



# AFRICA APPLAUDED



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**'as it is !'**

Contemporary African Art Exhibition Series



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Contemporary African Art Exhibition Series

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Wole Soyinka,  
Professor Emeritus,  
Obafemi Awolowo University,

Ile Ife Nigeria  
Nobel Laureate in Literature, 1986



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as it is!

CONTEMPORARY ART FROM AFRICA & THE DIASPORA

DECEMBER 2010 – MARCH 2011

As It Is! Contemporary Art From Africa & The Diaspora is an unprecedented series of exhibitions taking place for the first time in Dubai. This four-part series explores and celebrates the creative vigour of 24 astounding artists from the African continent and far-reaching Diaspora.

As It Is! aims to challenge widely held beliefs by giving these artists a platform to present their narrative, as they wish it to be viewed, heard and interpreted. Founded and curated by Nigerian born London based curator, and African art collector, Annabelle Nwankwo – Mu'azu, As It Is! brings to the fore a diverse range of international artists ready to be critiqued for their creativity as individuals rather than a collective.

Many of the artists live like nomads, between the 'motherland' and the Diaspora, whilst others are predominately based on the African continent - a generation of dynamic artists, both established and emerging originating from Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Cameroun, Senegal, Ethiopia and South Africa. All of these artists are exponents of African visual culture, innovators, free styling and captivating as they pursue their creative goals. Featured artists include recognised darlings of the international art world, El Anatsui, the celebrated Ghanaian sculptor, to emerging but highly acclaimed Nigerian-born, painter, Obiageli Okigbo; installation artist and painter, Ayo Aina; Ugandan, US based-actor and photographer, Ntare

Guma Mbaho Mwine; and hip-hop commentator Rushay Booysen.

As It Is! Contemporary Art From Africa and The Diaspora, illustrates beautifully a vision of Africa that captures the greatness and zeal of an African aesthetic, valid and invigorating and at the forefront of a new world order. Simultaneously, this series of exhibitions demonstrates a continuous journey of discovery, interaction, exchange and collaboration between the UAE, the African continent and Diaspora.

Poignantly, 2010 marked a significant milestone as 17 African nations celebrated 50 years of independence. As It Is! is proud to be taking place at a landmark time in world history.





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## as it is! Africa Applauded Overview

MARCH 2011

As It Is! Africa Applauded is the final instalment of a four part multi-faceted exhibition series titled As It Is! Contemporary Art From Africa and The Diaspora. As It Is! Africa Applauded will feature some of the most dynamic artists working on the continent and the diaspora today. It is an exhibition for the artist, about the artist. It is an opportunity to express their own narrative and for the viewer to hear the artists' true voices - and in so doing, experience the core of the artists represented.

All are internationally acclaimed artists working with diverse expressive mediums and inspirations, with common and not so common converging themes including post-colonial African realities; personal and cultural dynamics; issues of gender and race; globalisation, environmentalism and consumerism. These are critical issues that affect and reflect modern civilization - resulting in creativity spurned from conflicting as well as inspiring energies.

### FEATURED ARTISTS:

El Anatsui	Sculptor	Ghana
Sokari Douglas Camp	Sculptor	Nigeria/UK
Godfried Donkor	Painter/Mixed media	Ghana/UK
Jacob Jari	Painter/Mixed media/Installation	Nigeria
Atta Kwami	Painter	Ghana
Obiageli Okigbo	Painter	Nigeria/Belgium
Nnenna Okore	Sculptor/Mixed media/Installation	Nigeria/USA

'As it is!' is the first ever group exhibition presenting contemporary African art in the Middle East. Over four months at The Mojo Gallery 'As It Is!' is showcasing 24 leading and emerging artists who articulate a progressively evolutionary break from European stereotypes about 'contemporary African art'. The concept for the exhibition series is an artist-led ideology. It is about their narrative, their experience of being an artist and expressing their identity.



## PAINTING ACROSS CULTURES BY PROFESSOR WOLE SOYINKA - PATRON

Usually, African art turns its face towards Europe, occasionally also towards the United States but, mostly towards Europe. This is not surprising, once we recall that what most of what we know as modern Africa is a creation of Europe, through colonialism. Consequently, any external exposure, or dialogue between artistic forms and motifs follows the same path of exchange and influence as other forms of creativity – literature, music, dance and drama, and indeed, architecture.

The colonial cords remain as effective as ever—Francophone, Lusophone, Anglophone or Hispanophone. And yet a powerful ‘external’ creative language exists on the continent itself – the Arab/Islamic, beckoning towards the larger Arab world.

One of the very few statesmen to address this option was, not surprisingly, a poet and intellectual in his own right – Leopold Sedar Senghor. He was the earliest to recognize and articulate the need for a black African linkage to that cultural repository that he named Arabite, and he matched his words by deeds in creating opportunities, as head of state, for the mutual cultural interrogation

between both sides through expositions and Festivals, even while committed, a priori, to the founding of such exchanges on the cultural actualities of the African continent itself.

Despite such efforts, the weight of contacts between Africa and Europe still predominates, awaiting the moment when the pendulum would swing the other way and bring the Arab cultural world just as close, if not closer to the African. This exhibition of African art in the Arab world therefore strikes me as a most essential dimension of such creative dialogue between two vibrant cultures. Despite a historic foothold in the African continent, the Arab world still exists in as profound ignorance of the African world, its history and creative vitality, as the African world also does of the Arab. While, all too often alas, politics divides, Art unites.

Art has always proved the disinterested bridge across world views, a source of illumination as much as inspiration. This is one of the reasons, for instance, that I gladly accepted an invitation to the Dubai International Poetry Festival that took place this year, under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, the Ruler of Dubai who,

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just like his Senegalese counterpart, the late Leopold Senghor, is a highly considered poet of the Arab world. I was already acquainted with a few established names in Arab poetry, but it was a revelation to encounter the works of the younger generation of poets and engage them in person over a variegated field of existential and creative concerns.

It is my hope that this exhibition ('As It is!') will mark a beginning in the construction of such bridges, a mutual opening out between two already interconnected worlds, that will further enrich both, inspire new directions in articulating the realities of both traditional and modernized worlds that such societies – especially their artistes simultaneously inhabit.

This exhibition should travel, evolving eventually in a joint presentation of representative works from both cultures, for the edification of both, and the rest of the world.

Wole Soyinka,  
Professor Emeritus, Obafemi Awolowo University,  
Ile Ife, Nigeria  
Nobel Laureate in Literature, 1986



The Mojo Gallery is proud to have been involved in a project of this scale and significance. Being the first exhibition of its kind in Dubai, 'As it is!' reflects our vision as a gallery to present exhibitions that are groundbreaking and international in context.

We have been honored to present the work of some of Africa's most famous emerging and established artists. Artists of the highest caliber who, despite critical acclaim from major art institutions, have yet to be shown in this region.

As a gallery we felt the time was right to host a series of exhibitions that recognise the importance of contemporary African art on the global cultural stage. Our decision has been validated by the overwhelmingly positive response we have received from all sectors of the art world.

We hope, that through this series of 4 shows, we have played a small part in redefining the underlying perception of contemporary Africa and brought a fresh appreciation of the sheer depth of talent and intellectual thinking the continent has to offer. Hopefully this, in turn, has laid the ground for further ongoing cultural dialogue between the UAE and the continent of Africa.

On behalf of my Partners, I would like to thank everyone involved in what has been a huge undertaking.

Firstly, our visionary and committed sponsors who have demonstrated a deep understanding of the significance of funding the arts. Without them this exhibition would not have been possible.

Likewise, we would like to thank the curator Annabelle Nwankwo - Mu'azu for putting forward the concept in the very beginning and then working so hard in bringing it to life.

Thanks too to our very own Shannon Ayers Holden who has been tireless in her efforts to make a success of this series.

And finally, a sincere thank you to the entire team at Mojo who have delivered on every front.

Thank you.

Kurt Blanckenberg  
Director  
The Mojo Gallery



## AS IT IS! Africa Applauded A Journey Fulfilled

In 2009, I visited Dubai for the first time, as a VIP guest of Art Dubai and I was excited by the exceptional international visual display, but even more so by the art from the region. However, as I spent time at the fair, I began to feel a profound sense of unease as I realised that yet again, Africa, this magnificent continent comprising 53 countries, the 'birth place of man,' had been seemingly excluded. London based October Gallery featured some works by El Anatsui and Nnenna Okore. These beautiful artworks stood out for me in that they were the most profound pieces on show and because they were the only artistic representations from the African continent. But, why this gaping hole – why once more, was Africa not represented in what was an 'international' celebration of art?

Then to add credence to this stark reality, we noticed that not only was Africa's art under-represented, Africa's people were few and far between. As a group of three African women, we stood out! In the exclusive world of contemporary art, this unfortunately is the norm. My girlfriends and I debated into the night about what was becoming clear - that in order to be seen on a level playing field, we, as 'Africans' need to embrace the

realities of the competitive world of art by taking charge, by making our presence known and by educating. There are a growing number of like-minded individuals on the continent, keen to communicate this desire to free Africa and its artists of stereotypes and marginalisation, and the time was ripe to make the same assertion in the UAE. Here was an opportunity for artists from Africa to show their work on terms acceptable to them, in a region where fellow artists have been similarly sidelined by western art.

As a curator of African art, I've had the privilege of meeting and working with some of the most compelling and inspirational African artists of our age and when I contacted them with the idea, the response was resoundingly positive. Further endorsement came in the form of Africa's first Nobel Laureate in Literature, Professor Wole Soyinka, lending his respected name to the exhibition, stating: "...As It Is! will mark a beginning in the construction of bridges, a mutual opening out between two already connected worlds that further enrich both..." I was honoured to have his respect and encouragement.



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Critical to the success of any exhibition is the space and the understanding of the curatorial approach. One year on, I met Kurt Blanckenberg, Director of the Mojo Gallery and Project Manager, Shannon Ayers Holden. The Mojo Gallery recognised immediately the energy of the project and were willing take it as far as it could go! Not only did the project fit the Gallery's strategic vision of staging exhibitions that explore contemporary concepts in fine art and design through multiple mediums and formats, it was also the perfect time for the space to host a show that recognises the importance of contemporary African art on the global cultural stage.

Funding a project of this magnitude is a significant challenge. It was crucial that the continent's movers and shakers support Africa's cultural renaissance. We were able to raise enough sponsorship to begin to make the vision real through support from our major sponsor, Africa's leading style and culture magazine, Arise.

In this final exhibition in the four part As It Is! series, Africa Applauded, seven of Africa's most talented and acclaimed visual mavericks are featured as we celebrate a coming together of immense artistic talent.

EL ANATSUI is one of a handful of African artists who have

transcended the label of 'African artist,' to being recognised as one of the greatest contemporary artists of our time - although he clearly identifies himself, 'as a person and an African.' I had the great pleasure of meeting El in 1994. The connections with El continued when my late husband, Capt. Usman Mu'azu, a collector and supporter of the arts in Nigeria, purchased three of El's wood wall sculptures. One of these works, 'Migrants and Illusion' is exhibited in this show. I approached El in September 2009 about participating in As It Is! I was humbled that he would see the importance of this endeavour. Without doubt El's meteoric rise is deserved and many would say the international recognition he now bathes in should have occurred sooner. His large shimmering metal hanging installations, stitched with copper wire are astonishingly beautiful. 'New World Map,' the magnificent headline piece in As It Is! Africa Applauded, is an outstanding example of this artistic perfection: multicoloured jewels surrounded by drapes of gold 'sheets,' hanging free, attest to a positive, new world order, with the excellence of Africa at the forefront.

