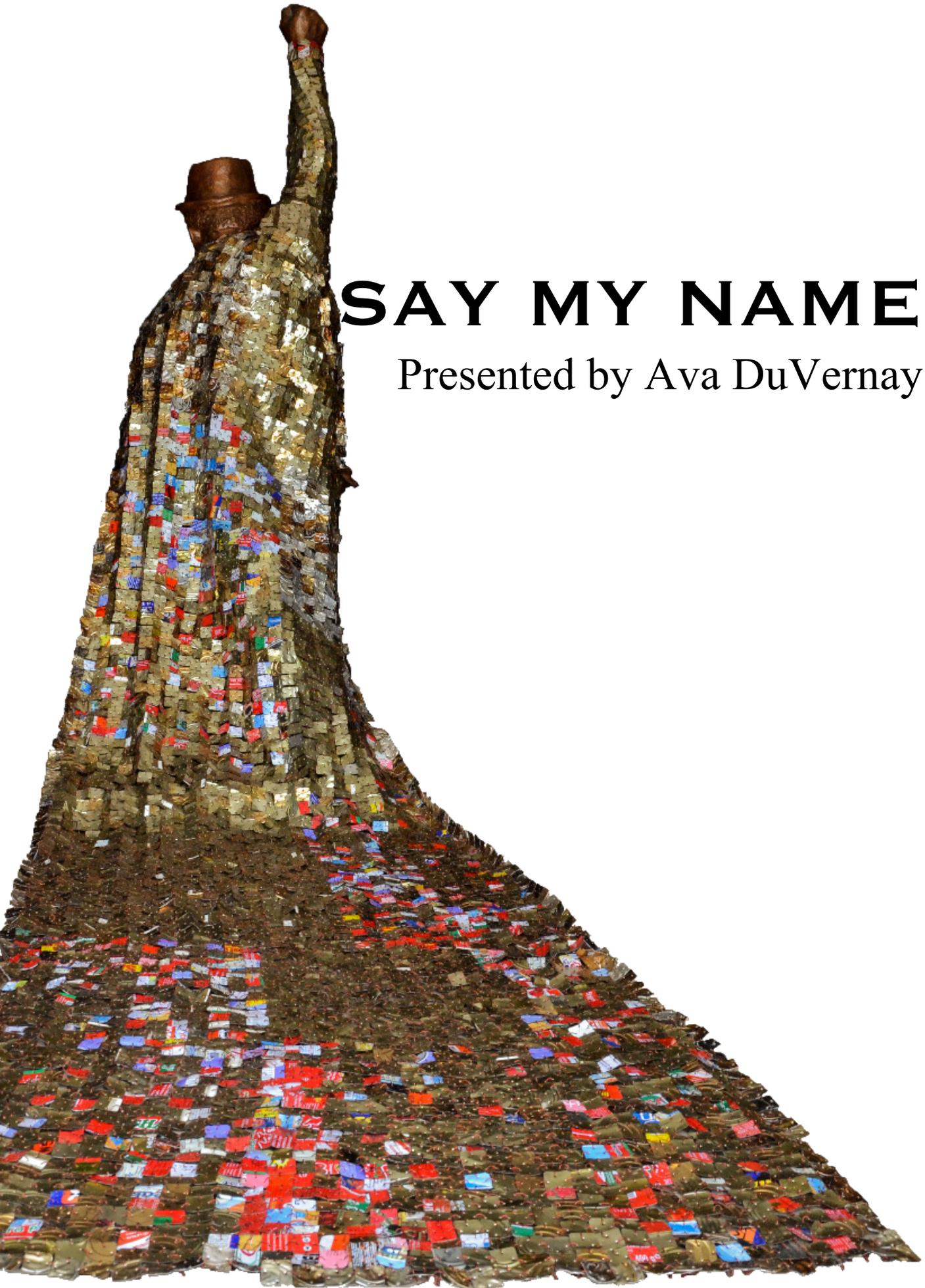


SIGNATURE *African Art*



SAY MY NAME

Presented by Ava DuVernay

SIGNATURE African Art

27th of October 2020 – 28th of November 2020
20 Davies Street, Mayfair, London, W1K 3DT
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FOREWORD

When someone or something attracts peoples interest based on expression of art, association or cultural *identity*, the first thing they want to know about them is their names; and if it is for all the right reasons, they desire such names be mentioned frequently as a sign of approval, accolade and glory. Nature is only a process which nothing can explain. Everything that exists has a spirit and that spirit lives in their names. Through iconographic and semiotic values perceived in the arts or acts of expression, therefore, an idea can be named in reality and once there is a name, there is a soul or spirit. Names are given by owners, strangers and oneself; and can always be changed at will. Therefore, names are one of the most fundamental factors that calibrate the implications of *identity* and culture which drives material reality and existential value of life. When we are all created by parents in birth through inspiration of certain divine energy and knowledge, per se, we are *named*; when we interact with growth, the strange society may *rename* us through how we manage circumstances; and in protest to this relatively pathetic situation, we may try to *rename* ourselves again, this, hence, remains a constant struggle which defines the concept and content of our reality throughout lifetime. The attempts to protest or accommodate or express this struggle through communication may translate into *semiotic* grumbling that defines our opinions and values; and approach to material associations as well as human relations, which is visible or perceptive in our expressions in works particularly, and also determines the content of our identity and form, technically, in work and responsibility as it concerns art and humanity, to the effect of global prosperity or retrogression.

