



kó



Ozioma Onuzulike

The Way We Are

The New Nsukka School series

29 March - 22 April 2021

Acknowledgements

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COVER:

FRONT COVER: *Relics of Our Treasure*, 2021, Earthenware and stoneware clays, glaze, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

FRONTISPIECE: *Treasure Islands I*, 2021, Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

BACK COVER: *Africa, Our Africa*, 2021, Earthenware and stoneware clays, glaze and glass

kó



kó is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Ozioma Onuzulike, titled *The Way We Are*. This exhibition is the third chapter of our three-exhibition series titled *The New Nsukka School*, which re-examines the conceptual and material practices that characterise the art department at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This series has also included solo exhibitions by Ngozi-Omeje Ezema and Eva Obodo — all artists who currently teach at the university.

The Nsukka School has long been referenced as a descriptive term for artists who have studied and taught at Fine and Applied Arts Department at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in Southeastern Nigeria. An important center for art education in Nigeria, the experimental trajectory of the post-Civil War art department at Nsukka was spearheaded by Uche Okeke and Chike Aniakor in the early 1970s, and has subsequently been led by prominent artists including Obiora Udechukwu and El Anatsui.

This shared artistic vision reveals itself in the experimentation with materials and technical processes, and a critical approach to art production. Many of these artists incorporate found objects from nature and the built environment, which are used to create immersive sculptural installations. The Nsukka School is best known for the revival of Uli, an Igbo art tradition that was historically used for body art and wall murals, placing this visual language into contemporary art discourses.

Ozioma Onuzulike, who is the head of the art department at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, uses the medium of clay which undergoes a variety of complicated technical processes to reach the final artwork. In these three bodies of work — his *Yam*, *Bead*, and *Honeycomb* series, Onuzulike adopts metaphorical symbols to dissect political and social ills plaguing the country and around the world, looking at both history and the present moment to question what we might become.

Kavita Chellaram
Founder, kó

The New Nsukka School

Dr. George Odoh

From January-April 2021, kó will organise three back-to-back solo exhibitions featuring the works of three Nsukka artists, **Ngozi-Omeje Ezema, Eva Obodo and Ozioma Onuzulike**, in an exhibition series titled *The New Nsukka School*. Nsukka artists are no strangers to the contemporary art space and have critically engaged both its visual and theoretical fields. As a descriptive label, Nsukka artists not only conjures up an image that romanticizes the creative identity of artists who trained at the Fine and Applied Arts Department of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, it also references a stylistic patrimony whose formal and aesthetic codes draw from a creative ideology that is conceptually idealized, experimentally driven and intellectually grounded.

Nsukka artists leverage this ideology in creating modern and contemporary art forms through the exploration of ideas, materials and forms sourced from the environment. The stylistic interventions engendered by the *uli* revivalist art movement, which emerged in the Nsukka art department in the 1970s, bear eloquent testimonies to the potency of the Nsukka art ideology. The institutional practice of transforming traditional *uli* art into a modernist artistic language catalysed the emergence of the Nsukka art school, an artistic phenomenon whose creative exceptionalism and triumphalism have significantly impacted on contemporary art practice nationally, continentally and globally. The core thesis of Nsukka school art centres on the use of indigenous knowledge to interrogate local and global spheres of art practice.

Beyond the intimate encounter with *uli* idiom, Nsukka school art is also known for a stylistic regime that critically engages with the materiality and metaphoric value of both natural and man-made objects. The art of El Anatsui, one of the leading figures of the Nsukka art school and Africa's most celebrated artist, serves as both fount and factor in appraising this creative posturing in the works of Nsukka artists. Historically, stylistic trends in Nsukka school art have largely been driven by the enriching influence of art teachers whose pedagogical footprints and artistic sensibilities have had a crystallizing effect on the Nsukka art school's stylistic identity. El Anatsui is unarguably one of the most celebrated and most influential artist to have taught in the Nsukka art department. His unconventional approach to art teaching as well as his highly experimental studio practice has influenced the art careers of many Nsukka artists. For instance, the technical processes employed by Anatsui in the production of his wood panel works of the late 1980s, and his more recent bottle top sculptural installations, find resounding echoes in the studio programmes of many Nsukka

artists. Of particular interest is the repetitive use of a modular unit of a chosen material in ways that pay homage to *Igwe bu Ike* spirit, the Igbo philosophical thought that extols the strength of the collective. Works produced with this technique project a radical aesthetics that evocatively communicates the intense, but yet effectual conversations between ideas, materials and processes.

Igwe bu ike philosophy provides the conceptual and technical chords which stylistically binds the works of the three artists in this exhibition series. Although sharing commonalities in terms of technical approaches and use of commonplace materials, the formal language employed by the artists differs and highlights how each artist engages the potentialities and materiality of their chosen medium/material. The two ceramists, Ngozi-Omeje Ezema and Ozioma Onuzulike, have consistently challenged conventional notions of ceramics art. Their works are charged with formal and aesthetic energies that locate ceramics art within the mainstream art historical and critical circuit. Their violation of the traditional use of clay enables the development of new contexts and imageries that not only reaffirms the potentialities of clay as a highly evocative medium, but also reinforces its essentializing role as a filtering medium in the deconstruction and reconstruction of life experiences. The sculptor, Eva Obodo, has mastered a formal language that profoundly harnesses the expressivity of both the material and metaphoric properties of charcoal textiles and jute fibre. His works which creatively navigate boundaries between art genres reflect the harmonious convocation of textiles, ceramics, painting and sculptural elements. The visual power of Obodo's works elevates our experiences and understanding of the sculpture genre. Thematically, the art of these three Nsukka artists derive a significant part of its elocutionary power from the symbolic deployment of technical processes as active carriers of the narrative weight of embedded messages. In this context, actions like piercing, tying, stringing, suspending, perforating, cutting, firing, dyeing and roasting among others, are used as metaphors that explicate the temporariness, permanence and liminality of the human condition.

