



Perceptions

July 8-August 11, 2023

Peju Alatise
Sokari Douglas Camp
Juliet Ezenwa Pearce
Chinwe Uwatse

kó is pleased to present *Perceptions*, a group exhibition featuring Peju Alatise, Sokari Douglas Camp, Juliet Ezenwa Pearce, and Chinwe Uwatse. This exhibition interrogates the dynamics of representation and identity of women in Nigeria today through a female perspective, examining the intersections of cultural history, gender stereotypes, and social norms. Incorporating painting, sculpture, and mixed media, these artists deconstruct conventional perceptions of women while advocating for inclusivity, nuance, and activism.

Peju Alatise's recent paintings explore the narrative of *Silifat*, a protagonist of the artist's prior novel, telling the story of a girl who finds herself in a web of circumstances beyond her control. **Sokari Douglas Camp** creates steel sculptures infusing central prominent characters in narratives that are inspired by her Kalabari heritage and broader aspects of African culture. **Juliet Ezenwa Pearce's** vibrant paintings illustrate Nigerian women as regal, resilient, and confident, highlighting their inherent power by emphasizing the significance of hairstyles and fashion as markers of identity. **Chinwe Uwatse** employs the abstract uli style of the Nsukka school, drawing inspiration from everyday life while using her paintings to assist the preservation of femininity in uli design forms. Together, these artists articulate the realities in how women present themselves in contrast to the way that they are perceived.

About Peju Alatise (b. 1975, Nigeria)

Peju Alatise is an interdisciplinary artist, architect, and author of two novels. A leading voice of contemporary art in Africa, Alatise produces artworks through the lens of spirituality and Yoruba cosmology, leaning into ancient storytelling traditions and crafting alternative social imagery. Her work is pointedly political, often provoking reflections about social issues both at home and abroad. Alatise has explored issues of exploitative labour practices in Nigeria, children's rights with a focus on young girls, and state-sanctioned violence against citizens. Her artistic practice is relentlessly experimental and labour-intensive, working across a variety of mediums, techniques, and materials including painting, film, installation, and sculpture. Alatise exhibited at the Venice Architectural Biennale in 2021 and was selected to represent Nigeria's debut pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale in 2017. She was the recipient of the FNB Art Prize at the Joburg Art Fair in 2018. Alatise is a fellow at the National Museum of African Art, part of the Smithsonian Institution, and work has been collected by the Smithsonian Institute. She is the founder of Alter Native Artists Initiative, an incubatory artist collective that offers training programs and residencies to young, emerging artists. Her sculpture, *Sim and the Glass Birds*, was exhibited at Regent's Park, London, for Frieze Sculpture in 2022. Alatise is based in Lagos, Nigeria and Glasgow, UK.

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About Sokari Douglas Camp (b. 1958, Nigeria)

Inspired by her Kalabari heritage and broader aspects of African culture, Sokari Douglas Camp CBE creates steel sculptures that span social and political life in Nigeria. Executed with elemental forms and metals, Camp highlights the energy of Nigeria's illustrious characters. Her works have dealt with wide ranging issues facing Nigeria, from its colonial past to environmental concerns. Camp studied at the California College of Arts and Crafts, earned a B.A. degree at the Central School of Art and Design and an M.A. from the Royal College of Art. Her work is held in numerous private collections including the Smithsonian Museum and the British Museum. Camp is one of the winners of the Memorial for Ken Saro-Wiwa in London and was also one of the shortlisted artists for the Fourth Plinth in 2003, London's most public showpiece for contemporary art. Camp lives and works in London.

About Juliet Ezenwa Pearce (b. 1968, Nigeria)

Juliet Enzenwa Pearce was first introduced to art practice by her grandmother, a reputable traditional body decorator using uli. Her work aims to dismantle the misogynist framework of modern day African society. She is viewed as an activist as her work addresses human rights issues especially those concerned with women and girls within Sub Saharan Africa. Her paintings illustrate African women as regal, strong and striking. Her process of creating art is a somewhat therapeutic experience, a way to shed light on the complexities and hardships she has witnessed. Ezenwa is an executive member of Echoes of Women in Africa She is a regular participant at the UN-sponsored art exhibition on female genital mutilation.

About Chinwe Uwatse (b. 1960, Nigeria)

Chinwe Uwatse is a contemporary artist who paints mainly in the abstract uli style of the Nsukka School. She draws inspiration from everyday life, and is influenced by science fiction and fantasy. Her central objective as an artist is to use her paintings to assist the preservation of femininity in uli design forms. Uli is the indigenous body art calligraphy of the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria. Her watercolours and ink drawings have a somewhat ephemeral aspect to them, rich in symbolic nature and layered in soft hues. Uwatse is best known for focusing on the female ethos with a unique style that draws on the nature of the female body. She uses her art form as a vehicle to comment on the pressures and joys of universal womanhood.

About kó

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.