Every work of art is universally regarded as an original and authentic piece of idea with layers beneath layers of meanings. Although these layers of meanings may constitute the consolidation of the bedrock of our identity, the larger portion of such meanings is not perceptive to the physical senses at first experience. To decipher these coded meanings, a *critical experience* of the work is required. First, the work is *deconstructed* logically, based on *ethno-historic* arguments relevant to visible forms that built up the work as well as the *subject* it metaphorize. However, the meaning of *iconography* might seem submerged within the description of *content* as one of the components key to art interpretation, but it is subject deeper than it appears and often confused with *Semiotics*, which describes the theory of *meaning making* through *symbolology*. Hence, *Iconography* as the descriptive discussion and discursive description of exclusive or classified factors confined or consecrated to pre-

existence, existence, post-existence and undisclosed content of an art thereof, is a powerful linguistic and/or non-linguistic device with which deep meanings that idealize *creative expressions* that can ignite change as DuVernay describes, can be sculpted. In essence, the meaning of the existence of a work can be traced to the existence of a certain historical idea found in certain textual account through this critical device. Take Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* for instance - be it as it may, such work or its theme may make no sense or meaning to the fellow in far Arab countries who never lived in *Galilee* in the *medieval* times or read the accounts of that portion of the scriptures. To such fellow, the work is just an exquisite representation of thirteen fully grown handsome looking men having a banquet at a dinner table; whereas, in actual reality, the work means so much more than just that to a *Roman Pope*. This phenomenon, consequently, becomes that which calls for an *iconographic* analysis of the last supper for instance, in order to deduce its *inferred* meaning and ignite the work's evaluation. The conclusive speculation on Da Vinci's themes and the general components of his works based on *subject, form* and *content*, for instance, can pacify his character as *ethno-cultural* and professional identity. Having understood the *iconographic value* in *content* development, we take a peek into *semiotics*, which is closely linked to *Iconography*, and establish its relevance to *ethno-cultural* and artistic evaluation. *Semiotics* and *semiotic studies* which is the study of meaning-making, sign process and the study of meaningful communication, including the study of signs and sign processes, indication, designation, likeness, analogy, allegory, metonymy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication through such meaning-making process synthesized in art works and other human cultural expressions. Through this theory and practice is the exploration of signs and symbols as a significant part of human communications in art works. Although, different from linguistics however, *semiotics* also studies non-linguistic sign systems organized in work of art and other human cultural expressions. Semiotics is often considered as having important *anthropological dimensions* in every human *cultural phenomenon* that may be studied as communication.

With all that said, *Racism* therefore, is a name given to an art, an act, an idea; a philosophy that could not name itself. *Racism* is helpless; and taking advantage of its helplessness to name it against its own will is unfair and even more racist than *racism* itself; it is slavery in itself and humans have been found to always take advantage of everything in existence - both people in *iconographic* recklessness; and language in *semiotic* recklessness - seizing them by coercion or by corn to serve their own interest as slaves. *Racism* is one of such victims abused to describe prejudice of diverse human *ethno-cultural* identity; serviced

by misplaced priority of political interest. Everything in the world today is created or made in its own semiotic niche, either by itself or something else, configured to feel a little love for itself more than others, because being created or born alone suggests the implication of a specie of great attention and specific objective; no need to be penalized for that, because every new thing with a spirit feels that way, *special*, humans inclusive. This may be the origin of competition, struggle and *war* to patronize or promote the idea that one is made of a little more substance than the rest. But it takes proper *civilization* to realize that this expression in itself is vanity and lust after power which in actual sense is an expression of insecurity, revealing the weakness or powerlessness of the ones who think or believe they are made of more substance than the rest of humanity, because in actual sense, all living organisms are meant to crave the things they need which happens to be more of those things they do not have. Competing for superiority of race is the implication of a *semiotic* communication of inferiority complex because a proper race understands that it is fundamentally a member or unit of the collective human race; nothing more, nothing less.

The situation or reality of expressive *superiority complex* by a people of certain philosophy and *culture*, is what is described today as *Racism*, because that culture considers itself politically as a special race, thereby degenerating the *human race* into retrogression as a race of unnecessary *violence* and global wastage of life and environment. But in reality, it is a human factor or better still, an animate instinct to appreciate oneself first, before another, at least in basic reality, but when it degenerates into assaults, whether in feeling or in actual attack, to stir up offence or defence or even death based on illegal motives, it becomes *crime*, which hence, no longer satisfies a positive interest of collective human and global prosperity; and therefore, should be discouraged and classified as totally unacceptable. In actual sense therefore, *Racism* does not exist as an *act* but as a *term* that describes such *crime* motivated by misguided superiority complex, politically funded. The name should therefore be *Political Crime* and should be punishable by certain social terms.

