

PEJU ALATISE

ALAFIA

4–30 April, 2022

kó

ko-artspace.com
Lagos, Nigeria

kó is pleased to present *Alafia*, a solo exhibition of sculptures, and paintings by interdisciplinary artist Peju Alatise.

Reflecting on recent happenings and current realities, the exhibition dialogues with the concept of wellness, sound health, and freedom. It examines the idea and understanding of wellness in our world today. While acknowledging the present day realities, *Alafia*, a Yoruba word which is translated as “peace or wellness” is the artist’s desire and prayer for everyone in these trying times.

Peju’s artistic practice addresses themes including violence, exploitative labour practices, girl child rights, migration, history amongst other socio- political issues. She defines her practice as a search for truth and to this end much of her work centres on women in Nigeria and on the political and religious issues at the heart of the country.

Comprising large-scale works, the exhibition presents Peju’s recent sculptures which are a continuation of her exploration in the fantasy world of young girls. The works continue to serve as a platform to advocate for young girls in her country and community. Alatise has also been an influential voice on the Child Not Bride campaign in Nigeria, with her work regularly feeding into this discourse. Additionally,

This presentation features recent sculptures that are a continuation of Alatise’s exploration in the fantasy world of young girls. Her artworks continue to serve as a platform to advocate for young black girls in her country and community. The figures in Alatise’s sculptures are in a dream-like state, with the ability to fly and whimsically interact in synchronized movement with the birds and butterflies around them. Alatise formed the figures after inviting local children to pose for them, careful in their precision of a realistic representation. The figures are then built in clay and cast in fiberglass. While many of the artist’s past works have alluded to the pursuit of children’s autonomy from the oppression of the present, these works suggest a happier fantasy. These children are depicted being lifted up in their own imagination, as being lighter than air. In these works, the young girls are the superheroes of their own narratives.

The *Good Luck* series (2022), is a new body of work comprising 20 pieces made of mild steel, glass, granite cast in resin, raw rainbow fluorite. Attached to each piece is a gemstone that symbolizes wealth, great value, longevity, good fortune, amongst others. Researching the properties of these gemstones, Peju metaphorically wishes people all shades of goodness and luck in their various endeavors.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Peju Alatise is an interdisciplinary artist, architect and writer. She started her professional career as an architect while running a private art studio. These days, she is a leading voice in contemporary art on the African continent. Her practice is relentlessly experimental and labour- intensive. She produces works across a variety of mediums, techniques and materials including but not limited to paintings, film, installations, sculptures.

Her work is also pointedly political, often asking damning questions of, and provoking reflections about times, the state of affairs at home, and abroad. She has been consistent with her experimentation with materials and techniques as a medium to analyze various socio-political issues.

Alatise is a fellow at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art and the 2017 winner of the FNB Art Prize in Johannesburg. Her work was exhibited at the 57th Venice Biennale as well as in numerous exhibitions in New York, Florence, Morocco, London amongst many others. Her debut novel *Orita Meta*, chronicling the interwoven path of three women, was nominated for the ANA/Flora Nwapa Prize for Women's Writing in 2006. She is also the founder of the ANAI Foundation - a non-profit foundation dedicated to the development of visual arts in Nigeria, offering sponsored training programs for artists.

Lifted series 1 - Dream-catcher

2020

Resin, fiberglass, granite cast,

Acrylic paint, mild steel metal

78 x 22 in.





Freedom series

2019

Burned wood, plywood,
Mild steel metal, acrylic paints, resin,
Fibreglass and granite dust cast
60 x 48 x 20 in.



Manifestation

2020

Glass, mild steel

Dimensions variable



God is a little girl 1

2021

Mild steel, granite cast, resin

84 x 36 in.



God is a little girl 2

2021

Mild steel, granite cast, resin

84 x 36 in.

Spider man

2020

Plaster cast in resin, fibre glass, mild steel
42.5 x 36 in.





Good Luck

2022

Mild steel, glass, granite cast in resin, raw
rainbow fluorite

15.5 x 6.5 in.

20 pieces

Okiemute series

2011

Acrylic on canvas

47.5 x 47.5 in.



Okiemute series

2011

Acrylic on canvas

47.5 x 47.5 in.