ATTA KWAMI is another of Ghana's leading artists and educators and in recent years he has gained wider recognition beyond his shores. His vibrant colour block abstracts radiate inspiration from his native Kumasi where colour escapes every

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the cityscapes encountered on his travels throughout Africa and worldwide. Known for his installation pieces and large paintings, more recently Atta has also worked on a smaller scale where he derives tremendous meaning from the smallest canvases, noting “...scale is not a limitation; it does not reduce the amount of energy that I can put onto a pictorial surface.... I find self-forgetfulness can be reached on a small scale just as effectively as on a larger one. Small images, when assembled together, can create surprising visual impact.”

NNENNA OKORE is a member of this coming of age of African artists. An ex-student and protégée of Anatsui, Okore is an internationally renowned sculptor in her own right. As an assistant professor of art at North Park University, Chicago, where she chairs the department, her work employs ordinary materials such as newspapers and magazines often discarded, but for Nnenna they are ‘usable commodities.’ She seeks to highlight ‘wastefulness through beautiful and graceful forms we can readily relate to.’

The sculptures in this exhibition, ‘Akwa Ocha,’ ‘Conjoined’ and ‘Anyanwu,’ are all manifestations that look to the tactile qualities of nature, which inform her experimentation with biodegradable materials. By gentle manipulation of natural fibres that include burlap, coffee, dye and clay, the resulting forms are textural, ephemeral and reminiscent of forms in

the natural world. Okore asks the audience to reflect on the greatness of our natural surroundings and to respect mother earth. To have the opportunity to house examples of her creative genius in this show speaks volumes.

Nigerian-born artist SOKARI DOUGLAS CAMP is known for her large sculptures seen in the British Museum and other major institutions. Her principal medium is steel. She is strongly influenced by African and British culture and, inspired by her Kalabari heritage, issues of race, gender and exploitation often surface in her work. A stalwart member of the contemporary African art scene in London for over 25 years, she is celebrated as one of Africa’s greatest sculptors. Her small figurines are a refreshing departure from her larger pieces. These humorous figurative sculptures made from welded sections of steel almost rebel against the cold hardness of her chosen material; embellished with decorative elements she softens the steel further and in so doing celebrates womanhood. “I think after 40 women get a voice,” she laughs. “They learn to shout back: enough’s enough!”

GODFRIED DONKOR’s ‘FT Flag’ series looks at the symbolism of the flag and the various appropriations and sometimes contradictory codes attributed to it. Godfried has used The Financial Times (FT) as a source of inspiration and as a form to produce powerful collages that ask the viewer to search deeper. The use of the FT as a working



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material, with its toneless linear strictness, deprives the emblems their colours and so focuses us on the shapes and the newspaper itself. What do these colourless flags signify? The choice itself of national flags is symbolic and particularly relevant at this time of political upheaval in the Middle East.

In his work Donkor has often explored the implied significance of signs and how these may or may not fulfil a general but often warped perception of belonging. Donkor asks: "Is the form as powerful without the colour?" Godfried carved out a name for himself internationally with his iconic 'Boxer and Slave Ship' series and his 'Black Madonna' works, gaining recognition as one of Ghana's most gifted among an emerging generation of younger artists.

OBIAGEJI OKIGBO, is a dear friend and in my opinion, one of the most compelling artists to come out of Nigeria. A new generation of artist experimenting and moving freely among classical genres, Obi is a painter's painter, unafraid of colour. This richness of colour is an exuberant symbol of her voyage of self discovery, highlighted in 'Predominantly Violet, La Pieta' which was taken from her first solo exhibition, 'Tapping into the Known.' Okigbo's present trajectory has evolved in her new body of work titled 'Out of the Ashes.' A monochromatic exploration of recurrent themes, this series is a new level of her ongoing journey of acceptance and sanguine defiance, illustrated in her

newest work, 'Lustra.' The depth achieved in these predominantly black and white works is astonishing in its simplicity and complexity. Okigbo allows the viewer space to disappear into her paintings, to be taken over by the perfume and deliciousness of her passion for self affirmation and her continual re-birth.

I met JACOB JARI in Zaria, 1994 lecturing at Ahmadu Bello University. An inspiring artist he is considered one of Nigeria's, if not Africa's foremost artists. The wider art world is finally recognising the brilliance of the fastidiousness of his work ethic. Every aspect of Jari's creative purpose is sustained and deliberate, but the heart of his message remains the same: society can only improve when everybody, regardless of class is included in the dialogue of change and empowerment. The works exhibited represent his forays in artistic madness – intricate tapestries of 'handmade paper beads' made from strips of coloured paper, gently rolled and placed on the surface; diagonally cut drinking straws, aligned somewhat randomly, but in actuality each has its designated place on the board; his stunning 'bullet hole' series in which he uses left over material, discarded by a tailor, overlaid on a defaced canvas frame punctured with tiny holes created by a hot metal implement, made with his own hands and heated on a coal fire. The result is a stunning tapestry effect. When asked why he chooses to work like methodically and time draining (in my opinion), his response has always been to smile – an appropriate response from a creative genius.

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It is every curator's aspiration to produce an exhibition of substance and worth, that captures a momentous interlude on the artistic landscape; to work with passionate and inspirational artists; and to engage with an audience willing to suspend judgement and respond by embracing or rejecting the ideas illustrated, but at the very least being moved or touched. This has been the objective in all my work and even more so in this project. The 'As It Is!' series, of which Africa Applauded is the last exhibition, was conceived in order to bring together, in Dubai, a diverse range of international artists living within and outside Africa. Working with expressive mediums and motivations, it has been about showcasing an invigorating and positive image of Africa and Africans, not often seen in the mainstream media, but which surely exists in every corner of this magnificent continent. On a celebratory note, two years after I first visited Art Dubai, As It Is! Africa Applauded will open during this prestigious event. Africa is taking charge of its artistic destiny and enhancing the equilibrium, and it would seem that the international art world is finally open to the inevitable change.

## About The Curator

Annabelle is the founder and Director of Cocoa Arts. Established in late 2007 from her passion for the contemporary arts of Africa and the Diaspora; and a desire to dispel pre-conceived modes of thinking about 'African Art' and highlight and convey the wealth of vibrant artistic creations, from this wonderful continent and beyond, to diverse audiences worldwide. Cocoa Arts is an internet based gallery and art consultancy specialising primarily in contemporary art from Africa. However, diversity and interaction with artists from all corners of the world are intrinsic to the portfolio ethos and Cocoa Arts also promotes emerging artists from outside Africa and the Diaspora.

[www.cocoaarts.com](http://www.cocoaarts.com)



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### Africa: always modern.

The first time the Venice Biennale, that great festival of international modern and contemporary art, exhibited material from Sub-Saharan Africa was 1990. The work of five artists had been selected from a show at the Studio Museum in Harlem earlier that same year. One of them was El Anatsui, his first international showing. Another was Bruce Onobrakpeya, already an artist with an international reputation, even if within the specialist circles that had always given attention to modern African art. The work was shown in some unused space in the back end of the Italian pavilion. Almost every country in the world had its pavilion, but of all the countries of Africa in 1990 only Egypt had its own pavilion. All five artists were from Sub-Saharan Africa, which is, as we all know, not a country but a geographical region comprised of more than forty-five countries many of which already had long-established Fine Art teaching departments in their universities, quite apart from more “traditional” forms of art education (including photography). These countries included Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, among others, with a history covering most of the 20th century. Well-established artists like Francis Nnagbenda, Ben Enwonwu, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Ibrahim El Salahi, Gerard Sekoto, Iba N'Diaye, were among the

obvious representatives of these developments, and among the ‘ancestors’, as it were, of El Anatsui. One of the works on display, *Grandma’s Cloth*, a series of narrow pieces of wood with pyrographic patterns drawn into them, seemed to draw upon the idea of cloth in the Anlo-Ewe tradition (Anatsui, though working then – and still – in Nigeria is from south-east Ghana) as a repository of family and lineage memories. His work, even then, allowed us to entertain the possibilities of his present international reputation, a reputation built upon visual and material resources that are entirely local to Anatsui’s circumstances, but which nevertheless resonate in a global contemporary art world.

Europeans (and Americans) have had a habit of looking at Africa and getting things wrong: one hopes that we are a little better at it today! In 1920 the then famous art critic Roger Fry suggested, correctly as it happens, that sub-Saharan Africans had invented sculpture in the round in a truly three-dimensional manner that one simply did not find, art-historically, in other parts of the world where sculpture emerges from an essentially two-dimensional background. He did not look beyond that sculpture to see all the other aspects of African visual cultures (and it is not that he could not have done: the collections of the British Museum, for example, already contained ceramic and textile works from Africa); for, notwithstanding his unique insight into

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African sculpture, he could not see beyond the then current European obsession with Modernism, as if being modern was a uniquely European thing, and with African sculpture as providing a new repertoire of forms for that Modernism. And although many artists in Europe had indeed collected African sculpture and included its forms in their art, if we go back to that iconic painting by Picasso that stands at the head of these developments, i.e. *Les Femmes d'Alger*, his painting of naked prostitutes now in New York's Museum of Modern Art, the 'African-sculpture' version of the inception of Modernism in the visual arts is almost entirely mythic. *Les Femmes d'Alger*, in regard to the formal layout of its figures is entirely derived from French postcards in Picasso's possession showing photographs, taken by a French photographer of naked women in Mali. They strike poses that seem designed to make the most of certain female anatomical features, and one wonders about the pressures those women were under to behave in such a ridiculous manner! For we know enough about the history of photography in West Africa to insist that (a) photography had been an African visual practice since the 1850s, that (b) a developing African tradition of portraiture proved enormously popular, and that (c) when people had their photographs taken they absolutely did not dress like the undressed women in Picasso's postcards.

Now, as we all know, photography is the first of the world's modern arts; and although the technology was first developed in Europe, it was very quickly domesticated by non-European peoples who found themselves, quickly, in possession of its technical apparatus. This fact alone ought to alert us to the fact that the sorts of changes and developments that we see in both European and African modernisms are elements within a continuous and continuing trajectory. Change and development in art was never something that Europeans do, and Africans do not. This would be absurd. It is true, of course, that in Africa the historical narrative prior to the mid 19th century is often hidden by the lack of written histories; but the fact that there might be no paper-based documents in Africa cannot mean that there is no history. For example, in Benin City around 1500 a new art form developed for which there was no prior precedent, the rectangular plaque cast in brass for mounting on the massive wooden pillars that supported the verandas in the public areas of the royal palace. I must emphasize that this was a form without precedent in 1500, and the subject matter 'depicted' therein likewise. This was indeed a pictorial art, unique through all of what we know of African sculpture at that time, showing the ceremonial life of the court, battle scenes, mythic animals such as leopard, crocodile, pangolin, python, bird of evil omen, and so forth, as well as the recently-arrived Portuguese traders and soldiers. Though copper-alloy casting had



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been around in the lower Niger region for the best part of a thousand years, this was an entirely new way of making art; and the raw materials (imported brass – for the Portuguese traded using brass and copper bracelets as the medium of exchange – rather than local bronze), the pictorial imagery and the rectangular plaque form all suggest Benin artists were quick to see and draw upon the new conditions that the Portuguese (who were only in Benin City for thirty years) made possible. There are two points to draw from this: first (d), there is a long-running history in which both Africans and Europeans look at each other and at each other's art, and make use of what they see; and second (e), what happened in Benin City is just one episode in a long-running history and trajectory of change and development in African art.

