



Press Release

Lagos, Nigeria

Nigeria's kó gallery debuts at 1-54 New York, May 18-21, 2023, featuring a group presentation of Adébayo Bolaji, Mobolaji Ogunrosoye, and Ozioma Onuzulike.

kó, an art gallery based in Lagos, Nigeria, is pleased to participate at 1-54 New York, the contemporary African art fair, in New York, May 18-21, 2023, Booth 15. This presentation will showcase painting, collage, and ceramic artworks by Adébayo Bolaji, Mobolaji Ogunrosoye, and Ozioma Onuzulike.

Adébayo Bolaji (b. 1983, UK) is a British-Nigerian multidisciplinary artist whose paintings reflect on the process and narrative of change, examining questions of identity, power, and cultural history. Bolaji adopts a mixed-media practice featuring bold colors and geometric abstraction alongside elements of figuration. Bolaji's paintings adopt a metaphorical language that reflects on the physiological and the social. His work references history, anthropology, religion, and popular culture. For 1-54 New York, Bolaji presents two new mixed paintings, incorporating acrylic, spray paint, and oil pastel.

Mobolaji Ogunrosoye (Nigeria, b. 1991) uses the distortion of photography and collage to explore ideas around perception. Her practice revolves around ideation and exploring the different ways in which images of the female body may be distorted. In the *Portraits* series, Ogunrosoye creates multi-layer collages, incorporating a process of burning and cutting to create depth in revealing underlying layers of images. The series addresses selfhood, body image, and the impact of societal influences on personal identity as it is related to Nigerian women.

Ozioma Onuzulike (b. 1972, Achi, Enugu State, Nigeria) creates large-scale ceramic installations that hang like tapestries, formed from thousands of ceramic palm kernel beads, terracotta and copper rings, and natural palm kernel shells. He explores the aesthetic, symbolic and metaphorical nature of the clay-working processes – pounding, crushing, hammering, wedging, grinding, cutting, pinching, punching, perforating, burning, and firing. Adopting the laborious process of firing the materials through multiple kilns, each firing creates unique colors and textures in transforming the clay, oxides, glazes and recycled glass. In his *Bead* series, Onuzulike likens the palm kernel shells to the history of colonialism as a symbol of currency. For the artist, they also represent the continuing imbalance in political relations between Africa and the West.

kó is an art gallery based in Lagos, Nigeria, that is dedicated to promoting modern and contemporary art. kó has a dual focus in championing Nigeria's leading artists from the modern period and celebrating emerging and established contemporary artists across Africa and the Diaspora.



About Adébayo Bolaji

Adébayo Bolaji lives and works in London and graduated from the Central School of Speech and Drama. Bolaji has exhibited internationally with artist residencies in New York and Margate, including an artist residency with Yinka Shonibare MBE Guest Projects. His work was recently featured in a two-person exhibition, *Bitter Nostalgia*, at Saatchi Gallery in London in 2023. Bolaji is a multidisciplinary artist who has also trained as a lawyer, actor and writer, and has had prominent speaking engagements with Penn State University and Mall Galleries. Additionally, Bolaji belongs to the prominent Soho House Collection as well as the Hogans & Lovells Collection. Solo exhibitions include *In Pursuit of Flow*, UH Arts, Hertfordshire (2021); *The Power & The Pause*, BEERS London, London (2021); *Between Two Worlds*, Galerie Kremers, Berlin (2020); *Top ia: A Reinvention of the Self*, Serena Morton Gallery, London (2019); *Babel*, Galerie Proarta, Zurich (2019) and *Rituals of Colour*, Public Gallery, London (2018).

About Mobolaji Orunrosoye

Moloblaji Ogonrosoye is a visual artist based in Lagos, Nigeria. In 2018, Ogunrosoye held her first solo exhibition at A White Space Creative Agency in Lagos. In 2022, she was included in the group exhibition *Austere Imaginary* at kó in Lagos. She has completed residencies at the Nolder Foundation, Ghana, and a virtual residency at Window, Winnipeg. In 2021, she was selected a finalist for the Art X Prize in Nigeria.

About Ozioma Onuzulike

Ozioma Onuzulike graduated First Class from the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he now serves as Director of the Institute of African Studies. His solo exhibition, *Seed Yams of Our Land*, was held at the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), Lagos, Nigeria, in 2019, along with a presentation of his poetry collection of the same title also published by the CCA. kó presented Onuzulike's exhibition, *The Way We Are*, in 2021. His works were included in *[Re:]Entanglements: Colonial Collections in Decolonial Times* at the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, UK. His exhibition, *Strings the Length of Our Palm's Seal*, was held at Chertludde, Berlin, in 2022. His work has been included in recent presentations at The Armory Show, EXPO Chicago, 1-54 London, Artgenève, Zonamaco, and Art Brussels. Onuzulike is a fellow of the Civitella Ranieri Centre, Umbertide, Perugia, Italy, where he undertook a residency under the UNESCO-ASCHBERG Bursary for Artists, and an alumnus of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, USA. His work is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Anthropology and Archeology, University of Cambridge, Princeton University Art Museum, Hudson Valley Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, and the Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art, Lagos.