



ART IN EMBASSIES EXHIBITION UNITED STATES  
EMBASSY ABUJA

On the cover

VICTOR EKPUK

**Head 7**, 2015

Acrylic on canvas, 47 1/2 x 27 1/2 in. (120,7 x 69,9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, D.C.

# ART IN EMBASSIES

Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of Art in Embassies (AIE) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program in the 1950s and a decade later President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, AIE curates exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. Ambassadors' residences and new embassies worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing AIE's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

AIE's exhibitions allow citizens, many of whom might never travel to the United States, to personally experience the depth and breadth of our artistic heritage and values, making what has been called a "footprint that can be left where people have no opportunity to see American art."

<https://art.state.gov/>

# WELCOME

I am delighted to present this exhibition assembled under the fabulous Art in Embassies program for my Residence in Abuja. As I survey the rich array of works of art that adorn my home in Nigeria, I am struck by their fluency in sketching the geographic arc of my life. There are works that spotlight my home town of Worcester, Massachusetts; nod to the six years I spent in Mali; and robustly represent artists whose heritage is rooted in Africa. I am thrilled to reside among these artworks made possible by the generosity of the lenders.

A smaller living room in the Residence was habitually dubbed the Garden Room, but during my tenure I have transformed it into the Worcester Room by placing several works depicting my home town there. The storied Worcester Art Museum graciously lent five photographs from a larger series that was the subject of a special exhibit in 2017-2018. *Reimagining a Community of Color* tells the story of an itinerant photographer, William Bullard, who captured images of his neighbors in their shared lower-middle-class, racially integrated neighborhood. These same images graced my Residence in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as Ambassador to the African Union, and have been in Abuja with me for several months at the time of writing. I have often been struck by visitors' engaged reactions to this rich story of race relations, migration, integration, and transformation across America's history, succinctly captured in the experience of one American community. Central Massachusetts artist Michael Graves brings us his depictions of the city's restored Union Station, and a delicate rendering of Worcester's Elm Park. One of the first pieces of land in the U.S. purchased for specific use as a public space, Elm Park was designed by renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who also created New York's famed Central Park.

It is exciting to feature New York artist Janet Goldner again with a different selection than in my Addis Ababa home, this time with one of her metal sculptural “books” capturing symbols of Malian culture. I am equally awed by the explosion of creativity, perspective, and beauty represented in a series of works by African American and Nigerian artists. I discovered some of these artists in Nigeria and others through Washington, D.C., galleries. These include artists represented in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art such as Nike Davies-Okundaye (also appearing in collaboration with Tola Wewe), Victor Ekpuk, Osi Adu, and Stanley Agbontaen. Rounding out the exhibition are other vibrant works by Nigerian artists I have become acquainted with since my arrival, such as Muraina Oyelami’s colorful styling, Rotimi Akinnire’s haunting *Forest Faces*, and Juliet Ezenwa Maja-Pearce’s works that she describes as “springing from a well of happiness.” I want to give special recognition to Tim Davis, a talented force in his own right with four evocative pieces exhibited, whose gallery helped select several works for my Abuja and Addis Ababa exhibitions.

I take great pride in the broad gender diversity encompassed in this exhibition, both among Nigeria- and Washington-sourced works. Visitors are particularly wowed by a phenomenal painting by Kesha Bruce, whose art also graces the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture, and the fusion message of Amber Robles-Gordon’s vibrant collage of purse, belt, and bra straps. It is the “go-to” backdrop for photo opportunities at the Residence.

I am deeply indebted to Art in Embassies and the artists and institutions who made this exhibition possible, creating a rich atmosphere for all who visit the Residence.

**Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard**

*Abuja, Nigeria  
November 2020*

# STANLEY OSAHENI AGBONTAEN (1982–)

Stanley Osahehi Agbontaen uses a palette knife to create vibrant scenes of the life around him with thickly applied oil paint. His vivid color choices make images that transform as the viewer steps back—the farther one moves away, the more captivating they become.