In an exhibition case in the South African Museum, Cape Town, there are some short lengths of red ochre, square in section, and at least one has markings inscribed along one side. Sitting in their case they could for all the world be a work of conceptual art: after all, these days you never know what an artist might do to make us sit up and think – one can imagine what El Anatsui might have made of some apparently discarded lumps of stone, even if roughly shaped, had he been relocated to another time and place in Africa! And yet these pieces of red ochre are 77,000 years old, from a cave overlooking the south coast of South Africa.

They have been published (in the British press) as 'the world's first work of art'. What were they for? Why is one of them marked? We shall never know; but we do know that red ochre is still used in parts of Africa to staunch bleeding wounds, and that red ochre is one of the most widespread substances used to paint sculpture, the human body, and the walls of temples and palaces, within the traditions inherited from the past, as also, once upon a time, the rock shelters used by our earliest ancestors. Human species evolve in Africa, the capacity to make things (that capacity essential to all art making) evolves in Africa, and the capacity to talk to one another evolves in Africa (a capacity driven by material invention and social necessity); and it is worth remembering that in that South African cave we find the earth recycled to make those pieces of red ochre – might they be crayons? – just as, much earlier, pieces of stone had been recycled in the making of the world's first manmade tools!

The cast brass plaques of Benin City were modern in their day – and let us not forget that 'modern' simply means 'just now', and that 'now' is the only place we can be. The modern world is where we are at; and just as many of us do not always like what we see of the modern world, one wonders what the people in Benin City in 1500 made of their modern world and its new art forms; or the people in that South African cave 77,000 years ago when some of them began drawing on its

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walls and on themselves. When an artist like El Anatsui works with worn-out wooden mortars (once used for pounding yam) to build sculptures, or with rusty discarded cassava graters to make a huge wall, or liquor-bottle wrappings to make those extraordinarily sculptural hangings, of course they are new works of art, new ways of working, new ways of making us look around at the world as we have made it to be; but they are also among the latest manifestations of aesthetic processes that can be traced back to the very beginnings of human history – which is the history of all of us – in Africa.

The sorts of developments in the arts to which we give the name Modernism do of course have their beginning in Europe, even when informed by arts from Africa, Japan, Indonesia, the Pacific, the ancient Mediterranean world, and so forth, as well as by the new technologies available as from the mid 19th century, most obviously photography. Moreover, these developments are transferred to Africa as part of the school-university educational system introduced during the colonial period; and the independent nation states of Africa have not rejected these developments: on the contrary, they have domesticated them in local African ways. African peoples were quick to realize that the school-university system and its art education, domesticated within all the various local circumstances in which they were located, provided in philosophy and in the arts the means of

contesting colonial rule in terms that colonial regimes could not fail to understand. At the same time, these developments in the visual arts, together with photographic portraiture and local dress and textile forms, and chiefly ceremonial, and, still in many places, masquerade gave African peoples a clear sense of the universal value of indigenous cultural forms and practices, a clear sense of a social identity the equal to anything Europe had tried to impose. My final point, then, is that (f) the arts, whether Modernist or within traditions inherited from the past, have all played their part in the political processes of contesting Europe and establishing a unique series of political and cultural 'voices' in the modern world. One might say that is how the international processes of Modernism became African, generating forms that could not have come from any other part of the world. Modernism in African art is, in other words, part of the culture of independence and nationality.

John Picton  
Emeritus Professor of African Art  
School of Oriental and African Studies  
University of London



## EL ANATSUI

“About six years ago I found a big bag of liquor bottle tops apparently thrown away in the bush. At the time I was searching for a pot monument (pillars of stacked pots, each of which represents bereavement in the village) that I had seen decades before in that locality. I kept the bottle caps in the studio for several months until the idea eventually came to me that by stitching them together I could get them to articulate some statement. When the process of stitching got underway, I discovered that the result resembled a real fabric cloth. Incidentally too, the colours of the caps seemed to replicate those of traditional kente cloths. In effect the process was subverting the stereotype of metal as a stiff, rigid medium and rather showing it as a soft, pliable, almost sensuous material capable of attaining immense dimensions and being adapted to specific spaces.

To me, the bottle tops encapsulate the essence of the alcoholic drinks which were brought to Africa by Europeans as trade items at the time of the earliest contact between the two peoples. Almost all the brands I use are locally distilled. I now source the caps from distillers around Nsukka, where I live and work. I don't see what I do as recycling; I transform the caps into something else. If there is a direct link between the bottle tops and the fabric cloths, it is probably the fact that they all have names linked to events, people, historical or current issues. Take Ecomog gin: this refers to the regional military intervention force which brought the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia to an end.

The brandy called Ebeano (meaning ‘where we are now’) references a popular electioneering slogan from the last political polls in the state in which I live. Similarly kente cloths are given names like takpekpe le Anloga (conference at Anloga) or can be named after a personality. Fading cloth is more of a formalistic name, with the full blooded reds at the top and bottom of the cloth yielding to creams and other pale colours in the centre. Flattening and stitching the caps is laborious and repetitive – a very different process to my earlier work using power tools on wood. I have several assistants working with me, and we start with strips and eventually assemble them into the final composite results. The process of stitching, especially the repetitive aspect, slows down action and I believe makes thinking deeper. It's like the effect of a good mantra on the mind”

“When something is used by people, it has a history. It has a story. It has something behind it. I think that fact lends a lot of meaning to whatever you are doing with [it].”

One of Africa's most acclaimed contemporary artists on the international scene, El Anatsui was born in Anyako Ghana in 1944. He trained as a sculptor at the College of Art, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana (1965–68). Since 1975, he has been a professor of sculpture at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka where he still lives. Known for his innovative wood panel sculptures in which he has focused on themes relating to African history and colonial



experience, using marks made by the chainsaw and oxyacetylene flame and traditional sign systems including Uli motifs and Adrinka symbols, his wood sculptures were seen as metaphors for the destruction of African indigenous cultures by colonialism and its aftermath, suggesting a critical connection between slavery and colonialism on the one hand, and on the other, the disappearance of African visual and textual archives, and the loss of historical memory in the age of post colonialism. But it is for his monumental 'metal cloths' that he has achieved worldwide accolades and recognition. His uses metals—aluminium strips from liqueur bottle caps, rusty metal graters, old offset printing plates, and evaporated milk cans—to create large-scale, wall-bound and freestanding metal installations with colossal visual power.

El Anatsui has exhibited his work around the world, including at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, 52nd Venice Biennale, Hayward Gallery and Centro de Cultura Contemporanea Barcelona. A retrospective of his work, titled *When I Last Wrote to You About Africa* opened at the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada in October 2010 and will be touring North America for the next three years.

Anatsui is also premiering a solo exhibition in Japan titled "A Fateful Journey: Africa in the Works of El Anatsui." This exhibition premiered at Minpaku, the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka and is now at the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Hayama until March 27, 2011, when it will tour to the Art

Forum, Tsuruoka and Saitama Prefectural Museum of Modern Art from July –August, 2011.

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - SOLO

- 2010 - 2012 El Anatsui: *When I Last Wrote To You About Africa*, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, touring to Museum for African Art, Long Island City, NY; University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI; Denver Art Museum, CO; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC
- 2009 El Anatsui, Belger Arts Center, Kansas City, Missouri
- 2008 El Anatsui: *Gawu*, National Museum for African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC
- 2006 Asi, David Krut Projects, New York.  
Nyekor, Spazio Rossana Orlandi, Milan, Italy
- 2005 Danudo, Skoto Gallery, New York and Contemporary African Art Gallery, New York.
- 2003-2008 *Gawu*, Oriol Mostyn Gallery, Ulandudno, Wales, UK, an Oriol Mostyn Gallery Exhibition, touring to: Model Arts & Niland Gallery, Sligo, Republic of Ireland, Gallery Oldham, Oldham, England, UK, Djanogly Gallery, University of Nottingham, UK and the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA
- 2002 El Anatsui: *New Works*, October Gallery, London,



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



- 1998 A Sculpted History of Africa, October Gallery, London, UK.
- 1997 Hakpa, French Cultural Centre, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 1995 El Anatsui, October Gallery, London, UK.
- 1991 Old and New: An exhibition of Sculpture in Assorted Wood, The National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - GROUP

- 2010 Who Knows Tomorrow, Nationalgalerie, Berlin
- 2009 Moscow Biennale Extreme Frontiers, Urban Frontiers, Institut Valencia D'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain
- 2008 The Essential Art of African Textiles: Design without End, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary, Museum for Arts and Design, NY
- 2007 Altered, Stitched and Gathered, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island, New York. 8th Sharjah Biennale, Sharjah United Arab Emirates. Artempo: Where Time Becomes Art, Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, Italy. 52nd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy. (Un)fair Trade, Neue Galerie, Graz, and Laudesmuseum Joanneum Austria.
- 2006 The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama, Fowler Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, Black Panther Rank and File, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, USA
- 2004 Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea.
- 2004-2007 Afrika Remix, Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf, Germany, touring to:
- 2003 Biennale de Ceramica dell' Arte Contemporanea, Villa Gropallo, Vado Ligure, Italy. Transfers, Palais de Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium.
- 2002 The Independents, Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art, Liverpool, UK. The Happy Face of Globalisation, The 1st Albissola Ceramics Biennale, Museo Civico d'Arte Contemporanea and Museo della Ceramica Manlio Trucco, Albissola, Italy, touring to Musée Ariana, Geneva, Switzerland.
- 2000 El Tiempo de Africa (Africa's Time), Centro Atlántico Arte Moderno, La Palma, Canary Islands, Spain.
- 1999 Les Champs de la Sculpture, presented by the City of Paris and organised by the Paris Cultural Affairs Department, Champs Elysées, Paris, France.

