

Gerald Chukwuma

7 April - 18 May 2017



Work by Gerald Chukwuma, copyright the artist, courtesy the artist and Gallery 1957, Accra

Gallery 1957 is proud to present new works from Gerald Chukwuma from 7 April - 18 May 2017, marking the artist's first solo show in Ghana.

In a new series of work spanning paintings, sculptures and collage, Chukwuma explores migration as a constant process of transformation and reinvention. Considering the implications of globalisation on his local community, Chukwuma transforms everyday materials to render new stories of Nigeria's socio-political landscape. The artist draws on the movements of people through voluntary and forced migration as a vital stage in the progress of our collective humanity. This sense of optimism instils his work with playfully illustrative characters, drawn from a wide variety of visual forms present in Nigeria's deep cultural history.

Chukwuma positions his narratives of local communities within global contexts of time, trade and travel. In some works, the artist creates aerial views of road networks and urban landscapes, constructing small towns and buildings from sim-cards sourced from local communities; these are the same communities that appear in his woodcarvings as symbols of urban societies galvanised by the realities of globalisation, and coloured by internal and external conflicts.

Featuring *Uli* and *Nsibidi* motifs and symbols - pictorial languages originating from the south-eastern Igbo regions of Nigeria - Chukwuma's work references the *Nsukka* art tradition, a movement which emerged in the 70s from the University of Nigeria and worked to expand and modernise the aesthetic of Igbo culture. Carving these designs into recycled and found objects from his contemporary environment, Chukwuma re-contextualises his practice within a moment of rapid environmental and ecological change.

Born in Nigeria in 1973, Gerald Chukwuma is one of the country's fastest rising contemporary artists. Known for his intricately crafted wood-slate sculptures, Chukwuma's multifaceted approach to burning, chiselling, and painting discarded objects - including found aluminium sheets and wooden planks - captures the nation's richly layered history, whilst imbuing his works with both personal and political meaning. The artist explains:

"The use of wood in my work is symbolic - it gives me the freedom to pierce, to cut, to attach and to interact, cultivating an aesthetic characterised by pre-eminence and solidity of the material. My work also explores the relationship between their structural, architectural and organic qualities of the medium and image."

About Gerald Chukwuma

Gerald Chukwuma (b. 1973) lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria. He graduated in 2003 with First Class Honours from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Chukwuma has participated extensively in solo and group exhibitions across Nigeria and internationally including: Art X Lagos, Civic Center Lagos (2016); *People's Paradise*, Temple Muse, Lagos (2015); *Essentials*, Alexis Galleries, Lagos (2015); *The Contemporaries*, The Wheatbeaker, Lagos (2015); *Today In History*, Thought Pyramid Art Centre, Abuja (2015); *Soaking Up Beauty*, Constant Capital, Lagos (2014); *Highlife II*, Ethnocentrique, Lagos (2013); *Music Lesson*, Alexis Gallery, Lagos (2012); *Highlife I*, Exhibition of Designs and Art, Ethnocentrique, Lagos (2011); *Heden Daagse Afrikaanse Kunst*, Amsterdam (2010); *Pachakucha: Inspire Japan*, Terra Kulture, Lagos (2009); *Reclaiming Africa*, Goethe-Institute, Lagos (2009); *In Pursuit of Knowledge*, Civic Centre, Lagos (2009); *Africa Now*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C (2009); *Moderne Afrikansu Kunst*, Danish Center for Culture and Development, Copenhagen (2009); *Mouling Matter*, Pan African University, Lagos (2008); *The Unbreakable Nigerian Spirit*, Galerie 23, Amsterdam (2008); *With A Human Face*, Pan African University, Lagos (2006); *Salt of the Earth*, PACA Biennale, Alliance Francaise, Enugu (2004) and *Awakened Instincts*, Nimbus Art Center, Lagos (2003).

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For press information and images please contact:

Sophie Campos or Francesca Meale at Pelham Communications

Tel: +44 (0) 208 969 3959

Email: sophie@pelhamcommunications.com or
francesca@pelhamcommunications.com

Exhibition: Gerald Chukwuma

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Address: Gallery 1957, Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City, PMB 66 — Ministries, Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue, Ridge — Accra, Ghana

Telephone: +233 303967575