Welcome

Celebrating Nigeria? As this final edition for 2010 is released, activities marking 50 years of independence go into overdrive. Nigeria can be adept at making the biggest noise, the baddest parts. Welcome and West Africa collaborating with artists, curators, writers, theorists and national and international organisations.

Over the past month, I spent a great deal of time visiting a hospitalised relative. Over the past month, I spent a great deal of time visiting a hospitalised relative. Over the past month, I spent a great deal of time visiting a hospitalised relative. Over the past month, I spent a great deal of time visiting a hospitalised relative. Over the past month, I spent a great deal of time visiting a hospitalised relative.

We start by noting the archive and celebrating the diversity of the work of master photographer J.O. Okeke and presenting a modest selection of work focusing on traditional and western dressing from the 50s to the 70s. Professional development as well as curatorial interest continues to be a priority of our activities. We have two residencies in the works, Uchay Chima (fiance) goes to Amsterdam, whilst Albert Portrony from the UK comes to Lagos. We will also collaborate with Triangle Arts Trust to organise their first workshop in Lagos featuring Nigerian artists as well as artists from across the continent and further afield.

Our library has benefitted immensely from the generosity of some organisations and individuals. This quarter we are expecting several boxes of publications from our programmes started in 2008 which finished recently with the NSK Passport project curated by Hansi Momodu. None of these activities would be possible without the confidence, support and dedication of the CCA, Lagos’ board of trustees. Their journey with us makes the work that we do all the more rewarding. To my colleagues – the backbone that keeps the dream alive – Jude, Cyreza, Harri, Mama Noj, Antwan and Hansi my appreciation remains limitless. Their continuous manifestation of commitment, dedication and passion remains unwavering for the idea of CCA, Lagos that we can work together yet, (on) dependent of each other, speaks the dynamism of each member of the CCA, Lagos family.

The Audacity of Place

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Welcome to our World.

Bai Silva - Director

• Available Publications
• Art-Language, Dialect or Accent?
• Art, Fashion and Identity
• A Nigerian Library

This is borne out by our 2009/10 Fellowship Antwan I. Byrd whose immense contribution during a one-year sojourn sees him re-integrated as an adjunct curatorial assistant working on several projects with us from his base in the US. Whilst we acknowledge the Ambivalence of Independence and the tensions inherent in the postcolonial, we nonetheless look ahead to the promise of the next 50 years. A collective promise to work towards creating the places and spaces for dialogue, discourse, interaction and exchange. A promise that will allow us to celebrate in 50 years’ time the true meaning of independence. The promise begins now. In the spirit of Owambe, Happy 2011!

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Geothe Institute, whose substantial funding has enabled us to adopt a new format for this year’s three quarterly newsletters. Their support has also enabled us to begin work on the forthcoming Democracies publication. Art Collaboration has been generous in supporting our exhibition programme as well as a pilot project in artist residencies, a workshop and curatorial development initiatives. Prebi-a-Porter was such an ambitious programme and the partnership we formed with IPA and Ghetto Institute has been invaluable. The Lagos and Johannesburg branches of the Goethe Institute have shown that support is part of a continuum that must be developed and cultivated. An excellent example of this is the Advanced Training Programme started in 2008 which has been running without the confidence, support and dedication of the CCA, Lagos’ board of trustees. Their journey with us makes the work that we do all the more rewarding. To my colleagues – the backbone that keeps the dream alive – Jude, Cyreza, Harri, Mama Noj, Antwan and Hansi my appreciation remains limitless. Their continuous manifestation of commitment, dedication and passion remains unwavering for the idea of CCA, Lagos that we can work together yet, (on) dependent of each other, speaks the dynamism of each member of the CCA, Lagos family.

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As part of CCA,Lagos’ objective to proactively contribute to the professional development of artists, we are pleased to present our first overseas artist residency. Uchay Chima took part in our Video Art Workshops in 2008/2009 in collaboration with One Minute Foundation and Miguel Petchkovsky’s Linsia imaginaria. His work ‘Carbon Blues’, won, by popular audience vote, the 1st prize in the 2nd workshop – an all expenses covered residency in Amsterdam. Over a month period to be facilitated by artist Alix Trijano of the One Minute Foundation and artist Miguel Petchkovsky, Uchay will develop his video art skills. He will also meet and interact with local and international artists based in Amsterdam as well as visit museums, galleries, art organisations and other art professionals. Whilst in Amsterdam, he hopes to work on the development of a new work.

