practice by Aura Seikkula and Bisi Silva. Taking "Africa" as its focal point, this year's edition of ARS 11, Finland's largest inter-

national exhibition of contemporary art will feature work by approximately thirty artists whose practices engage with Africa from various perspectives. Among the participating artists are Georges Adéagbo, El Anatsui, Samba Fall, Laura Horelli, Alfredo Jaar, Nandipha Mntambo, Otobong Nkanga, Odili Oditia, Emeka Ogboh, Abraham Oghobase and Barthélémy Togo.

For enquiries, please contact info@ccalagos.org or info@kiasma.fi

CCA Lagos/Tate Modern, London Curatorial Exchange
 Jude Anogwih and Kerryn Greenberg

Tate Modern has recently established a series of curatorial exchanges as part of the Level 2 Gallery programme, the museum's dedicated space for exhibiting emerging international artists. From February–March 2011 Kerryn Greenberg from Tate Modern and Jude Anogwih from CCA, Lagos will spend two weeks in each other's cities, meeting artists and undertaking research to gain a greater understanding of artistic practice and the cultural infrastructure in London and Lagos. This curatorial exchange will ultimately lead to a collaborative exhibition organised by both curators at their home institutions.

This curatorial exchange is supported by the World Collections Programme.

The Ruptured Landscape: On the Construction of Difference.
 Mudi Yahaya

2nd April - 23rd April 2011

Mudi Yahaya's forthcoming solo exhibition *Challenging The Raptured Landscape: On The Constructions Of Difference* will present several new bodies of work that explore interpretations of African hybrid identities and their varied visual dialects, currencies and vocabularies.

Mudi Yahaya is a cultural activist whose photography has evolved from social documentary essays to critical conceptual photography. Mallam Mudi, works largely on long term, self-assigned projects, that focus on the aesthetic relationship between images and post-colonial deconstruction of the African identity in syncretic African spaces.

Educated as an electrical engineer, Mallam Mudi, began his photography career in 1995 at Dexter Lucian Studios. His work has been featured in several publications such as the book *Lagos: A City At Work*, 2005 as well as the London Times. He recently exhibited in *A Perspective of Contemporary Nigerian Photography* (2009) and *Reconstruction In Reverse* (2010) both at the Omenka Gallery, Lagos.



J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere (b. 1930) documented significant moments in Nigerian history with great passion and discernment. Throughout his career, he has focused on the social, political and cultural transformations occurring during Nigeria's transition from a colonial state to an independent republic. His formal investigations, documentary work and various commercial endeavors captured the unique atmosphere and élan of Nigeria during a period of great euphoria and ambivalence. Practicing since the early 1950's, Ojeikere is a leading artist of his generation, devoted to the art of image making, the history of his country and the critical possibilities of the photographic medium.

Moments of Beauty is curated by **Aura Seikkula** and **Bisi Silva**. Curatorial Assistant is **Antawan I. Byrd**.

This exhibition has been organised by the **Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos** in collaboration with **Foto Ojeikere**. It is co-produced with the **Museum of Contemporary Art, Ki-**

Art-iculate

Curator's Talk: Kristina Van Dyke, Curator, Menil Collection
 Saturday, 23rd April 2011, 2.00pm



Kristina Van Dyke will provide an illustrated overview of The Menil Collection's history and discuss its unique curatorial philosophy. The Menil is dedicated to preserving and exhibiting the art collection of Houston philanthropists John and Dominique de Menil. The collection's diverse holdings represent many world cultures, from prehistoric times to the present day. The museum is recognized for its depth and eclecticism and the contemplative way it presents works of art.

Kristina Van Dyke is Curator for Collections and Research at the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas, where she co-manages the curatorial department and oversees the museum's archives, library, and exhibitions department. She received her M.A. from Williams College and her Ph.D. from Harvard University, writing her dissertation on the nature of representation in the oral cultures of Mali. Since arriving at the Menil in 2005, she has curated *In-sistent Objects: David Levinthal's Blackface*, *Chance Encounters: the Formation of the de*

Menils' African Collection, and *Body in Fragments*. In 2008, she reinstalled the African galleries and published *African Art from the Menil Collection*.

Van Dyke is currently developing three research projects: a study of Malian antiquities and cultural heritage issues; an exhibition exploring skull imagery in sculpture from Nigeria, Cameroon, and Gabon; and an exhibition on the theme of love and Africa.

Temporary Permanence: Victor Ehikhamenor's Ethnographic Drawings
Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos
 30th April - 28th May 2011

This exhibition will feature recent drawing-based works by Victor Ehikhamenor, which explores the artist's re-discovery of the visual culture of his ancestral home. Of this new body of work, Ehikamenor writes:

In December of 2010 I decided to go back to my village, my childhood, my upbringing, my "primary colors" and I was shocked at what I rediscovered about my heritage and ancestral home. Until then I did not really realize that over the decades I have been unconsciously feeding off of what was always there as part of my everyday life when I was growing up—the numerous shrine walls, the mud walls of my many grandmothers, my uncles' rooms, and other villagers' walls were all beaming with different kinds of art. I started documenting them all with my camera, because it was also obvious that many people no longer care about these arts'

Visual artist, photographer and writer, Victor Ehikhamenor was born in Uwessan Irrua, Edo State, Nigeria. He has BA degree in English and Literature, Msc in Technology Management and Masters of Fine Art (MFA) from University of Maryland, College Park, USA. Ehikhamenor has been prolific in producing abstract, symbolic and ethnographic works shown in Nigeria and United States

He has published numerous works of fiction and essays in world journals and magazines. His works have been used as book/journal/magazine covers by major authors and publishers. He is currently the Creative Director of NEXT Newspaper in Lagos and also maintains a studio in Maryland, USA.

- 1 Installation Views of J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere: Moments of Beauty. Photos: Finnish National Gallery/Central Art Archives. Courtesy Petri Virtanen
- 2 J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere. Untitled (WD 2093), 1960'S. Courtesy of the Artist and Foto Ojeikere.
- 3 Kristina Van Dyke. Photo credit: Paul Hester.
- 4 Yinka Shonibare. *The Confession*, 2007. Mixed Media. Courtesy of the Artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery.
- 5 Jude Anogwih and Kerryn Greenberg. Photo: Amaize Ojeikere
- 6 Mudi Yahaya. Nigerian Hootentot Venus 02, 2010. Courtesy of the Artist.
- 7 Victor Ehikamenor. *Temporary Permanence Series I*, 2010. Courtesy of the Artist.
- 8 Green Summary. Installation of work by Taiye Idahor. Photo: Jude Anogwih

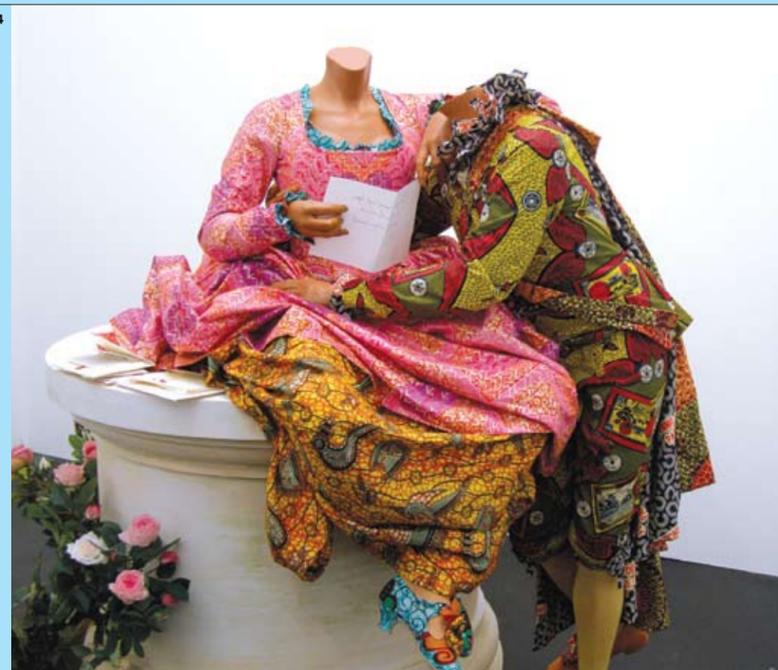
Artist's Talk: Yinka Shonibare MBE
 Saturday, 23rd April 2011, 3.30pm

Internationally acclaimed Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare MBE will discuss his artistic trajectory over the past two decades, presenting key themes from his vast and diverse artistic practice.

Yinka Shonibare, MBE was born in London and moved to Lagos, Nigeria at the age of three. He returned to London to study Fine Art first at Byam Shaw College of Art (now Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design) and later at Goldsmiths College, where he received his MFA—graduating as part of the 'Young British Artists' generation. Shonibare has become well known for his exploration of colonial and post-colonial themes. His work explores these issues through the media of painting, sculpture, photography and, more recently, film and performance. With this wide range of media, Shonibare examines in particular the construction of identity and the tangled interrelationship between Africa and Europe. Having described himself as a 'post-colonial' hybrid, Shonibare questions the

meaning of cultural and national definitions. In 2004 Shonibare was shortlisted for the Turner Prize and in 2009 he won a commission for the Fourth Plinth in London's Trafalgar Square, for which he unveiled in 2010 a scale model of Nelson's ship HMS Victory in a bottle. He has exhibited at the Venice Biennial and internationally at leading museums worldwide.