To this effect, *Signature*, a gallery of African art in London, exhibits works of 13 artists, all of African descent, each presenting a new work, ranging from paintings and portraits, sculptures of raised fists, exploration of wire gauze, photographs of scenes and other exquisite site of a collection of new media, in a special show titled *Say my Name*, at the gallery facility in Mayfair, London. This show is organized to commemorate the *Black History Month* in UK from October 27 to November 28, curated by Khalil Akar and presented by Ava DuVernay. There will be a follow-up show in Los Angeles, USA, in February 2021, in solidarity to the African cultural struggle against *Western political*

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superiority complex syndrome as well as *ethno-cultural profiling* as usually executed tactically by the Police against men and women of African ancestry. The concept of this show is woven around the loose fabric of the *Black Lives Matter* movement, focusing on the value of ethno-cultural diversity that encourage collective human prosperity. The show is comprised of 13 male and female artists based in Africa. The essence is to reference the *13th Amendment* in America and Ava DuVernay's show on *Netflix 13th*, trying to connect African related issues from the opinion and perspective of African artists, African-Americans and European-Africans.

Artists such as Oluwole Omofemi, Dennis Osakue, Demola Ogunajo, Samson Akinnire, Anthony Nsofor, Giggs Kgole, Adjaratou Ouadraogo, Djakou Kassi Nathalie, Taiye Erewele, Moufouli Bello, Ejiro Owigho, Ayanfe Olarinde and Dandelion Eghosa; will be presented to the *caucus of art seers* piloting the global appreciation of the art world. In philanthropic gesture, donation of 40% of the proceeds from the entire sale is willed to the *LEAP* foundation founded by Ava DuVernay; and investing in artists that denounce *Police* brutality; as well as the gallery's profits, to the family of victims. This cultural and creative expression through a single artistic showcase by *Signature African Art*, London, is a global phenomenon welcomed as an encouragement in diplomatic development of global human relations. I strongly urge you to see the show. Happy viewing!

Ike Gerald Chiemezie / Visual Artist, Author, Art Diplomat / October 2020



Dennis Osakue, *The Power Of Black And White*, Acrylic & Collage on Canvas, 150cm x 150cm, 2020



Moufouli Bello, *Breonna Taylor*, Acrylic on Canvas, 150cm x 120cm, 2020



Ayanfe Olarinde, *I Was There*, Reduced Iron & copper wire & copper rods & chicken wire gauze & perspex & acrylic spray & 24k gold leaf & Styrofoam, 215cm x 150cm x 120cm, 2020

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Giggs Kgole, *Boshielo, Anaglyph*, Oil, Acrylic fabric & mixed media on Canvas, 230cm x 150cm, 2020.
Can be viewed with 3D glasses.



Djakou Kassi Nathalie, *Speak Out*, Polished Fire Clay, 178cm x 79cm x 68cm, 2020



Dandelion Eghosa, *In Remembrance of Bruce's Beach*, Photography, analogue collage and embellishments with acrylic paints on Canvas, 190 x 127cm, 2020.



Demola Ogunajo, *Shadow Work*, Acrylic on Canvas, 150 x 120cm, 2020.



Anthony Nsofor, *Nne (Before Braque, Picasso and co)*, Acrylic on Canvas, 70cm x 46cm, 2020



Samson Akinnire, *My Name*, Mixed Recyclables (beer cans, tin cans, copper), 180cm x 260cm x 75cm, 2020

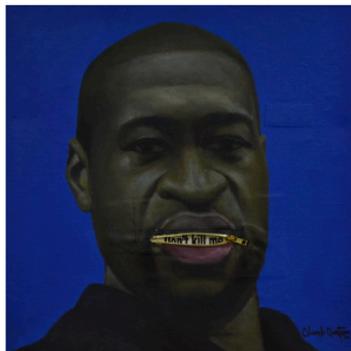
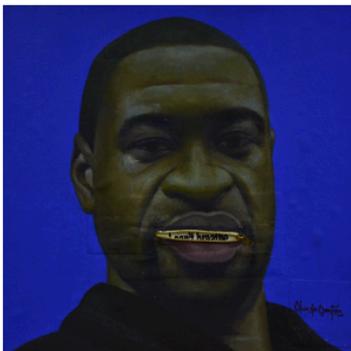
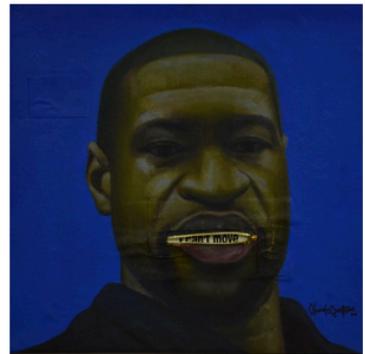
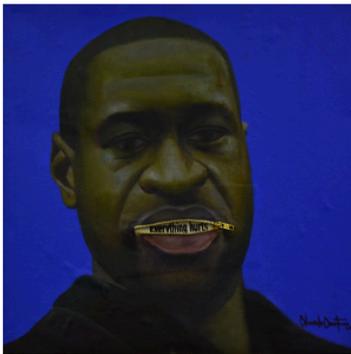


Taiye Erewele, *Black Beauty*, Acrylic on Canvas, 90cm x 114cm, 2020



Ejiro Owigho, *Profiled Identity*, Acrylic & Collage & Pencil on Canvas, 180cm x 150cm, 2020

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Oluwole Omofemi, *George Floyd*, Acrylic on Canvas, 50cm x 50cm each, 2020



Adjaratou Ouedraogo, *La Compassion*, Acrylic on Canvas, 150cm x 150cm, 2020

SYPNOSIS

The Power of Black and White

Angela Yvonne Davis is an American Scholar, Political Activist and Author who emerged as a prominent counterculture activist in the 1960's. Her Afro hair signifies the richness of black culture.