He earned a Higher National Diploma in Fine Art from Auchu Polytechnic in Nigeria and was awarded the Rector's Certificate of Excellence in 2002. Agbontaen has been featured on Nigeria's National Television Authority, received the Federal Capital Territory Award, and was nominated by the United States Department of State to the International Visitor and Leadership Program. His work has been featured in several solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally and is part of the World Bank Collection in Washington, D.C.

Agbontaen is affiliated with several humanitarian organizations that promote equity and economic development through investments in youth education and empowerment. He lives and works in the Washington, D.C., area and recently has worked with large buttons as a medium to tell the stories of his community.





**Harmony**, 2018

Oil on canvas, 40 x 44 in. (101,6 x 111,8 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and International  
Visions Gallery, Washington, D.C.



**Meeting Point**, 2018

Oil on canvas, 31 x 41 in. (78,7 x 104,1 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and International  
Visions Gallery, Washington, D.C.



# ROTIMI AKINNIRE

Rotimi Akinnire approaches nature through a surrealist lens. Lush trees with fine branches and gigantic green stems tower into the expanse of many of his works, allowing him to pave the way for warm and soft rays of sunlight that leave the viewer with the impression of a dreamlike paradise. Waterfalls and streams create movement amid the stillness that pervades Akinnire's works.

Akinnire was born in Nigeria in 1971. He attended the Institute of Textile Technology, Art & Design in Lagos. His works have been exhibited numerous times both at home and abroad and are sought after by local and international collectors alike. He lives and works in Lagos.







**Solitude II**, no date  
Oil on canvas, 45 x 45 in. (114,3 x 114,3 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Thought Pyramid Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria

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**Forest Faces**, no date  
Oil on canvas, 46 x 57 in. (116,8 x 144,8 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Thought Pyramid Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria

## OSI AUDU (1956–)

“My graphite and black pastel drawings titled self-portrait and sequentially numbered, in which I explore the chromatic, light absorbing and reflecting qualities of both mediums, are more about the portrait of the self—that intangible essence of being, and the head as a container of memory, dreams, ideas, and aspirations.”

Osi Audu investigates issues of identity and self-discovery in his paintings, taking inspiration from the geometric shapes found in traditional African art. Intrigued by the Yoruba idea that consciousness has both a physical and non-physical dimension, Audu’s *Self Portrait* utilizes graphite and pastel to explore the intangible self instead of a literal self-portrait. Audu works in contrasting scales, from very large to very small, to survey the relationship of viewer and object.

Born in Nigeria, Audu earned his Bachelor of Arts degree with First Class Honors from the University of Ife and his Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Georgia in Athens. He has exhibited worldwide, including solo and group exhibitions in Germany, Japan, Korea, the United States, and the United Kingdom. His work is held in several private and public collections, including the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C; the British Museum in London, England; the Iwalewahaus, the University of Bayreuth, Germany; and the National Gallery of Modern Art in Lagos, Nigeria, among others.

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(Top) **Self Portrait No. 35**, 2014  
Graphite and pastel on paper  
15 × 22 ½ in. (38,1 × 57,2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, D.C.

(Bottom) **Self Portrait No. 41 A Certain Smile**, 2014  
Graphite and pastel on paper  
15 × 22 ½ in. (38,1 × 57,2 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, D.C.



# KESHA BRUCE (1975–)

Kesha Bruce creates richly textured and visually complex artwork that explores the connections between memory, personal mythology, and magical-spiritual belief. Her latest work is concerned primarily with exploring the ways vibrant color and abstract symbols can not only trigger powerful emotion but also begin to conjure narratives.

Inspired by the belief that handmade objects can be imbued with spiritual energy and the intention of the maker, Bruce employs a labor-intensive creative process of dying, ripping, knotting, and cutting away from the fabric to create each painting. The resulting pieced, patched, and assembled surfaces use repetition and pattern to hint at dream languages or perhaps hidden sacred texts.

Bruce received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Iowa in Iowa City and her Master of Fine Arts degree at Hunter College in New York City. She has been awarded fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), the Vermont Studio Center, and the CAMAC Foundation, and she received a Puffin Foundation Grant for her work with Artist's Books. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C.; the Amistad Center for Art and Culture, Hartford, Connecticut; the University of Iowa Women's Center, Iowa City; the En Foco Photography Collection, New York; and the Museum of Modern Art/ Franklin Furnace Artist Book Collection, New York.

