

# CADENZA

03 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Jonah Bulus | Peter Adelaja | Simon Ojeaga | Tosin Ajayi | Ugo Emebiriado | Ukandi Atsu



Affinity Gallery is pleased to present 'CADENZA' a group exhibition curated by Asibi Danjuma featuring 23 works by Jonah Bulus, Peter Adelaja, Simon Ojeaga, Tosin Ajayi, Ugo Emebiriado and Ukandi Atsu which will open to the public on Sunday, September 3rd in Lagos, Nigeria.

A Cadenza is a section of improvised music that is performed within a classical piece of music. It is a point of personal flourish and experimentation, a means of giving new life to the antiquated. This exhibition seeks to find a confluence between classical music and fine art; after all, both have historically informed one another and share the qualities of flow, movement, structure, harmony and ornamentation.

Cadenza is an ideal starting point, building on the idea of improvisation as it alludes to the reappraising of art histories, in order to arrive at new and imagined territories. The exhibiting artists have thus delved into the lineages of painting, photography, sculpture and classical music, and have utilised their findings in building technical passages towards self-discovery.

Jonah Bulus (b.1987) is an abstract painter from Askira, Borno State, Nigeria. A Fine Art graduate of the prestigious Zaria Art School (2017), he was a student of the illustrious painter, Professor Jerry Buhari. His abstract paintings bear the backbone of drip technique, married with intentional strokes, to represent nature as an ever-abundant antidote to the perils of the human condition, having lived in the city Maiduguri, during a period of constant attacks by the insurgent group Boko Haram. Bulu's paintings have been commissioned and

acquired by private and corporate collections such as SeerBit, Churchgate Group and Lighthouse Capital.

Beguiled by the works of symbolist artist Gustave Klimt, Simon Ojeaga (b.1996) paints in a manner that illuminates the cultural practice of wearing textiles, a visual testament to the richness of African customs, traditions. Furthermore, his meticulous painterly lines draw his subjects close together, revealing the nuances of social interactions. Ojeaga earned a distinction in Painting from Auchu Polytechnic School of Art and Industrial Design in 2019. He has participated in exhibitions including a solo, Lines and Wonder at AMG Projects, Lagos (2022) and Otherworldly, O'DA Art, Lagos (2022).

Ugochukwu Emebiriado (b.1999) astutely captures the flavours of urban dwelling, from a viewpoint that feels both present and voyeuristic. His compositions reveal the glaring and quiet dynamism of daily life. From a radiant sunset, to drops of sea water elegantly glistening on a shoulder. Emebiriado's creative prowess has earned him recognition, including the Igby Prize for Photography and the Isiaka Aliagan Poetry Prize. His photography has been published in Guardian UK, Vice, NPR, Irin Journal and Monocle Magazine. He is a past winner of the Tecno Canon Competition and a 2023 Resident at Kobomoje AIR, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Self-taught multidisciplinary artist Ukandi Atsu (b.1991) has built upon the works of the likes of pre-eminent Beninois photographer, Leonce Raphael Agbodjelou, by presenting a visuality that combines Renaissance art with Kalabari masquerades, an endeavour that is quick-witted and avant-garde. Born and raised in Rivers State, Nigeria, he graduated from the University of Abuja with a degree in Political Science. Atsu's recent exhibitions include The Mis-predilections Of Aboya - A white Space, Lagos (2022), Area-Noir x Soho House pop-up, Soho House Redchurch Street Studio London (2022), Arnheim 5 collective, Ibadan (2023).

Sculptor and performance artist Peter Adelaja's marble and stone sculptures form conjunctions between fluidity and stasis, a rumination on the Aristotelian classification of things into the matter they are made of and the form that matter takes. Adelaja is a graduate of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (2022), and apprenticed under multi-disciplinary artist Patrick Akpojotor. He most recently participated in the exhibition All Guts, Kokopelli Gallery, Lagos (2022).

Tosin Ajayi's (b.1984) original piano composition, '*Imagination*', which is inspired by masters from the classical and early romantic eras, erupts in a perfect cadence. He is an accomplished pianist, organist and music instructor with over 3 decades of musical experience. Ajayi studied with the Russian pianist Maria Asseeva who is of the Rachmaninoff school (Rachmaninoff-Ashkenazy-Asseeva-Ajayi) and was featured at the concert marking 200th posthumous anniversary of the birth of Frederic Chopin.. He made his concerto debut, playing 1st movement of Grieg's Concerto in A minor with the MUSON Symphony Orchestra under the baton of German conductor, Walter-Michael Vollhardt.

The exhibiting artists have all reorganised the canon of their disciplines, with the result of drawing history closer to them.

### **About the Curator**

Asibi Danjuma is a writer and art producer based in Lagos Nigeria. She is also the founder of PHÍLOS, a framework that merges contemporary African art and literature, in an exploration of the profundity of the human condition.

In 2020, she was awarded a writer's grant by New York and Hamburg based Art Publisher's Montez Press for her prose piece Bonsai (2020) and she has produced two exhibitions, namely Today, A Dream of Yesterday by Fidelis Joseph (2020) and In Search of Home by Fidelis Joseph (2021).

Intrinsic to her work is building art collections for corporate institutions and she has contributed her knowledge of the Nigerian contemporary art world to publications such as Financial Times. Presently she is one of 5 facilitators for Art Bridge Project's Beyond the Canvas mentorship program. Cadenza is inspired by her ever-changing experiences as a keen and imperfect pianist.

For interviews, images, and comment, please contact: Moni Aisida,  
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Exhibition Opening Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11 am – 6 pm Sundays are by appointment only.

Affinity

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### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Affinity Art Gallery is a modern and contemporary gallery dedicated to the promotion and celebration of African artists who are passionately sharing the African narrative with their works. The gallery functions as a beacon to educate and preserve Africa's rich and diverse culture in a bid to inspire the next generation of young Africans.

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