

CARTE BLANCHE

A Solo Exhibition by Olu Amoda

Art Twenty One is pleased to present Carte Blanche, a solo exhibition of renowned mixed media artist Olu Amoda from November 6th, 2021 to January 29th, 2022. As the fourth solo exhibition of Olu Amoda at Art Twenty One, Carte Blanche presents the artist's body of work created over the past three years and addresses the diverse expression trends in contemporary sculpture as transparent in the use of material, techniques, technologies, forms, and style in today's Nigeria.

Combining repurposed materials, mild steel objects, nails, rods, aluminum and wood, the artist invites audiences to engage with sculptural works clad in social and political layers that are not easily deciphered as the viewer encounters them. The exhibition brings together Amoda's recent experimentation as an environmental scientist and thematically focuses on banditry, state-sponsored execution, and brutal acts against humanity. Amoda embraces the world as his living theatre and places Nigeria at the centre stage for observing the many crimes that have remained unsolved and press freedom globally.

According to Olu Amoda, "The threat to urban dispositions is now endemic, as evident in power structures in government and the private sector - every class, household, school, association, and business. The revered civility in our collective consciousness has gone over time. It appears the proverbial village has given up on raising the kid. The use of art as a tool for social discourse has created an inflection where artists are interceding for the art— no more art for art's sake. The "about" has become more significant than the "on" comfort zone for most art critics. Significant numbers of art critics and journalists now thrive on the "about," thus negating the discourse of art history interception to contemporary art- making. One of the strategies explored in this body of work is using the familiar to uncover the unknown where each piece challenges what is seen and expressed as artwork. They are complex in composition but mirror today's society's organized chaos, the eternal desire to accumulate more than we need. The ants in their colony will marvel at how humans have managed so far and not extinct themselves. Today's challenge is about one's ability to disrupt."

ABOUT OLU AMODA

Olu Amoda (Nigeria, b. Okere, Warri; 1959) has worked consistently over the past three decades to create a sculptural language that has unique character and beauty. Working as a sculptor, muralist, furniture designer, and multimedia artist, Amoda is best known for using repurposed materials found from the detritus of consumer culture. His works often incorporate rusty nails, metal plates, bolts, pipes,

and rods, that are welded together to create figures, animals, flora and ambiguous forms. Amoda uses these materials to explore socio-political issues relating to Nigerian culture today, from sex, politics, race and conflict to consumerism and economic distribution. His seminal body of work, Sunflower, explores the connection between mass industry and the organic, winning top prize at the DAK'ART Biennale in Dakar, Senegal in 2014. More recently, Amoda has experimented with new materials and processes as he examines issues of privacy, surveillance, and voyeurism in the Nigerian urban environment.

Amoda graduated in sculpture from Auchu Polytechnic, Nigeria, and received a Master's Degree of Fine Arts from Georgia Southern University, USA. Amoda has participated in exhibitions at the Victoria and Albert Museum (UK), the Museum of Art and Design (New York), Skoto Gallery (New York), Georgia Southern University (USA), Didi Museum (Nigeria), WIPO Headquarters (Switzerland), and Art Twenty One (Nigeria), among others. He has completed residencies at Villa Arson (France), The Bag Factory (South Africa), Appalachian State University (North Carolina), and the New York Design Museum. His work is included in many prestigious art collections including the Newark Museum and Fondation Blachère. Amoda has taught Sculpture and Drawing at the School of Art, Design and Printing at Yaba College of Technology in Lagos since 1987. Amoda lives and works in Lagos.

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.