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Contemporary African Art Exhibition Series



- 1998 7th Triennial of Small Sculpture, Stuttgart, Germany.  
Riddle of the Spirits – Twelve African Artists,  
Skoto Gallery, New York, USA.  
9th Osaka Sculpture Triennial, Osaka, Japan.
- 1997 The Poetics of Line-Seven Artists of the  
Nsukka Group, The National Museum of  
African Art, Smithsonian Institute,  
Washington DC, USA.
- 1996 Africana, Sala 1, Rome, Italy.  
Transforms, October Gallery, London UK.
- 1995 Aka '95, Bona Gallery, Enugu and Didi  
Museum, Lagos, Nigeria. 8th Osaka Sculpture  
Triennale, Osaka, Japan. Seven Stories about  
Modern Art in Africa, The Whitechapel Art Gallery,  
London, UK. Africus-1st Johannesburg  
Biennale, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 1994 5th Havana Biennale, Havana, Cuba.
- 1993 Six African Artists, October Gallery, London UK.
- 1992 Begegnung mit den Anderen, University of  
Kassel, Kassel, Germany.
- 1991 Aka '91, Bona Gallery, Enugu and Goethe  
Institut, Lagos, Nigeria.

- 1990 The Calabash 1st Exhibition, The Calabash,  
Lagos, Nigeria. Five Contemporary African  
Artists, 44th Venice Biennial, Venice, Italy.  
Contemporary African Artists-A Changing  
Tradition, The Studio Museum in Harlem,  
New York;

## AWARDS

- 2001 Fellow, Civitela Ranieri Center, Umbertide, Italy
- 2000 Founding Member and Fellow, Forum for African  
Arts. Member, International Selection Committee,  
Dakar Biennale, Dakar, Senegal.
- 1999 The Public's Prize, 7th Triennale der  
Kleinplastik, Stuttgart, Germany.
- 1998 Bronze Prize, 9th Osaka Sculpture Triennale,  
Osaka, Japan.
- 1995 Kansai Telecasting Corporation Prize, 3rd  
Osaka Sculpture Triennale, Osaka, Japan.
- 1990 Honorable Mention, 44th Venice Biennale,  
Venice, Italy. Competition, Accra, Ghana.



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



### SELECTED COLLECTIONS

African Studies Gallery, University of Nigeria,  
Nsukka, Nigeria.

Musée Ariana, Geneva, Switzerland.

The British Museum, London, UK.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,  
Washington DC. USA

Diamond Bank of Nigeria, Victoria Island,

Ghana National Art Collection, Accra, Ghana.

International Peoples' College, Helsingør, Denmark.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

Museum of Art, University of Iowa, Iowa City,  
Iowa, USA.

Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

Iwalewa-Haus, University of Bayreuth,  
Bayreuth, Germany.

The National Gallery of Contemporary Art, Lagos, Nigeria.

The National Museum of African Art,  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA.

Osaka Foundation of Culture, Osaka, Japan.

Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan.

The World Bank Art Collection, Washington DC, USA.

De Young Museum, San Francisco, USA.

Pompidou Centre, Paris, France.

Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf, Germany

Missoni, Milan, Italy.

UNAIDS, Geneva, Switzerland.

Fowler Museum, University of California,  
Los Angeles, USA.

Jordan National Gallery of Art, Amman, Jordan



New World Map | Aluminum and Copper | 500cm x 340cm | 2009





## ATTA KWAMI

“My work is described conventionally as ‘abstract.’ Given that there is a very precise, knowable set of resources at the back of it, I would describe it as schematic; like a map, or rather a reaction to or interpretation of a map. It is about ownership, a way to finding myself, where I am. In that sense my work enhances a viewing of Kumasi, and Ghana where the sign painting workshops and rich textile traditions have engaged my attention. My passion lies in making... I have focused on colour as subject matter, perhaps taking me back to what I started with as a child; my mother’s paints and her textiles were good resources. In recent works I have pursued the use of the imaginary grid as a matrix for emotion. This structure is a smokescreen within which to create something new. Working in different places requires an ever-present preparedness to take the work wherever it demands to go. Wherever I go I take my world with me.....

The qualities I seek on my work are clarity, simplicity, intensity, subtlety, architectonic structure, musicality (rhythm and tone), wholeness and spontaneity. So many strands inevitably manifest themselves in painting: jazz, the timbre of Ghanaian music (Koo Nimo), improvisation, arrangements of merchandise and so forth. I also see corresponding aesthetic commonalities with wall paintings and music from northern Ghana, the limited range of

earth colours and the pentatonic scale of the xylophone. Poetry is able to sustain the life of language through new forms of usage. In painting it is also re-interpretation, improvisation and variation that affect innovation and development.”

Atta Kwami was born in Accra, Ghana, in 1956. He grew up immersed in the arts—his mother was a well-known visual artist and art educator, his father a musician. He studied painting with Ato Delaquis at the College of Art at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). After completing his first degree he spent several years in southeast Nigeria teaching art before returning to Ghana to assume a position as Lecturer in painting and printmaking at the College of Art, KNUST.

Until recently, he served on the faculty of the College of Art at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi. Today he is an independent artist, maintaining studios in Ghana and England and exhibiting extensively worldwide.

Kwami’s paintings are held in major public collections including the National Museums of Ghana and Kenya, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the National Museum of African Art in Washington.



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - SOLO

- 2010 Susuka (Clarity) Gallery CAAS, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA
- 2010 Fufofo (Coming Together) Howard Scott Gallery, New York
- 2009 Take Time Beardsmore Gallery, London (+Pamela Clarkson)
- 2008 Harmonium Howard Scott Gallery, New York, USA Small Small Oriel 6 & 7, Llandudno, Wales
- 2007 Amadee Exhibition The Open Univesity Library, Milton Keynes
- 2006 Schoner Wohnen: Eilfried Huth Landesmuseum Joanneum/Kunstlerhaus Graz, Austria
- 2005 Atta Kwami, Nicolas Krupp Contemporary Art Gallery, Basel
- 2001 Atta Kwami Kunsthalle, Basel
- 2000 small small Alliance Francaise Kumasi, Ghana
- 1998-99 Geometric Organic National Museum, Accra, Ghana
- 1997 Fordsburg Artists Studios, Johannesburg, South Africa

- 1996 Grace Kwami Sculpture: An Artist's Book by Atta Kwami, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK
- 1994-95 Point of View Gallery, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; Station Steps Castle Museum, Nottingham, England
- 1990 Ecology Arts Centre, Accra, Ghana Drawings, Paintings and Textiles Science Lecture Theatre, Mawuli School, Ho, Ghana

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - GROUP

- 2010 Long Long Gone Leo Koenig, New York
- 2008 Design Without End: The Essential Art of African Textiles, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
- 2008 Rotonde des Arts Conteporains (RAC) Five West African artists, Vle Biennale Internationale de la Gravure d'Ile-de-France. Eugen Lendl, Graz Chaumalieres Carrefour International de L'Estampe, Chaumalieres

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Contemporary African Art Exhibition Series



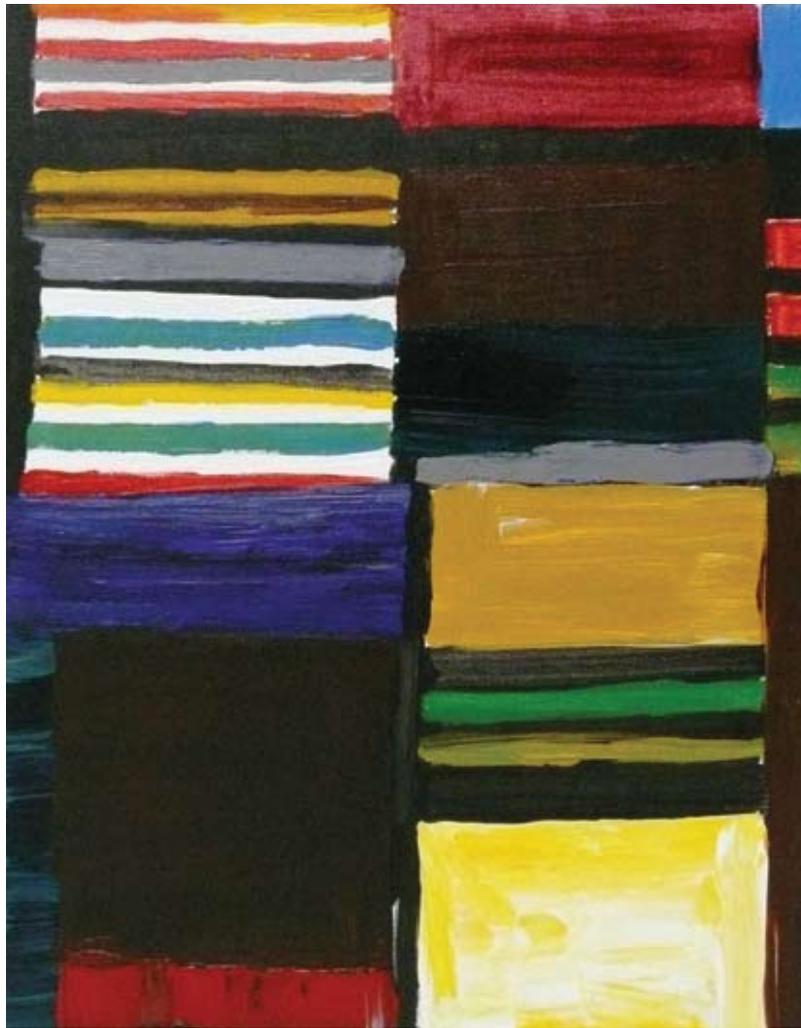
- 2008 Draw Your Soul University of Sunderland, UK
- 2006 4779, with Ferdinand Penker, Galerie
- 2006 A Tale of Two Cities Goethe Institut/Alliance Francaise, Accra/Kumasi
- 2006 El Particular, Mexico City
- 2005 Re-Configuring the Contemporary KMUST Museum, Kumasi
- 2002 Nicolas Krupp at Artissima, Torino
- 2002 Kumasi Junction Oriol Mostyn Gallery, Llandudno, Wales
- 2002 Ten, Beardsmore Gallery, London
- 2000 Triangle Workshop 2000, 92nd floor World Trade Centre, New York, USA
- 2000 A Slice of Contemporary African Art Galleri B:FORS, Stockholm,
- 2000 South Meets West Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland
- 1999 A Step in Africa National Museum of Kenya, Nairobi
- 1998 An Exhibit of Contemporary African Art Earthhues, WorldSpace, Wash DC, USA
- 1997 Alternating Currents 2nd Johannesburg Biennale
- 1996 A Collaboration and Exchange Ghana & Humboldt County, Eureka, California, USA