Uchay Chima graduated in 1997 from the Art School of the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu. He started working in new media art in 2007 and has exhibited in Nigeria and abroad. Visit his site at www.uchayjoelchima.blogspot.com

CCa Lagos/ Triangle Arts Trust International Workshop 4th - 17th October 2010

CCA Lagos and Triangle Arts Trust are organising the first Triangle Workshop at the Stone House in Alakuko, Lagos. The two-week workshop will bring together a group of artists working in various disciplines to share ideas, experiences and to make new work inspired by the context and the opportunity to work alongside other artists. Approximately 16 artists will participate in the workshop, half from Nigeria and the rest from other countries in Africa and further afield. During the workshop participants will also be invited to present their work to each other and to the public. The workshop will end with an Open Day, when the public will join the artists in celebrating the outcome of the two weeks.

This workshop is funded by The British Museum, the Ford Foundation and the Commonwealth Foundation. It is organised and supported by CCA, Lagos and Triangle Arts Trust in collaboration with Stone House, Alakuko.

Gasworks Residency in collaboration with CCA, Lagos.

Albert Potrony
Lagos, 1st November - 12th December 2010

Albert Potrony works in a variety of media, from sculpture and installation to video and sound. His work reflects an interest in the gaps between perception and interpretation, language and understanding. And the larger question—What may be revealed through these gaps? Memory, recollection and the shifting frame of definition are recurring themes in his mixed media installations. Allowing a story to unfold is a key principle of his practice, with random discoveries being as important as the concepts involved in shaping his works.

Alongside his practice, Potrony has developed and delivered art projects as an artist-educator for the Whitechapel gallery, Tate Modern, Gasworks, The Drawing Room, Orleans House Gallery, English Heritage, Bow Arts Trust, Goldsmiths College and Next Generation at the National Theatre.

Whilst in Lagos, Potrony is interested in establishing a series of dialogues with Lagosians as a possible starting point to developing a new piece of work. Visit his site at www.albertpotrony.com

JD ‘Okhai Ojeikere: Sartorial Moments and the Nearness of Yesterday
1st October - 14th October 2010

JD ‘Okhai Ojeikere has received a great deal of international recognition for his photographic series that explores the aesthetic form of hairstyles and headdresses in Nigeria . In addition to being the subject of many solo exhibitions, Ojeikere’s work has been featured in many major exhibitions such as Documenta XI.

There still remains, however, other significant bodies of work from the artist’s archive—an assayed over a 45-year period—that has yet to be shown publicly. In Ojeikere celebrates his 80th year and Nigeria its 50th year of independence, CCA, Lagos is pleased to present in collaboration with artist Ojeikere a selection of photographs that Ojeikere produced from the early 1950s to the late 1970s.

Within the context of our Art, Fashion and Identity programme, this exhibition focuses on a selection of work from Ojeikere’s oeuvre that explores fashion—both in the traditional and western styles, with images taken at work, of play and during special events.

Viva Africa! Felabration 2010 at CCA, Lagos
14th - 16th October, 2010

This year’s theme of Felabration is drawn from Fela’s prophetic message ‘Viva Africa!’ released in 1969, reaching to Nigeria’s civil war and asking us all to heed Fela’s prophetic message ‘viva Africa!’ by countering the civil war.

Included in the exhibition are photographs of Fela and his legendary band, containing a selection of images from the early 1970s to 1980s, showing Fela and his band performing as their music crosses borders. Felabration 2010 will feature both local and international artists who worked with Nigeria’s famous musician Fela Anikulapo-Kuti.

CCA Lagos, Curated by Tamsin Kuboye.

Independence Shorts
October - November 2010

A programme featuring a series of events called ‘Independence Shorts’, which are aimed at reflecting and celebrating independence. It will present a collection of talks, workshops, screenings and exhibitions that focus on fashion, expectations, information dissemination and activism.

Watch Out! Preview of 2011 Programmes
Master Class for Photographers, February 2011
This six-day intensive master class led by Sabakkye Adeniyi Jones and Akinbode Akirbi is for advanced professional photographers. More info: masterclass@ccalagos.workshop@gmail.com

2nd International Art Photography Residency Programme, November/December 2011
CCA Lagos will be presenting its 2nd art photography residency programme featuring local and international artists, curators and writers. To receive more information or to join the mailing list, please contact ccalagos.workshop@gmail.com

Itoja Uche-Okeke

I had a very interesting view of, and greater insight into the 2010 Joburg Art fair working as a member of the Centre for Contemporary Art Lagos (CCA, Lagos) team. This year’s fair had an added ant of anticipation and excitement, due primarily to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, hosted by South Africa and its large city, Johannesburg. As expected, the fair benefited considerably from the influx of tourists with visiting from around the world.