Shonibare's visit is supported by the Menil Collection, Houston as part of the preliminary research for work to be presented in the forthcoming exhibition *Love and Africa* (2012-13) taking place in Houston and Lagos in collaboration with CCA, Lagos.



Past Programmes

The Green Summary
 December 20th 2010- 21st January 2011

The year 2010 marked the 50th anniversary of the independence of 17 African countries, as well as the 3rd year anniversary of the opening of the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos. To celebrate these milestones, CCA featured a dynamic range of programming which culminated with *The Green Summary* an exhibition that featured newly commissioned work

by nine contemporary Nigerian artists: Emeka Ogboh, Ndidi Dike, Jude Anogwih, Jelili Atiku, Taiye Idahor, Uchay Joel Chima, Victoria Udondian, Richardson Ovbiebo and Karo Akpoki-ere. In reflecting on their relationship with CCA as well as the history of Nigeria, the artists presented an array of individual and collaborative projects in a variety of media. Jointly

curated by Ronke Adeola, Jude Anogwih and Oyinda Fakeye, the curatorial structure of the exhibition mandated that each of the participating artists incorporate the colour green in their work as a way of embracing or critiquing notions of nationalism from a Nigerian perspective.



Professional Development

Curatorial Residency: Helsinki, Finland > Antawan I. Byrd
10th April 2011 - 25th May 2011

In April, Antawan I. Byrd—former Fulbright fellow at CCA, Lagos, and currently a Curatorial Assistant—will be pursuing a curatorial research residency in Helsinki, Finland supported by Finnish Fund for Art Exchange (FRAME) and the Helsinki International Artist-in-Residency (HIAP) Programme. During his five weeks in Helsinki, Byrd will spend his time interacting with artists and curators, as well as various art institutions with an eye toward developing future projects.

On his residency plans, Byrd writes, “My approach to studying contemporary art has always been about seeing as much as possible—as a way of developing a less abstract understanding of the field’s different shapes and structures. I think that my research on contemporary African art requires that I am

able to think comparatively about forms of production and methods of presentation in different parts of the world. Thus, I am excited about exploring the art scene in Helsinki, which seems quite vibrant. I am keen on interacting with the emerging generation of Finnish curators and art historians.” Byrd’s residency will coincide with the ARS11 exhibition at the Museum for Contemporary Art, Kiasma, which in its 50th year will focus on contemporary art in Africa.

Following his residency, Byrd will spend the summer in Lagos working on several publication projects at CCA, Lagos. In the fall he will begin his doctoral programme in the History of Art at Northwestern University, Chicago.

Reflections on an Internship > Moyo Oladunjoye

My interests in art developed during my time in secondary school when I had the opportunity to explore my creativity through drawing. Since then, I have always been interested in art and curious about what motivate artists. It is these interests that lead me to intern at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, where I was able to interact with artists, be a part of exhibitions and participate in the many different kinds of talks featuring artists and curators talking about their work.

These experiences helped me to better understand that every form of art has its own meaning and connection to the world we live in. It is through such works of art that artists are able to tell their own stories. I really enjoyed being able to hear artists from different backgrounds and different parts of the world talk about their work, and the motivation behind their interests in being artists. I also got to see artists work-

ing together to develop ideas and make new work.

My experiences at CCA have really given me a better appreciation for art. It’s a great place to be. For those who have never been to CCA, I can only say, this is where art is at its finest.

Oladunjoye graduated from Covenant University in 2010 with a degree in Accounting.



Moyo Oladunjoye. Photo: CCA, Lagos

ing together to develop ideas and make new work. My experiences at CCA have really given me a better appreciation for art. It’s a great place to be. For those who have never been to CCA, I can only say, this is where art is at its finest. Oladunjoye graduated from Covenant University in 2010 with a degree in Accounting. More details of my proposal and those of my colleagues can be found on the Independent Curators International website: www.ici-exhibitions.org

ative Time, who both discussed their experiences with public art. Presentations with Mary Jane Jacob, Claire Bishop and a host of other professionals provided a great deal of insight on many issues related to the execution and consumption of Public Art. Considering that the course was aimed at assisting us in developing our projects, the presentations covered each step of developing a proposal—from the research stages to the development and execution. At the start of the course, I was assigned three mentors with whom I met with individually as I prepared to present my project on the final day.

The ICI team of Chelsea Haines, Renaud Proch and director Kate Fowle mentored the group throughout the week—reviewing sessions, dis-

More details of my proposal and those of my colleagues can be found on the Independent Curators International website: www.ici-exhibitions.org

The Curatorial Intensive > Oyinda Fakeye

In October 2010, I had the opportunity to participate in Independent Curators International Curatorial Intensive programme in New York. The programme, structured as a course, offered a dynamic mix of talks, presentations and on-site visits with seasoned contemporary art professionals with a focus on Public Art practices. As a requirement for the programme, all participants submitted a proposal for a project they were interested in developing during the course. My proposal outlined a plan to develop and install light-based sculptures in the city of Lagos.

the seven days we interacted with art professionals of different backgrounds who highlighted their individual methodologies vis-à-vis Public Art. Our first visit was to the Madison Square Park, an important New York landmark with an interesting variety of public art programmes. Of note was the vibrant light-based work by the San Francisco-based artist Jim Campbell. His installation featured thousands of LED lights that were strung from cables and timed to turn on and off. The beaming lights collectively gave the impression of scattered constellations. I was particularly interested in Campbell’s work especially the way in which the public interacted with Campbell’s installation.

I benefited immensely from the sessions with Anne Pasternak and Nato Thompson of Cre-

ative Time, who both discussed their experiences with public art. Presentations with Mary Jane Jacob, Claire Bishop and a host of other professionals provided a great deal of insight on many issues related to the execution and consumption of Public Art. Considering that the course was aimed at assisting us in developing our projects, the presentations covered each step of developing a proposal—from the research stages to the development and execution. At the start of the course, I was assigned three mentors with whom I met with individually as I prepared to present my project on the final day.

Work In Progress

In this section, we invite emerging writers, artists, curators and other cultural professionals to present work that they are currently developing as a way of engendering dialogue.

Alternative Realities: Imagined Communities and Contemporary Art in Africa > Loren Hansi Momodu

In an era in which our idea of community has become bound increasingly with the idea of the nation state, contemporary artists have been at work creating varied means with which to reflect, rebel against and re-create that idea. Taking the nation state of Nigeria as a starting point, my aim here is to highlight the prevalence of imagined communities in contemporary art practice, in Africa and beyond. The works explored here each offer a view of an alternative reality which questions the status quo, expounding new ways of seeing the world we live in, signifying collective aspiration for an enhanced way of life. Whether it is through the act of migration caused by a longing for a life elsewhere, or through the willingness to stay and fight for an alternative vision.

have sought this dual identity. Taking this as a starting point, I am interested in examining artistic projects that engage with our sense of collective identity in search of positive change. *NSK State in time* offers a utopian escape, mimicking idealistic Christian ethics and the aesthetics of the nation state, it occupies the void after politics and religion have failed. It works on a conceptual level, requiring the imagination of not only fellow citizens, but also of the state itself—as it exists only in time, not in physical space.

The fore runners of the NSK, such as Kazimir Malevich, Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Beuys may offer a distinctly Western art history, however the number of ordinary Nigerian citizens who have become a kind of counter audience of the *NSK State in Time* speaks of a significant connection to a sense of longing for an alternative existence. And this agency for positive change, is also evident in the work of a number of contemporary artists working on the continent, in medium ranging from performance, video, sculpture and installation. Nigerian multimedia artist Jelili Atiku’s practice deals directly with the political concerns of his country, conversing with the notion of imagined communities on a very practical level. In order to achieve a more ‘egalitarian’ reality his strikingly direct performance and sculptural works are statements aimed unmistakably at the ruling classes. The immediacy of his approach is typified in *Agbo Rago*, 2009; first

concern with the significantly more tangible experience of attempting to actualise such utopian visions. As the work of art becomes ever more implicated in the political and personal, the ethical ramifications of such projects are brought into question. This tipping point between the selected works and other realms of existence, such as the political and private sphere also illuminates the ambivalence of politically imbued practice. Loren Hansi Momodu is a MA candidate at the Royal College of Art, London. She is an Adjunct Curator at the CCA, Lagos, and Curatorial Assistant at the Turner Contemporary.

concern with the significantly more tangible experience of attempting to actualise such utopian visions. As the work of art becomes ever more implicated in the political and personal, the ethical ramifications of such projects are brought into question. This tipping point between the selected works and other realms of existence, such as the political and private sphere also illuminates the ambivalence of politically imbued practice.

