



## ***Mining Abstractions***

April 24-May 31, 2025

**Lani Adeoye**  
**Chijioke Anyacho**  
**Jelili Atiku**  
**Kingsley Ayogu**  
**Adebayo Bolaji**  
**Layo Bright**  
**Chukwuemeka Anthony Chukwu**  
**Yagazie Emezi**  
**Diana Ejaita**  
**Modupeola Fadugba**  
**Bisila Noha**  
**Ozioma Onuzulike**  
**Araba Opoku**  
**Sabastine Ugwuoke**

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 24, 6-8 PM

kó is pleased to present ***Mining Abstractions***, a group exhibition that brings together artists who engage abstraction to decipher cultural codes, histories, and mythologies. Their works deconstruct systems of visual language through mark-making, pattern, repetition, and fluid structures. Working across painting, drawing, ceramics, textiles, and design, these artists approach abstraction as a practice of excavation, uncovering layered meanings and reshaping personal metaphors.

Some works unfold through delicate, meditative marks; others through bold, expressive gestures. Several artists draw from inherited traditions—Yoruba cosmology, Igbo *Uli* design, ceremonial symbols, and craft practices—infusing abstraction with cultural memory and ancestral knowledge. Others respond to the conditions of contemporary life, shaped by digital culture, diasporic movement, and the politics of visibility. Motifs such as webs, networks, and fragmented bodies evoke themes of restriction, transition, and passage. In other works, abstraction becomes a way of mapping psychological and spiritual landscapes, reflecting on legacy, loss, and transformation.

Together, these artists expand the language of abstraction—at once personal and collective, historical and contemporary, visible and obscured. Through their material gestures, they engage reshape narratives of continuity and change.

**Lani Adeoye** (b. 1989, London, UK) is a multidisciplinary designer whose practice spans sculpture, lighting, furniture, fashion, and assistive devices. Rooted in the ethos of connection, her work blends her Nigerian heritage and traditional craftsmanship with



a futuristic approach. *Igbako* (2023) is a bronze light sculpture inspired by the form and tactile quality of the traditional *igbako*—a serving utensil used for “swallow” meals in Nigeria. The form evolved through multiple prototypes—carved in clay, wood, and oxidized bronze—culminating in a work that bridges utility, ritual, and sculptural form.

**Chijioke Anyacho** (b. 1995, Benin City, Nigeria) works at the intersection of abstraction and representation, crafting compositions that unfold like emotional maps. Disjointed figures—torsos, limbs, and silhouettes—are suspended in saturated, dreamlike spaces. The kaleidoscopic palette sets vivid tones against soft washes, where flat planes collide with textured passages. These bodies appear in flux, suspended between presence and erasure. Drawing from his personal history of growing up without a father, Anyacho dissects the psychological weight of absence, loss and acceptance.

**Jelili Atiku** (b. 1968, Ejigbo, Nigeria) creates abstract drawings shaped by his performance-based practice in public spaces. His works chart both physical and metaphysical movement through webs, lines, and residual marks. Informed with Yoruba cosmologies and social structures, these drawings visualize the body's navigation across real and imagined territories. For Atiku, the web becomes a symbol of lived experience and systemic restriction, reflecting on borders, displacement, and limitations of mobility.

**Kingsley Ayogu** (b. 1994, Enugu, Nigeria) forms abstract compositions with nets, creating multiple layers and textures that reflect on spirituality, fragility, and resilience. These brightly-colored nets are torn, ripped, and loosely reassembled as a translucent mesh, partially disguising the figurative canvas underneath. Ayogu's practice is rooted in his focus on Black consciousness and its key values of re-defining Blackness as a form of mentality, self-regulation and authority.

**Adebayo Bolaji** (b. 1983, Perivale, UK) merges figuration with abstraction to build allegorical compositions steeped in, symbolism, metaphor, and psychological depth. Dynamic profiles emerge from a kaleidoscope of fragmented forms and radiant color, evoking a dreamlike space charged with chaos and movement. Drawing from history, anthropology, religion, and popular culture, Bolaji develops a symbolic visual language to probe questions of identity, power, and cultural memory.

**Layo Bright** (b. 1991, Lagos, Nigeria) explores themes of displacement and belonging through a material-driven practice that incorporates glass, textiles, and found objects. Bright's incorporation of Ghana-must-go bags—ubiquitous symbols of migration—alongside fused glass highlights the fragility and place, challenging perceptions of movement, belonging, and exclusion. Her work engages with class structures and cultural heritage, reflecting on how histories are layered and rewritten over time.

**Chukwuemeka Anthony Chukwu** (b. 1998, Nigeria), also known as “Anzo”, produces abstract compositions that merge loose mark-making with geometric structure, combining acrylics, gels, and tape on textured surfaces. Influenced by architecture, science, technology, and digital media, gaming played a significant role in shaping his aesthetic. This is reflected in the flat graphic forms, modular structures, and rhythmic codes that echo three dimensional digital landscapes. His compositions shift between controlled color fields and spontaneous marks, with floating rectangles, scattered symbols, and etched patterns evoking movement, fragmentation, and camouflage. Blending intuitive experimentation with an architectural sensibility, his work allows for storytelling of mini experiences. Chukwu opens a reflective space for issues of inclusion, including discussions surrounding race, housing development, space utilization, online presence, media consumption and how they intersect with his reality.