A painting of Angela Davis from a picture used by Time magazine on their cover. I deliberately used only Monochrome to create this portrait Art to acknowledge 'The Power of Black and White', manipulating appropriated images from comic strips to create work that is heavily influenced by street and graffiti art, historical imagery with references to contemporary pop culture.

Divided we fall together we stand, and we simply can't Live without each other.

Breonna Taylor

Breonna Taylor became a martyr in spite of herself, as did several other black Americans, murdered with impunity by the American police; which constantly commits murders on this part of the population.

It is a representation that I did not want to be falsely triumphant because its history characterizes the epitome of the alienation of people discriminated against in a racist and unequal society.

She did not choose this death; it was imposed on her. These people stole her life and her dreams, and she became the symbol of centuries-old struggle.

I wanted to pay tribute to her life, and the quiet strength she seemed to have.

I Was There

"I do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth"

Amidst increased visibility and centring of social justice movements like Black Lives Matter in recent times, the role of monuments and memorials has fallen under critical examination, especially in exploring the context in which they were made as well as what they represent in modern society. In this light, *"I was there"* aims to dialogue with The Statue of Liberty against a backdrop of increased racial tensions, institutionalised racism and marginalisation as well as police brutality in the United States of America.

Designed as an 'icon of freedom and of the United States', 'a symbol of welcome to immigrants arriving by sea' as well as 'commemorating the recent national abolition of slavery', *"I was there"* considers the irony between perceived notions of a free, just and fair state and present day realities which have prompted collective responses in form of organised protest in several parts of the United States of America. In a gesture which subverts the traditional ideas of freedom and justice associated with the monument, the statue plays the role of eyewitness and fellow protester to the racial injustice and violence prevalent in contemporary America.

Incorporating slogans from several protest across the country, *"I was there"* pays homage to the important and necessary work done by social justice movements in the United States and across the world, while also interrogating the role that memorial objects play in propagating false narratives and in contributing to a denial and erasure of marginalised realities. This work hopes to add to the existing dialogue on the need for creating desired futures of freedom, justice and fairness for all.

Boshielo

International award-winning Young Master and Africa's rising star, Giggs Kgoale creates a larger than life interactive masterpiece using his signature anaglyph technique to explore the never-ending beauty of Black resilience. A poetic piece that captures the true essence of black stories, through past and current

day adversity. Kgole's masterpiece pays tribute to #SayHerName, a social movement that seeks to raise awareness of the Black female form, that has been subject to victimisation by police brutality and anti-Black violence in the United States and around the world. The theme draws a similar thread, within the same masterpiece, where he ominously alludes to the current Gender Based Violence taking place in South Africa. Kgole, nicknamed the Mighty Ancestor of Limpopo, paints a powerful, breath-taking spiritual experience of why #BlackLivesMatter to him and why the world needs to stop killing Black Women.

Speak Out

This beautiful work by Djakou Kassi Nathalie is a clenched fist carved with many masks and placards carrying messages.

The work is calling all of us to speak out against brutality, racism, hate, discrimination, whilst asking us to love each other, to teach love, to say no to silence, to demonstrate that we are only one race, equal, bleeding the same colour and to show our beautiful differences and diversity. The recent demonstration has called all of us to end the issue of racism and to always remember those who died because of injustice. The hand is the sign of power, a sign that black lives matter, their voice matters and their lives too. We should not stay indifferent and silent to what is happening around us.

In Remembrance of Bruce's Beach

This piece aims to challenge the traditional narratives of holding spaces for people who must be heard and highlights the importance of understanding the legacies of slavery, white supremacy, and raise awareness about the injustices that need to be overcome by a collective voice.

In my experience as someone who grew up in Nigeria having conversations about racism and oppression within and outside my environment means dealing too often with people who respond to issues of race as being outdated and irrelevant because slavery and legal segregation ended "so long ago," or some others who say "I'm not my ancestors." people often forget that all oppressions have one message in common – that certain people are not valuable and liberation in part is always a story telling process; breaking stories, breaking silences, making new stories and acknowledging that other silencing's manifest in smaller ways; through income inequality, assassination of the human spirit, the rise of a new extreme elite. Poverty silences.

One cannot tell the story of Bruce's beach without illustrating the spiritual consequences of depriving a people of their lands and rights. Drawing inspiration from the traditional laws of the Ishan community where land is viewed as having more than just a commercial value and central to identity and spirituality, included in this piece are rituals for healing, renaming and reclaiming spaces. If the essence of all rituals is the act of linking the sensations in the body to the ideas in the mind, who do we become in our journey of navigating trauma and loss?

Perhaps we have been taught to be silent that we have nothing of value to say. Perhaps it's the exhaustion from the constant loss and longing. But for healing and repair to begin, we all have to do the work.

What's the furthest way to challenge silence in an environment where fattening thieves are rarely heard accountable?

Through this piece, there's an opportunity for contemplation and reflection on how much farther we must travel along the road toward justice and equality.

By using photography, analogue collage and embellishments with acrylic paints, Dandelion seeks to separate the layers of conversation that often obscure the humanity of individuals on the identity spectrum and reassert this humanity by reconstructing images in ways reminiscent of how people must dismantle social conditioning and community expectations and reassemble their true identities.