Dealing with some of the logistics from the Johannesburg I became aware of many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art Fair. The high cost of moving works of art from one region of the continent to the other is a major challenge, as is the cost of transportation for many of the challenges that might prove in the 2nd Johannesburg Art FA
Artists Focus: Otobong Nkanga

Otobong Nkanga is a visual artist and performer working in a variety of media including installation, photography, drawing, and sculpture. She often uses her body and voice to articulate her reactions to, and the implications of, the way she acts in different environments and contents. The resultant works, inspired by her observation of the sensations of her surroundings, depict the social developments and changes in our environment. In essence she puts forward the personal and the autobiographical so as to accentuate and expose the frailty and instability of man in his environment.

Otobong Nkanga (b. 1974, Kano) began her art studies at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria and continued at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France. She was at the residency program at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In 2008 she obtained her Masters in the Performing Arts at Dasarts, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.


“1. Bisi Silva: I am primarily familiar with your earlier photographic works and drawings, so it was interesting for me to learn that you not only work across media, but also over prolonged periods of time. It seems that much of your work has been focused on performative works ranging from State of Amnesia (2005), Topology (2010), and most recently travel projects such as your recent exhibition of Alan Kaprow’s Baggage (1972-2007).

Bisi Silva: I am primarily familiar with your earlier photographic works and drawings, so it was interesting for me to learn that you not only work across media, but also over prolonged periods of time. It seems that much of your work has been focused on performative works ranging from State of Amnesia (2005), Topology (2010), and most recently travel projects such as your recent exhibition of Alan Kaprow’s Baggage (1972-2007). Could you speak more about these transitions?

Otobong Nkanga: These two spaces were joined by a third ‘other,’ “viewer” and/or “spectator.” When I attempt to discover different ways of working, different ways of dealing with complexity of the personal in relation to the everyday local/global and universal issues of our society and environment. Using different media enables one to engage with the same subject but from different angles and perspectives. This stimulates and motivates me allowing no room for complacency with certain processes and ideas. I am interested in exploring different forms and methods of working. This is why my practice naturally oscillates from photography to performance to drawings or sound and vice versa.

2. BS: Your photographic practice over the years has been particularly performative in nature. I am thinking particularly about the Amnesia series. Could you discuss the relationship between performance and photography in your practice?

Otobong Nkanga: Your photographic practice over the years has been particularly performative in nature. I am thinking particularly about the Amnesia series. Could you discuss the relationship between performance and photography in your practice?

BS: The environment is something that for me is a totality, it is everywhere and in all, in other, in much of your output. Could you talk more about your interests in the environment, specifically in Nigeria, but also generally, and the various processes involved in your practice?

ON: What actually fascinated me was the rate at which the Nigerian landscape was changing. Buildings that were built a few years back suddenly appear like desert sand and next to the building, a new structure seemed to sprout out of nowhere. This fast acceleration of construction also exposes, with such contrast, the decays and ruins of the society.

3. My earlier photographic works marked a period for observation and documentation, but also created a path or a way of thinking that led to me look for other ways of expressing ideas. It helped me focus-conceptualise the two spaces I was living in and working between—Europe and Africa.

BS: How has it been a very slow process and it is something that I am still engaged with as a way to discover different ways of working, different ways of dealing with complexity of the personal in relation to the everyday local/global and universal issues of our society and environment. Using different media enables one to engage with the same subject but from different angles and perspectives. This stimulates and motivates me allowing no room for complacency with certain processes and ideas. I am interested in exploring different forms and methods of working. This is why my practice naturally oscillates from photography to performance to drawings or sound and vice versa.

4. In 2005 I decided to do my Masters at Dasarts, Netherlands to be able to delve more into the aspects of performance but also taking into account my visual art background. In this way I was able to explore aspects of staging scenarios and the notion of narratives. The 5 years of exploration confirmed my way of positioning my work and the staging of different perspectives—like it in photography, drawings, performances or installations.

BS: You have always been interested in experimenting with different media to find the medium that fit with the ideas, my emotions and way of thinking. It is, therefore, important that the work is able to effectively transmit the thoughts and layers that evolve from my research. In my earlier works I was very interested in documenting spaces, especially ruined or abandoned spaces and places undergoing change. In the photographic series such as Road Series: Toll Gate to Ibadan—1972-2007, involving the presence of architecture, I was interested in the oil rich delta region in Nigeria, which has undergone ecological and social and political shifts resulting to conflicts, violence and ecological damage.