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

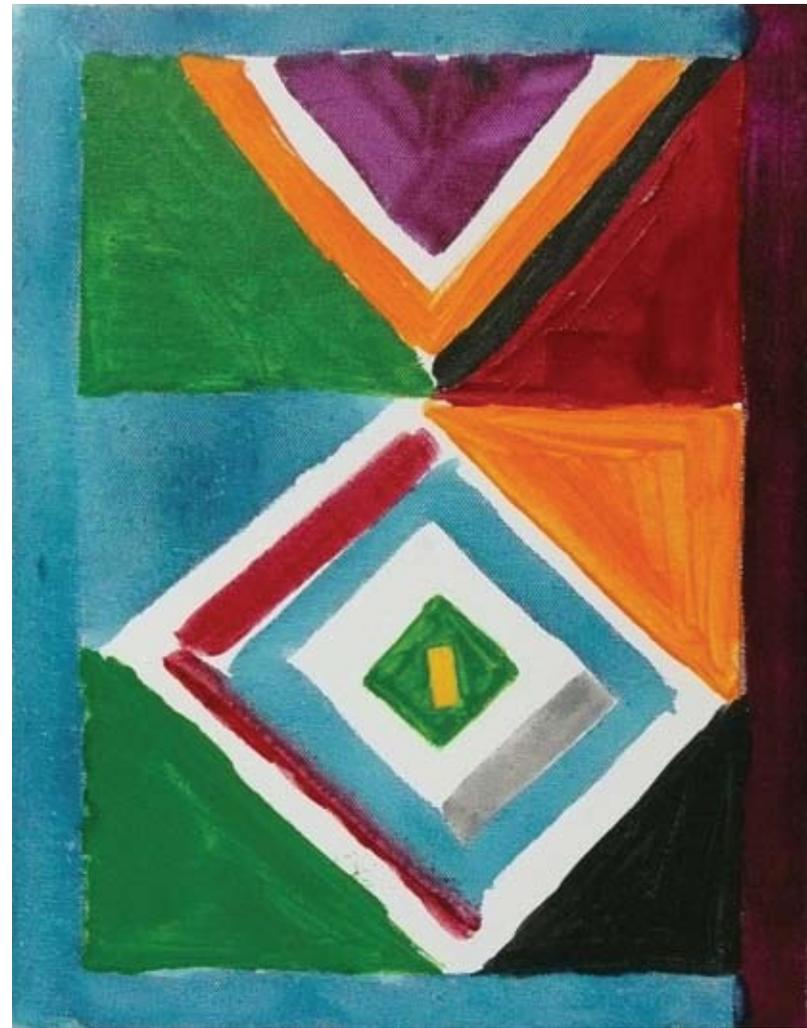
- National Museum of Ghana
- The Hope and Optimism Portfolio, Heynitz Castle, Windhoek, Namibia
- Victoria and Albert Museum, London
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Abidjan
- National Museum of African Art, The Smithsonian, Washington DC
- National Museum of Kenya / Kuona Trust, Nairobi
- Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- The British Museum, London.

## AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

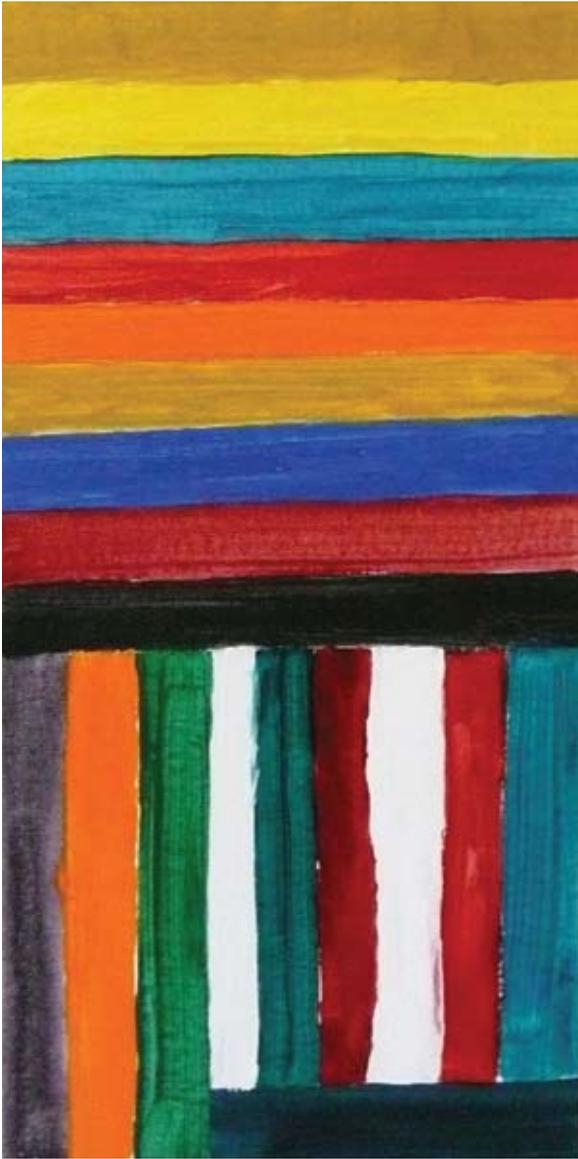
- 2010 Philip L. Ravenhill Fellowship, (UCLA); Smithsonian Institute, National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.
- 2009 Ghana Cultural Fund Award for the publication of Ph.D. thesis: Kumasi Realism, 1951-2007: An African Modernism. 1st Thoyer Distinguished Visiting Scholar, New York University.
- 1991 Commonwealth Foundation, Fellowship (African Region)



Adidoe | Acrylic on canvas | 25cm x 35cm | 2010



Afuya | Acrylic on canvas | 25cm x 35cm | 2010



Anyigba | Acrylic on canvas | 25cm x 50cm | 2010



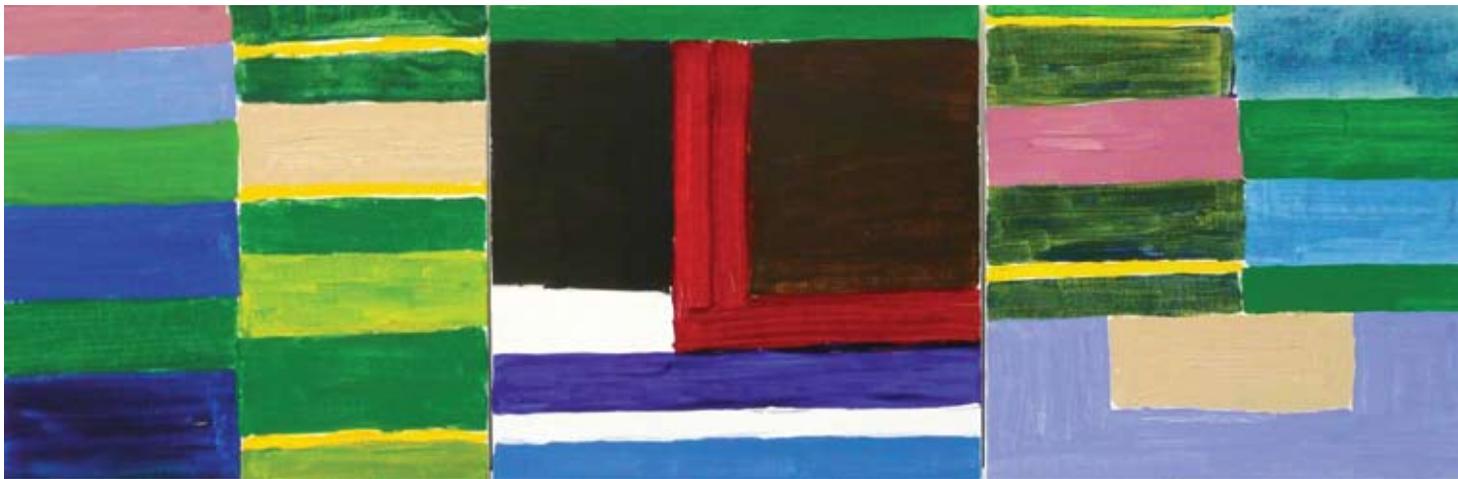
Walewale | Acrylic on canvas | 30cm x 23cm | 2010



Ziordo | Acrylic on canvas | 51cm x 51cm | 2010



Taviefe | Acrylic on canvas | 38cm x 23cm | 2010



Atideka | Acrylic on canvas | 61cm x 20cm | 2010





## JACOB JARI

“Depending on one’s location and awareness, Nigeria is either exalted or damned. This location is both geographic and societal. Despite any situation however, we have a great sense of communion. Coming together to share in happiness or sadness is a way of life that is taken for granted. My work mimics this communion.

I employ objects which have been discarded such as pages of magazines, fabric off-cuts, straws and bottle-tops. In the case of the pages of magazines, I roll them up into capsules, a technique I learnt in Uganda. There could be different layers of interpretation to these capsules but suffice it to state that, like drug capsules, these word capsules could heal or destroy depending on their administration. The fabric off-cuts which I pick up from the dumps of tailors represent pieces of choices we make which are a part of us. I use the discarded objects to “heal” a defaced support, representing our country.

The non-representational nature of my work allows the viewer to engage closely with the medium, thereby bringing a fresh and most likely, respectful attention to a once discarded

object. My titles are sometimes inspired by African musicians, particularly songs sung by them which transport me to dreamland.”

Jacob Jari was born April 19, 1960 in Kabwir, Plateau State, Nigeria. He was trained at the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and holds master’s degrees in Art History and Painting. He has since been teaching at his alma mater. Jacob has participated in many exhibitions and workshops at home and abroad. His current interest in art relates to reclaiming rejects and empowering them.



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2010 | Nigeria Visual Arts World Tour, Palace of Arts, Cairo, Egypt  |
| 2009 | Artists Without Borders, Triangle Arts Trust Exhibition, Kuona Trust Gallery, Nairobi, Kenya          |
| 2008 | Naija, an Exhibition of Contemporary Nigerian Art, Dakar, Senegal                                     |
| 2008 | Berlin Carnival Cultures, Exhibition by National Gallery of Art, Nigeria in Berlin, Germany           |
| 2000 | Accident and Design: Gani Odutokun and His Influence, Brunei Gallery, London, England                 |
| 2000 | Group Exhibition, National Museum, Nairobi, Kenya   |
| 1995 | Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London,                            |
| 1995 | Contemporary Nigerian Art, World Intellectual Property Organization Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland |

### SELECTED WORKSHOPS/ RESIDENCIES

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2007 | Braziers International Artists Workshop, Braziers Park, Oxfordshire, England, UK        |
| 2007 | Art Residency, Phoenix Arts Studios, Brighton, England                                  |
| 2003 | Aftershave International Artists Workshop, Maraba Pottery, Maraban-Jos, Kaduna, Nigeria |
| 2002 | Khoj International Artists Workshop, Mysore, India                                      |
| 2000 | Wasanii International Artists Workshop, Naivasha, Kenya                                 |
| 1999 | Aftershave International Artists Workshop, MOTNA, Jos, Nigeria                          |
| 1997 | The Shave International Artists Workshop, Nettlecombe, Somerset, UK                     |



## SELECT APPOINTMENTS/CURATORSHIP

- 2010 Sabbatical Appointment, Department of Fine Arts, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri
- 2008-date Professor, Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
- 2000 Co-curator, Accident and Design: Gani Odutokun and His Influence, Brunei Gallery, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
- 1989-date Lecturer, Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
- 1998-2010 Coordinator, Aftershave International Artists Workshop: [www.aftershaveworkshop.org](http://www.aftershaveworkshop.org)

## SELECT CONFERENCES

- 2009 Triangle Arts Trust African/Middle East Conference, Nairobi, Kenya
- 2007 Knowledge through Practice: An African Experience, Knowledge through Practice Ph.D. Seminar Series, University of Brighton, England
- 2005 The Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies Conference on Reconfiguring The Contemporary: Dialogues in African Art, University of London, England
- 2003 Communications Network for African Artists, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2003 The West African Seminar Series, Department of Anthropology, University of London, England
- 2000 Communications Network for African Artists, Nairobi, Kenya
- 1997 The International Views of the Place of the Artist conference, Gasworks Studios, UK



The Harvest | Mixed Media on canvas | 76cm x 76cm | 1999



Untitled | Paper beads on board | 77cm x 59cm | 2007



Sun, Sea, Sand | Paper beads on board | 74cm x 64cm | 2007



Brighton | Plastic straw on board | 92cm x 69cm | 2007





## OBIAGELI OKIGBO

"Building upon a fundamentally architectonic understanding of the world; light, rhythm, geometry & enclosure, my work attempts to assemble 'poems' or 'connections' of perception which permits the language of representation to engage with issues of transience, memory, history, rites..."

