



## PRESS RELEASE

4 December 2020

### **kó is pleased to present a group exhibition with artists Edozie Anedu, Joseph Obanubi and Stephen Tayo, 10 December-9 January 2020.**

This exhibition includes new bodies of work from each artist that were developed during their residencies with the Arthouse Foundation in 2020. While the global pandemic certainly created obstacles for the artist residencies at the Arthouse Foundation this year, these artists have developed new projects that explore the social and architectural fabric of the city, each experimenting with new ideas and techniques that deviate from their normative practices.

**Edozie Anedu** is a painter based in Benin City, Nigeria, who explores popular culture, social issues and his personal experiences through oils, acrylics and pastels. His paintings incorporate elemental forms that verge on the abstract, with figures and symbols drawn with rapid, expressive brush strokes. His work often includes cultural references that span music, fashion and entertainment.

Edozie Anedu's residency project, *Landscape mode*, is a play on the genre of landscape painting. Imagining different urban landscapes scenes around the islands of Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Lekki, his abstract renderings are created from elemental lines. His vibrant color palette, with saturated hues that suggest mood as inspired by social media photoshop filters, depict an otherworldly atmosphere. Edozie began creating this series while in residency during the coronavirus lockdown in 2020. The scenes are void of the busy social interaction of normal daily life, and instead focus on the solitude and spirit of the city and its architecture. He inscribes pointed phrases atop of the paintings.

**Joseph Obanubi** is a multimedia artist based in Lagos, Nigeria, whose work explores the relationship between identity, fantasy, technology and globalisation. He is best known for his collages which reconstruct fragments found in everyday experiences. Obanubi considers his work to be a visual bricolage - a (re)construct of different subjects taken from their original context into a new one. His creative ideology stems from concepts of delusion, surrealism, futurism and experimentation, providing an alternative way of seeing regular things.

Joseph Obanubi's residency project, titled *How close can it get?*, interrogates the limits of closeness in relation to dense urban populations. Inspired by the movements of

people within the city of Lagos, Obanubi imagines both real and imagined spaces. He references currencies, numbers and analytical data, overlapping different sources and modes of technological information. Combining texts, writings and inscriptions using an embossing technique, along with drawings, digital collage and stamping, he maps the city from a nuanced perspective. Obanubi points to how people's experiences of personal space are dictated by socio-economic conditions and wealth inequalities.

**Stephen Tayo** is a photographer who captures intimate portraits that reveal the sartorial flair and quiet dignity of his sitters. Focusing on their clothing and accessories, his work explores the multi-layered symbolism of fashion: what clothing says about identity and relations with family and community. He also often trains his lens on everyday, commonplace but yet undocumented subcultures; elevating ordinary moments of his environment: at festivals, family celebrations, friendships, across Nigeria and beyond. His sitters are usually active participants in the act of picture taking; they perform along with the photographer or often times even set the tone. Adopting formal poses that were popular in the studio photography in West Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, his work is influenced by the portraits of Seydou Keita, Malick Sidibe and Samuel Fosso.

In Stephen Tayo's residency project, *What If?*, the photographer collaborated with a group of self-professed drag artists in Lagos, who are leveraging the visibility of social media to build digital followings and challenging social expectations. Stephen spoke extensively with veteran journalist, academic and film producer Funmi Iyanda, whose studies of Yoruba cosmology, history and evolution have examined the ways gender was expressed in pre-colonial Yoruba culture, and how those negotiations have been warped by contact with the West. Stephen presented his subjects free of political subtext, photographing in spaces where his subjects felt at ease and with the creative freedom to pose in ways that were best representative of their drag. Stephen Tayo ultimately created a series of collages based on these photo sessions, a new direction in his artistic practice. His collages chop up, fragment, and repeat images from his portraits, which are super-imposed with texts of colloquial expressions.

**The Arthouse Foundation** is a non-profit organisation that aims to encourage the creative development of contemporary art in Nigeria. Through a residency-based program, the Arthouse Foundation provides a platform for artists to expand their practice and experiment with new art forms and ideas. By establishing a network that supports cross-cultural exchange between Nigerian and international artists, the Arthouse Foundation embraces contemporary art to engage communities, promote social dialogue and advance the critical discourse of artistic practices.



**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.

For more information, please email us at [info@ko-artspace.com](mailto:info@ko-artspace.com), or visit our website at [www.ko-artspace.com](http://www.ko-artspace.com).



### **ABOUT EDOZIE ANEDU**

Born in 1997 in Benin City, Edozie is currently finishing his bachelors degree in Chemical Engineering at the University of Benin. His first solo exhibition, *Mistakes I Chose to Keep*, was held at 16/16 in Lagos in December 2019. Edozie's work was also included in the group exhibition *Material Identities* at The Melrose Gallery, Johannesburg in 2019. His work is included in the group exhibition *The Medium is the Message* at Unit London in 2020.

### **ABOUT JOSEPH OBANUBI**

Joseph Obanubi received his Bachelor's and Masters degrees from the University of Lagos. He has a background in advertising and currently lectures in the Visual Art unit of the Creative Arts Department of the University of Lagos.

His series *Techno-Heads* was shortlisted as part of the finalists for the Contemporary African Photography Prize, and it won the British Council Prize for Emerging Artist. His work was exhibited at AKAA Art Fair (2019), Darmstadter Tage d. Fotografie Photography Festival, Darmstadt, Germany (2020), 1-54 Art Fair London, Marrakech, Morocco (2019 & 2020), and Vantage Point Sharjah 8 (VPS8) UAE, amongst others. He was recently announced as a finalist for the Kuenyehia Art Prize. In December 2020, his work is included in a two-person exhibition at Magnin-A in Paris.

### **ABOUT STEPHEN TAYO**

Stephen Tayo studied philosophy at the University of Lagos. Tayo lives, works in and draws inspiration from Lagos. His work has been featured in Vogue US, British Vogue, New York Times, Indie Magazine, Dazed, Teen Vogue, Okay Africa, Vogue Italia, CNN, ArtNews, OkayAfrica, Highsnobiety, Vogue Australia, Hybe Beast, Vice, and Interview Magazine.

In 2018, he was commissioned by Dutch street wear brand Patta and Nike on the occasion of their collaboration, to shoot a campaign for their launch which was exhibited in London. In the same year, he co-photographed the increasingly ascendant culture of boundary breaking fashion in Nigeria's commercial capital, Lagos, for the New York Times. In 2019, he had a solo collaborative exhibition at Corosia Theatre and Expo and Film Centre in Amsterdam about the Gothics Scene in Lagos. He was also commissioned by the Ngola Art Festival in São Tomé to shoot the campaign image for the Festival. He was also included in the exhibition *City Prince/sses* at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. He spotlighted the emergence of New Sound in the Nigerian Music



Scene for the New York Times in August titled "The New Guard of Nigerian Music". He was also shortlisted amongst 14 other photographers around the world for a book feature by Antwaun Sargent titled *The New Black Vanguard* with an exhibition at Aperture Gallery in 2019.

In 2020, Stephen Tayo was nominated for the British Fashion Council Awards 2020, in the "New Wave" category. He also developed a project with Apple on stories of the pandemic. He shot a campaign with musician Skepta in Cuba with Havana Club, which is currently being used on billboards across the UK. He also show the campaign photo for the *Now Look Here* exhibition in Amsterdam, in collaboration with Jan Hoek.