Loren Hansi Momodu is a MA candidate at the Royal College of Art, London. She is an Adjunct Curator at the CCA, Lagos, and Curatorial Assistant at the Turner Contemporary.



Jude Anogwih, Jelili Atiku, Inke Arns, Loren Hansi Momodu during the *Towards a Double Consciousness: NSK Passport* project at CCA, Lagos, 2010. Photo: Courtesy Loren Hansi Momodu

Deterritorialised Space

Over the last two decades, there has been an increase in non-representational theories of space, and particularly the Deleuzian notion of deterritorialised space, i.e. the spatial dimension which defies political or otherwise classical representations of space (geography, geometry, place etc.) and loosely named virtual space, striated space, fluid space, liminal space, dark space, any-space-whatsoever, etc.

Tolulope Onobolu

In Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, deterritorialization is an involution of representational systems, wherein a form which had persisted as authoritative gesture is suddenly or methodically violated by a minor or otherwise subversive form, and then reterritorialized. In architecture, this involution has taken on various forms, from the appropriation of itinerant journeymen into the guild of masons in the Middle Ages, to the Enlightenment’s project of rationalising Renaissance poetics. In more recent times,

architecture has been deterritorialized under the rubric of town planning, housing, estates and speculative development, and building construction.

While these various forms of deterritorialization and reterritorialization have transformed the field and discourse of architecture, a significant subversion (or involution to be consistent) is the role of fiction in the transformation of architecture - from the proverbial rabbit hole in Alice’s *Adventures in Wonderland*, to Plastic Beach and the windmill powered city

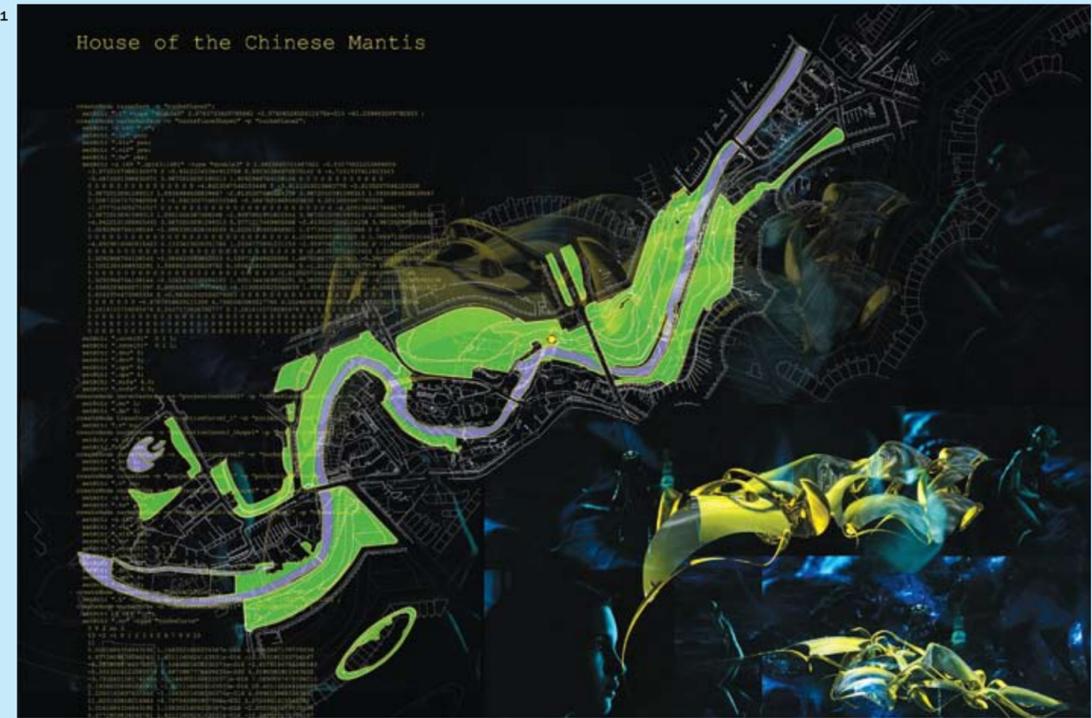
CCA Lagos, beginning its own excursion into this nebulous spatial realm, approached three researchers - locally and from the Diaspora - about their thoughts on this spatial phenomenon, and its impact on their various practices.

These were their comments:

Yesomi Umolu

I’d like to consider deterritorialisation through the lens of recent political upheavals across the Arab region and the spaces that become synonymous with popular resistance. Of course, we can suggest that excising political agency through its specific placing - for example, in the aptly named Liberation Square, in an occupied building or across the digital networks that coalesce a community - is intrinsically part of the aesthetics of a contemporary revolution. But, my interest in this phenomenon is directed at the process that these places narrate, which I argue expresses itself as a deterritorialised space. The unfolding of recent events in Tunisia and Egypt necessarily involved the decoding of values, beliefs and practices attributed to any given place and a subsequent process of recoding, in order to construct anew. As we witnessed, the potency of these uprisings stems from their spontaneity and temporality, but these too engender precarious conditions and the threat of unsustainable action. Moreover, we must be aware that these micro-politics are practiced across both sides of the divide, as the institution concurrently de/re-codes the newly assumed spaces of resistance. As such, deterritorialisation in this context must be viewed as a condition of anticipatory tactics and imminent inhabitation, which in my view defies any symbolically, demarcated space.

Yesomi Umolu is a London-based curator, writer and researcher.



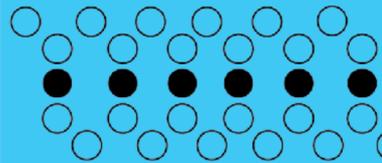
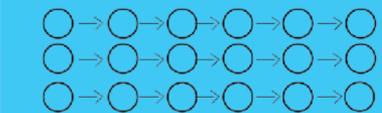
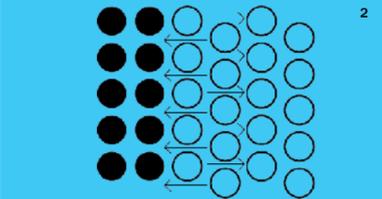
Paul Goodwin

I’ve followed with interest the increasing spatialisation of the discourse of contemporary art. In my former life I was a ‘critical geographer’ and an avid disciple of critical spatial theorists such as David Harvey (with whom I studied in Oxford), Doreen Massey, Ed Soja, Rosalyn Deutsche and above all Henri Lefebvre. I was particularly enchanted with Lefebvre’s theories around the production of space and its articulation of cultural difference within the context of the globalisation of the ‘urban’. These ideas helped me to make sense of the proliferation of spatial metaphors in cultural theory in the 1990s and ideas about ‘situated’ practices, theoretical ‘territories’ and ‘spaces’ of knowledge production. Of course, Deleuze’s notions of deterritorialisation (and

reterritorialisation) have been central to the migration and often problematic translation of spatial discourses from geography and other spatial disciplines into the art world. Deterritorialisation has helped me to conceptually think through complex issues of post-colonial art and curatorial practices that have decentred and destabilised dominant colonial and racist, Eurocentrist notions of art. Artists from Africa and the diaspora have been and are at the centre of such critical engagements in their diverse practices. Deterritorialisation has been at the heart of emerging global modernities in Africa and the Southern hemisphere and critical spatial thinking can be a powerful tool to help curators and theorists unpack and unleash the creative and multiple

potentialities of a truly decolonised art practice in the 21st century.

Paul Goodwin is a curator, urbanist and researcher based in London, UK. Currently Goodwin is Curator of *Cross Cultural Programmes* at Tate Britain, London.



1 The House of The Chinese Mantis explores the tragedy of the amorous scene. This scene consists of computer code, magic, an architectural object and a site of encounter; it is gnosticism meeting cybernetics - a deterritorialized space, in which architecture becomes the scene of a narrative. Image: Tolu Onobolu, *House of The Chinese Mantis, in Architecture and The Creation of Worlds, Book 1: The Actual* (unpublished PhD thesis), Edinburgh College of Art, July 2010.

2 Schematic diagrams from *How to Protest Intelligently: Important Information and Tactics*, 2011. Sourced Online. Courtesy of Yesomi Umolu

Collector's Focus: Sandra and Joe Obiago

This year, our Focus feature shifts from highlighting the practices of emerging and established artists to giving prominence to the practices of the rising number of collectors of Modern and Contemporary African art. In this edition, Bisi Silva interviews local collectors Sandra and Joe Obiago about the history and highlights of their art collection.

Bisi Silva: When did you start collecting?