The New Nsukka School exhibition series aims to revalidate the criticality of Nsukka school art in the global art space. The exhibitions will provide a contextualized window through which the conceptual, intellectual and experimental energies that frame the school can be stylistically mapped in the works of three Nsukka artists. By hosting the exhibitions back-to-back, kó aims to maximize the visuality of the Nsukka experience while also providing an intellectual space for engaging the dialectics of contemporary art practice in Nigeria and its connectivity to art dialogues around the world.

Dr. George Odoh is a Senior Lecturer in painting and drawing in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.



The Way We Are: Conceptual Notes

Ozioma Onuzulike

My work is generally inspired by the social histories of the African continent and how such histories impact on the current realities around me, especially in the context of the human condition in my home country Nigeria in which I live and work. For my current exhibition, *The Way We Are*, I offer a selection from three recent bodies of work – the yam project, the ceramic palm kernel shell beads project and the honeycomb project.

The yam is a sacred and prestigious crop among the Igbo of Nigeria, my place of origin and nurture. In the past, the yam crop was the main socio-economic stay for men and their families. The yam seedlings, therefore, were held sacrosanct as the future hope of every family for economic and socio-political sustenance. When planted in a harsh, barren or impoverished environment, the yams become stunted, ravaged, devastated or totally destroyed. When they lie individually, I see in the forms of the yam tubers what look like motionless human bodies encased in body bags. When sorted and tied together (like in a typical African yam barn), they remind me not only of how African slaves were in the past crammed in slave ships like mere commodities, but also how they are today tightly packed in trucks and boats hazarding the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea with the hope of going to “grow” better in a more conducive environment. Many have been lost in transit.

The debilitating conditions that have made the African continent a very hostile environment to grow her “seed yams” remain with us today, and are rather worsening by the day. They compel me to continue my exploration of the seed yam metaphor in my quest to draw critical attention to the devastating effects of these conditions on the continent’s youth population - the metaphorical yam seedlings.

Another African produce, the palm kernel, has also attracted my attention, but for a different reason. It is well known that after the slave trade era, trade in palm oil, palm kernel and other natural resources of Africa became more intense. My part of Africa was particularly noted for palm oil and palm kernel production in servicing the lopsided trade/ power relations with the Western world. I see the palm kernel shell (the remnants of the palm oil/kernel production) as very historically charged. In their natural form, they look like beads – again, a trade token (popularly called Slave Beads) that carry a lot of historical baggage. I have made millions of palm kernel shells in terracotta, turning many of them into glass beads in a very laborious studio process. With them, I have woven mixed media ceramic structures that resemble Africa’s prestige cloths (such as the Nigerian Akwete and Aso Oke) or imported ones (such as the lace fabric) that are also highly regarded in Africa as markers of social status. Like the medieval amour (my own symbol

of backwardness in the light of today’s war defence mechanisms), these ceramic textile structures come with enormous weight. I often title the works by their weight and the accumulated ceramic beads used in making them. In this way, I seek to call attention to the enormous burdens that Africa’s reckless politicians, and the elite in general, have to bear in their quest for ostentatious life styles (represented by the accumulation of the beads) that add nothing meaningful to the growth of their nations.

Finally, the honeycomb project is my most current studio engagement, which was first conceived during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and dedicated to all frontline workers risking their lives for the rest of us. I initially contemplated the quarantine houses or isolation centres and intensive care units, both popularised in my country Nigeria by the coronavirus pandemic, as somewhat similar to bee houses. It occurred to me that while bee farmers are very much aware that the stings of the insects are deadly, something inspires or motivates them to brave the danger. They wear protective gears (the personal protective equipment) against the deadly stings of the bees - kits that very much resemble the ones I saw doctors, nurses and other frontline workers wearing against coronavirus infection.

Honey is like liquid gold. You need to take risks, dig deep to reach the goldmine. Life is the greatest natural resource and timeless treasure, and it is as sweet as honey. But the honeycomb, the ‘body’ structure holding the honey, is fragile. And so, I equally chose a fragile and vulnerable media for this studio project – terracotta (fired clay) and glass/ glaze. These are derived directly from the earth, the same material from which we are made and to which we must return. All of us – big or small, white or black – are as fragile as the honeycomb. Thus, for this project, I began by exploring the honeycomb as a symbol of the vulnerability of the human body housing our lives – a vulnerability that the Covid-19 episode greatly amplified.

I was later to start seeing the honeycomb project in a different light. The honeycomb has reminded me that Africa’s natural resources have been at the base of her woes (what has been described as “resource curse”). Historically, perhaps beginning from the highly skewed trade relations with the Western world (including the obnoxious slave trade), the continent’s natural resources have been the honey pot pulling the ravenous appetite and interests of the imperial nations of the world. And, traditionally, to freely and deeply harvest the honey (the resources), the “bees” needed to be subdued, tamed, conquered, forcefully driven away or even killed by all means, including naked flames.

This is the way we are!

Ozioma Onuzulike
Nsukka, Nigeria
March 2021



Ozioma Onuzulike: The Creative Nomad and his Clay Pastures

Dr. George Odoh

Anyone who is familiar with Ozioma Onuzulike's art would have by now known how committed and unafraid he is to violate the traditional use of clay in ways that transmute its ordinariness into highly expressive visual spectacles. His experimental spirit has seen him explore in very diverse and interesting contexts, the materiality of the clay medium using processes and imageries that metaphorically infuse this medium with tongues of fire that speak the bitter truths of living in today's contemporary society. In this exhibition, *The Way We Are*, Ozioma Onuzulike's invites his audience to bear witness to another episodic moment of his many revealing journeys through the expansive landscape of contemporary art. His, is a journey of seeing, of knowing, of questioning and interrogating established traditions and conventions. It is also a journey that locates the past in the present allowing for the emergence of new visions and truths of what ceramics art is, what it stands for and what it can become.