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**Heal Us and Make Us Strong**, 2016

Mixed media on canvas, 48 x 36 in. (121,9 x 91,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, D.C.





## WILLIAM BULLARD (1876–1918)

William Bullard's photographs tell a story of the racially diverse community in Worcester, Massachusetts, constructing an identity through photography in the aftermath of post-American Civil War emancipation and reconstruction. His work addresses larger themes in American history, many of which remain relevant today: the stories of African Americans and those of Native American descent in their struggle for equality, as well as the fundamentally American story of migration, immigration, and creating community in new surroundings.

Bullard's photographs provide an exceptional opportunity to deepen our understanding of the political and personal use of photography by African Americans after emancipation. Unlike most archival collections of everyday Black Americans taken in this period, the subjects in Bullard's photos are identified in his logbook, contextualizing stories of lower-middle-class African Americans, a demographic often lost to history. Bullard photographed formerly enslaved people, their children, and grandchildren who migrated from the South. Where others in New England told stories describing their former lives, the individuals represented here tell a free story. No longer "former slaves" or "freed people," Bullard's subjects sometimes represent themselves as independent, prosperous, and fashionable, at other times as ordinary Worcester residents. Whether posing in front of their homes or gardens, in military uniforms, or dressed in the latest cycling attire with their bicycles, all of the individuals in these photographs, Black or White, stake their claims as citizens.



**Raymond Schuyler with his Children**, c. 1904  
Archival inkjet print, 7 x 5 in. (17,8 x 12,7 cm)  
Courtesy of the Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts



**Thomas A. and Margaret Dillon Family**, c. 1904  
Archival inkjet print,  
5 x 7 in. (12,7 x 17,8 cm)  
Courtesy of the  
Worcester Art Museum,  
Massachusetts

**Portrait of Edward Perkins in his Garden,**

c. 1902  
Archival inkjet print,  
5 x 7 in. (12,7 x 17,8 cm)  
Courtesy of the  
Worcester Art Museum,  
Massachusetts







**Portrait of Celia Perkins**, c. 1900  
Archival inkjet print, 7 x 5 in. (17,8 x 12,7 cm)  
Courtesy of the Worcester Art Museum,  
Massachusetts



**Portrait of Eugene Shepard Sr. Seated in a Railcar**,  
c. 1905  
Archival inkjet print, 7 x 5 in. (17,8 x 12,7 cm)  
Courtesy of the Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts

## TIM DAVIS (1955–)

“My focus has been to utilize themes that represent interactions of relationships between stylized figures, and portraits within environments or abstract settings... With painting on an unconventional surface such as Plexiglas, I utilize the transparent and reflective quality with various materials, such as graphite, sculpture materials, acrylic, photography, pen and ink, and re-assemble and tell stories of [the] human spirit.”

Tim Davis's signature portrait style leaves the faces blank without expression to let the viewer see more through the form, line, and color. Concerned for the human experience and the Black experience, he uses real people that he has met throughout his life as subjects.

Davis was born in Chicago and earned a Master of Arts degree from the University of Illinois, where he studied with artists Frank Gallo and Bill Carlson. His work has been exhibited in Colombia, Russia, and throughout the United States, including Chicago, Miami, New York, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C. Davis is the founder and owner of International Visions Gallery, where he promotes and provides contemporary multi-cultural works by national and international artists to museums, private collectors, and art enthusiasts. He lives in Washington, D.C.



**Together Again**, 2009

Acrylic on plexi, collage, 29 x 41 in. (73,7 x 104,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and International Visions Gallery, Washington, D.C.

**Staying  
Connected #1**, 2017  
Acrylic on plexi,  
mixed media,  
17 x 20 in. (43, x 50,8 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist  
and International Visions  
Gallery, Washington, D.C.



**Tuned in or  
Tuned out — Staying  
Connected #2**, 2018  
Acrylic on plexi,  
pen and ink on wood,  
17 x 20 in. (43,2 x 50,8 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist  
and International Visions  
Gallery, Washington, D.C.