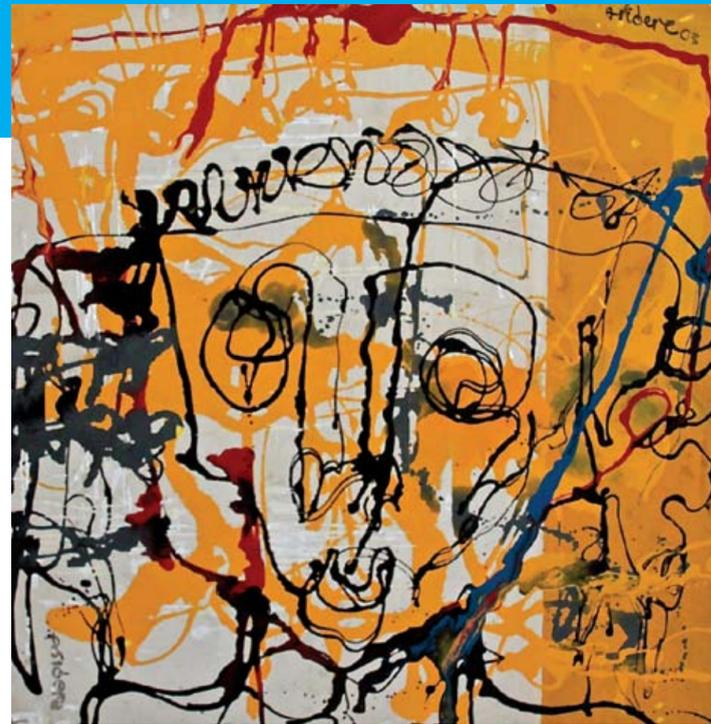
Sandra Obiago: I've always had a love for art, and grew up in a home where my mother's love for collecting African art was fused with the amazing spaces my father, an architect designed. Our home was a perfect marriage of ancient African art presented within a very airy and light, tropical interior that had classical furniture of modern design such as Eames & Corbusier, Fakeye wood carvings, amazing terra cotta heads and Benin bronzes set against eclectic art pieces from all over the world.

My art collecting was inspired by working as a volunteer tour guide and teaching assistant at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in Manitoba, Canada, during my student years. I began to see art in museums as instrumental for teaching kids "aesthetic intelligence," general art appreciation, and providing a platform for their own cre-

ative expression which empowered kids to discover and unleash their own creativity. I think it was these influences in my life that got me seriously "hooked" on harnessing creativity in all its forms (film, music, visual art etc.) within my life and environment. When I met Joe, our mutual love for art and design was a natural and exciting aspect of our growing friendship – and so we were able to complement each other's passion for art.

Joe Obiago: Art was always a part of my youth. Actually, my older sister, Jane Obiago, is an artist who studied under Professor Yusuf Grillo and Mr. Kolade Oshinowo at Yaba College of Technology in the 1970's. I met these great artists as her teachers and used to enjoy visiting the art studios at Yaba Tech. My keen interest continued throughout secondary school, where I studied Fine Art.

As a young man heading to the United States in the summer of 1980 to start my university degree in economics, I stopped briefly in London to visit family. One of the highlights of the trip was the Tate Gallery where I bought my first piece of art, a Joan Miro poster for three pounds. During my college years, I continued collecting museum posters, dreaming of the day I would be able to invest in an original painting. On graduating from college and returning to Nigeria and working as a young banker at Citibank, I began spending time with my father's schoolmate, the renowned artist Professor Ben



Enwonwu. I remember sitting in his lush garden looking out over the Lagos lagoon at the back of his house at Ikoyi Crescent, being mesmerized by his quintessential "English Gentleman" manners, peppered by his temperamental outbursts, while contemplating social anthropol-

ogy and philosophy. Sometimes I visited Uncle Ben with my friend and curator, Afolabi Kofo Abayomi, who probably has the most significant collection of Ben Enwonwu's art to date. And that is really, how my passion for art and artists flourished.

we were looking for a Grillo for many years. When we finally found two amazing pieces – we just looked at each other and knew that these were the pieces we had been looking for. I think in many ways, art collecting is also a spiritual journey in which you are led to certain pieces, and often, there is some spiritual connection between you and the piece, and often between you and the artist.

BS: Why did you start collecting art?

SO: I think collecting art has always come naturally to us. It is a passionate hobby which has become an important aspect of our lives. Over

BS: How did you start collecting?

SO: Joe is a more strategic, historically inspired, and very deliberate art collector. Early on, he knew who were the major artists we should be collecting and why their art was significant. I am definitely more of a passionate, "coup de foudre" (love at first sight), impulsive collector – and often need some convincing about why this or that artist is so amazing. Sometimes Joe acquires a piece, and after it hangs on our walls for a few weeks, I begin to see its depth and beauty. But before we invest in a major piece – Joe usually does a lot of research – and we "agree to agree" on what we buy. For example,

BS: What is the dominant trajectory of your collection? Is it structured primarily by theme or medium? Is it mainly older modern artists, or younger artists working in a modernist vernacular?

SO: Wow, that's a tough one. Joe is more drawn to modern art, while I seem to gravitate towards contemporary art – so our collection has some interesting contrasts and tensions – which make it rich and diverse. I think we tend to collect pieces that have strong, bold, and vibrant colors and in some way express hope and positive energy – rather than some works that represent the more disturbing, sometimes even violent, depressed, and dark side of human nature. We both like political and satirical art, and enjoy artists such as Duke Asidere, Victor Ehikhamenor, Gani Odutokun, even Demas Nwoko and Dele Jegede, whose works have deeply etched political under-tones. Contemporary artists such as Kainbei Osahenye, Fidelis Odogwu and Olu Amoda are taking the industry by a storm.

We also have many younger artists in our collection who we know and enjoy supporting such as Uchay Joel Chima, Ibe Anabanaba, Ola Balogun, Simeon Akhizebhu, Chidi Kubiri, Gerald Chukwuma, and Peju Alatise. However, collecting contemporary art is not always easy because of the scale of installations. The most impressive awe inspiring contemporary and new media art pieces are difficult to house in a private collection – unless one has large exhibition space. That notwithstanding, I have worked very closely with documentary and art photographers such as Uche James Iroha and TY Bello from Depth of Field, as well as artists exploring video art such as Uchay Chima Joel.

JO: Our Collection is balanced between Modern and Contemporary Art. While Sandie tends to

the years we have been more strategic in building our collection. We try to fill gaps, analyse market trends, visit artists frequently, take part in local and international auctions, and increase the collection's geographic footprint.

JO: As a young Banker, I took great pride in my apartment and enjoyed decorating my "Bachelor Pad", with eclectic pieces I picked up during art exhibitions, on travels abroad, and from Mallams who used to sell me beautiful classical bronze pieces from across West Africa. By the time I met my wife Sandie, our mutual passion for art was ignited.

like Contemporary Art, I tend to focus on Modern Art and the works of a handful of Nigerian "Masters." Also, being a Banker, I strive to strike a balance between a keen sense of value and my personal joy in collecting works, which have aesthetic depth, artistic merit and economic value. In my opinion, balancing these three elements is actually what sets a collection and collectors apart. I also enjoy the excitement of the bargaining and negotiating process when I compete for a prized piece. There is an element of providence and destiny when you dream about acquiring a piece which is tugging at your emotions for days on end – and you begin to plan, scheme and pray about making it yours. (he laughs!) But as a general comment, we tend to be drawn to art that makes us happy and celebrates the African spirit and culture, and expresses our humanity and positive energy, which ultimately is God inspired.

BS: Do you collect only Nigerian artists or African/international artists?

JO: We have a growing African collection which includes works from: Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique, South Africa, Congo, Kenya, and Uganda. Some of our favorite Nigerian Modern artists include Ben Enwonwu, Ben Osawe, Jimi Akolo, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Jimoh Buraimoh, Uche Okeke, Simon Okeke and Demas Nwoko to name a few. On the pan-continental side we love our works by Abiade Glover, Amon Kotei, Ngwenya Malangatana, Jose Pardua,

Cheri Cherin and Gerald Sekoto. But we are expanding our collection beyond Africa and just invested in a beautiful piece by the Hungarian British sculptor, Peter Lambda of the famous African American singer Lena Horne and a wonderful painting by French artist, Jean Lareuse.

BS: What do you consider the benefits of collecting art?

SO: From a purely aesthetic point of view, it is totally satisfying buying artistic work that inspires and moves your spirit. From a

financial point of view, you can't go wrong by investing in unique assets that no one else has, and that are constantly increasing in value.

JO: Firstly, art is the only asset, besides real estate, that you invest in that instantly appreciates on acquisition unlike other things people spend money on such as cars, jewelry, and other luxury goods. For instance, my collection from the Ben Enwonwu 70th Birthday auction, became the security of probably Nigeria's first art lease transac-

tion with the Arts & Objects Gallery, owned by Funke & Gbolly Osibodu and VT Leasing, owned by Femi Akingbe. I simply wanted to demonstrate that art can be used as collateral and therefore a strategic store of value!! Furthermore, art is good inheritance to leave for your descendants. As a collector, one also becomes a custodian of creativity, artistic development and the cultural heritage of a people – which is crucial in nurturing human progress, and socio-historical relevance.

BS: Which direction do you see your collection going?

SO: We are strategically investing in more pan-African art and increasingly, investing in more international art and photography. Very exciting indeed!