Like the other two Nsukka artists featured in this three-part exhibition series, "The New Nsukka School," organised by ko Gallery, Onuzulike draws inspiration from the intellectual, conceptual and experimental foundations that anchor the creative ideology of the Nsukka art department where he trained and has taught ceramic art, fine arts criticism and modern/contemporary art for close to two decades. His familiarity and close associations with influential Nsukka artists like Chike Aniakor, Obiora Udechukwu, Benjo Igwilo, Chris Echeta, Vincent Ali, Okpan Oyeoku and El Anatsui, provided enriching influences that not only expanded his knowledge of both the scientific and material properties of clay, but also opened his eyes to how the critical engagement of ideas, materials, processes and compositional frameworks could meaningfully contribute to the crystallization of a creative voice that is at once, personal, unique and expressive. It is with this voice that Onuzulike narrates his ongoing conversations and experiences with clay and how this intersects with, and also reconstructs the dysfunctional state of his immediate environment. Breaking this down further, I am inclined to arrive at the conclusion that the tenor of his artistic voice is tripartite in nature. First, it speaks the language that pays homage to the materiality and expressivity of clay. Second, it speaks the language of how clay bodies are processed through physical actions that are infused with symbolic content. Lastly, it equally speaks a language that eloquently communicates the artist's unwavering role as a social crusader. Again, drawing from insights gained from my interactions with

Onuzulike and his works, I boldly assert that his art performs a balancing act in which form and content cross pollinate each other through the metaphoric agency of his studio processes.

As a creative nomad seeking new challenges at the frontiers of the ceramics art genre, Ozioma Onuzulike explores the vast landscape of his 'clay pastures' with highly measured, very confident and experimental footsteps that are bolstered by his inventive spirit and fertile imagination. In the process, he has unearthed clay's many secrets and (re)presents them in evocative forms that expressively carry the humanizing weight of embodied messages. Three bodies of work anchor Onuzulike's recent exhibition, *The Way We Are*. These include the *Yam Series*, *Ceramics kernel Shell Beads Series* (which encompasses the *Armour Series* and *Lace Series*) and the *Honeycomb Series*, which is the artist's direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic in honour of the frontline health workers. The artist's explanation of the idea behind the *Yam Series* is quite telling:

The idea for the ceramics yam seedlings, based on the sizes that I have chosen, is to look at the socio-economic conditions in which our future leaders, the future of our country, Nigeria, and other African nations, are being planted and the effects of these conditions on their development. So I am using this kind of crops, the sacred crop, the prestigious crop of the Igbos which they cherish and specially care for, and also have a lot of sanctions for its misuse or abuse. The conditions these yam seedlings are planted and the way the yam farmers tend them will determine how they turn out. So when they are grown in a hostile environment, they come out with blisters, they come out empty, they come out rotten and eaten or devastated by rodents.¹

By using yam seedlings rendered in various unsound states to describe how the youths have been abandoned, Onuzulike points accusing fingers at the farmer and the hired labourers who are nonchalant and incompetent. The dereliction of duty outlined here re-echoes the crisis of leadership that characterises governance in Nigeria and in many other African countries. The consequences of bad leadership accounts for why many youths are looking for an escape route out of the hostile environment. However, the search for a better future also comes with its own consequences as emblemized by the migrant crisis that has become an issue of global concern. The current migrant crisis at the southern border of the United States of America as well as the significant numbers of persons who have lost their lives crossing the Mediterranean sea from Africa to Europe in search of a better life are very good examples. Onuzulike's *Burnt Barn Series* uses imageries derived from how yams are tied and stacked in yam barns to illustrate the perilous nature of illegal migrations particularly, how large numbers of African migrants are packed in boats in claustrophobic and suffocating conditions.

The *Ceramic Palm kernel Shell Bead Series* interrogates socio-political relationships and its impact on identity and social constructions. The historical life of palm kernel in Nigeria began with the trade relations between Africa and the imperial world, especially after the slave trade. It is the exploitative nature of such relationship that undergirds the thematic trajectories of the works belonging to this series. According to Onuzulike:

Palm kernel shells speak about exploitation, how people take the essential content and leave us with shells. But beyond that, I began to use the palm kernel shells to now make beads, and also class beads. Beads, again, go back to the history of slave trade where it was used as a token for transactions and that is why it is called the slave trade beads or slave beads. So, the bead actually became a symbol of the slave trade. My using them to make armour-like structures and textile-like structures, again, goes back to how prestige cloths in Africa defined someone's status and position in society...Meanwhile both the glass beads that were more prestigious and other beads didn't really add value. They are more like empty shells really. They are like using medieval armour in an era of modern war fare...So referencing this armour shows that we are still backward while having a false sense of acquisition.²

Ozioma Onuzulike uses the works in the *Ceramic Palm kernel Shell Bead Series* to draw attention to our sense of priority as a people while also using them as historical reference for the imbalance in trade relations as well as the imbalance in political relations between Africa and the West, a trend that still continues till today. Beyond the aesthetics, works in this series are titled based on the number of beads used in composing them as well as their respective weight. This is the artist's way of referencing the burden that goes with maintaining one's status and position in the society.