The drawings “Delta Stories: Landscapes—I” portrays an aerial view of an imaginary landscape going through a metamorphosis which gradually unfolds with water and in a later stage with a sprawl of crude oil. These drawings point to a two-way state of mutation in the delta zone. The geological and the man-made course of development. The structures are told with the juxtaposition of one image next to the other and the telling of each drawing gives another layer of the notion of the narrative. The changing landscape I am interested in is the oil rich delta region in Nigeria, which has undergone ecological, political and social shift resulting to conflicts, violence and ecological damage.
Portfolio@CCA,Lagos

Portfolio@CCA,Lagos is an initiative developed to encourage and facilitate interest in contemporary art from Africa by presenting the work of emerging and established artists. We hope that this initiative will stimulate the new, but growing generation of collectors on the continent. Considering the increasing global interest in contemporary art from Africa, and taking advantage of our wide network of curators, writers, artists and other art professionals, we are pleased to introduce to a wide audience exciting new works by artists from across the continent. This issue presents affordable and unique works by four dynamic and innovative artists and cultural producers based in Nigeria and abroad.

Karo Akpokiere

Akpokiere’s drawings are indicative of his desire to combine different ‘cultural’ elements in order to create art that is not only universally appealing but also reflective of his interests in textile motifs, the graffiti aesthetic, t-shirt graphics, sneakers, advertising, geometry and popular culture. The artist transfers his designs—which are created using either analogue or digital techniques—onto everyday objects like tote-bags, t-shirts, badges etc., as a way of tapping into the potential of these objects to make his drawings more accessible and visible. In this way, the products represent the intersections between art and fashion, with the result being art that is functional and wearable.

The Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos has commissioned Akpokiere to create these limited edition tote-bags in celebration of our 3-year anniversary.

Price on Request.

Yinka Shonibare MBE

Yinka Shonibare, MBE. Climate Shit Drawing 1 (2008). Four-colour lithographic print with silkscreen glaze, collaged with fabrics and bolts and die cut, 50.4 x 34.4cm (19 3/4 x 13 1/2in). Edition of 200.

N35,000 (excl. p&p.)

Yinka Shonibare's 'Climate Shit Drawing 1' is Yinka Shonibare’s first limited edition print. A lithograph with unique hand drawn and cut fabric and foil collage, the print is signed and numbered in an edition of 200. It is accompanied by the sumptuous catalogue, published by Prestel, celebrating the artist’s mid-career retrospective, which took place recently at the Brooklyn Museum, New York and at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

The launch of the book will feature limited edition box sets containing 9 of the works by four dynamic and innovative artists and cultural producers based in Nigeria and abroad. Each chapter contains 20 colour prints of drawings by Otobong Nkanga. This book is fitted in a silkscreen translucent white envelope. / No of Edition: 470 prints, N6500 (excl.p&p) / 30 prints special edition containing an original drawing 19 x 26.7 cm each.

Price on Request.

Otobong Nkanga

"Filtered Memoires" is 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.

The Book "No be today story O!" is a ‘Singer-stitched’ brochure divided in 4 chapters.

Nigerians Behind the Lens

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

Price on Request.

Jazzhole Records

Jazzhole Records is an independent label based in Lagos dedicated to championing and preserving the vintage treasures of African music. It focuses on traditional folk and roots music that have been produced in West Africa in the past since the early 40s. In so doing it seeks to pioneer a renaissance as well as preserve an important musical heritage that has influenced the modern trends that evolved as a result of this music.

The Jazzhole label has released three notable CDs from seasoned artists - Seni Teyejoo’s ‘Easy Motion Tourist’, re-records a time-honoured musical form that touches on the evolution of “Toy Moti”, a sound that uniquely blends the early manifestations of Aaje and palm wine music, and careers through twelve tracks that parade influences which include Calypso, Fatai Rolling Dollar’s Returns highlights the varied infections and nuances of the palm-winehighlife musical genre, percolated by dance and jazzy infusions that feature its rep­port with contemporary grooves and styles. Sina Aiyale Bakura’s ‘Aje Mini’ expands the flavour of fasıl music and usher this across with melodies of awambe and an instrumentation profile that is modern and chic.