BS: What advice would you give to new collectors?

SO: I think it is important not just to invest in an artist because their art is momentarily "trendy" and hot. Invest in pieces that you love, and won't get tired of looking at. Also, try to seek advice from experienced curators who can guide you and provide important historical and artistic context to established and rising artists, and who can also help to value your collection and advise you when you want to make a major investment. And attend as many art exhibitions as possible – the more you see, the more discerning your eye gets. Art auctions are exciting events to attend and watch how collectors bid for pieces – there is an electricity and nervous energy in the room during art auctions, which is truly amazing and quite contagious.

JO: As they say, "buy boldly and sell slowly" (Saatchi) and most of all, have fun growing your collection. Knowing the artists behind their works, also gives depth and relational significance to your works.

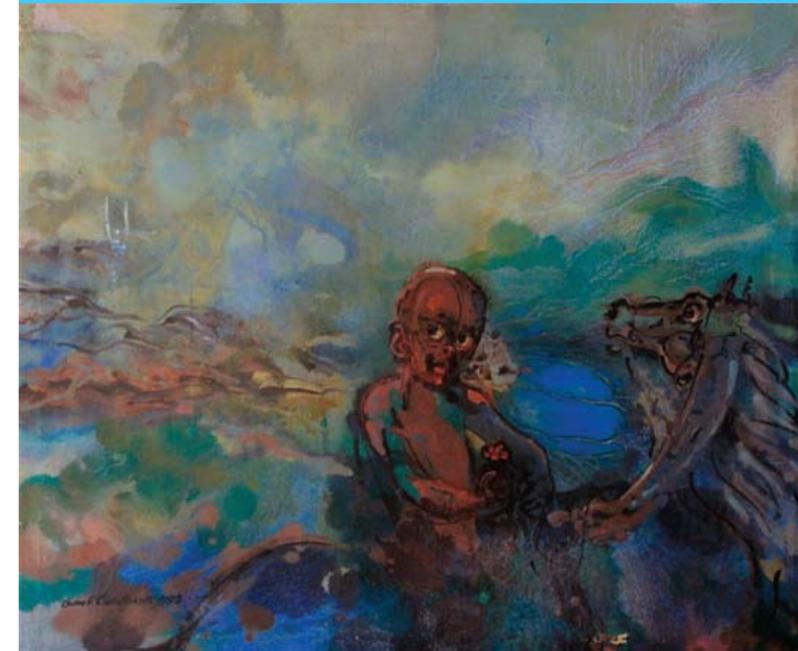
BS: How do you see yourself impacting the development of the Nigerian art space?

JO: Beyond collecting we are committed to strengthening the visual arts in Nigeria – especially in terms of investing in international artists-in-residence programs, general art education, foreign collaboration and international exposure of our best Nigerian talent, as well as in the documentation, and better preservation of our art. We believe that enhancing the possibilities of Nigerian artists will become a reality with more widespread exposure and the opportunity to spend time in international artistic spaces, being inspired by a diversity of cultures as well as cutting edge innovation and universal philosophy.

- 1 Duke Asidere. *Untitled*, 2003. Mixed Media on Canvas.
- 2 Ben Enwonwu. *Ogolo*, 1986. Oil on Canvas.
- 3 Chidi Kwubiri. *Trance*, 2009. Oil on Canvas.
- 4 Gani Odutokun. *Triumph of Life*, 1993. Oil on Canvas.



Joe Obiago is Managing Director and CEO of Global Energy Company Ltd, an energy resources, engineering, and infrastructure group focused on Africa with international operations. Sandra Obiago is the Executive Director of Communicating for Change (CFC), Nigeria, a non-governmental media organisation which uses radio, TV, print, market research, theatre, capacity building, & special events to help change behavior and attitudes about vital social and environmental issues from a distinctly African perspective. They both reside in Lagos, Nigeria.





Modernism in Nigerian Visual Arts

On the Modern and the Contemporary in Nigerian Art

Frank Ugiomoh

A contention exists currently regarding the status of the words “modern” and “contemporary” in reference to Nigerian art history. This contention is layered by conventions of appropriations and or adoptions that are historical in nature. In this brief write up I aim to review these terms, the history they betray and offer advice on their relevance in defining historical time. The applications of these terms in art history have largely been context dependent. My interest in engaging this topic arises from the debate at the presentation of the amended National Gallery of Art (NGA) bill on modern art and artists now before the National Assembly. From information I have gathered the proposal put forward at a recent presentation of the bill regarding the determination of a modern period for Nigerian art was inchoate. While the exact date of the modern and the contemporary are in conflict regarding their time value, there are also problems that inflect their meaning and status.

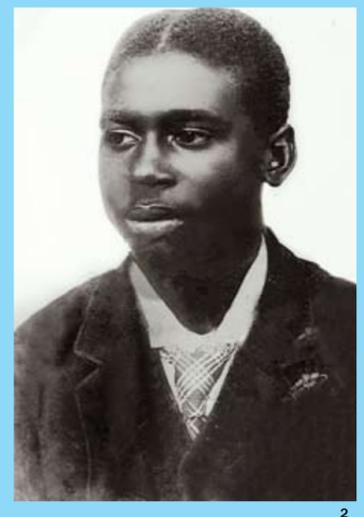
In the book which Uche Okeke published in 1982 entitled *Art in Development: A Nigerian Perspective*, he engaged the issue of periodization in Nigerian art. Okeke’s periodization schema recognizes the following: “the traditional,” “the colonial or the transitional” and “the independent or modern.” Osa Egonwa creates the distinction between the “contemporary” and “modern” also within the context of artistic production in the past millennium. These initiatives are at root hazy in the understanding they provide. What Okeke recognizes as “transitional” is what Egonwa tags “modern.” For John Picton a modern period for African art dates from 1500AD to present. His rationale is that the 16th century contacts between Africa and Europe impacted on the cultural institutions of Africa South of

the Sahara begetting new identities. Picton’s schema reverses the claim by Europe that denies progression in African visual arts by insisting that two periods “traditional” and “contemporary” govern it. As he argues “a European-American narrowing of just what art is, or rather just what we can include within the idea of ‘art’” does not work “art-historically” as far as African art is concerned. Picton’s format for African visual arts, an essentially Eurocentric – ancient, medieval and modern, has a depth of time, which though contingent, speaks adequately to history’s own agenda as a narrative science that values distinct delineations of time. Its definition of a “modern consciousness” is hinged on the element of newness, as it is also a product of natural synthesis.

identities in time. In structuring the periods “traditional” and “contemporary” for the art history of Africa by western cultural institutions the idea remains to deny African art history definable historical identities. Both words traditional and contemporary are reductive and unhistorical. They are designed to over simplify the complexities the under gird the richness African art and its cultures have to show off. I have refused to patronize such words as an art historian.

I rather join with the likes of John Picton and Elizabeth Harney to proclaim a modern consciousness for Nigerian art. The point of take off for me tallies with Tam Fiofori’s recognition of the eminent professional photographer of Nigerian nativity Jonathan Adagogo Green (1874 – 1905) whose tool then and compositional skill remain overwhelming. As a consequence, the period begins with Mr. Green and terminates at the present time. Remember history is a contingent construction of meaning and it is revaluated as new facts emerge. I suggest that this should guide the Society of Nigerian Artists in fixing a time frame for modern Nigerian art in its submission. In periodology it is recognized that the modern is always loaded with many undigested and un-milled facts. When in a future time the true character of our era is properly understood by those coming behind they will lay claim to modernism and confer on our era their understanding of the subject-matter spun by us.

Dr. Frank Ugiomoh is an art historian and sculptor based at the University of Port Harcourt.



1 J.A. Green, *Portrait of Chief Herbert Fawari Oko Jubo (1856 - 1933)*.
2 *Portrait of Jonathan Adagogo Green (1873 - 27th November 1905)*.
Note: Most of Green’s works were acquired by the United African Company (UAC), and signed “JAG.” Images Courtesy of Prof. E. J. Alagoa.

From Aina Onobolu to Adagogo Green: Widening the Scope of Modernism in Nigerian Visual Arts

Akin Onipede

Elder Tam Fiofori deserves commendation for expanding the frontiers of definition and appreciation of modernism in Nigerian visual arts in his recent submission during the public hearing of the bill for an act to repeal and reenact the NGA Act, at the National Assembly in Abuja as reported in *The Guardian* of Tuesday, November 9, 2010. Fiofori’s argument that Jonathan Adagogo Green, a photographer of Ijaw origin, whose photograph of the deposed Oba Ovonranwen of Benin in 1897, qualifies as a modern artistic expression and hence the beginning of modernism in Nigerian visual arts cannot be faulted.¹

Hitherto, modernism in Nigerian visual arts has mostly been attributed to the emergence and exploits of Aina Onobolu in the early 20th century. Professor Uche Okeke (Nig. Mag.) had looked back, beyond Onobolu to posit that modern art in Nigeria started in Benin in the 16th century. This view was parroted by Ikpakronyi (*Nigerian Women in the Evolution...*) who sees the influence of Portuguese icons on Benin art as the beginning of modern Nigerian visual arts. These views as tempting as they are anachronistic however overlooked the fact that there was no unit called Nigeria in the 16th century and as such, the developments in Benin art could not have been attributed to a nonexistent, yet to be configured Nigerian nation. Most scholars have therefore held on to Aina Onobolu as the father of modernism in Nigerian art until Fiofori’s elucidation, which has no doubt removed the veil from our eyes.