The *Honeycomb Series*, as earlier mentioned, celebrates all frontline workers risking their lives for the rest of us. In this series, Ozioma Onuzulike explores similarities between bee houses and quarantine houses/isolation centres and Intensive Care Units, in Nigeria. Both ideas conjure up imageries associated with industriousness, danger, risk-taking, courage and resilience. Also, very humbling and connected to all these is the knowledge that life is so fragile. Onuzulike references this truth while explaining the honeycomb project:

Life is the greatest natural resource and timeless treasure, and it is as sweet as honey. But the honeycomb, the 'body' structure holding the honey, is fragile. And so, I have equally chosen fragile media for this studio project – terracotta (fired clay) and glass/glaze...Thus, for this project, I explore the honeycomb as a symbol of the vulnerability of the human body housing our lives – a vulnerability that the Covid-19 episode has greatly amplified.³

The studio processes involved in the honeycomb project, as well as in the other two bodies of work, are very laborious and symbolically charged. These processes encompass diverse actions that include the physical acts visited on clay like wedging, cutting, piercing, slamming, pinching, hammering, buffeting and firing. The firing process outlines an experimental approach involving different processes and materials. This allows for unexpected results that amplify the overall aesthetics of the works. However, beyond aesthetics and durability, firing is used in a symbolic sense to communicate the pain, sufferings and trauma that have become part of our everyday lives. Stringing the beads together to create the Armour and Lace Series is equally symbolic and highlights how individual destinies or fate come together to tell a collective story that shows that we are all in this together.

The Way We Are reveals that Ozioma Onuzulike's restless spirit abhors the stagnancy that comes with an inflexible state of being. His experimental approach to art reminiscences the Igbo saying, *Onye ije ka onye isi awọ ihe ama* (A traveller is more knowledgeable than an elderly person who stays at home). As expected, his creative mobility has engendered stylistic interventions that speak the "language of sublime awe"⁴ for which the Nsukka art department is known. Without a shadow of doubt, this exhibition is a befitting climax to this three-part exhibition series featuring artists of the new Nsukka art school. While Onuzulike's art is reflective of the stylistic attitudes that presently characterize Nsukka school art, his nomadic footprints have the potentials of mapping out new frontiers that will not only cement his status as one of the most experimental contemporary Nigerian ceramic artists, but also will further advance the intellectual, experimental and conceptual borders of Nsukka school art.

Dr. George Odoh is a Senior Lecturer in painting and drawing in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Notes

1. Personal conversations with Ozioma Onuzulike during a guided tour of his studio at Nsukka in March, 2020. He outlined the conceptual frameworks that anchor the three bodies of work featured in this exhibition as well as the studio processes involved in their production.
2. Personal conversations with Ozioma Onuzulike.
3. Ibid
4. In his essay, "From Masks to Metal Cloth: Artists of the Nsukka School and the Problems of Ethnicity," Sylvester Okwuonodu Ogbechie uses the term 'language of sublime awe' and 'radical aesthetics' as stylistic markers of Nsukka school art. The aesthetic regime of this style reflects dialogic encounters between indigenous knowledge and local/global sites of artistic production.





Ozioma Onuzulike

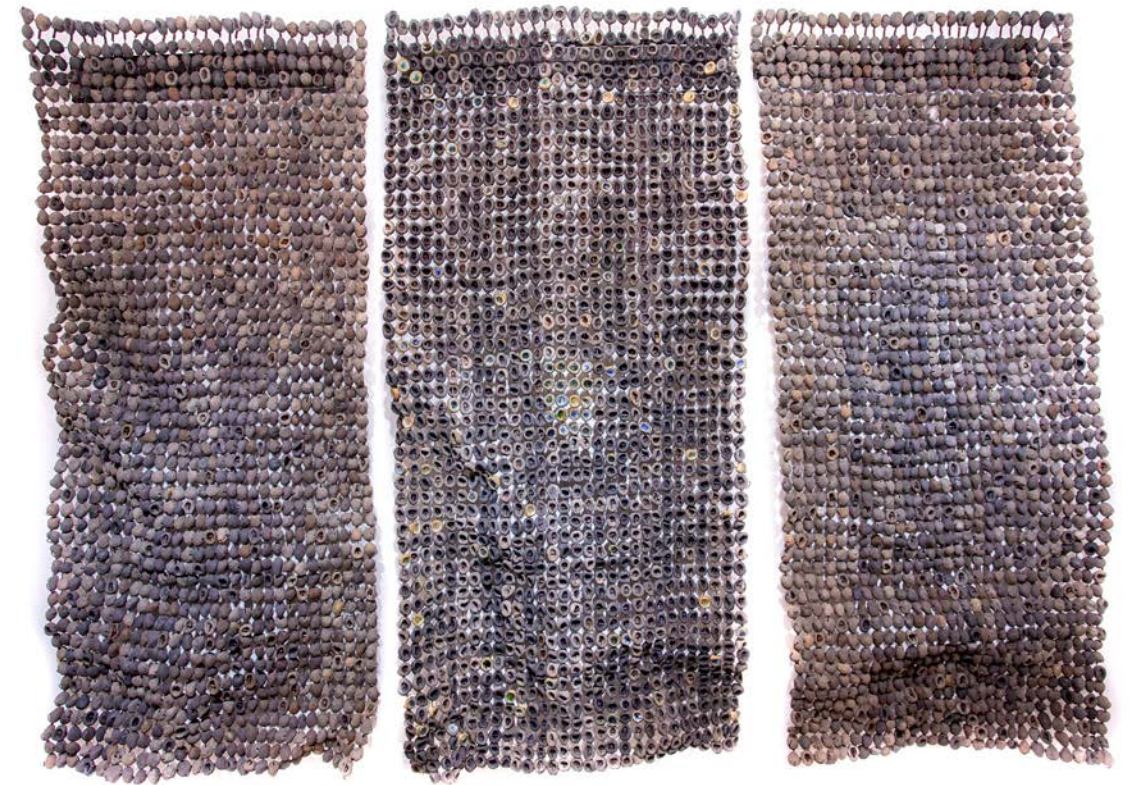
Treasure Islands I

(47kg 6,510-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour) [Triptych]