For more information or to purchase these CDs, please visit Jazzhole Records at 55B Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos or contact tejayesin@hotmail.com

CCA Lagos / Newsletter issue No.10 / September - December 2010
In May of this year I was invited by the New York-based organisation Independent Curators International (ICI) as their inaugural touring curator. Instead of touring solely exhibitions/objects, ICI wanted to move curators/critics across the US. My intensive schedule included speaking engagements at different kinds of institutions, ranging from the Chicago Art Fair to the Clark Institute, from the Menil Collection in Houston. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet individual curators, artists and even collectors.

It was an important and illuminating project especially after a 15-year absence from the US, I was taken aback yet pleasantly surprised by the level of engagement it afforded me. During my visits to different cities and institutions, I was amazed by the level of interest in contemporary art activities on the continent. The imprint of my presentations focused on my curatorial trajectory especially on my experiences in the UK, my relocation to different cities and institutions, I was repeatedly surprised by the level of engagement. From April 27th to May 16th 2010, the 2nd Invisible Borders Biennale of Photography took place in the African continent. The stops along the way in Africa—most especially, the Republic of Benin, Togo, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya were potential destinations.

Underpinning the project are several major aims namely; to tell Africa’s stories, by Africans, through photography; to encourage exposure of emerging Nigerian photographers towards experiencing art and photography as practiced in other parts of the continent; and to develop a cultural network that encourages and embraces trans-African artistic relationships within the continent.

The first trip took place in November 2009 Lagos to Bamako for the 5th Bamako Encounters Biennale of Photography. From April 27th to May 16th, 2010, the 2nd Invisible Borders Biennale of Photography took place in the African continent. The stops along the way included the Republic of Benin, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal.

Although IB is not an initiative with fixed participants, the founding participants were the same as those on the 2002 journey with only one new addition: Amaize Ojeikere, Ray Daniels, Uche Okpa-Iroha, Kehinde Okunoren, Oyinda Fakeye, and Charles Okeke. Invisible Borders 2010

AB: You have printed your illustrations on everything from clothing, badges to furniture, how do these surfaces differ from traditional paper support in terms of conveying ideas, etc?
KA: It’s about the secondary function (you sit on chairs, wear badges and t-shirts) and the ‘non-art’ nature of these surfaces. Working with paper provides a means to an end-with the end being a T-shirt, or a piece of furniture. These surfaces therefore become the ‘new’ support for the drawing. Most people expect the work to be art and the reverse process, but working on surfaces other than paper allows me to present art to people in a functional, understandable and commercially accessible manner that resonates with everyday life.

AB: What are you currently working on in the virtual/artistic space known as The SpaceProject? Can you talk more about this, what’s the aim of the project?
KA: The SpaceProject serves as a platform for me to make and display work and also collaborate with other creatives. In the near future the project will expand to display work by other artists. It is about finding ways to increase visibility and accessibility through self-initiated projects and commissioned works. It is a way to add more art to the world, and also a way to inspire and empower people to create.

AB: Can you explain the motivation behind the featured illustration?
KA: The illustration was created in 2004 and it reinterprets the spiritual aspect of a friend who incidentally commissioned the artwork. It’s a hand-drawn mix of bold lines of varying widths, text and characters seemingly woven to create a rich, neutral-coloured composition that works wonderfully well on fabric or as a standalone art print. The text and imagery present in the drawing take inspiration from the graffiti art and most elements of popular culture.

AB: What is the title of the artwork being potential destinations?
KA: The title of the artwork is “Ghanaian Flag (2010).”

AB: What is the title of the artwork being potential destinations?
KA: The title of the artwork is “Self Portrait of the IB 2010 Team (2010).”

AB: How do you make your art accessible to as many people as possible?
KA: One that, for want of a better word, provides the ‘new’ support for the drawing. Most people expect the work to be art and the reverse process, but working on surfaces other than paper allows me to present art to people in a functional, understandable and commercially accessible manner that resonates with everyday life.

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Thinking Out Loud

Contemporary African Art—Language, Dialect or Accent

Antwan I. Byrd

In this recurring section we invite artists, critics, curators, and other cultural professionals to contribute their thoughts and/or comments on specific aspects of contemporary art that interests them.

One of the most challenging aspects of my Fulbright project concerned my efforts to understand the nuances of contemporary art practice in Nigeria, and on the other—its figure the best way to deploy such knowledge. The impetus for my project was born out of a different, yet methodically related, set of concerns about the field that we call contemporary African art. Prior to beginning my research in Lagos, I was completely overwhelmed by the abstract ways in which the field had been, and is still, in many ways—engaged. This abstraction is embedded in the strategic conceptualization of a language when compared to the particularity of its dialects or even, the specificity of its accents. Consider, for example, the relationship between English as a global, and a local accent.

