



Affinity

EMBODIED POETICS

NADA MIAMI

3 DECEMBER - 7 DECEMBER 2024

BOOTH E113

ANNE ADAMS

DAMILOLA ONOSOWOBO

SAMUEL NNOROM

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

This presentation illuminates freedom-focused praxes that invite viewers to gather and reconnect with themselves. Drawing upon Sylvia Wynter's reconceptualisation of 'sociopoetics', these sculptural and painterly works attest to the urgency of emancipating from power hierarchies.

Adams's use of postcolonial and postmodern feminist theory configures subversive, revolutionary sculptures that welcome liminality and newness. Comparably, Onosowobo's paintings use familiar, intimate motifs within a specific Nigerian spatiality to invoke reflections on identity and community. Finally, Nnorom's fabric architectures promote self-interrogation and critical thinking, using these to respond to sociopolitical factors that inform the mundane. These artists invite us to consider the difference between what is given and what is our own.

Adams's sculptural series explores rest as a radical act of resilience. She considers this practice as essential to Black women and all marginalised and colonised people. Adams's stoneware visualises her observations of exploitative, migrant histories- how these forcibly shape identity and challenge personal and collective rights to rest and harmony. This being in direct opposition to the fluid Nok sculptures she draws inspiration from. Her contemporary methodology challenges colonial narratives, recontextualising the notion that self-care is political warfare- as cited by cultural theorists like Audre Lorde and bell hooks.

Onosowobo's practice discusses everyday Nigerianness using motifs of memory and time. This new body of work presents a painterly dreamscape that poses questions rather than answers. In 'A Hand on a Shoulder', the composed, formidable subject contrasts the obscured, barely visible bodies collected in the Lamu background. The viewer's gaze is coaxed to the clearest object, a calm hand placed on the feminine figure's shoulder. This limb acts as a gesture of pleasure, which defies the temptation of despair and isolation- imagined as the European pull. Onosowobo sees the shoulder as an everyday part of the body; her fixation on this element calls to her general focus on the nostalgic and ordinary.

Nnorom's textile, sculptural practices deconstruct various socio-cultural concerns and truths. His work is foregrounded in his use of Dutch wax prints or African print fabric (Ankara) and second-hand clothes (Okirika) predominantly used within his local community and across West Africa. By manipulating these cloths into bubbles, bindles, and lines, he comments on the dynamism of "The Social Fabric"- this being reconstituted according to geopolitical-cultural histories and spaces. In particular, he explodes, ties, and creates parallel lines within his architectural works. Thus, Nnorom suggests a global, quotidian rhetoric stipulating expression and connectivity.

Collectively, these contemporary works craft a necessary poetic that encourages a rounded self-intrigue and sense of being.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Anne Adams (b. 1993) is an interdisciplinary artist from Nigeria, she received her MFA from the Tyler School of Art and Architecture in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In recent years, Adams has participated in shows in the USA, UK, France, and Africa. Her recent exhibitions include Radical Reimagining at the Newark Museum of Art, The Future of Clay at The Clay Studio Philadelphia, Clay Holds Water, and Water Holds Memory at the Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati. Freedom in Multitudes at The 1897 Gallery in London She has participated in residencies including the Haystack Mountain School of Craft open studio residency and Watershed Center for Ceramic Art.

Adams has shown at fairs including Art X Lagos and 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London. She received the NCECA Multicultural Fellowship 2023 and the Simone Leigh Zenobia Award at Watershed 2023. She was recognized by The Lagos State Government, as one of the 100 women making a change in Lagos, Nigeria for her contribution to the arts.

ARTIST STATEMENT

This body of work explores rest as a radical act of resilience for the marginalized, colonized, and Black women; as well as migrants whose labor and displacement are products of colonialism's enduring legacy.

As a postcolonial Nigerian living in the United States, Adams has witnessed how histories of exploitation and migration shape identities- continuously challenging the right to rest and autonomy. Her sculptures embody rest as a subversive, revolutionary act—existing in a state of in-betweenness where new narratives and identities are forged.