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

52.4 x 120 x 3.2 in. (131 x 300 x 8 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Treasure Islands II

(28kg 4,728-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead armour) [Triptych]

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

52.8 x 73 x 4 in. (132 x 182 x 10 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

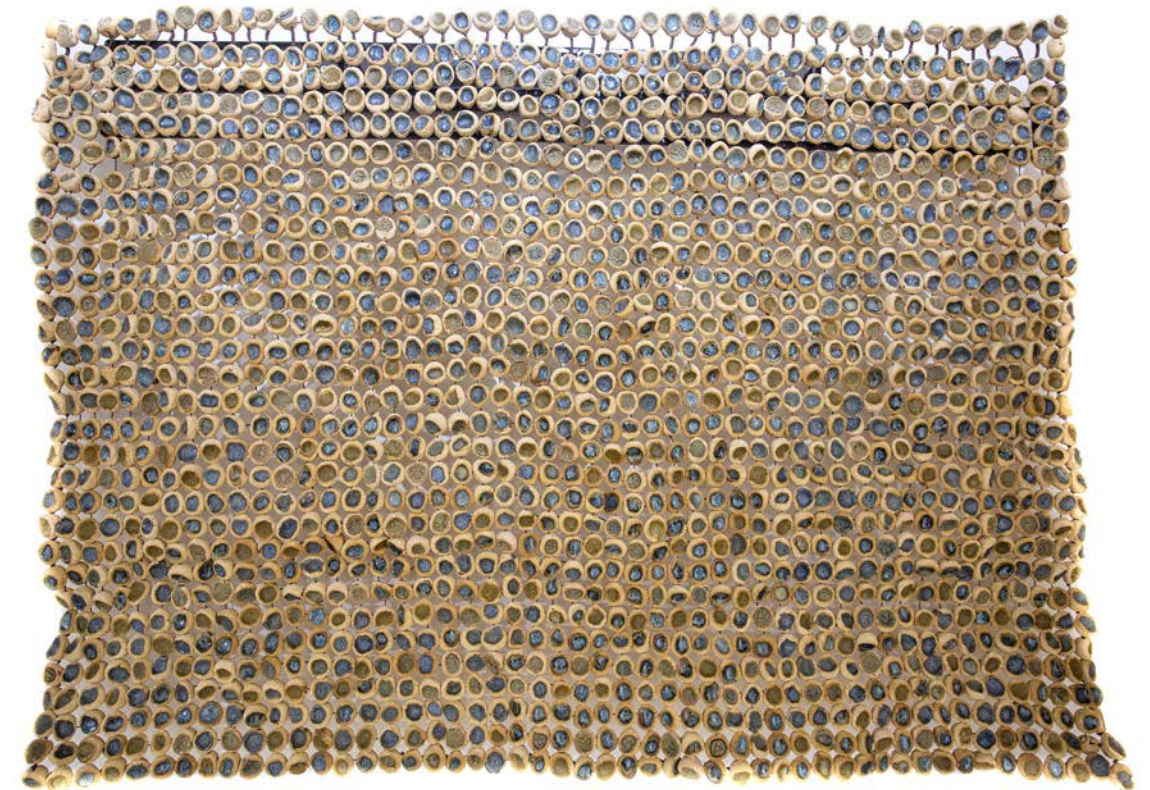
Lace I

(18kg 2,039-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass, glaze and copper-coated aluminum wire

35 x 46.8 x 2-8 in. (88 x 117 x 7 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