Shadow Work

This painting is an attempt to look at police brutality from an angle of ensuring police officers change for the better.

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The policeman is a victim of psychological forces beyond his control. We are all vessels and these forces affect all of us one way or the other.

They affect us positively or negatively but most of the time it is the negativity that is most amplified.

It is the sorry story of man; we hear the BANG! BANG!! BANG!!! of the police gun all the time. The noise is carved boldly in our minds when they lose control. But what we should focus on is the stranglehold of the BEAST (humanity's arch enemy), and how to combat that. Police officers should also be encouraged to deal with the many issues they experience on a daily basis but then again there is a societal conditioning that might not permit them to fully express themselves as they should.

Some of our police bottle up these psyche knots until it is released in the spray of bullets from a handgun or an Ak47 at the flimsiest of excuses.

This painting is a clarion call to the issues that affect police welfare with special attention needed to be given to their psychological health.

Shadow Work, as title of this painting brings attention to the psychological process of introspection by Carl Jung. It affords us the opportunity to find peace by trying to better other people's positions.

Nne

A cloud of doubt soon formed in my mind as an African, of the enforced civilizing nature of the academic project, the notions of 'origins', 'originality' etc. Academic training seemed to use learning to present 'historical facts'- manipulating these 'facts' as weapons of power, subjugation, reaffirming the teller's viewpoint and superiority.

My painting goes beyond the popularized Western style in search of other things. I would rather see the flat planes following the bones under the flesh as light strikes the bust. Having a strong familiarity with my village Oguta, I have seen many ancient, undocumented, artforms in homes and communal shrines. One such artwork is the bust of a woman guarding the back entrance of our ancestral 'obi'- said to protect the wives who birth the children and continue the family bloodline. This well rendered, stylized sculpture begs for more scholarly attention. As an artist, one takes the opportunity to appropriate, to be curious about the aesthetics and formal consideration that guided the artist who produced this work. For me the purpose is to go beyond the familiar, popularized vision- beyond a borrowed history. The African artist has inherited stories that must be told, grounded and guided by more primordial instincts. The traditional African artist didn't start his abstract pieces by starting with realistic works and simplifying the work to an abstract summary. He studied form but wanted to pass across a message about the image he created.

Fred Hampton

My sculpture piece depicts Fred Hampton Allen the late American civil right activist and revolutionary socialist who came to prominence in Chicago as chairman of the Illinois chapter of the black panther Party and was assassinated. His voice was heard concerning the occurrence of police brutality, humiliation and social political issues around the world. The sculpture was produced in respect to his voice "BLACK LIVES MATTERS". The piece serves as a reminder of the great leaders our revolution has had over the years, and producing Fred Hampton taking a knee with a raised fist, links the revolutions throughout the decades, and amplifies our unified voice.

Black Beauty

Once green and lush,
carpeted with an array of foliage,
I gazed upon the land
I have grown to call me home.
All that was left of it
was parched red earth
thirsty for the slightest scent of rain.

The heat of the yellow sun
scorching my skin,
streaks of warm sweat running down my cheek.
My own Mama Africa,
The land of my Fathers' was quickly becoming a shadow of itself.
The trees which once provided a nest for the birds,
shelter for the others and which out of generosity oozes a breath of fresh air, suffers at the hands of tyrants.
The trees, though tall and beautiful couldn't speak for themselves,
I became their voice,
they were defenceless,
I took the bullets for them,
my life on the line,
One day after the other.
All I did was plant, one tree after another, I planted.
I soon raised an army.
I remember my fathers' saying; "A tree you plant today becomes a forest tomorrow".
I am brought to tears of joy.
My planting was not void of opposition, fierce opposition.
The more I planted, the more the opposition yet I wouldn't give up.
Alas! Many years of sacrifice finally pays off.
soon mother nature began to redeem her pride, budding and flourishing gallantly, her rewards unqualified.
With my head held up high, I say to myself; "We went, We planted and We conquered!!!"

My name is Wangari Maathai.

Profiled Identity

In my artwork titled " profiled identity" I employed acrylic, magazine and charcoal pencil (mixed media) on a canvas format, an abstract block of colour and tone with design also incorporation of text. The gesture of my subject matter depicts struggle, event, vulnerability and race barrier. This is not different from what has happened in the past, it's a reality. Innocent and promising souls are forcefully taken down, our future is at stake. What is the purpose of our existence? For every life counts no matter the race.

"You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom."
Malcolm X.

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." Nelson Mandela.

"Change will not come if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." Barack Obama.

George Floyd

The killing of George Floyd by a white policeman who brutally knelt on his neck until his life ebbed away caused widespread outrage that shook the United States with a nationwide protest.

Observers felt that the incident happened as a result of a culture of disdain for the black people among some white people. Many a white man see the black race as inferior. This latest act of barbarism struck a sensitive creative chord with artist who has always shown a strong Afrocentric sentiment.

For about three weeks, Omofemi was disturbed and searched for an answer to this racial question.

George Floyd, who was said to be compliant at first during arrest later became resistant when the white officers attempted to bundle him into their waiting patrol vehicle.

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George Floyd uttered nine historically significant agonising sentences in his final moments that inspired a composite creation by Omofemi which consists of nine symbolic artworks.

