



Tofo Bardi:
Dissonance and Disturbance

June 7-July 5, 2025

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 7, 6-8 PM

kó is pleased to present *Dissonance and Disturbance*, a solo exhibition of new oil paintings by Tofo Bardi. This body of work continues Bardi's exploration of fear, anxiety, and the subconscious through a cast of spectral figures that emerge within surreal, psychologically charged landscapes. These phantasmic characters represent fragmented versions of the self, caught in states of anticipation and uncertainty. They reflect what Bardi describes as the *numinous self*: a self in flux and shaped by the tension of expectant emotions.

In this new series, Bardi draws on Sianne Ngai's writing on "ugly feelings," particularly the notion of anxiety as a dispositional state that disrupts action, clarity, and control. Informed by her own experiences of fear and loss, Bardi explores the concept of a disturbed mind, imagining dreamlike realms that evoke solitude and wonder. Her figures appear distorted, bodies folding inward, merging together, or losing their boundaries, conveying a sense of disorientation, ambiguity, and psychological imbalance.

Each painting begins with loose, gestural marks, an abstract foundation from which forms slowly emerge. Bardi's intuitive process mirrors the instability she explores, allowing her figures to surface through layers of movement and chance. She often sketches fragmented clusters of lines as mental illustrations, which serve as reference points for her phantom-like characters.

The exhibition features an installation titled *The Space*, comprising drawings and sculptures set in an immersive environment. Inspired by Ernst Jentsch's 1906 essay *On the Psychology of the Uncanny*, the installation explores the psychological experience of the uncanny—that strange, eerie sensation that arises when one cannot fully comprehend their surroundings. Bardi evokes this disorienting state that elicits feelings of confusion, imbalance, and uncertainty. Referencing the idea of purgatory—a liminal space between states—the installation places the viewer in a suspended zone where orientation and meaning are deliberately unsettled. The installation features a series of ceramic works that animate the narrative language of her paintings. Together, the works in the exhibition reflect on internal dissonance, fluidity, and the ambiguity of the self in transformation, exploring how spirit and self become dispositioned.

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Tofo Bardi (b. 2001, Benin City, Nigeria) is a graduate of the University of Benin, specializing in painting. She has participated in residencies including Longform (Michigan), the Young Contemporaries Bootcamp by Rele Arts Foundation, and the Arts in Medicine Fellowship. Her recent exhibitions include *Self-Pleasure* at Thomas Erben Gallery, New York (2024), *Optics* at kó in 2023, and presentations with kó at 1-54 New York, Untitled Art Miami Beach, and the 2025 Investec Cape Town Art Fair. Bardi lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria.

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.

kó is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11 AM-6 PM.

For artwork inquiries, please email info@ko-artspace.com.