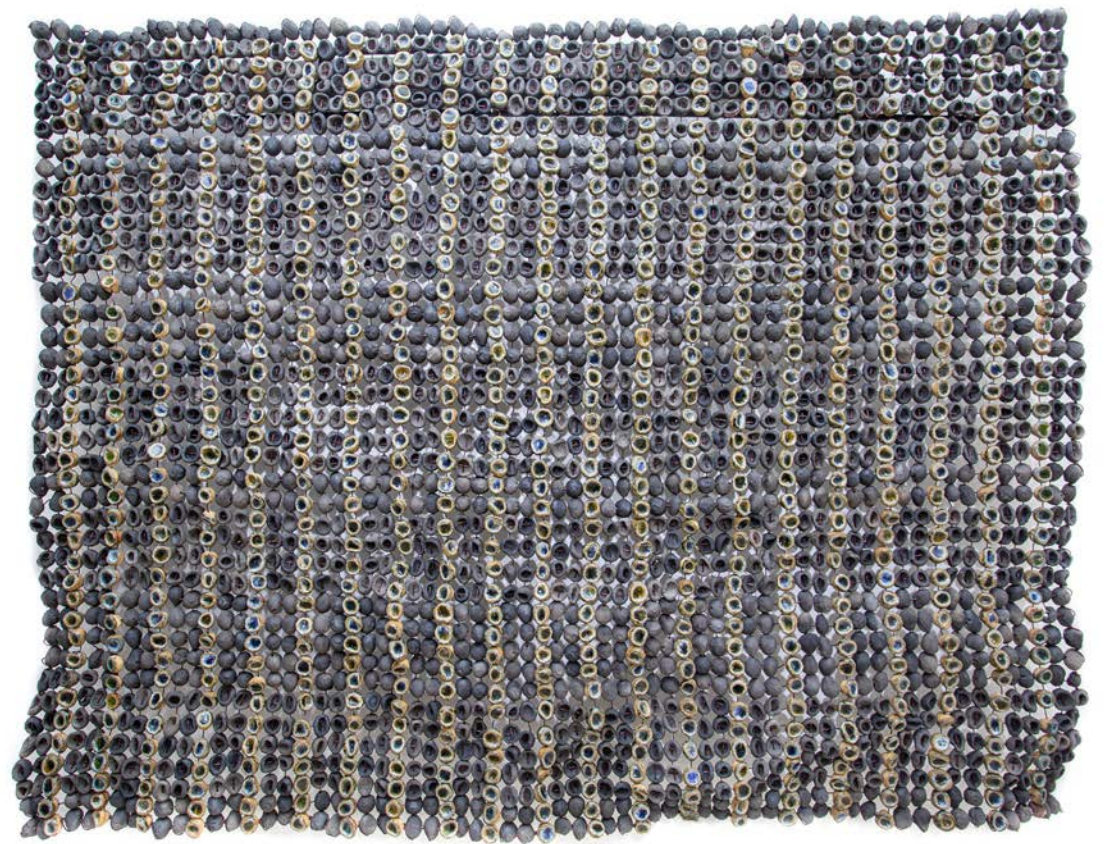
Lace II

(18kg 1,602-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass, glaze and copper-coated aluminum wire

33 x 46 x 2.4 in. (82 x 115 x 6 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Lace III

(23kg 2,600-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

13.2 x 54.4 x 2 in. (106 x 136 x 5 cm.)





Ozioma Onuzulike

Women's Weave I

(21kg 2,870-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

41.2 x 56.4 x 2 in. (103 x 141 x 5 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Women's Weave II

(14kg 1,952-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

50.8 x 34.4 x 3.6 in. (127 x 86 x 6 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Lace IV

(23kg 2,747-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

42.4 x 54.8 x 2 in. (106 x 137 x 5 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Lace V

(17kg 2,408-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour),
2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire
40 x 52.4 x 2 in. (100 x 131 x 5 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Lace VI

(24kg 2,820-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

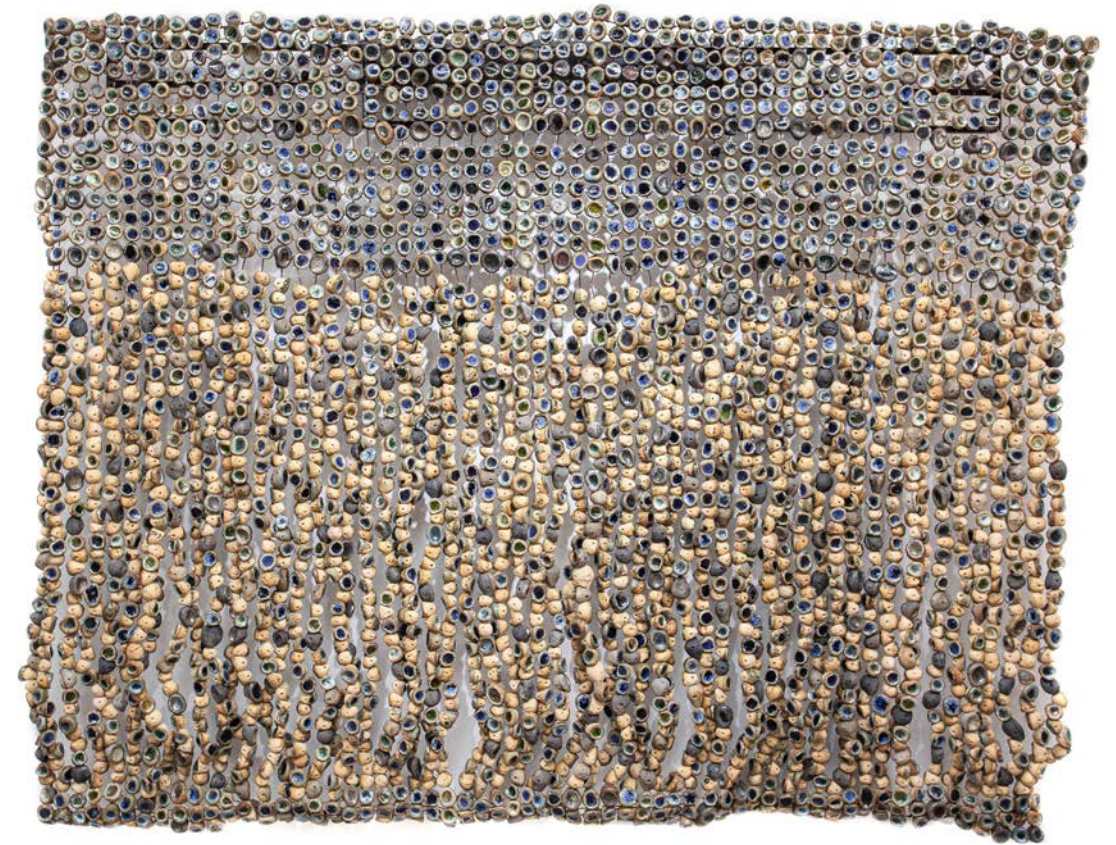
50.8 x 44 x 3.2 in. (127 x 110 x 8 cm.)