His last nine sentences: " I can't move, I'm through, Everything hurts, I can't breathe, Don't kill me, Please sir, Some water and My face" will remain hidden in the inner recess of human history as they reveal the organised indifference against the black race. Oluwole Omofemi graphically portrayed this with George Floyd having a zip across his mouth representing his freedom of expression summarily taken away.

La Compassion

Through this new series '*La Compassion*' which is a tribute to the "Windrush generation" and directly refers to the dramatic Windrush scandal. Adjaratou Ouedraogo explores themes which are dear to her: humanism, dignity and solidarity. She thus pays a vibrant tribute to these women and men who left their country, their land, their families to come to work and build Great Britain after the Second World War.

The colourful universe of Ajaratou Ouedraogo, populated by childish characters, opens up a multitude of perspectives, in the background, a perpetual questioning of identity. This small theatre of intimacy that she creates with bright and colourful touches, is now her personal brand. And because it gives importance to the material, to the colour, which often comes to chase away sadness, and to the idea of freedom, the work of Adjaratou Ouedraogo is always an opportunity to express an art corrosive that tries to dissolve all the obstacles to this same freedom, thus stimulating our senses and creating a poetic link between our memory and our experiences.

ARTISTS

Dennis Osakue

Born in 1968 to one of Edo state's most renowned artists, Alfred O. Osakue (also known as The Human Camera), Dennis Osakue has been in love with art since he was an eight-year-old watching his father paint hyper realistic portraits. Dennis Osakue worked in the advertising industry as an illustrator, photographer and a video editor after graduating from school.

Using the pen and ink technique, Dennis has been drawing landscapes of cities and portraits of everyday people since the late 1990s. His work has evolved over the years and right now, he's updated his technique to create something a bit more modern, pop art.

His large-scale paintings bear a photographic quality that underscores his power of imagination. Pop art is a modern art movement which involves taking imagery from popular culture – in the case of Dennis' Pop art paintings he visually removes popular logos famous characters from its known context and combining it with unrelated materials.

Whilst other pop artists lean a little towards the political and social with their works, Dennis creates for one simple reason: to spread happiness:

"I know most people create art for political reasons and while that is important, it's not why I became an artist.

I just want people to see my art and feel happy. I want people to see my art, and regardless of what is going on with them at that moment, be overcome with joy." Dennis Osakue

Moufouli Bello

Moufouli Bello is a multi-media artist who lives and works in Cotonou, Benin.

A lawyer by training (with a master's degree in international labour law from the National School of Administration), Moufouli Bello was always passionate about art and communication. This oriented her towards social law, journalism, photography and the visual arts. Her interest in identity issues soon led to the study of ideological structures, specifically regarding the process by which cults, traditions, culture, politics and technology affect our perception of society, our emotions and our unity. Her works, which combine painting, photography and digital manipulation, thus focus on the interaction between the dynamics of societal evolution and the intimacy of being, ideas of the feminine and human condition, identity, and other considerations that evolve in relation to society and its upheavals.

Moufouli is a 2016 laureate of the French Institute and the Cité Internationale des arts, Paris, and was selected for the exhibition *Africa: Le Grand Festin* in Vienna, Austria, in 2017.

Ayanfe Olarinde

Ayanfe Olarinde (1996) is a self-trained visual artist currently exploring scribble art and photography. In 2018, she graduated from the university of Lagos with a BSc. In Microbiology.

Her journey into art emanated from her love for scribbling, an art form bore out of imperfection on her quest for acceptance. Through this she is able to unpack her emotions in thought-provoking ways.

Ayanfe's artistic dynamism connects enthusiasts in more perspectives than one as she exploits her use of several medium including ink, paint, wire, and discarded objects in creating scribbles, doodles, sculptures, paintings, digital art, upcycled artworks, and textures for her scribbles whilst speaking on broader issues of self-exploration. As an evocative artist influenced by her passage through life, her perception has evolved to include photography and mixed media collages.

In 2018, she was shortlisted for the GTBank Days of Dorcas photography contest. In 2019, she was nominated for the future awards prize for arts, and went on to win the First Bank Magic 125 Creative Contest in the same year. And in 2020, she was listed amongst the 100 Most Inspiring Women in Nigeria. In 2019, she exhibited alongside other photographers at the 25th Bamako Encounters, Mali – OFF exhibition, and the Live-In Desires exhibition by the Goethe Institute Nigeria and The Nlele Institute. Across Ayanfe's work, there is an implicit thematic projecting her interests in self image, identity formation, gender construct, mental health, society's and government's impact in her telling of untold stories. She is also known for her desire for the conceptual aspect of photography. Olarinde looks beyond the manufactured touches of photography to the idea of the medium as a product of her creative mind. She has the ability to see beyond her subject revealing deep crevices of emotions. She is critically acclaimed by pundits. At present, she's a mentee at the Nlele institute, and also the director and curator of Unearthical, an enterprise under which she explores the fashion and fine art genres of photography. She lives and works in Lagos.

Giggs Kqole

Giggs Kgonamotse Kgole, formally known as Kgole, was born in Kutupu Village in Limpopo in 1997 and grew up in Tembisa, Johannesburg. In grade six he applied for a scholarship with the Student Sponsorship Program (SSP). From a pool of 3000 applicants, he was one of 25 who earned a full scholarship, then attended the prestigious St John's College in Houghton, where he completed high school.