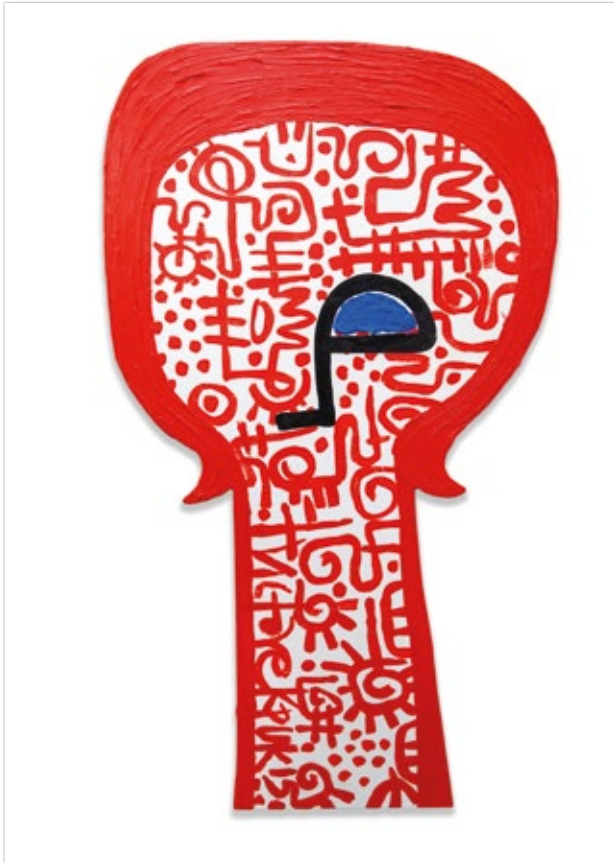


**Wrapped in Love II, 2015**

Acrylic and plaster on canvas, 18 x 24 in. (45,7 x 61 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and International Visions Gallery, Washington, D.C.

# VICTOR EKPUK (1964–)



**Head 7**, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas, 47 ½ x 27 ½ in. (120,7 x 69,9 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, D.C.

Victor Ekpuk is a Nigerian-born contemporary artist based in Washington, D.C. He is known for glyph- and script-like paintings and drawings, which began as an exploration of Nsibidi “traditional” graphics and writing systems in Nigeria. The focus of his work is the relationships and challenges that make up the human condition. Ekpuk re-imagines graphic symbols to form a personal style of mark-making that intertwines art and writing. He says, “forms are reduced to basic essence resulting in new symbols or codes in script-like drawings that are used to express contemporary experiences. When combined with Nsibidi signs, these ‘scripts’ also provide the background narrative to my compositions. Most often, these narratives are better perceived when they are felt rather than read literally.”

Ekpuk’s works have been featured in several international and national exhibitions, including Aicon Gallery, New York City; Somerset House, London; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; and the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.



**Mask Series 4, 2018**

Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 18 in. (61 x 45,7 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, D.C.

## MICHAEL D. GRAVES (1952-)

“In a time of persistent change, my paintings remind us of all that is constant and enduring, the hardworking values of the farm and the factory, the sanctity of faith and family, the predictability of the seasons, and the simple pleasures of enjoying time spent amidst rolling mountains, and crashing waves, endless forests, and bountiful fields. It is an artist’s unique and impressionist rendering of a country that I have loved for more than six decades.”

Based in central Massachusetts, Michael D. Graves works in plein-air. Although he lacked a formal art education, renowned Cape Ann artist Bernard Corey (1914–2000) mentored him for over thirty years. Throughout his career, Graves painted many of America’s most scenic national parks and iconic landmarks, but his favorite subjects are the simple, everyday scenes of rural, small-town America, especially in the New England area. His paintings, with their vivid colors and depictions of light and shadow, remind the viewer of stability during a time of rapid transformation.

Graves is a member of the Rockport Art Association, the Hudson Valley Art Association, and the Old Lyme Art Association. He is a friend and frequent painting companion of some of the most well-known plein air artists of New England. His award-winning works have been displayed in many galleries across the United States, and included in the permanent collection of the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio.