Ozioma Onuzulu
The Way We Are





Ozioma Onuzulike
Women's Weave III
(17kg 2,452-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)
2021
Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire
37.6 x 55.6 x 2.4 in. (94 x 139 x 6 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

August Meeting I

(26kg 3,050-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glaze, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

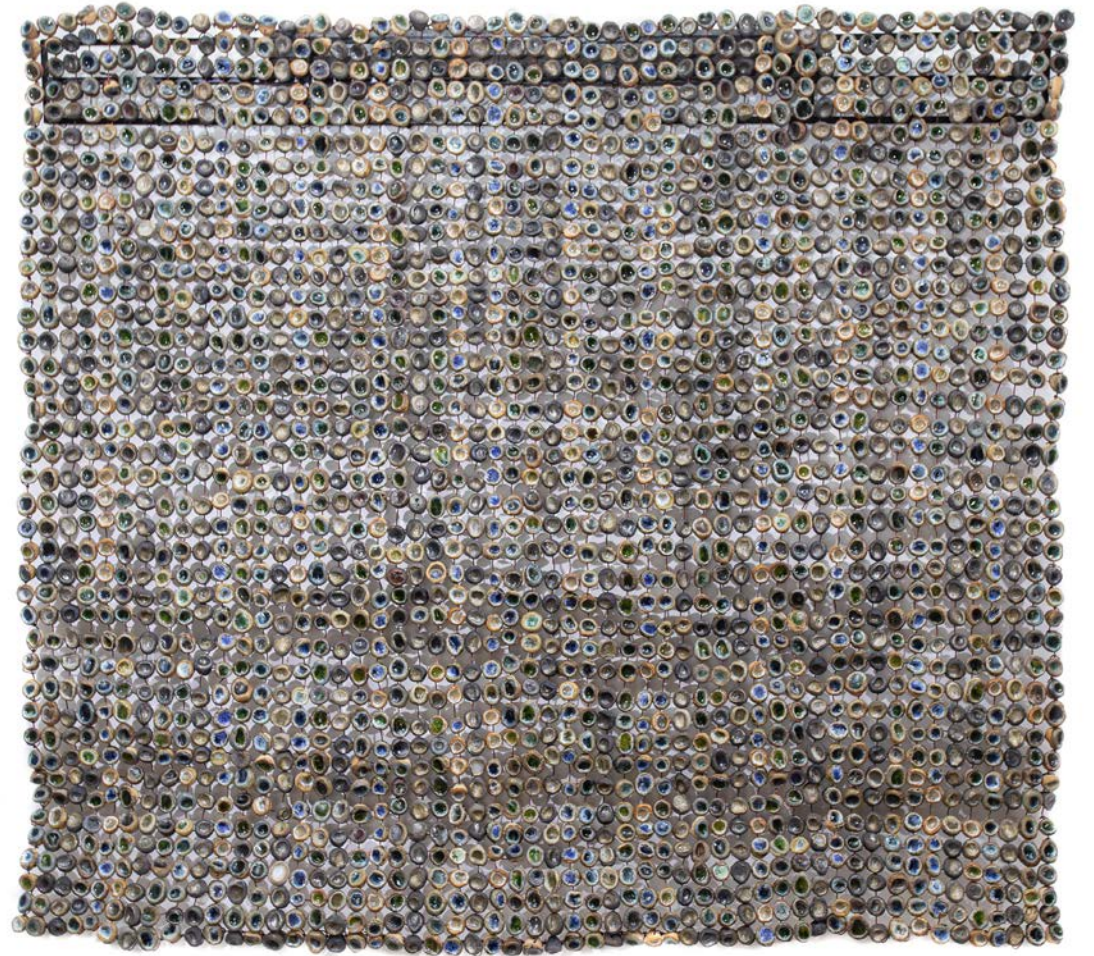
53.2 x 40.8 x 2 in. (133 x 102 x 5 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike
August Meeting II
(30kg 2,950-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)
2021
earthenware and stoneware clays, glaze, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire
54 x 52 x 2.4 in. (135 x 130 x 6 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike
Women's Weave IV
(17kg 2,435-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)
2021
Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire
40 x 52.8 x 2 in. (100 x 132 x 5 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Lace VII

(22kg 2,214-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

48 x 42.8 x 2 in. (120 x 107 x 5 cm.)





Ozioma Onuzulike

Royal Armour for the Giant of Africa

(30kg 4,016-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead armour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

65.6 x 52.8 x 2.4 in. (164 x 132 x 6 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Relics of Our Treasure

(24.5kg 2,930-piece ceramic palm kernel shell bead amour)

2021

Earthenware and stoneware clays, glaze, glass and copper-coated aluminum wire

49.2 x 51.6 x 4.4 in. (123 x 129 x 11 cm.)

Ozioma Onuzulike
Mended Amour for King Jaja
(40kg mixed media amour)
2021
Earthenware and stoneware clays, glass and copper-coated aluminum wires
59.2 x 62.4 x 2.8 in. (148 x 156 x 7 cm.)





Ozioma Onuzulike

Yam Bodies: Dry Season I

2019

Terracotta (iron-saturated stoneware clay body), mild steel, copper-coated aluminum wire
and wood

41.2 x 65.6 x 6.8 in. (103 x 164 x 17 cm.) (variable installation)



Ozioma Onuzulike

Yam Bodies: Dry Season II

2019

Terracotta (iron-saturated stoneware clay body), glass, mild steel, copper-coated aluminum wire and wood

45.2 x 68.4 x 6.4 in. (113 x 171 x 16 cm.) (variable installation)



Ozioma Onuzulike
We are like yam seedlings in a burnt barn
2019-2021
Carbonized terracotta, burnt wood and mild steel
62 x 92 x 4.8 in. (155 x 230 x 12 cm.)





Ozioma Onuzulike
Yam Vessels I (six pieces ensemble)
2019
Glazed stoneware
Biggest (14.4 x 4.8 x 4 in.), smallest (9.6 x 4 x 1.6 in.)
Biggest (36 x 12 x 10 cm.), smallest (24 x 10 x 4 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike
Yam Vessels II (four pieces ensemble)
2019
Glazed stoneware
Biggest 14.4 x 5.2 x 4 in. (36 x13x10 cm.)