I am interested in archetypes: "primordial mental image inherited by all." I am looking for points of convergence... constants. I look to Mythology, Nature and Science; they exist in every culture but with timeless themes. Myths are "clues" to the spiritual potentialities of the human life.

The source of my interventions is this shared potentiality. The outcome –drawings, paintings, installations- represent tentative solutions. But, like archeological maps, reveal through its layers the passage of time, history, movement, traces, imprints..."

Obiageli Okigbo was born in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1964, studied in Nigeria then graduated from Oxford Brooks University with a BA in Architecture and pursued her post-graduate studies at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, London. She practiced architecture in London, Rome and Paris until 1994. In 1995 she moved to Brussels where she

lives with her two children Sofia and Luca. Expanding her reach into the visual arts, she began developing her work on a theoretical level through painting and has consequently exhibited in Nigeria, United Kingdom and Belgium including two major solo exhibitions in Lagos, 2003 and London, 2007. She established the Christopher Okigbo Foundation in 2005, which is tasked with researching and preserving the legacy of Christopher Okigbo, poet (1932-1967).



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

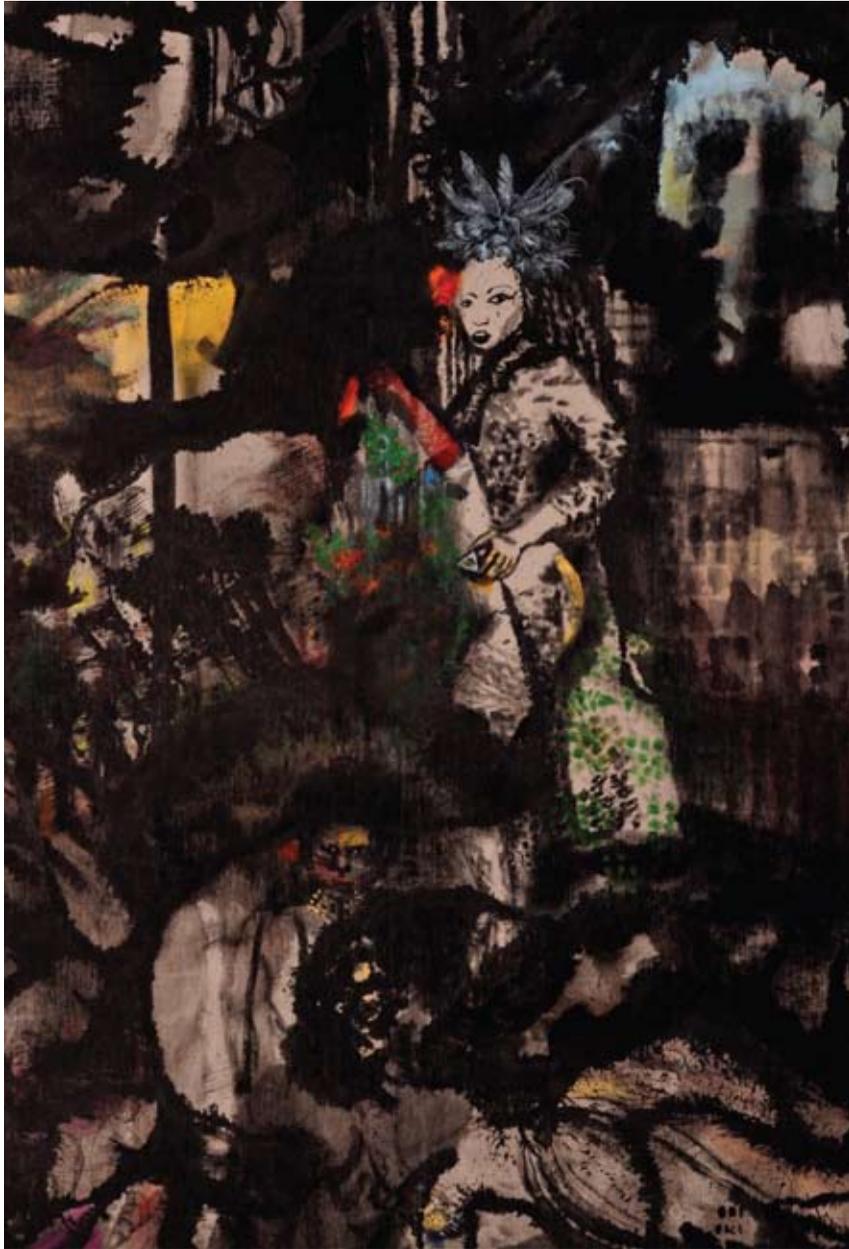
- 2007 Solo Exhibition; Tapping into the Known, Brunei gallery, School of Oriental & African Studies, London
- 2006 Conflict Culture: Exhibition/Colloquium (L-ARN/M.A.P initiative) Brussels, Belgium
- 2004 Two woman show; 'mythological landscapes' at Espace Alizees, Brussels, Belgium
- 2003 Solo Exhibition; 'Tapping into the known' at the Nimbus Arts Center, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2002 Group exhibition at the 7th International Group Show and Art Festival, at the National Museum, Enugu, Nigeria
- 2001 Installation for exhibition; 'Viva la muerte! , at the International Festival of Music, Couleur Cafe, Brussels, Belgium
- 2001 Group exhibition; 'Des Elles des Femmes', at the Centre Culturel d'Etterbeek - Espace Senghor, Brussels, Belgium
- 1996 National Museum, Enugu, Nigeria
- 1997 Didi Museum, Lagos, Nigeria Collective exhibition; 'Songs for Idoto', including; El Anatsui, Uche Okeke, Bruce Onobrakpeya & Obiora Udechukwu

### PUBLICATIONS

- 2008 NKA Journal of Contemporary African Art: 21st Century and the Mega-Shows - A Curator's Roundtable
- 2008 Fathers and Daughters; An anthology of exploration, edited by Ato Quayson, Ayebia Clarke publishing
- 2007 BBC Focus on Africa
- 2006 Revue Inter-cultuerelle d'Art et de Littérature No25



Predominantly Violet, La Pieta | Mixed media on canvas | 200cm x 200cm | 2004



Lustra | Mixed media on linen | 200cm x 140cm | 2010



Self Portrait with kimono | Indian ink on paper | 70cm x 100cm | 2008



Eva | Indian ink on paper | 70cm x 100cm | 2008



Ibeji | Indian ink on paper | 70cm x 100cm | 2008





## NNENNA OKORE

Much of my inspiration stems from my childhood years at Nsukka, a small university town in southeastern Nigeria. As a child, I was fascinated by the social, natural, and man-made conditions in bucolic dwellings around the University campus, where I resided. Embedded within the rural landscape were evocative imageries captured by its rocky slopes, humongous ancient trees, and architectural structures...

Of all the aspects of rural life that inspired me, the use of discarded objects and found materials in coping with poor economic conditions, had the most profound impact on me. It is reflected in the visual content and imagery of my works, which by virtue of these influences, celebrate the transformation of discarded materials into cultural objects, forms, and spaces; and bring a critical focus to bear on the consumption and recycling cultures in parts of Nigeria. My materials include newspapers, wax, cloth, rope, clay and sticks and I apply various repetitive and labor-intensive techniques, like weaving, twisting, sewing, dyeing, waxing and rolling, which were learned by watching villagers perform everyday tasks. These processes accentuate colors, textures and other visceral qualities of my sculptures.

Presently, I am invested in exploring forms that are inspired

by intimate spaces, shelters and natural habitats. I am also interested in discovering new ways of reflecting tactile qualities and social values associated with the African fabrics, using multitudinous ceramic elements. As I continue to investigate these materials and processes from my past and present environs, I hope my works resonate deeply with, and speak to the aesthetics of people from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences."

Nnenna Okore is an Assistant Professor and Chair of the Art Department at North Park University, Chicago, where she teaches Sculpture, Spatial Art, Advanced Studio, Two and Three Dimensional Design, Drawing I, Non-western Art History and Video Art. She earned her B.A degree in Painting from the University of Nigeria (First Class Honors) in 1999, and an M.A and M.F.A. in Sculpture from the University of Iowa in 2004 and 2005. She has received several national and international awards and been shown in numerous prestigious galleries and museums within and outside the United States. She recently completed a 2010 summer residency in Apt, France, and was selected to participate in the prestigious 29th Sao Paulo Biennial held in Brazil.



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - SOLO

- 2010 Life After, Noyes Art Centre, Evanston, IL
- 2010 Textile, Blanchere Foundation Art Centre, Apt, France
- 2010 Recovered Energies, Bekris Gallery, San Francisco, CA, USA
- 2009 Anyanwu, Carl A. Fields Centre Gallery, Princeton University, NJ
- 2009 Twisted Ambience, Chicago Cultural Centre, Chicago, IL
- 2009 Of Earth....Barks and Topography, Goethe Institut, Lagos, Nigeria.
- 2008 Ulukububa-Infinite Flow, October Gallery, London.
- 2008 Affrika West, Oriel Mostyn Gallery, Ulandudno, Wales
- 2007 Reflection: A Nigerian Experience, Contemporary African Art Gallery, New York.
- 2006 Trans-figuration, Robert F. DeCaprio Art Gallery, Moraine Valley Community College, IL
- 2005 Paper to Paper, Armature Art Gallery, University of Iowa
- 2004 Accumulations, Arts Iowa City, Iowa City, IA

- 2003 Re-presented, Armature Gallery, University of Iowa
- 2002 Beyond the Lines, Didi Museum, Lagos, Nigeria
- 2001 Metaphors, Alternative Space, Lagos, Nigeria

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - GROUP

- 2010 Scratch, presented by Sakshi Gallery at Latit Kala Akademi, New Delhi India
- 2010 (Re-) Cycles of Paradise, UN COP16, Cancun, Mexico
- 2010 29th Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 2010 Textile, Blanchere Foundation Art Centre, Apt France
- 2009 (Re-) Cycles of Paradise, UNCOPI5, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2009 Trash Menagerie, Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA
- 2009 Chance Encounters, Sakshi Gallery, India
- 2009 Object of A Revolution, Galerie Dominique Fait, Paris.
- 2008 Channel4 Art Exhibition, Channel4/Art4 Gallery, London
- 2008/2009 Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary, Museum of Art and Design, New York City,
- 2008 Joburg Art Fair, Sandton Convention Center, Johannesburg, SA

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Contemporary African Art Exhibition Series