He considers this a great achievement for himself and his family, as not only was he the first person to attend a private high school, but the first in his family to reach and pass Matric.

In 2017, a year after Kgole's first Solo exhibition he received a Prestigious Presidential Scholarship to study in Rome at John Cabot University, where he had his first solo showcase in Europe titled 'Before the High Walls'. 2018 marked a new feat for Kgole as he became one of Africa's youngest gallery owners at the age of 21. GasLamp Gallery, located Johannesburg, South Africa was a contemporary art space for creatives who needed an opportunity to tell their stories in a commercial gallery.

In 2019, Kgole spent six months in France, in a residency organized by Undiscovered Canvas. Kgole was named as the Mail and Guardian's Top 200 young South Africans, Kgole has also won the People's choice awards for his masterpiece, "God Ke Mama", which was the catalogue cover of the 10th Anniversary Young Masters Art Prize in London. Passionate about life, inspiring others and marking his name in history, Kgole continues to make enormous strides and take on the art world, one masterpiece at a time.

Kgole's work is typified by his use of Anaglyphs, whereby two versions of his composite photographic images are printed in different colours (typically blue and red) onto canvas. He then applies collage and paint to the printed work. The viewer is then asked to view the work through glasses with a red filter and a blue filter as lenses, creating a dramatic 3D effect.

The glasses play the role of enhancing the viewer's experience and relationship to the work, as it helps you interact with the work more at a more intimate level.

Djakou Kassi Nathalie

Djakou kassi nathalie is a ceramicist from Cameroon. She has been inspired by art since her childhood. She started studio practice very early after her university studies in 1998. The same year, she was also an instructor in the only art school of central Africa in Mbalmayo in Cameroon where she succeeded to introduce the "Matrrial Technology" course. In 2004 she was employed in Centre d'Art Appliqué of mbalmayo in Cameroon as ceramist and also as chief manager of the ceramic studio. In 2011 she was vice president of the craft Association of her local government for 3 years. She worked for a long time in her studio and also worked with many renowned artists in their studios and obtained many distinctions, awards and prizes in and out of Cameroon including the first African prize of creativity of international salon of art craft of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso in 2012. In 2013 she created the ceramic group DECERAM with whom she realised a lot of commissions and specials works.

She moved to Nigeria in 2015 and has participated in many exhibitions. She was also one of the 100 winners of the Union Bank art competition for their 100 years anniversary, she also did and collective exhibition during women international day in March 2018 at the Wheatbaker hotel. In June 2019 she was the artist of the month at Thought Pyramid Art Center Lagos for "Mentoring Moments".

Dandelion Eghosa

Dandelion Eghosa is a young nonbinary visual artist working with diverse visual mediums and primarily with photography as a means to document critical issues and tell stories about their relationship with their immediate environment. Their interests lie in documenting expressions in everyday life and in highlighting marginalized identities particularly the Afro-LGBTQ+ community.

Her work essentially documents progressive periods in the changing social trajectory of gender, sex, sexuality and mental health within communities. Dandelion graduated from Ambrose Ali University, Benin City with honours in Modern Languages in 2014.

Demola Ogunajo

Nigerian artist Demola Ogunajo is born in 1973 and is most recognized for his African pop artwork that utilizes fine art, graphic design and illustration. Primarily working on canvas, Ogunajo explores modern life through his fantastical characters. Demola tends to favour acrylic and vibrant colours to bring happiness and life to his paintings. He is influenced by his social and political surroundings in Nigeria, and he uses his pop art style to lighten the mood, whilst maintaining the strong social stance it represents.

Anthony Nsofor

Anthony Nsofor obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Fine and Applied Arts (Painting) from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1997.

Tony's emphasis on the study of iconographical uli symbolism, for which Nsukka University is known, still determines his artistic process today. However, he does not use uli symbols to convey their conventional meaning, but rather "scribbles and scratches" them onto the canvas as part of his own contemporary expression. His work is firmly driven by the subconscious, and often the story of the work becomes clear to him when he steps back to observe where his process has led him.

Samson Akinnire

Samson Akinnire is one amongst Nigeria's contemporary artist. He was born in Ajegunle Lagos, on 1st June 1986. He holds higher national diploma in sculpture from Lagos state polytechnic, where he graduated as the best student in 2011.

He's an experimental artist that conveys high sense of drama on his known wooden panel installations with 3-dimensionality.

He creates abstracts, portraits mostly of beautiful feminine and masculine figures where he deliberately uses recyclables.

He had participated in several art auctions and exhibitions within Nigeria and abroad.

In 2018 he had his first solo exhibition/art residency in the united state of America at RAM gallery, Brooklyn NY.

Taiye Erewele

Taiye Erewele is an emergent Nigerian experimental artist who specializes in painting. Her early education was in the ancient city of Kano- Northern Nigeria, where she spent the first 18 years of her life. Inspired by her elder brothers' drawings as a child, Taiye cultivated drawing as a hobby, and would later substitute her earlier study in Geography and Regional Planning with Fine and Applied Arts in 2006, to set herself on a path of self-discovery.

SIGNATURE African Art

She obtained a Bachelors of Art degree in Fine Arts from Ambrose Alli University and a Master degree in Visual Arts History from the prestigious University of Lagos in 2008 and 2012 respectively.