**Yagazie Emezi** (b. 1989, Aba, Nigeria) stitches photography and textiles to explore the cultural legacy of *Uli* through embroidery. *Uli*, a form of body and wall painting practiced primarily by Igbo women in southeastern Nigeria, features geometric patterns and symbolic motifs rich in meaning. Emezi layers contemporary imagery within a traditional practice as she explores narratives rooted in stories of identity and cultural preservation. Her work reflects an interest in reconnecting with ancestral wisdom and reviving indigenous knowledge, emphasizing the importance of intuition, memory, and tradition as vital sources of understanding.

**Diana Ejaita** (b. 1985, Cremona, Italy) examines cultural memory and the African Diaspora experience, evoking a distinct visual vocabulary that draws from intersecting influences. Her paintings embody the concept of assembled experiences—a fusion of present and past lives, visual and verbal expressions, and spiritual fluctuations. The compositions present silhouettes emerging from densely layered, abstract elements. These fragmented yet interconnected forms resemble bodies, natural elements, and ritual objects, evoking the idea of living, moving shrines—sacred yet dynamic spaces of existence. Her illustrations feature bold contrasts and negative space, softened by intricate textures that evoke the strength and grace of femininity. For Ejaita, art is both a meditative ritual and a process of healing, reflecting her personal growth, including her journey into motherhood.

**Modupeola Fadugba** (b. 1985, Lomé, Togo) unveils the rich narrative of the *Ojude Oba* Festival, a celebration of Yoruba heritage that reflects deep communal ties and cultural pride. The series honors the powerful bond between the Monarch and his people in Ijebuland, symbolizing identity, unity, and collective purpose. Inspired by the delicacy and detail of Japanese surimono prints, Fadugba blends bold Nigerian symbolism with refined, layered textures. Riders on regal horses and traditional textiles are framed by coral, magenta, and lilac hues, with gold lines tracing dynamic forms. Visible pencil strokes, layered shading, and intentionally unfinished areas preserve the raw creative process. Trained in Chemical Engineering, Fadugba employs a unique technical skill-set to bring her surfaces to life, activating material science as a form of

storytelling through the delicate burning of paper and incorporation of a variety of materials such as gold leaf, graphite, ink, acrylic, and oil.

**Bisila Noha** (b. 1988, Zaragoza, Spain) is a ceramic artist whose practice centers on overlooked craft traditions, particularly those shaped by women in the Global South. Drawing on her Spanish and Equatorial Guinean heritage, she reflects on the multiplicity of identity while challenging Western hierarchies that separate art and craft. Her work incorporates clay, plaster, and bronze, using techniques such as throwing, coiling, carving, and casting. Noha often returns to the vessel as a central form, creating clay pieces that resemble aged water jugs with weathered, textured surfaces. These tactile forms evoke an archaeology of use and memory, referencing ancestral tools and the labor of women. Her recent bronze sculptures were developed during a residency in Benin, Nigeria, where she worked alongside local artisans to explore the region's bronze-working traditions. The resulting works recall ceremonial artifacts, imbued with communal meaning.

**Ozioma Onuzulike** (b. 1972, Achi, Nigeria) creates large-scale ceramic works, resembling tapestries, that are meticulously crafted from thousands of ceramic palm kernel beads and natural palm kernel shells. He explores the aesthetic and symbolic nature of clay-working, adopting a laborious process to achieve unique colors and textures in the clay, oxides, and glazes. Each ceramic undergoes bisque-firing and is dipped into ash glazes before being adorned with recycled glass. The pieces are woven with copper wire and allude to the West African textile traditions of Akwete, Aso Oke, and Kente. These beads mimic the visual lightness of precious stones or ivories and also carry a tangible weight, much like Africa's woven prestige textiles—dense with meaning, history, and identity.

**Araba Opoku** (b. 1998, Ghana) creates abstract paintings through a fluid process that interlaces winding brushstrokes with geometric motifs. Her practice explores the multiplicity of ecologies—those rooted in the body and psyche, as well as the natural, spiritual, and mystical realms. Through her layered compositions, Opoku evokes the entanglement of these tangible and intangible worlds, evoking the interconnectedness of existence. Vivid psychedelic hues ripple across the surface in undulating patterns and textures, suggesting organic and symbolic resonance. The canvas is encased in a warped, sculptural frame that mirrors the painting's internal fluidity, echoing her expansive approach to form. Drawing from material culture, Opoku considers how patterns, symbols, and sensory experiences can act as portals into concealed layers of meaning.

**Sabastine Ugwuoke** (b. 1975, Umachi Enugu-Ezike, Nigeria) creates wall sculptures formed from repurposed aluminum printing plates, aluminum cans, and rubber soles. His artworks take abstract forms as the materials flow and take variable shape, creating fabric-like tapestries. Ugwuoke is interested in the concept of duality and how it forms our understand of life, articulated through his experimentation of discarded materials

# kó

and their manipulation into expressive forms. Taking the form of textiles, Uguwoke connects his artworks to the Igbo expression *Ogodo mkpuchi oto*, “wrapping cloth that covers nakedness,” as a metaphor for personal or social identities.

This exhibition is proudly sponsored by **Le Connoisseur**.



## About kó

kó is an art space 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.