Ozioma Onuzulike
Yam Bodies I (three pieces ensemble - locked)
2019
Iron-saturated stoneware body
14 x 4.8 3.6 in. (35 x 12 x 9 cm.) (individual dimensions)



Ozioma Onuzulike
Yam Bodies II (three pieces ensemble + poetry)
2019
Selectively glazed stoneware
14 x 4.8 3.6 in. (35 x 12 x 9 cm.) (individual dimensions)



Ozioma Onuzulike
Africa, Our Africa
2021
Earthenware and stoneware clays, glaze and glass
49.6 x 50 x 15.2 in. (124 x 125 x 38 cm.)



About the Artist

Born 1972 in Achi, Enugu State, Nigeria, Ozioma Onuzulike graduated First Class from the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he is currently Head of Department and professor of ceramic art and African art and design history. His solo exhibition, *Seed Yams of Our Land*, was held at the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), Lagos, Nigeria, in 2019, along with a presentation of his poetry collection of the same title also published by the CCA. His works have been included in the forthcoming exhibition at the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, UK, arising from the *[Re:]Entanglements* Research Project led by Professor Paul Basu. Onuzulike is a fellow of the Civitella Ranieri Centre, Umbertide, Perugia, Italy, where he undertook a residency under the UNESCO-ASCHBERG Bursary for Artists, and an alumnus of the prestigious Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, USA. This is his eleventh solo exhibition.

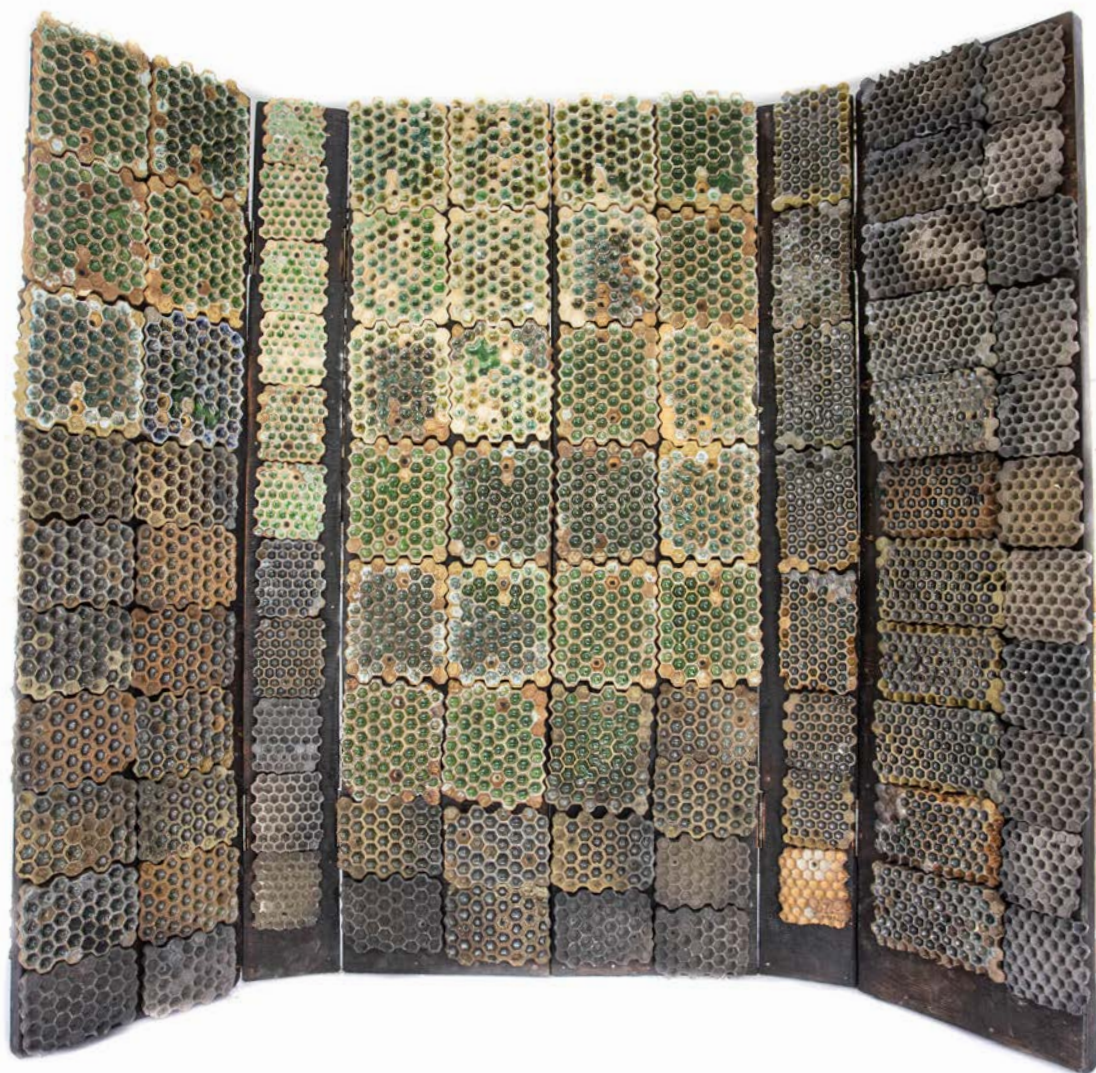


About kó

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. Through exhibitions, publications, public programming, and participation in art fairs, kó aims to expand conversations about contemporary art in Africa to a local and global audience.

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