Going through Prof Frank Ugiomoh’s thesis on “The Modern and the Contemporary in Nigerian Art”, as posted by Bisi Silva, one could not but marvel at how seemingly “small issues” receive clinical interrogations and analysis in the hands and laboratories of experts. Ugiomoh’s expositions on the contentious nature of definitions, especially when tainted by layers of biases can only be advanced or discounted by pitching more authorities to complement or dismiss his argument.

Many scholars/authors have dwelled/quarrelled with the misapplication or swapping of the terms “Modern” and “Contemporary” in contextual application to the arts, not only in Nigeria but globally. Sidney Kasfir, (in *Contemporary African Art, 2000*) argues that in “Western art history... ‘Contemporary’ connotes the art of the present and the recent past... while the much broader and weighty term ‘modern’ encompasses an ideological break...” from conventions, the type that ushered in “*Les Femmes d’Avignon*” a painting by Pablo Picasso in 1907, which marked an epochal shift from Euro-naturalism to African formalism in Western art. Assuming Kasfir’s definitions were appropriated and localized in Africa/Nigeria on the merit of their surface meanings, modernism in the Western sense, attained by the borrowing of African/Oceania forms, would still not mean the same thing as modernism in African/Nigerian arts. And if Onobolu’s espousal of naturalism was seen as Nigerian modernism, then due credit is not being given to the rich artistic culture that produced the naturalistic masterpieces of Ife art.

Professor Chike Aniakor’s definition of contemporary Nigerian art aligns slightly with Kasfir’s abovementioned definition. While positing that Contemporary Nigerian art describes works being produced as of now in Nigeria, he however points out that the term ‘contemporary’ is a big umbrella capable of bringing under its shade a variety of stylistic and conceptual assortment. (*Contemporary Nigerian Artists and Tradition*).

Okwui Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu contend (in *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*) that definitions can be disabling but submit that “contemporary African/(Nigerian?) Art denotes a field of complex artistic production, research, interpretation and a repository of rich intellectual discovery at the intersection of the shifting models of cultural, political, social, and epistemological analyses in which Africa/(Nigeria?) is meaningfully interpellated.” For now, I must admit that I’m still chewing on the meat of the book and have not arrived at digesting it.



Ikwuemesi (in *Beyond the Pigeonholes...*) sees contemporary art, “from the point of view of African scholarship, as, an acquired paradigm, a by-product of colonisation and, a problematic term which according to him, does not stand up as a valid label for describing not only African art, but art in general.” He agrees somewhat that there is a context in which contemporary art can stand as substitute for modern.

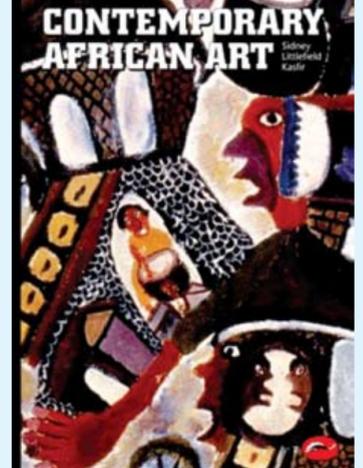
Eddie Chambers (in *Contemporary Art or Contemporary African Art...*) asks: “In what sense can we refer to contemporary African art?” And he answers rhetorically; “certainly not on the basis of skin colour...country of birth... (or) geographical location.” In some contexts, he says, “it becomes almost a nonsense to speak of contemporary African art as any sort of recognizable entity...”

As stated earlier, the object of this exercise is not to pontificate or proffer definitions but to draw on existing positions through which better insight to what constitute modernism and contemporary Nigerian art may be sifted. If it took these many years to be enlightened and shift from Onobolu to Adagogo Green, a closer look may still expand the frontiers further. Fiofori’s

revelation has no doubt given the challenge to historians to wake up and dust off old assumptions and dig deeper into history to situate developments not only chronologically but also factually. If going by Kasfir’s definition that modernism represents an ideological break, from past representations, then Adagogo Green’s 1897 photograph of Oba Ovonranwen of Benin was epochal—materially, conceptually and technologically. This knowledge should inform the new position to be advanced for the purpose of the harmonized bill, and further intellectual engagements.

¹ The beauty of scholarship is in its flexibility, proclivity and inevitability to submit to superior argument(s). My attention has since been drawn—by Prof Frank Ugiomoh—to the fact that the same logic advanced by me as to the inappropriateness of attributing the beginning of modernism in Nigerian art to developments in Benin art in the 16th century, because of the non existence of the entity called Nigeria, can also be used to fault my acquiescence and defense of the thesis that Jonathan Adagogo Green, with his 1897 photograph of deposed Oba Ovonranwen was at the beginning of modernism in Nigerian Art. While it is not contestable that Adagogo Green’s photograph qualifies as modern artistic expression, its labeling by me as the beginning of modernism in Nigeria stands nullified. What Ugiomoh’s clarification has done on the one hand is to reaffirm Aina Onobolu as the pioneer of modernism in the unit called Nigeria, so constituted in 1914, while on the other hand, it has opened the door for further elucidations and definitions of the appropriate classification for the exploits of the Benin artists of the 16th century and those of Adagogo Green—to be classified as Nigerian or not. The contention over the correctness or otherwise of the swapping of modernism with contemporary or vice-versa nevertheless continues.

Akin Onipede is a writer and artist currently based in Lagos, Nigeria.



1 Okwui Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu. *Contemporary African Art since 1980*. Damiani, 2010.
2 Sidney Littlefield Kasfir. *Contemporary African Art*. Thames & Hudson, 2000.

In Memoriam

Goddy Leye
(24 November 1965, Mbouda, Cameroon – 19 February 2011 Bonendale, Cameroon)
By Emeka Ogboh



Goddy Leye, 2009. Photo: Dorina Hecht

I first met Goddy Leye in February 2009 during the Linha Imaginaria Video art workshop at CCA Lagos, which he co-facilitated. Prior to meeting him, I had heard and read so much about him and his work. Consequently, I painted a larger-than-life picture of an ego-exuding artist. How wrong was I? My first impression after meeting Goddy Leye in person was that of an unassuming and quiet gentleman, who didn’t let his fame go to his head.

Goddy was genuinely interested in the development of young African artists. I am a witness to that, having benefited directly from his advice and mentorship. He keenly followed the progress of each artist that participated in the CCA workshop, and was never too busy to lend a helping hand or advice any time he was called upon.

I had the opportunity to visit the Art Bakery, a modest art space he founded, in March 2009, when I was in Douala to attend a video art workshop organised by Doual’Art. It was truly an honour to see Goddy in his element, as an accomplished artist. Yet, he was still a gentleman to his protégées and contemporaries. I witnessed the impressive amount of energy and work concentrated in Art Bakery.

So, it came as a shock to hear about his death on his Facebook page, on that fateful day, (19 February 2011). He was such a promising artist who had given his all and still had a lot to give. Goddy was one of the inspirations behind the founding of the Video Art Network Lagos, for the promotion of new media art/video art in Nigeria, and farther afield. He was always there to advise and to offer positive criticisms whenever he was asked. Now there is a vacuum.

Adieu Goddy Leye, though you passed on young, you definitely left an indelible mark on the field of contemporary art in Africa. The trail you have blazed is clearly marked out for us to follow. You will forever be in our hearts.



1 Review

Events of the Self: Portraiture and Social Identity. The Walther Collection.
Akinbode Akinbiyi

The industrialist Artur Walther has for some time collected the work of Western photographers, and has gradually begun exploring the practices of Asian and African photographers. Housed in nine galleries and across four specially conceived and partially renovated buildings **Events of the Self: Portraiture and Social Identity** juxtaposes work from the Walther Collection of African photography alongside work by European photographers.

Okwui Enwezor's curatorial expertise and experience is evident in not only the range of photographers featured in the exhibition and publication, but also through the scope of the writers whose scholarly essays provide deeper insights into the strategies and intentions of the works presented. Chika Okeke-Agulu writes about the work of J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, whose hairstyle photographs are presented alongside the work of Bernd and Hilla Becher, and thus enables us to read both practices in terms of their construction of typologies. Deborah Willis discusses the recent work of the Malian photographer Malick Sidibé. Her text succinctly examines the current phase in Sidibé's artistic trajectory, emphasising the social and sexual codes imbedded in the photographer's seemingly playful back-view portraits.