**Elm Park**, 2019  
Oil on canvas,  
18 1/2 x 22 in.  
(47 x 55,9 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist,  
Millbury, Massachusetts



**Union Station**, 2015  
Oil on canvas,  
26 1/2 x 30 1/2 in.  
(67,3 x 77,5 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist,  
Millbury, Massachusetts

## JANET GOLDNER (1952-)

Janet Goldner is an artist, curator, and lecturer whose work traverses many cultures, focusing on the “beauty and genius of each as well as what we have in common.” She grew up in Washington, D.C., in a family of political activists, fully immersed in the social and political issues of the 1960s. Goldner spent most of 1973 in West Africa and returned in 1994 for another year, working in Mali with potters, metalsmiths, and other artists. She spends several months each year in Mali collaborating, and because of those experiences, she combines Western and non-Western images and ideas in her works. “Cultural preservation is important to my work where my research takes the form of immersive fieldwork,” Goldner says.

Her practice uses various media, including sculpture, photography, video, and sound, to explore cultural identity and social justice issues in the United States and abroad. Goldner has exhibited her work in several solo and group shows in the United States, Germany, Italy, Bosnia, and Mali, among others. She is the recipient of numerous awards, grants, and artist residencies, including a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship and two Fulbright Senior Specialist grants as well as grants from the Ford Foundation, the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, and the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid. Goldner’s work has been published in many books, journals, magazines, catalogs, and news sources, and she has curated exhibitions, published articles and catalogs, and lectured at conferences, universities, and community venues.



**Ideogram Book 1**, 2007  
Steel, 18 x 24 x 10 in. (45,7 x 61 x 25,4 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist, New York, New York.

# NIKE DAVIES-OKUNDAYE (1951-)

Chief (Mrs.) Nike Davies-Okundaye was brought up amidst the traditional weaving and dyeing practice in her native village of Ogidi in Western Nigeria. Davies-Okundaye's artistic skills were nurtured at a young age by her parents and great grandmother, who were musicians and craftspeople. She spent the early part of her life in Osogbo, which is considered a major art and culture center in Nigeria. During her stay in Osogbo, indigo dyeing and Adire production dominated her informal training.

Davies-Okundaye is the founder and director of four art centers, which offer free training to young artists. She is the owner of the largest art gallery in West Africa, comprising over 7,000 artworks. The centers also serve as a rich source of knowledge for traditional arts and culture to scholars and institutions. She has exhibited work internationally in Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Belgium. Her work is also on permanent display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C. Davies-Okundaye lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria.





**Rhythm of Life**, 1995

Acrylic with brush on canvas, 28 x 28 in. (71,1 x 71,1 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria



< **The Brilliant Outing**, 2007

Acrylic with brush on canvas, 54 x 28 in. (136,2 x 71,1 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria



NIKE DAVIES-OKUNDAYE AND TOLA WEWE

**Communication Through Patterns of Life**, 2018

Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 30 in. (61 x 76,2 cm)

Courtesy of the artists and Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria

## TOLA WEWE (1959-)

Tola Wewe's work is a hybrid of African and western sensibilities and images that reflect his training and experience as an international artist. Early in his career, three major influences characterized Wewe's work: his academic training in Ife, Nigeria, the master's research program in the Ijaw water spirit mask, and society—particularly the Yoruba society. His style draws from the Ona symbols of the Yoruba, and his themes project traditional lore and myths of his native Yoruba culture. Wewe describes himself more as a witness than an author, "communicating with the spirits of the ancestors, and drawing out the invisible spirits... who make the artworks...I am the vehicle, and they are the drivers. We go on these strange journeys to the most remote ends of imaginative experience."

Wewe trained and graduated with a degree in fine art from the University of Ife in 1983. He then obtained a master's degree in African Visual Arts from the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, in 1986. Wewe would later become a founding member of the Ona movement, which consist of a group of scholars, critics, and practicing artists committed to pursuing artistic excellence through the adaptation and interpretation of traditional materials, methods, forms, and styles of contemporary Yoruba art and design that emerged in 1989. Beyond Nigeria, Wewe's works have been exhibited across Europe and the United States.