Juxtaposing this with the history of the Nok sculptures, which remain open to interpretation and represent the fluidity of identity, Adams seeks to create a contemporary methodology that challenges the colonial narratives. Her work reclaims space and form to address the realities of modern migration and the relentless labor expected of those seeking better lives. Mass migration, driven by global inequalities rooted in colonialism, reflects the ongoing exploitation of bodies displaced from their homes and forced into perpetual survival.

Inspired by thinkers like Audre Lorde and bell hooks, who defined self-care as political warfare, these sculptures assert rest as an essential form of resistance. In doing so, they offer a vision of resilience where new stories and futures are continuously being formed, despite histories that sought to define us.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Damilola Onosowobo (b. 1993) received her Bachelor's in Architecture and Master's in Environmental Design from the University of Lagos. Her works highlight the reality that humans rely on echoes of the past. We are connected through memories. The lives we live serve as artefacts for those in the future to collect. Onosowobo's work has always celebrated the mundane; ordinary things and moments that retain power and resonance within our minds and memories.

Her recent shows include ART X Lagos, 2024, 1-54 London, 2024, ART X Lagos, 2022, Girls Run The World, Eclectica Contemporary, Cape Town, 2022, Coalesce at Affinity Gallery, Lagos, 2021, Mother of Mankind, HOFA Gallery, London, 2021, Phenomenology of a Black woman, For you Gallery, Dubai, 2021.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Nostalgia, familiarity, home, simple times, and everyday Nigerianness- are themes that Onosowobo typically explores within her artistic canon. Each year serves as a layered moment that is eventually displayed on canvas through oil. Her current focus is curiosity, she allows herself to be contemplative in her works. Questions fascinate her much more than answers.

This current series of works ponders her confusion and unreadied thoughts. She is contorting herself within various surroundings- playing with the stages of grief and combat that encapsulate the inward journey.

As a Nigerian Yoruba woman, Onosowobo investigates the loosened threads between herself and her wider culture. This self-described 'gap', exemplifies the impacts of Western colonialism. This fractured cultural history bodes questions surrounding possession and heritage. She asks herself, "What is ours?". Global modernity informs her assemblage of self. Yet, the chaos of experiencing a nation that is partially dissociated from itself is somewhat disorientating. Onosowobo re-contextualises these complexities through her lens.

"It's kind of a progression of what my work has always been about. This time, it's beyond reminiscing. It's a cultural question that I can never answer."

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Samuel Nnorom (b. 1990, Abia, Nigeria) holds a B.A.Ed. Sculpture from the University of Jos, Nigeria, and M.F.A Sculpture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His body of work is typically constructed from pieces of Ankara/African wax print fabric scraps collected from tailors or cast-off clothing from homes. Along with discarded foam from furniture workshops. Through actions like sewing, rolling, and tying, he poetically navigates the boundaries between textile, painting, and sculpture.

He has an upcoming solo exhibition at the Textile Museum of Canada. He has held solo exhibitions at Saatchi Gallery in collaboration with Tiwani Contemporary and What Tomorrow Holds at THK Gallery, all in 2024. He has taken selected residences at Black Rock Senegal and BISO International Biennial of Sculpture of Ouagadougou Burkina-Faso. Nnorom's works are found in collections including Taguchi Collection in Japan, Fondazione Marino Golinelli, Italy and Fondation Gandur pour l'Art in Geneva, Switzerland.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Nnorom's interests lie in the history, value, meaning, politics, consumption, power, and identity represented on the Dutch wax prints or African print fabric (Ankara) and the second-hand or used clothes (Okirika), which are predominantly consumed within his local community and West Africa.

Fabrics evoke a sense of social structure or organisation that interlaces humanity into society; however, when referring to the "fabric of society" or "social fabric," it is unique to different societies that inform his contemplation on socio-political structures, consumerism, industrialization, and colonial remnants. These themes are sometimes expressed through metaphors such as bubble forms, bundle forms, lines of fabric strips, exploded bubbles, and tied clothes on architectural structures or canvases using techniques such as cutting, rolling, stitching, tying, and installation.

Nnorom stipulates that such expressions respond to our daily lives and struggles while fostering commonality and social connection. He hopes that his works will inspire endless possibilities in the minds of audiences by promoting self-interrogation and critical thinking while appreciating artistry at its finest.