I wondered about how this dynamic played out in terms of contemporary artistic production, and how it might enable us to develop new ways of conceptualizing the challenges related to my areas of inquiry.

Let us accept, for example, that the sphere of contemporary art, with its international exhibitions and transnational art practices, constitutes a global language. Then, we might consider contemporary African art to be a dialect of the language not yet spoken—other regional specific fields like contemporary American art. Therefore, distinctively, contemporary Nigerian art can be thought of as an accent—one that, at least for me, requires direct engagement with local speakers in order to be properly comprehended and embedded into larger conversations on contemporary (African) art practices.

My research was precisely about talking and learning—about having conversations with artists, curators, writers and other individuals in the cultural sector. These conversations led me to the many projects I worked on at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos to aid me in developing a project involving interviews, conducting interactions, in forming and participating in various engagements, and traveling in the country. Many of these projects were conceptualized and framed by trips to other African cities such as Accra, Bamako and Johannesburg.

Considering the logic of a language, it follows that dialects and accents are typically conceptualized in parallelistic geographic space. Again, art dialects can be defined by certain vocabularies and syntaxes, accents are, however, rooted in the particularities of pronunciation. The dialect of contemporary art, for example, speaks to the different world over who are united, in one way or another, by their affinities to the continent. Yet how are we to deal with the real that every artist speaks with a different accent—even when they in the same environment, set alone in different regions of the world and in different places, be it, to the field of contemporary art generally.

Thus there is a need for more attention to national and specific art practices. And it is this concern that informs my current research, as I attempt to organise the data, reflect on my experiences and plan for future investigations in the field of contemporary art practices in Nigeria.

Ruth Simbao

Cosmopolism: The Audacity of Place

Ruth Simbao

Art that is gathered together under the ‘international’ rubric of ‘Contemporary African Art’ is generally art that rests towards the continent, but simultaneously regulates a certain distance from the place of Africa. Due to the fact that the discourse is still largely driven by the ‘international’ rubric of ‘Contemporary Art, Lagos’ it is often the case that the ‘international’ rubric of ‘Contemporary Art, Lagos’ is the necessary paradigm to which any projects are aligned to. In the discourses of the ‘international’ rubric of ‘Contemporary Art, Lagos’, it’s the case that the ‘international’ rubric of ‘Contemporary Art, Lagos’ is the necessary paradigm to which any projects are aligned to. It is the political edge of the new cosmopolitanism in Africa which can be seen in their personal practices. In this context we do have a limited rejection of the static, parochial notions of place, cosmopolitanism, in a context where questions of identity can be discussed. The political edge of the new cosmopolitanism in Africa which can be seen in their personal practices. In this context we do have a limited rejection of the static, parochial notions of place, cosmopolitanism, in a context where questions of identity can be discussed. The political edge of the new cosmopolitanism in Africa which can be seen in their personal practices. In this context we do have a limited rejection of the static, parochial notions of place, cosmopolitanism, in a context where questions of identity can be discussed. The political edge of the new cosmopolitanism in Africa which can be seen in their personal practices. In this context we do have a limited rejection of the static, parochial notions of place, cosmopolitanism, in a context where questions of identity can be discussed. The political edge of the new cosmopolitanism in Africa which can be seen in their personal practices. In this context we do have a limited rejection of the static, parochial notions of place, cosmopolitanism, in a context where questions of identity can be discussed.
As Nigeria celebrates her 50th year of independence, the centennial, Jimoh Ganiyu Akinloye, also known as Jimga, sees the art of cartooning as a valuable medium within the field of contemporary art. This aspect of artistic practice, maintains Akinloye, must be situated in intellectual discussions, as cartoons do not only reflect a society’s political realities, but can also be used as a tool to shape public perception.

Jimoh Ganiyu Akinloye is a young optimistic cartoonist who draws inspiration from a variety of politically topical issues. For Jimga, cartooning is the sincerest form of flattery. As Bill Hill has noted, the relationship between image and language has informed many of the significant developments of contemporary art. This aspect of artistic practice, maintains the cartoonist, Jimoh Ganiyu Akinloye, also known as Jimga, must be situated in intellectual discussions, as cartoons do not only reflect a society’s political realities, but can also be used as a tool to shape public perception.

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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 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.

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