

## **FAÇADE: An Exhibition of Paintings by Bruce Onobrakpeya Lagos, December 2020:**

Art Twenty One is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of Master artist, Bruce Onobrakpeya which takes place from 12 December 2020 to 10 April 2021 and features variations of paintings dating back from 1961 till 2020.

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The desire to reexamine the concept of painting as concerns African art informs the body of works showing in the exhibition, **Façade**, thus seeing **the famed technique in a new and unconventional presentation**. The title of the show references the flawed notion shared by majority of the public that there are limits to what a painting is. In effect, the exhibition delivers a sharp contrast to the viewer's expectation of what the technique entails, intrinsically conveying the artist's limitless and eclectic capacity for storytelling by the revered African artist and scholar, Bruce Onobrakpeya.

Despite being formally trained and with a degree in Painting obtained from the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology (now Ahmadu Bello University) Zaria, Onobrakpeya has carved a niche for himself as a Printmaker per excellence, having developed the style with innovations and new inventions. He has also included in his portfolio, other techniques including drawings, assemblages and digital art. As such, over the years, his exhibitions have comprised a melange of prints (linocuts, metal etchings, serigraphs etc), sculptures and paintings thus making this **the very first exhibition of solely paintings** by the artist.

Onobrakpeya, yet again, sets a precedence in innovation as seen in the formulation of bases for his various productions. This is visible in his invention and use of the *triptilinen* canvas, upon which imprints of his artistic expression are made. The canvas, a combination of paper, linen and regular canvas was developed about 15 years ago and the artist in foresight of his continuous developments of past works, has effectively made it into a permanent base that assures the ease of replicating a motif to be reexamined for its ultimate result and value.

The exhibits displayed have been **segmented to cover various periods and thematic exploits** of Onobrakpeya's artistry and as displayed in the show, feature *Folklores, Folktales and Myths; Cultural Expedition & Religion of the People; Social Unrest; Atasa Series* amongst others. They explore a diverse scope of subject matters that are peculiar to the messages treated by the artist; this range from social commentary as seen in the statement piece, *Ibiero Djidara* (2010/2020) that decries the violence against women as witnessed globally today and how they have become victims of barbaric acts such as femicide, rape, trafficking and other forms of dehumanisation; to works like *Ekugbe* (1994/2019), *Smoke from the Broken Pipe* (2005), *Ekuoregbe* (2003) and *Travail of the Continent Masquerades III* (2005) that address the political state of the country and continent.

The exhibition is curated by Lagos-based curator, Kennii Ekundayo and is proudly hosted by Art Twenty One.

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST:**

Bruce Onobrakpeya is an artist, art educator and culture advocate renowned for the versatility of his artistic practice that has birthed several unique techniques and styles including bronze lino relief, plastograph – an epoxy-base etching technique and, creating a set of ideograms, Ibiebe which are Urhobo-concept characters symbolical to his artistic productions. His studio experiments (particularly in the area of printmaking) led to discoveries, which attracted art students, researchers, and collectors. His studio soon became the place for industrial training, artist-in-residence, researches and documentation programmes. In response to the increasing demand for these programmes, Onobrakpeya started to develop the Niger Delta Cultural Centre in Agbarha-Otor (Now Onobrak Art Centre). The Centre has since 1998, hosted his dream project— the annual Harmattan Workshops for visual arts. The Workshop attracts visual artists from across and beyond Nigeria.

He was born August 30, 1932, in Agbarha-Otor, Delta State to Urhobo parents. He spent his formative years in Edo State, and went on to become an arts teacher in Western Boys High School and Ondo Boys High School. As an undergraduate student, he was one of the key members of the Zaria Art Society, a group of student-artists who came together to jointly repeal the “colonisation” of their artistic identities; this was prevalent given the colonial presence and establishment in the country at the time.

Today, Onobrakpeya stands out as the most researched, reviewed, critiqued and documented artist in Nigeria and arguably, the African continent. This is credited to his penchant for steadily archiving his works as well as practice which has spanned over six decades. Amongst his recognitions are the UNESCO Living Human Treasure Award he was a recipient of in 2006, and the Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM) conferred on him in 2017.

## **ABOUT THE GUEST CURATOR:**

Kehinde “Kennii” Ekundayo is an independent art curator based in Lagos, Nigeria. Specific about modern and contemporary African art, she has curated exhibitions around the country and internationally. Her professional practice began in March 2017 with a group exhibition of amateur photographers, and has grown to curating key projects involving the likes of revered legendary artist, Bruce Onobrakpeya and Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka, in various media ranging from drawings and paintings, to film and photographs, to texts and installations amongst other art forms.

She is affiliated with the Committee for Relevant Art (CORA), a Nigerian not-for-profit platform for artists, art critics and aficionados, and culture advocates as the Communications Officer. She is also a part of the organising team of the Lagos Book & Art Festival, LABAF, a yearly prime literacy and youth empowerment project that recently concluded its 22nd edition.

Ekundayo is head curator at Galeri ODUMIJE, a curatorial research outfit she recently established and which operates out of Lagos, Nigeria.



## **ABOUT ART TWENTY ONE:**

Art Twenty One is a space and platform dedicated to contemporary art in Lagos, Nigeria.

Located at the Eko Hotel & Suites, the 600sqm space is intended to contribute to and to solidify the growing art scene in Lagos, as well as position this great city as a major force in the international art world. The aim of the art space is to present and promote local and international contemporary art, as well as serve as a catalyst for contemporary art projects and for the interaction of local and international cultural players. In particular, the art space will support local and regional contemporary artists, helping them grow and giving them the tools to position themselves in the local, regional, and international art sphere.

An unprecedented and unique set up in Lagos, the space is designed to make art accessible to a large and growing audience who will be able to engage with a rich and diverse range of contemporary art, cultural practice, and educational art programs.

## **EXHIBITION DETAILS:**

Façade: An Exhibition of Paintings by Bruce Onobrakpeya

Date: 12th December 2020 to 10th April 2021

Location: Art Twenty One | Eko Hotel & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos

## **OPENING HOURS:**

Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-6 PM

Saturday, 11 AM-7 PM

For more information, visit us: [www.ArtTwentyOne.ng](http://www.ArtTwentyOne.ng) | [info@art21lagos.com](mailto:info@art21lagos.com)