2006 African Contemporary Art Exhibition, Dakar Biennale, Senegal  
2005 Twelfth SOFA International Exposition, Chicago  
2003 Units, Legion Arts CSPA, Cedar Rapids, IA  
2002 New Works, Armature Gallery, University of Iowa. Curator: Thomas Aprile, Professor of Art, University of Iowa  
2001 New Energies, Nimbus Gallery and Mydrim Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria Curator: Prof. El Anatsui, University of Nigeria

## GRANTS / AWARDS / RESIDENCIES

2010 Artist Residency, Jean Paul Blachere Foundation, Apt France  
2010 Artist in residence, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem Massachusetts  
2008 North Park University Faculty Project Grant  
2007 UNESCO-Aschberg Fellowship for Artists (Gruber Jez Foundation, Mexico)  
2006 Red Gate Residency, Beijing, China  
2005 North Park University Research Award

2004 Emma McAllister Novel Scholarship, University of Iowa  
2002-2005 Teaching Assistantship, University of Iowa  
1999 Valedictorian (Fine Arts), University of Nigeria  
1994 First prize, UNIFEM Women's Art Contest, Lagos, Nigeria  
1993 First prize, UNICEF African Child's Day Art Contest, Mbabane, Swaziland

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Jean Paul Blachere Foundation, France  
Indianapolis Art Center, Indiana  
Royal Family of Abu Dhabi  
Art House Contemporary Limited, Nigeria  
October Gallery, London, UK  
Channel 4, London, UK  
Renaissance Capital, Moscow, Russia  
Daraja Art Foundation, London, UK  
Farafina Magazine, Lagos, Nigeria  
Kenna and Associated Law Firm, Lagos, Nigeria



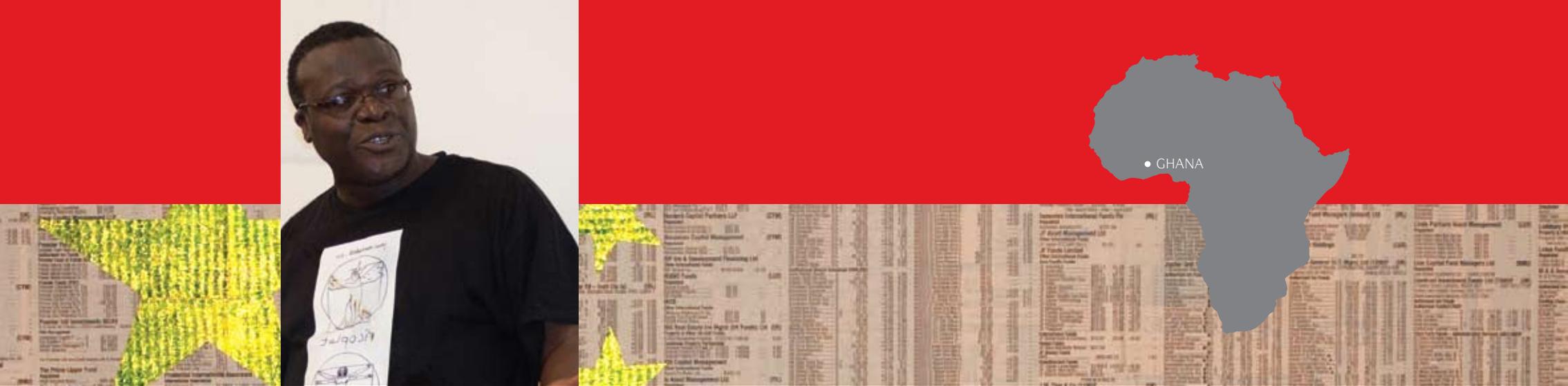
Akwa Ocha | Clay and Burlap | 38cm x 62cm x 10 | 2009



Anyanwu | Clay and Burlap | Varied dimensions | 2008



Conjoined | Clay and Burlap | 48cm x 42cm x 7cm | 2009



## GODFRIED DONKOR

"I am a visual artist living and working in London...My practice is heavily based on research. I am influenced by historical fact or fiction and I use multi-mediums to produce my work. Previous works include 'Lord Byron's Drawing Room' installation and the 'Browning Madonna' series. I am currently working on an ongoing series simply entitled 'Financial Times,' which uses the newspaper as a starting point."

Godfried Donkor was born 1964 in Kumasi, Ghana and has been living and working in London since 1972. He studied Fine Art and Art History at St. Martins College of Art, and the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1995. He studied Painting, as a Postgraduate student, at Escolla Massana, Barcelona. Donkor is an internationally renowned artist; he works primarily with paint, mixed-media collages, and printmaking, and has recently started using video. His dominant theme is the iconography of mass media. Mixing styles and imagery from the conflicting sides of the political and cultural divides, he examines creolization: integration and race as a creative force. Some of his images depict boxers, scantily dressed black women or iconic athletes, lifted from the worlds of fashion

and advertising or from pornographic magazines. He has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, both in the United States and in Europe, and was Ghana's representative to the 2001 Venice Biennale. Donkor's work is in the collection of the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institution.



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - SOLO

- 2008 Once upon a time... there was lace, Wollaton Hall, Nottingham
- 2007 Financial Times, Gorre Festival, Gorre Island, Senegal
- 2007 Abolition 07, Hackney Museum, London
- 2006 The Sable Venus and the Black Madonna, Gallerie 23, Amsterdam , Holland
- 2006 Jamestown Masquerade, Walsh metal works, St Croix, USVI
- 2005 Concerto in light and Darkness no 1, National Museum, Ghana
- 2004 Gallery Pascal Polar ( Brussels)
- 2004 Financial Times, Ecole Regionale des beaux Artes, Nantes, France
- 2003 The Fancy, Stephen Lawrence Gallery, London,
- 2003 Godfried Donkor, Recent works, The Scene Gallery, NY, USA
- 2002 Godfried Donkor, Albrecht Durer Kunstverein, Nuremberg, Germany
- 2001 Artists in Residence exhibition, IASPIS, Stockholm, Sweden

- 2000 Whose Africa, Horniman Museum, London
- 2000 Wrestling and Mysticism, Dak'Art 2000, Dakar, Senegal
- 1999 Slave to Champ, E M A C A, Nottingham
- 1994 School of Oriental and African Studies, London University

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - GROUP

- 2007 Financial Times Mudhut, The Big Chill festival, Heredfordshire
- 2007-2008 Trade and Empire: Remembering Slavery, The Whitworth Art Gallery,
- 2007 AFRICA SELECT, ARTCO Gallery, Herzogenrath, Germany
- 2007 TransCape, Cape Town, South Africa,
- 2006 L'Homme est un mystere, Musee d'Art et d'Histoire, ST Brieuc , France
- 2006 Rethinking Nordic Colonialism , NIFCA , Torshavn, Faroe Islands
- 2005 Collection of the Spanish Sports Council, Ses Voltes, Palma de Mallorca

# 'as it is!'

Contemporary African Art Exhibition Series

- 2004 We Two Together: GHANA.NIGERIA:  
OLADAPO & GODFRIED DONKOR  
National Theatre, Accra, Ghana
- 2003 BIDA, biennale of sports and art,  
Salamanca, Spain
- 2003 1st Flag, Casino, Luxembourg
- 2002 Body Power/Power Play, Wurttembergische  
Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany
- 2002 Populated, IASPIS Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2001 Authentic/Excentric, Venice Biennale, Italy
- 2001 Africa Today, the Artist and the City,  
Barcelona, Spain
- 2000 The 7th Havana Biennale, Havana, Cuba
- 2000 World Trade, Roebing Hall Gallery, NY, USA
- 1999 Big River-International artist's exhibition,  
Trinidad & Tobago
- 1999 Routes, Five artists, Brunei Gallery, London
- 1998 Cinco Continentes y uno Ciudad Salon  
exhibition, Mexico City, Mexico
- 1998 Dak' Art 98, Dakar Biennale, Dakar, Senegal

## AWARDS

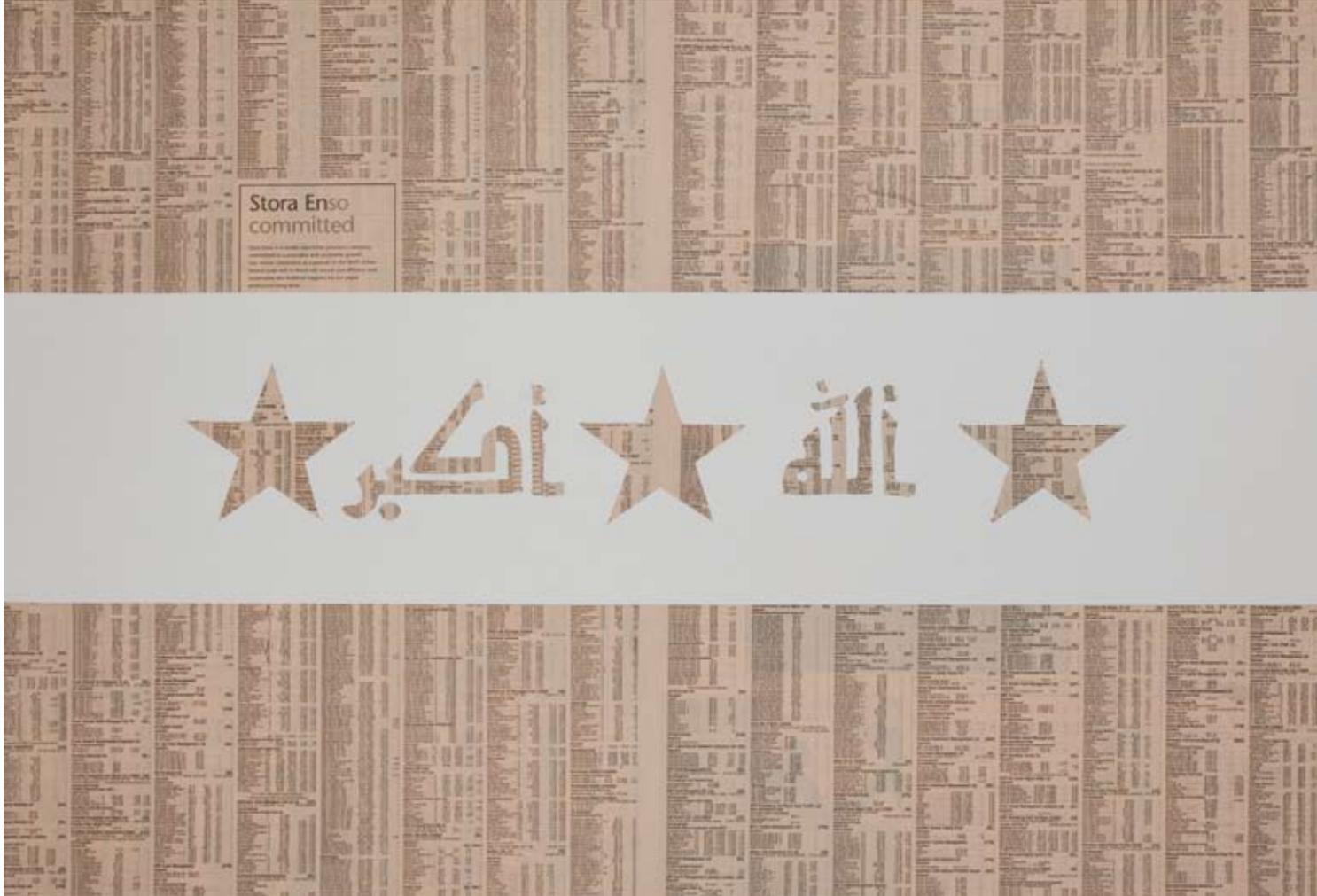
- 2004 Arts Council of England, research and  
development
- 1998 'Prix de la Revelation' Dakar Biennale

