Over the last twenty-five years, the global appreciation for artwork produced by artists working in Lagos, Nigeria has risen rapidly, promoted through digital technology, the rise of art fairs and auctions and the popularity of artwork by African diasporic artists. How does a sudden surge in popularity in the global marketplace affect the role of art within the artist’s immediate, physical creative sphere? Does an artwork’s commodification in the global marketplace change the reasons or forms through which an artist chooses to create her/his craft?

What does it look like when artists respond to both global and local social issues through their work? This exhibition looks at pieces by artists who respond to social issues relevant to the creative space of Lagos, but who also exhibit in a range of international art markets. Within this selection, two broad trends emerge. Some artworks identify specific localised issues, examining, addressing or exposing globally relevant human rights violations and forms of corruption through this lens. These works frequently seek to give a voice or human form to often unseen oppressed peoples. Other pieces depict individuality or specific aspects of locality, asserting heterogeneity and freedom from the homogenising constraints of society and globalisation.

In consideration of the format of this exhibition, as an online, already global method of communication, analysis of the artworks focuses on more localised interpretations that might otherwise be overlooked.

The bull’s head, tail and legs are made of welded steel, and the torso’s form is woven from thinly cut strips of rubber tire. Segments of tire are woven together with copper wire and other parts reclaimed from old generators. In recent years, electricity in Nigeria has become increasingly unreliable, and privately owned generators are the most popular solution to this serious problem.

Inspired by the Arab Spring, this piece was included in an exhibition entitled, ‘Ants and Giants,’ referring to the proverb ‘ants can not clothe a giant, but they can strip him of his pants.’ The bull visualises the power of individuals to effect widespread social change and address the devastating abuses of power and economic resources.
The monkey represents a gluttonous government official and the jewel toned fruits, the wealth of the nation. Facing the sky, it conceals the nation’s riches beneath its body, its hands and feet grasp the staffs, holding its position of power and control tightly.

Kainebi Osahenye,
*Blackout* (2008)
Acrylic, oil, enamel on newspaper, 244 cm x 330 cm. (Detail image next page) Images courtesy of the artist.
Poured, brushed and thickly smeared acrylic, oil and enamel paints buckle and degrade the fragile newsprint substrate of these small mixed-media works. ‘Blackout’ references a lack of governmental transparency and outright corruption surrounding its energy resources. In what should be a wealthy nation, electricity fails more than it functions, and the price of fuel to run private generators steadily rises.
Peju Alatise, *Nine Year-old Bride* (2011), Mixed Media, 144 x 60 in.
Image courtesy of the artist.

Molded fiberglass mimics a brightly colored aso ebi cloth wrapper, pressed across the figures of six women and one child’s diminutive form. The aso ebi connects the mature women with the child bride, their communal dressing illustrates the shared responsibility and accountability the women have for participating in an act which permits a family to sell their daughter into marriage as early as nine years old.

A mixed-media high-relief human form constructed from newspaper gossip column headlines is bound to a vertical plane. This visualisation of rumors and gossip impede the figure’s movement or agency, further exemplified by the woman’s absent hands and feet.
Constructed of corrugated metal sheeting, discarded generator parts, old signage and general detritus, the bricolage of materials connects the psychological to the physical. It reflects the ways fragments of gossip and rumors are picked up from different sources, solidifying into something substantial.


The artist is tied and dragged. He struggles against the ropes and implores the audience to intervene on his behalf.
Meat is cut from the artist’s neck, grilled and served to the audience, viscerally positioning the viewers as complicit.

Atiku’s performative style provokes public dialogue and action. He has situated his performance in the ram market to address the commodification of man’s actions in a neo liberal market, a threat he views as central to any ability to end human rights abuses.
A group of dancers from the Crown Troupe of Africa reflect the emotional experience of the artist and the audience’s struggles, like the chorus in a Greek tragedy or mourners at a funeral.
The work speaks to a ‘pull down’ mentality in which individuals seek to sabotage the success of others around them. Pinscher-like fingers and the saboteur’s cutting words reach toward a precariously ascending figure in an effort to pull her/him back to street level, implied by the third figure in the painting, a passing bystander or vendor.
This work references the abnormally high number of floods, droughts and storms that have occurred in recent times and that have been attributed to global climate change. Chima connects human actions with our environmental reactions, reminding individuals to privilege a shared, community ethics, in this case, our earth.
Leaping from atop a bus, a symbol of both civic disfunction and modernisation, the artist expresses his independence, strength and freedom to navigate improvised solutions for any number of daily impediments.

In this series, Oghobase has photographed all the occupants of a house in Lagos, blocking the entrance to their respective homes. Dark shadows fall across the text: “This house is not for sale,” referencing both a broad concept of resistance to commodification and a local scam (“Beware of 419”), in which a person sells property that they do not own.
An expression of national unity, peace and respect for cultural differences, the artist depicts housing styles common to northern Hausa, eastern Yoruba and southern Igbo communities existing harmoniously together.

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas, 65 x 50 in.
Image courtesy of the artist.
The artist’s use of china and ceramic ware wrapped within a welded metal armature riffs on his simultaneous evocation of literature and the quotidian phrase: ‘Wuraola.’ The piece signifies on a character from Wole Soyinka’s play, ‘Death and the King’s Horseman,’ as well as the idiom, ‘a bull in a china shop.’

Amoda carefully selected the china and ceramics from various places and previous owners, allowing the labels and texts that situate each component to remain visible to the viewer. The diversity of these collected and crafted elements reveal and enhance Wuraola as both a personal object and an object connected to a range of places in the world.

Listen to a segment of the soundscape at: [www.lagossoundscapes.com](http://www.lagossoundscapes.com)

The cacophonous sounds of Oblalende station and in particular, the verbal calls by bus conductors, not only direct the movement of people through the station, but also create a unique map of the space.
The hardhat, a symbol of safety at a construction site, reads incongruously when worn by a hotel manager, market woman or student. The artist uses this object as a symbol, playing with and questioning our confidence in and methods for protecting ourselves from danger.

Emeka Okereke, *Veiled Stare* (2011)
N’Djamena, Chad, as part of the Invisible Borders: Trans-African Photography Project. Image courtesy of Invisible Borders.

Movement, change and the fluidity of shared human experience, is punctuated by this photo-graph of a singular, fleeting moment.
Using an iteration of a classic graffiti tag, the artist invites photographic subjects in this series to engage with the notion of territorial claims by holding up drawn or painted signs with the phrase, ‘Pokart was here.’ The image simultaneously points to the artist’s own presence and subjectivity in the images.

This image depicts traders who cross back and forth through the border checkpoint every day, a constantly traversed line in the sand.
Where is the audience?
How does art function within diverse ‘glocalities’? What role does art play within global and local social spheres?

Amaize Ojeikere, *Here is Wole, Where is the Audience* (2010), Cotonou, Benin, as part of the Invisible Borders: Trans-African Photography Project. Image courtesy of Invisible Borders.