Taiye's relentless dedication to her artistic practice spans over a decade. Known for her many portraits, Taiye also indulges in abstract representations characterized by spontaneity and an intuitive use of colours, lines, and texture amongst other elements.

Drawing from the fabric of her personal experience, Taiye explores compelling issues surrounding the female gender. Her works amongst other things tells compelling stories of African women while engaging several subjects like beauty, culture, marriage. Her canvas also tackles social economic ills that have become exigent today's society.

Taiye emerged as the best graduating student in her Faculty in 2008; she is a recipient of several awards, including the Omooba Yemisi Shyllon Art Foundation award in Repousse (2011). She also sometimes delves into art curating and art instruction as the occasion demands. Her works adorn the homes of notable art collectors and connoisseurs' home and abroad.

She has participated in a several exhibitions both locally and internationally and had her first solo exhibition in 2018 at the National Museum, Onikan Lagos.

Ejiro Owigho

Ejiro owigho is an abstract expressionist born in Lagos, 1980. She obtained her national diploma (ND) and higher national diploma (HND) degree in art 2014, from Lagos state Polytechnic. She is a full-time studio artist, and a member of the society of Nigeria artist (SNA).

Her work focuses on psychological awareness of self. This is applicable to most personalities, moods and emotions are peculiarly human and these are exhibited knowingly and often times unknowingly. In her expressiveness the human face is a familiar subject for expressing such emotions and moods, mostly to create a balance between the past and the present as well as highlight the need for positive thinking. She is an activist for self-esteem and awareness.

Oluwole Omofemi

Oluwole Omofemi (born 1988), born Godwin Oluwole Omofemi, is an international artist who hails from Edo south in Nigeria. He was born in the ancient city of Ibadan where his artistic talent sprang to life and received the nourishment of older artists.

His strength as an artist lies in showcasing human figures; and this is a skill he has steadily honed on the professional turf. His chosen media are oil and acrylic with preference for oil.

Omofemi's first arts exhibition was at the National Museum, Ibadan, Nigeria. Alliance Francais, Ibadan, has also hosted his exhibition. His other exhibitions include the ones at some prestigious galleries in Lagos, Italy, Belgium and Ghana. He has had one solo exhibition to his credit.

For him, African Art has more depth since it is often a portrayal of sometime complex personal experiences. His mind continues to resonate with childhood experiences that proved material for his arts. He believes art has a functional role in society to correct vices, to reveal the messages in the mind of the artist, and as a record of the past.

He received his Higher National Diploma from the Polytechnic of Ibadan, where he was also recognized as one of the best graduating students of the year. As a visionary, Omofemi has always wanted to deploy arts to better the lot of the underprivileged, to showcase African fashion and feminine charm, and to bring about the rediscovery of Afrocentric pride. His works are widely collected in Nigeria and abroad.

Adjaratou Ouedraogo

Adjaratou Ouedraogo, was born in 1981 in Lomé, Togo and lives and works in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. She belongs to the small circle of women painters in Burkina Faso. Through a kind of mise en abyme, the artist explores her personal history, her cracks, her wounds dating back to childhood: thus telling a story within the story. The boundary between image and memory then creates moments of life carefully cut out, then almost religiously, arranged, in boxes, in the image of her childlike characters often appearing in biscornuous or extravagant, almost narrow positions.

SIGNATURE *African Art*

Adjaratou Ouedraogo's work has been presented at several fairs around the world in 2018 and 2019, including at AKA (Paris) and 1:54 Contemporary Art from Africa (New York). She has also recently joined prestigious private collections in France, Italy and the United States.

GALLERY STATEMENT

Signature African Art will donate 40% of the proceeds of *Say My Name* to Ava DuVernay's Law Enforcement Accountability Project (LEAP). Dedicated to empowering activists to pursue narrative change, LEAP is a propulsive fund focused on telling stories of police abuse and violence through various narrative art forms. Administered by DuVernay's non-profit ARRAY Alliance, the LEAP initiative commissions projects across multiple disciplines including film, literature, poetry, theatre, dance, fine art and music. The Gallery will also donate the profits made from the George Floyd and Breonna Taylor paintings to their respective families.

AVA DUVERNAY STATEMENT

Art is a disruptive and propulsive force. Creative expression is one of the most powerful tools that we can employ to activate and ignite change. I am happy to partner with Khalil and Signature African Art to showcase the galvanizing work of thirteen dynamic Black artists as they tackle issues of justice and dignity through their art practice.

KHALIL AKAR STATEMENT

We are delighted to be collaborating with Ava DuVernay on *Say My Name*. Signature African Art has been committed to providing a platform for African artists since its foundation in 1992. All of the artists involved hope their works will raise awareness and help to continue the conversation around the Black Lives Matter movement. It is important that we remember these stories and that we say the names of all whom we have lost.

ABOUT LEAP

Dedicated to empowering activists to pursue narrative change, LEAP is a propulsive fund focusing on storytelling around police violence and abuse. LEAP expands ARRAY's mission to amplify the work of Black artists, filmmakers of colour and women directors of all kinds. Administered by the non-profit ARRAY Alliance, the fund commissions projects across multiple disciplines including film, literature, poetry, theatre, dance, fine art and music. LEAP is envisioned as a two-year project to catalyse a minimum of 25 artist commissions. For more information, go to LEAPAction.org.



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