



**Bunmi Augusto**  
***Outside***

December 15 - February 6, 2023

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**kó is pleased to present *Outside*, an exhibition of pastel paper works by Bunmi Augusto. *Outside* is the artist's first solo exhibition in Nigeria.**

In *Outside*, Bunmi Augusto draws us further into *Within*, the name she gives the imagined world that has remained at the heart of her practice. Focusing on the interactions of three hybrid siblings, Aruaro, Agama, and Irunoji, the paintings explore themes of ancestral memory, belonging, and love.

Agusto's practice follows the inhabitants of a surrealist wonderland in her mind called *Within*. She uses this world as an exploratory site for how psychological and cultural theories contribute to the construction of selfhood. The indigenous inhabitants of *Within* are hybrids whose mutations are based on objects the artist finds integral to her sense of self and culture. Human family members, friends and passersby are also present in *Within* as cross-reality migrants. She works predominantly with pastel pencils and mixed media on paper.

Agusto renders Aruaro, Agama, and Irunoji as active participants in *Within's* evolving landscape. The viewer sees their individual perspectives and motivations radiate at the centre of Agusto's intricate and dynamic world-building. One sibling, Irunoji, is shown to possess a creative capacity that allows them to manipulate the natural and supernatural elements of their environment. In *Irunoji Pulls Blessings Down with the Night*, Irunoji brings the night into view with their hands. In *Two Lizards The Day They Met and We Started Something*, a romance unfolds between Agama, another sibling and half-human half-lizard hybrid, and an unnamed character. Their intimacy is emphasized through the angles of their bodies and a repeated motif of encircling agama lizards. In works like *They Were Dancing With An Ancestor*, we see the third sibling, Aruaro, play a more observant and meditative role. Using "ancestral eyes," they are able to perceive spiritual agents and phenomena.

As highly conceptual as they are deeply personal, these works document the characters, customs, and experiences that make *Within* as much a testament to Augusto's verdant imagination. The series is an inventive mosaic, whose formal and thematic qualities extend the narrative possibilities of contemporary art.

### **About Bunmi Augusto**

Bunmi Augusto (b. 1999, Lagos, Nigeria) earned her BA in Fine Art in 2020 from Central Saint Martins, where she graduated with First Class Honours and was awarded the Cass Art Prize twice. She graduated from SOAS University in 2022 with a distinction in MA History of Art & Archaeology. She is now an MFA candidate at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford where she has been awarded the Clarendon Scholarship for outstanding academic merit.

Agusto has been the subject of solo exhibitions at TAFETA, London (2022) and DADA Gallery (2021). Select group exhibitions include ASSEMBLE, V.O Curations Mayfair, London (2022); Art X Lagos (2021); 1-54 x Christie's, London (2021); *Now, Now*, TAFETA, London (2021); and *London Grads Now*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2020).

**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.