## MURAINA OYELAMI (1940-)

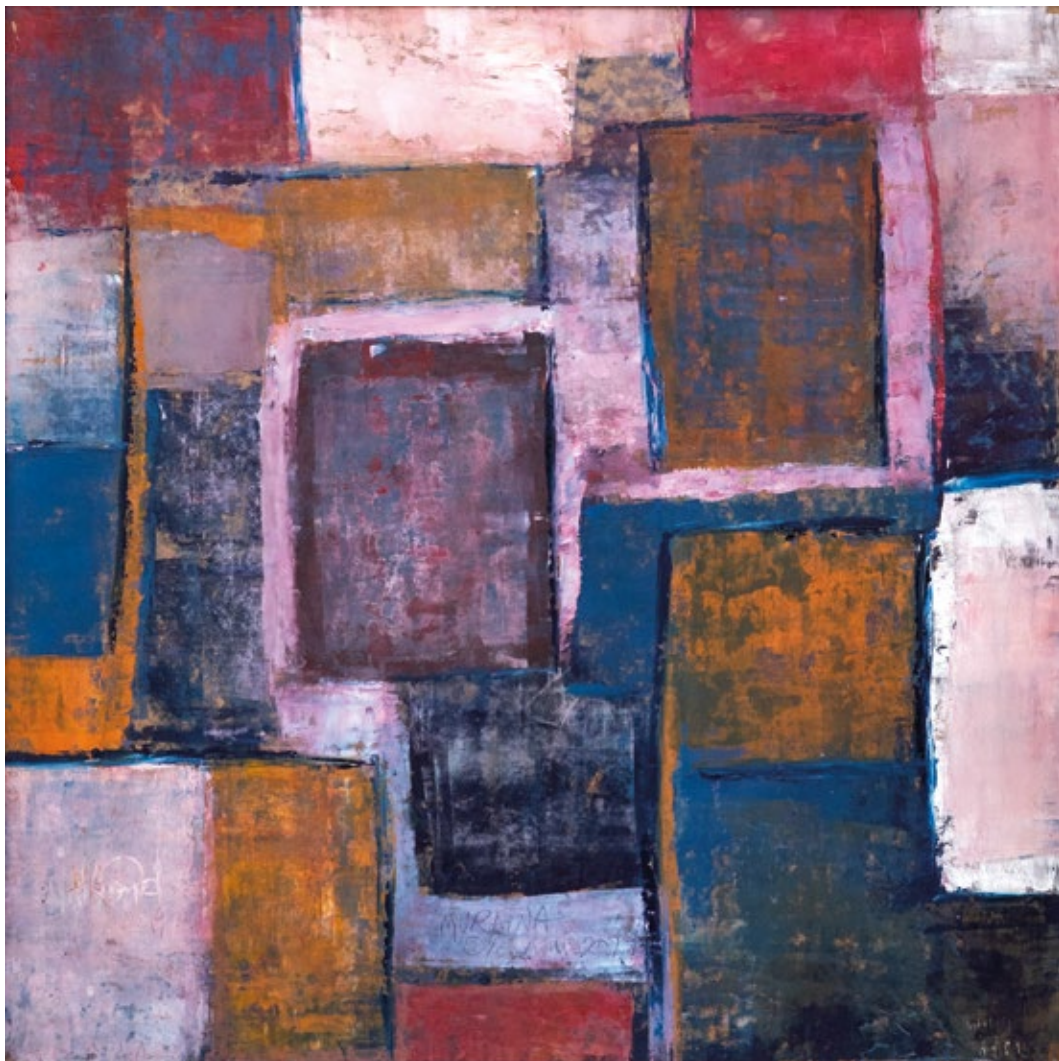
Chief Muraina Oyelami is both a master painter and a performing artist in music and theatre. He began his career in 1964 as one of the original products of the Osogbo Art School. He studied technical theatre, specializing in theatre design at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, where he later taught traditional music from 1975 to 1987. Described by many as a poetic painter with a romantic touch, his works are a representation of personal experiences, stories, folktales, and landscapes.