The Bechers work was the most serial of all the work presented; their black and white images of industrial buildings have become legend in their almost obsessive cataloging of the bare visual facts of the architectural objects depicted. They work with an insistence on photographic seriality, something that neither Ojeikere nor Sidibé fully embraced. The Bechers work out of a European/Western tradition of cataloging, of identifying and recording, of dictionaries, compendiums and encyclopedias.

Superficially there does appear to be similarities. Ojeikere recorded disappearing hairstyles in a very minimalist, bare bones documentary style. We rarely see the faces of the ladies bearing the woven hair. The photographic concentration is on the hairstyles themselves, typically shot from the side or behind. Similarly, the Bechers circumnavigated their architectural subjects shooting from as many angles as possible. People rarely appear in their images. The lighting is the ambient grey of cloud cover allowing for a shadow-less depiction. In the overall weight of their seriality, their intent of visual acuity is clearly revealed.

Perhaps though the bringing together of European and African practitioners is most questionable in the dialogue attempted between Seydou Keita and August Sander. Both are acknowledged masters of portraiture and both deserve the accolades showered upon them. But bringing them up so close in a kind of "face me I face you" confrontation, shows clearly the differences more than the perceived similarities.

Again the geographic and social backgrounds of both artists are so diverse and in complete contrast. Sander started out on his mammoth project to document all the classes and peoples of his native Germany in the years just before the First World War and continued until the Nazi occupation in the early thirties. These early decades were a time of rapid, volatile social change, the nineteenth century dissolving furiously into the innovations and experiments of the new century.

However, Keita started out in the middle of the twentieth century in a completely different social and geo-political situation. His portraits were expressions of a new self-awareness, a longing to go beyond the narrow confines of the stipulated colonial weltbild, or *world view*. His work was primarily customer orientated. Unlike Sander he did not have an over-arching project in mind. He did though apply his visual talents as keenly as Sander, such that he has since become an artist after the deed. His works now circulate in international museums and exhibitions, printed in large black and white formats, something he never had in mind.

Examples of the small sepia toned prints he made during his lifetime are depicted in the book, a complete contrast to the present day large black and white prints and begging the question of authorship and original artistic intent. Keita is more comparable to studio

photographers, not unlike Mike Disfarmer of Heber Springs, Arkansas, who were working in many different parts of the world around the mid-century. Both oeuvres reveal similarities in the intent gaze of the photographer, which challenge the equally intent gaze of the sitters. Both gazes seem to reveal uncertainties about the immediate and long-term economic, social and political environment of the time.

Sander's gaze is literally of another age, more likened to the nineteenth century, although he was already shooting in the twentieth century. Both he and his sitters though were still enveloped and immersed in the more rigid social structures that preceded our present time of incessant speed.

During the exhibition, a slide projection shows work by the photographer Santu Mofokeng of South Africa. Going into township homes, he has collected a sizeable number of family portraits done between 1890 and 1950. We see images of Africans standing upright, conscious of their visual selves, desirous of an image with which to adorn the walls of their homes. Being able to look at these images on the printed page is a big plus. The slide show is fleeting, the image gone before you really begin to take it in. The opportunity to view Santu's work in print is, therefore, one of the real highlights of the exhibition's publication.

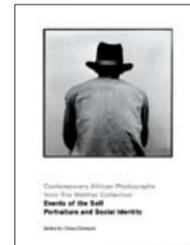
The images of Africans clad in the Victorian fashion also bear more of a semblance to Sander's work, a point brought out in the publication's interview between Artur Walther and the International Center of Photography (NYC) director, Willis E. Hartshorn.

The latter part of the publication is dedicated to current African photography. Here the emphasis is very much on the thematic overview of the exhibition and concerns portraiture and

social identity. The work of the late Rotimi Fani-Kayode is given prominence in this thematic run, and is framed by Kobena Mercer's insightful essay.

Thereafter we are given a plethora of images by artists from different parts of the continent and a few from the diaspora, but with a predominance of work from South Africa. The work selected manages to illuminate the theme, expand on it, and playfully bring out unexpected correlations. I was particularly drawn to the dark, blurry, off-kilter images of the South African artist Jo Ractliffe. Her work done with cheap plastic toy cameras showed the subversive potential inherent in the, in her case, very subjective take on the documentary mode, a mode that runs through the whole exhibition, despite the contrary claims of the exhibition's curator Okwui Enwezor that we are now in a post-documentary age.

This book is a must for any serious follower of photography and not just African photography. Very well printed and with an excellent layout, the publication is a large and heavy compendium (2.77 kg) of the first presentation of the Walther collection, presented in the home of the Walther village of Burlafngen—near the much larger city of Ulm in southern Germany. The exhibition is on view until April 2011.



1 Installation View, The Walther Collection, 2010. Photo: Bisi Silva.
2 Events of the Self: Portraiture and Social Identity. Contemporary African Photography from the Walther Collection, by Okwui Enwezor. Steidl & Partners, Göttingen, 2010.

2

Nollywood as Popular Art?

Bic Leu

The Nigerian film industry has become one of the principal forces of popular art on the continent. Its commercially accessible format distinguishes it from other African cinema cultures—in particular that of the Francophone countries, where filmmakers produce highly stylized "art films" driven by socio-political messages. Francophone films are primarily funded (and thus shaped) by the French government and distributed internationally to film festivals and other noncommercial channels. On the other hand, Nollywood films are privately funded, with (until now) little government subsidy or foreign aid. While most of the Francophone products are rarely seen by African audiences, their Nigerian counterparts are characterized by their capacity to transcend local ethnic and national boundaries and be voraciously consumed by millions of viewers across the continent, the Diaspora, as well as everywhere else in between.



skyline, since harassment from "area boys" and authorities demanding bribes make it exceedingly difficult to shoot exterior scenes. Common fears are written and rewritten into narratives revolving around love, betrayal, greed, and the power of religious faith as a panacea for all social ills. From film to film, actors play the same roles and even repeat the same lines, like Ramsey Noah's "Wakey, wakey, baby"—which awakens sleeping lovers in both *Guilty Pleasures* (2009) and *A Private Storm* (2010). Even the crews remain constant as producers and directors carry them from set to set. As such, Nollywood films communicate with its African audience through a series of endless reflections intended to reinforce the shared conventions and desires of contemporary Nigerian society.

tional film festivals; its practitioners are frequently invited to participate in film panels all over the world. Formal institutions are also becoming involved in the development of the industry. In January, President Goodluck Jonathan announced that the Bank of Industry would administer the \$200 million Special Entertainment Fund (which includes support from the World Bank) as low-interest loans designed to improve training, production, and distribution.

But the embrace of the mainstream often means sacrificing inventiveness to regulation and standardized expectations. The question remains: as Nollywood begins to interact with the formal economy, will it lose its mobility and accessibility as a popular art form? Or will this new development elevate Nigerian filmmaking to the same status as other established international film cultures, to be no longer derided as a low-cost novelty in guerrilla filmmaking?

However, Nollywood is starting to defy Barber's widely-accepted definition of popular art, which states that all commercial popular arts are produced within the African informal sector. Nigerian films are increasingly disseminated through recognized official channels, as exemplified by the box office success of recent cinema-only releases, such as Kunle Afolayan's *The Figurine* (2009) and Chinze Anyaene's *Ijé* (2010). Nigerian films are also screened at the Festival panafricain du cinéma et de la télévision de Ouagadougou (FESPACO), the high-brow bastion of Francophone African films that had banned Nigerian products from its line-up in the recent past. The industry has also become the subject of countless academic articles and interna-

Bic Leu is a US Fulbright fellow researching the social impact of Nollywood at the University of Lagos. She regularly records her observations at www.findingnollywood.com. The views expressed here are her own and do not represent those of the Fulbright program or the US Department of State.

1 Film marketer in Idumota Market. Photo © Bic Leu, 2011.
2 On the set of Tunde Kelani's 'Ma'ami', Abeokuta, Nigeria. Photo © Bic Leu, 2011.

Now Available! Limited edition publications available for purchase at CCA, Lagos.

Otobong Nkanga "No Be Today Story O!"

The Book "No be today story O!" is a 'Singer-stitched' brochure divided into 4 chapters. Each chapter contains 10 colour prints of drawings by Otobong Nkanga. This book is fitted in a silkscreen translucent white envelope.

"Filtered Memories" are a series of drawings based on selected memories of the artist. Nkanga filters and selects moments in her childhood and teenage years that had a certain impact on her life. These memories refer to the loss of innocence, home, security and of loved ones. The titles of the drawings are of important significance that help the reader to place each event in a specific place and time. Experiences and memory are frozen in time, giving a glimpse

into the artist's personal experiences, both in her homeland and Europe.

This is a .docs//M geopolitical Art Edition No. 1 / Co-edition Violet Stichting, Mondriaan Stichting and Nieuwe Vide Artspace. / No of Edition: 470 prints / 30 prints special edition containing an original drawing 19 x 26.7 cm each.

