

Affinity

THE THREAD THAT BINDS

26 MARCH 2023 - 29 APRIL 2023

Chinwendu Kelechi | Nikiwe Dlova | Stephanie Unaeze | Wanger Ayu



Stephanie Unaeze, *New Futures*, 2022
Acrylic on Canvas, 5ft x 4ft



Wanger Ayu, *Foliage and Fireworks*, 2022
Mixed media on Canvas, 122 x 92 cm

For their debut exhibition for 2023, Affinity Gallery is pleased to present 'The Thread That Binds' a group exhibition featuring four artists from Nigeria and South Africa. The exhibition opening Sunday, March 26th, 2023 is in celebration of International Women's Month.

The Thread That Binds, features works by Chinwendu Kelechi, Nikiwe Dlova, Stephanie Unaeze and Wanger Ayu, in a stunningly diverse showing and understanding of materiality. This exhibition aims to recontextualize historical narratives and examine them with a lens that is current while still maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the past. It is also a way to objectively examine our cultural history to see what aspects of it have served and continue to serve us well, especially where African women are concerned, so that we do not continue to repeat and perpetuate certain damaging historical cycles. This exhibition is also a path to acceptance, where we do not shy away from the past, but instead confront it, embrace it, hold it up to the light like a lump of coal with a diamond hidden within, then chip away at it to reveal its hidden truths and most importantly, learn from what is revealed.

Affinity

Chinwendu Kelechi (b. 1997) is a self-taught artist who lives and works in Umuahia, Abia State. Her work is centered on the cultural histories and traditions of Igbo society. Her work seeks to interpret and reimagine the ancient Uri, Nsibidi, Mbari, and Ukara art, by creating story-based pieces that convey cultural ideas in a contemporary setting. She uses a variety of mediums, such as "Ukara Ohuru" which means New Ukara. It is a new form of communication, record keeping, and storytelling on cloth, that is derived from the Ukara-Ekpe society. She has participated in exhibitions such as "Unusual suspects", African Artists Foundation, Lagos, Nigeria, 2021, and also served as Art Director for the short film "Swimming in a Sea of Trauma" created by Ugochukwu Azuya, which premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2023.

Nikiwe Dlova (b. 1997) is a multi-disciplinary hair artist from Diepkloof in South Africa. She has made hair her canvas through creative hairstyles, headpieces, and artwork using synthetic hair extensions, wool, fabric, and beads (amongst others). Nikiwe has a Diploma in Clothing Management from the University of Johannesburg, her love for fashion weaved itself through her textile hair artistry to tell visual African stories using hair as a symbol/language. She has participated in group exhibitions such as Creatress - A Woman or Goddess that creates, Mashumi Art Projects, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2022, and her first solo exhibition The Royal Hair Salon, Botho Project Space, Cape Town, South Africa 2021.

Stephanie Unaeze (b.1992) is a self-taught painter and mixed media artist. She spent her early years in the United Kingdom before moving back to Nigeria to finish her Secondary School education. She received a BSc in Computer science from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and an Education Design Certificate from Parsons School of Design. Stephanie uses her art to express and document the nuances, complexities, and layers that surround the modern African lifestyle. She has participated in exhibitions such as We Come In Peace, Eclectica Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa, 2023, Girls Run The World, Eclectica Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa 2022, The Other Art Fair Presented by Saatchi Art Los Angeles, 2021, START Art Fair, Saatchi Gallery, London United Kingdom, 2020.

Wanger Ayu (b. 1986) is a self-taught materials experiment artist & a fashion designer. She received her law degree at the University of Exeter, UK, and also a fashion certification from the French Fashion University (ESMOD), Dubai. Her mediums of expression combine the exploration of hand-woven textiles, with painting, print-making, beading, transfer & collage. She has been mentored by some of Nigeria's masters including Professor Bruce Onobrakpeya and Mr. Sam Ovrati and other renowned Nigerian artists including Nduwhite Ndubuisi, and Uthman Wahab. She has participated in group exhibitions such as Institut Français de Côte d'Ivoire, 2023, Découvertes #4, LouisSimone Guirandou Gallery, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 2022, Visage, Chilli Arts Projects, London, UK, 2022, Weaving Identity, DICA Arts at 1952 Africa, Lagos, Nigeria, 2021. Wanger lives and practices in Lagos, Nigeria.

Affinity

For interviews, images, and comment, please contact:

Moni Aisida, manager@galleryaffinity.com

Exhibition Opening Hours:

Tuesday – Saturday, 11 am – 6 pm

Sundays are by appointment only.

Affinity

Unit 2, 1-7 Muri Okunola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria.

www.galleryaffinity.com

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.

© 2023 Affinity. All rights reserved.