Oyelami was also a founding member of Duro Ladipo's (1931-1978) theatre company as an actor and musician. He toured with the group to the Berlin Festival of Art in 1964 and the first Commonwealth Arts Festival in the United Kingdom in 1965. Oyelami composed and directed the music for Wole Soyinka's famous *Death and the King's Horseman* at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, England. Oyelami has exhibited his works and performed traditional and fusion

music in many parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the United States. His notably accomplishments include the Guest of the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw, Poland; an artist in residence and fellow of the National Black Theatre in Harlem, New York; and a guest professor in African Studies at the University of Bayreuth, Germany, among others. Oyelami founded the Obatala Center for Creative Arts in 1987 to promote the traditional arts and culture. He lives and works in Iragbiji in southwestern Nigeria.







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**Village Scene**, no date  
Oil on board, 24 x 36 in. (61 x 91,4 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Thought  
Pyramid Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria

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**Untitled II**, no date  
Oil on board, 24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm)  
Courtesy of the artist and Thought  
Pyramid Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria

# JULIET EZENWA MAJA PEARCE (1968–)

“My art comes from a very happy place. I am as happy as a sand girl when I am creating art. Whenever I encounter challenges relating to both life and art, I simply take my lemons and make lemonade,” says multimedia artist Juliet Ezenwa Maja Pearce, whose practice includes watercolors, acrylic, oil, pastel, gouache, printmaking, sculptures, mirrors, and found objects. Experimenting with these forms throughout her career led to her printmaking method. Her works bring social justice themes to the forefront, including the rights of women in Nigeria and environmental degradation as a consequence of oil exploration.

She was first introduced to art by her grandmother, a reputable traditional body decorator who used the Uli style. As a child, her grandmother allowed her to paint a portion of the mud walls while she worked on the major walls. Pearce attended the Federal Government Girls’ College in Benin City, Nigeria, where she gained admission into Bendel State University (now Delta State University) in Abraka. In 1992, she co-founded the Tropical Arts and Craft Gallery and held two consecutive solo exhibitions.

Pearce is an executive member of the organization Echoes of Women in Africa and has been described as a child’s rights and gender activist. She is a regular participant at the United Nations-sponsored art exhibition on female genital mutilation. Pearce is also a member of the Guild of Professional Fine Artists of Nigeria, the Society of Nigerian Artists, the Female Artists Association of Nigeria, Business and Professional Women International, and the Art Gallery Owners’ Association of Nigeria. Her work has been featured in several books including Tom Lynch’s *Water Colour Rescue Workshop*, and *Great Watercolour Rescues*; Jess Castellote’s *Contemporary Nigerian Art in Nigerian Private Collections*; *Remembering Ken Saro-Wiwa and Other Essays* and *A Mask Dancing*, both by Adewale Maja Pearce; and also, her book, *Issues in Contemporary Nigerian Art 2000-2010*.



**Future**, no date

Mixed media, 27 x 29 ½ in. (68,6 x 74 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Thought  
Pyramid Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria



**Mask**, no date

Mixed media, 27 x 29 ½ in. (68,6 x 74 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Thought  
Pyramid Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria

## AMBER ROBLES-GORDON (1977-)

"My artwork is a visual representation of my hybridism: a fusion of my gender, ethnicity, cultural, and social experiences. I impose colors, imagery, and materials that evoke femininity and tranquility with the intent of transcending or balancing a specific form."

Driven by the need to construct a distinctive path and challenge social norms, mixed media artist Amber Robles-Gordon re-contextualizes non-traditional materials to create works that emphasize spirituality and temporality within life. Her practice is unconventional and non-formulaic. She associates working with light, color, and energy to focus on the healing power of the creative process and believes that colors have both feminine and masculine energies and represent aspects of nature.

Ultimately, through her assemblages, large sculptures, installations, and public artworks, she intends to examine the parallels between how humanity perceives its greatest resources, men and women, versus how we treat our possessions and environment. Her creations represent personal experiences yet symbolize the paradoxes within the imbalance of masculine and feminine energies with our society. Robles-Gordon received her Master of Fine Arts degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. She has exhibited throughout the United States, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, England, and Spain.







**Heal Thyself series, Metaphysical Planes of Life, 2006-2008**

Mixed media on canvas, 36 x 60 in. (91,4 x 152,4 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Morton Fine Art, Washington, D.C.

## Acknowledgments

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