N9500 (excl.p&p)



Nigeria Behind the Lens

Nigeria Behind the Lens is a limited edition art photography book featuring the work of 9 Nigerian photographers. The book, with 194 pages and 122 high quality images, has a mandate to provide a channel for identifying and celebrating visionary contemporary photography from Nigeria. The accompanying website also provides a digital channel for showcasing upcoming photographers.

The book will be printed in a limited edition of 1000 signed and numbered copies, creating a collectible piece of printed matter. The launch of the book will feature a private exhibition of 9 large format photographs, one from each of the featured photographers in the book.

Limited edition box sets

containing 9 prints of the exhibited photographs are also available.

The project is organised by the designer and brand consultant Ebi Atawodi of Inden Publishing.

N35,000 (excl. p&p)

For more information, visit: www.nigeriansbehindthelens.com

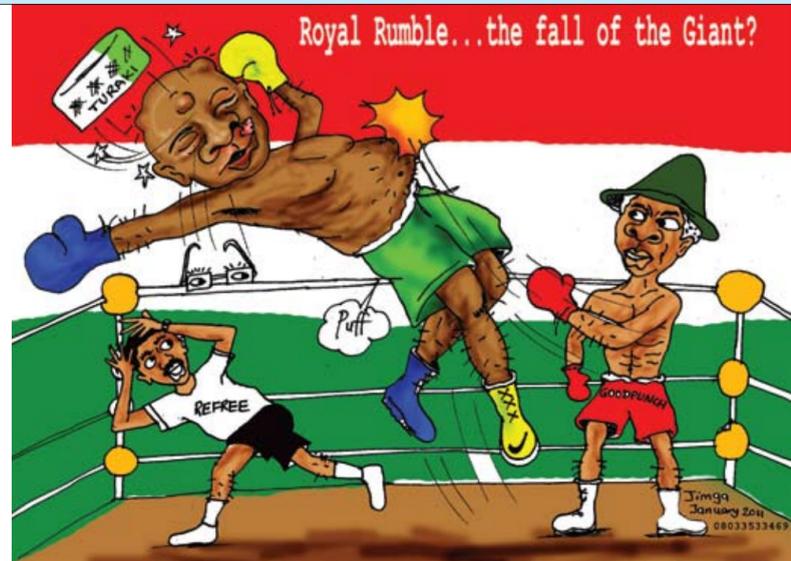


Jimoh Ganiyu Akinloye

Jimoh Ganiyu Akinloye is a young optimistic cartoonist who draws inspiration from a variety of topical political issues. For this issue of the CCA, Lagos Newsletter, Akinloye presents two comics that engage Nigeria's current political climate.

Jimoh Ganiyu Akinloye was born in Cote d'Ivoire and moved with his family to Nigeria at the age of eight. He is currently studying the History of Art on the postgraduate level at the University of Lagos, where he also obtained a B.A. Degree in Visual Arts specialising in graphic design in 2008.

1/2 Jimoh Ganiyu Akinloye. *Marwar* (2011). *Royal Rubmle* (2011). Courtesy the Artist.



Images from Art-iculate

In 2008, the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos began the Art-iculate lecture series, which aims to increase dialogue, encourage debate and stimulate exchange in visual art and culture in Nigeria. By prioritising the provision of an independent discursive platform through our public programmes, we hope to actively encourage the development of critical perspectives as well as engage with topical issues that affect our society specifically as well as the world at large. From 2008-2009 Art-iculate invited to much acclaim Didier Schaub (Doual'Art, Cameroon), Solange Farkas (Videobrasil, Sao Paulo) Yacouba Konate (University of Abidjan, Abidjan) Monna Mokoena (MOMO Gallery, Johannesburg), Shahidul Alam (Drik Agency, Dhaka) and Chika Okeke-Agulu (Princeton University).



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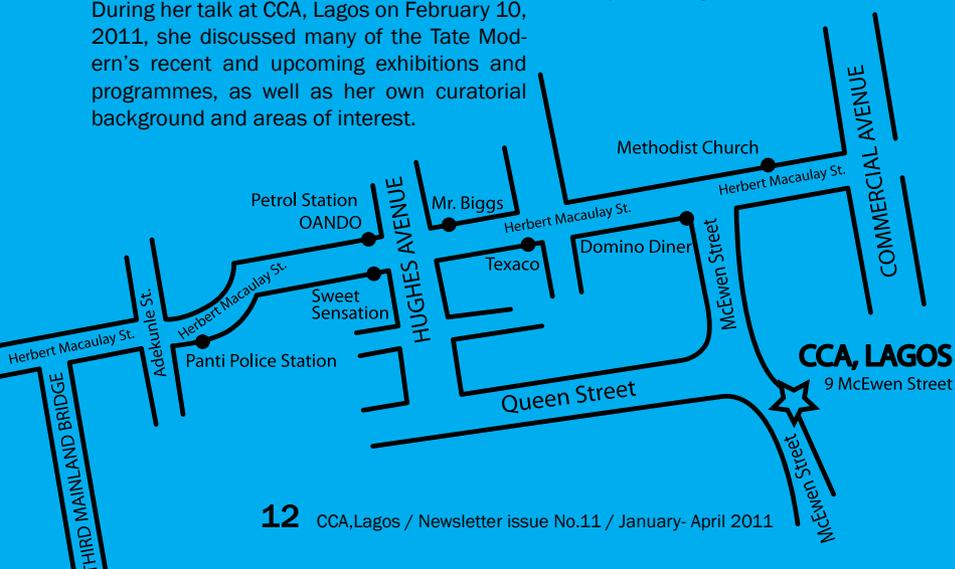


We most recently welcomed Kerryn Greenberg who is a curator at the Tate Modern, London. Greenberg holds a Master of Arts Degree in Curatorial Studies from Bard College, New York. Her recent curatorial projects include Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, Francis Alÿs: The Story of Deception, John Baldessari: Pure Beauty, Nicholas Hlobo: Uhambo, Rothko: The Late Series, and Juan Muñoz A Retrospective. She is currently working on a major exhibition of Joan Miró and has recently organized the 'Curating in Africa' symposium at Tate Modern. She writes regularly for exhibition catalogues and art magazines, including Modern Painters and Art South Africa.

1/2/3 Images courtesy of Jude Anogwih.

4 Kerryn Greenberg. Curator, Tate Modern, London.

During her talk at CCA, Lagos on February 10, 2011, she discussed many of the Tate Modern's recent and upcoming exhibitions and programmes, as well as her own curatorial background and areas of interest.



The Library

CCA,Lagos has set up one of the fastest growing independent libraries in Africa, particularly in Nigeria by specialising in the visual arts and the creative sector in general. The library contains over 2500 books, catalogues, magazines, journals, as well as a growing collection of art and artists videos. It is gradually developing into an important artists archive and educational facility for artists and specialised students, especially at graduate, post graduate and doctoral level. It is also proving to be an invaluable resource for local/international researchers and other professionals in the cultural sector.

The amount of materials that have been added to the library through purchase and donation has grown in leaps and bounds over the years, making the CCA,Lagos library a veritable treasure trove. In our efforts to encourage membership and promote readership, we have restructured and reduced our membership fees. These gestures reflect our profound commitment to knowledge—despite adequate provision by local statutory bodies.

CCA,Library is a reference resource only and unfortunately does not have the facility for lending materials. Library resources are available only through membership. Additionally, members are also required to pay daily usage fees.

Membership Levels

Full Member.....N5,000 per year.....plus daily rate N200
StudentN3,000 per year.....plus daily rate N100
(I.D card required)

Daily Rate without Membership

Nigerian Resident/
ECOWAS Citizens.....N500 per day
Non-ECOWAS Citizens..... N1,000 per day

Overseas Supporters

Diamond Donor \$1,000 (Pound/Euro equivalent)
Golden Giver \$500 (Pound/Euro equivalent)
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Frequently asked questions:

Where is CCA,Lagos Library?

CCA,Lagos library is centrally located on the mainland. We are 5mins from the foot of the 3rd Mainland Bridge and 10mins from Ikorodu Road when you turn onto Herbert Macaulay Street. We are about 5mins from the Alagomeji junction. Use the Domino Diner as your point of reference. The library is located on the 4th floor of 9 McEwen Street.

Can we order books from you?

No, we do not sell or order books on behalf of our members. However, members can request books to be ordered for the library – these requests are subject to approval and available funding. We are looking into the possibility of partnership with one of the premier bookshops in the country to provide an appropriate book ordering service to our members.

What do I need to join?

Joining the CCA,Library is easy – all you need is a passport photo, a completed registration form, and payment of membership fees. We have a variety of yearly membership options ranging from full membership at N5000 to student membership at N3000 to N1000 a day for casual members. See more information above.

Do you have only art books?

While the majority of our books focus on art, art history and critical theory, we do have a limited selection of books dedicated to architecture, fashion, textiles, design, and other related cultural areas. New books are constantly being added to our collection so do frequent the library to discover our recent arrivals.

When is the library open?

We are open from 10am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, and Saturday by Appointment only. The library is not open to the public on Sundays and on public holidays.

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Signature

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