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Spanish Sports Council Collection
- National Collection of Senegal
- Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC
- World Bank collection
- Unilever Collection
- University of Helsinki
- National Gallery of Botswana



China | Collage | 70cm x 50cm | 2008



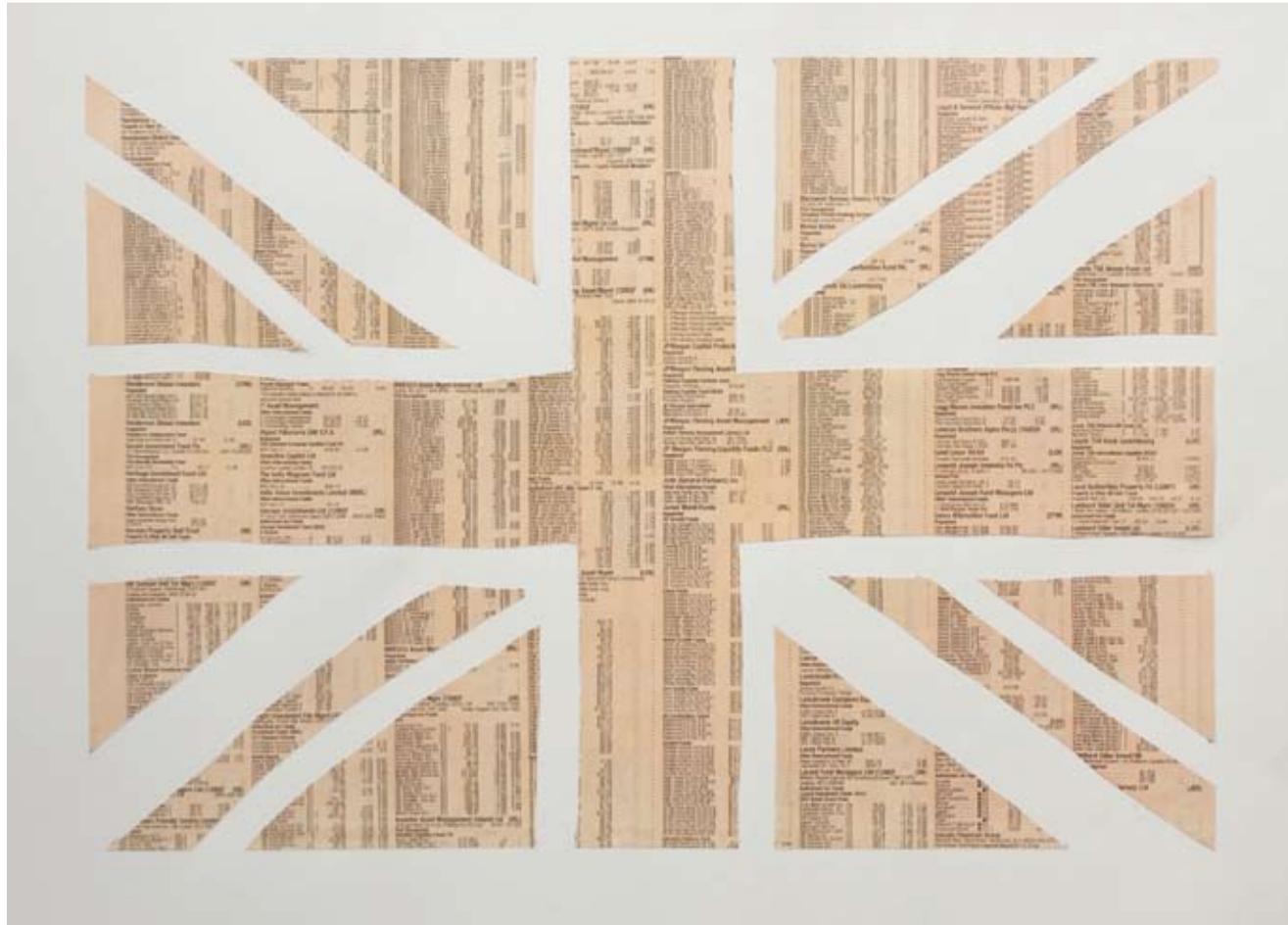
Iraq | Collage | 70cm x 50cm | 2008



Lebanon | Collage | 70cm x 50cm | 2008



Saudi Arabia | Collage | 70cm x 50cm | 2007



Union Jack | Collage | 58cm x 42cm | 2003



## SOKARI DOUGLAS CAMP

There has never been any doubt in my mind as to how sculptures and masks . . . should be presented. I always found it strange to be confronted in a museum with a bodiless mask . . . pinned to the wall. Where was the rest of it?

Sokari Douglas Camp was born in Buguma, Nigeria. She studied at California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland (1979-80), before completing a BA with Honors in Sculpture at the Central School of Art and Design, London (1980-83), and then an MA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art, London (1983-86). Although Douglas Camp has lived and worked in the U.K. for over twenty-five years, her work, predominately sculpted in steel, is strongly influenced by African culture and inspired by her Kalabari heritage.

She has exhibited internationally and notable solo shows include: *Spirits in Steel - The Art of the Kalabari Masquerade* at the American Museum of Natural History, New York (1998-9); and *Imagined Steel* at The Lowry Arts Centre, Manchester, which toured to Oriel Mostyn Gallery, Ulandudno; Brewery Arts Centre, Cirencester; and Derby Museum and Art Gallery (2002-03). Douglas Camp's work is to be found in collections around the

world including: the American Museum of Natural History, New York; the British Museum, London; Minneapolis Museum of Art, Minneapolis; Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo; and the Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.

She has completed numerous commissions and her proposal, *NO-O-War No-O-War-R*, was shortlisted for Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth. Her 'Living Memorial' to the late Nigerian activist and writer, Ken Saro-Wiwa was unveiled in 2006.

In 2005 Douglas Camp was awarded a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - SOLO

2010	Relative Pelican: An Installation of Steel Sculptures, Stux Gallery, New York	1998-99	Spirits in Steel: The Art of the Kalabari Masquerade- American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA
2009	Pain and Paradise - Stahlskulpturen, Kunstverein, Aalen, Germany Festival Boat Project (Ongoing) in association with the Lowry Centre, Greater Manchester, UK	1998	American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY
2008	The Pleasure of Seeing You: Sculpture and Fabric Patterns, Lethaby Gallery CSM, London	1997	National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian, Washington DC, USA
2008	Strength of Feeling, New Art Exchange Nottingham, UK	1996	Steel Stories , Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham
2007	One Day Exhibition: Resistance and Remembrance 1807- 2007, The British Museum, London	1995	Plays and Display - Museum of Mankind, British Museum, London
2006	Sweeping, Camberwell College of Arts, London	1994	Urban Walk - Barbican Centre, London
2005	11th Commandment Sculpture Tour, Peckham, Bexley & Enfield	1994	Peopling of London, Museum of London
2004	Galerie Peter Herrmann, Berlin, Germany	1993	Steel Clothes and Ornamentation, Redfern Gallery, London
2003	Imagined Steel, The Lowry Arts Centre, Manchester	1992	Urban Women, South Bank Centre, London; Sue Williams, London
2000	Knots of the Human Heart - Morley Gallery, London.	1991	Market People, Chelsea Arts Club, London; Pittminster Studio, Taunton
1999	National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, USA		



## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - GROUP

2011	Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College	2002	DAK'ART 2002 la Biennale de l'Art African Contemporain, Senegal.
2010	BM Treasures exhibition, Madrid	2001	The Artist and the City – Centre de Contemporania de Barcelona, Spain
2009	Gaia Auction, Paris, France	2000	Les Champs de la Sculpture No.2 - Champs Elysees, Paris, France
2009	Roots and More: Journey of the Spirit, Africa Museum, Netherlands	1999	Transatlantic Dialogues, Contemporary Art In and Out of Africa – Auckland
2009	Now we are Ten Campaign for Drawing, KRÉYOL Factory, Parc de la Villette, France, Le Panaf revient Alger,	1997	National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan
2009	In the Light of Play, Durban Museum	1997	Havana Biennale - Havana, Cuba
2008	Black Womanhood, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, New Hampshire,	1996	Die Andere Reise (The Other Journey) - Kunste Hallie Krems, Austria
2008	Design Without End: The Essential Art of African Textiles, Metropolitan Museum of Art	1995	An Inside Story, African Art of our Time :- Setegaya Art Museum, Tokyo
2007	Remembering Saro-Wiwa: The Living Memorial, Goldsmiths, London,	1994	Another Country - Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
2007	Teue Noire, Museum of Maurice Denis, Paris, France	1992	Art for a Fairer World - Oxfam 50th Anniversary Exhibition
2006	Afrika! Afrika!, Munich, Berlin, Germany	1991	The South of the World - Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Marsala, Sicily
2005	Black President, The Art and Legacy of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio	1990	JAPE (Japanese Association for Promotion of Creative Events) - Tokyo, Japan



## AFRICA APPLAUDED



### SELECTED COMMISSIONS

#### ONGOING:

Potters Field Commission For Southwark Council London "First Man"  
Burgess Park Memorial Sculpture.  
Southwark Council  
Amrita Court, Urban Solutions, Bermondsey  
Brewery Arts, Cirencester

2006 Remember Ken Saro-Wiwa: The Living Memorial  
2004 Sculpture of 'Feast of Neptune' for Deutsche Welle, Bonn, Germany  
1992 Horniman Museum, London, Africa Centrum, Maastricht, Holland

#### AWARDS

2007 Vice President Kalabari Union Culture and Heritage Award - 4th Annual Black Business Award 2007  
2006 Honorary Fellow of University of the Arts London

2005 Awarded Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)  
2004 Finalist, 4th Plinth, The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London  
1983 Princess of Wales Scholarship and Henry Moore Bursary  
1982 Saatchi & Saatchi Award  
1981 Amy Sadur Friedlander Prize

### SELECTED COLLECTIONS

British Museum, London  
Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, U.K  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA  
Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan  
Minneapolis Museum of Art, USA  
Horniman Museum, London  
Glenbow Museum, Canada  
Citibank Corporation  
Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria  
American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA



Kicking Beauty | Steel, wood and terrazzo | 36cm x 15cm x 23cm | 2010



Live and Kicking | Steel, wood and terrazzo | 36cm x 15cm x 21cm | 2010



Loving it | Steel, wood and terrazzo | 38cm x 15cm x 41cm | 2010



Walworth Lady | Steel | 50cm x 17cm x 18cm | 2008



Walworth Lady | Steel | 50cm x 17cm x 18cm | 2008

