

modupeola fadugba



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Cover: *Pink Lake The One That Looked Back (II)*, 144" x 60", Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



heads up, keep swimming

CURATED BY SANDRA MBANEFO OBIAGO



NOVEMBER 2 - NOVEMBER 27, 2017

TEMPLE MUSE
LAGOS, NIGERIA



Photography: Adeolu Dada



"Together, we can go farther, at the expense of going faster"
- Modupeola Fadugba



How to do a Four Head Bend, 60 x 60 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017

THERE IS NO SHALLOW END IN FADUGBA'S WORLD

In Modupe's world there is no shallow end. Whether one is contemplating her “tagged” or “synchronized swimmers” paintings, the intricate “flowers & prayers” works or her “heads or tails” coins, we are drawn into a world of complex codes, symbols, and patterns. Just like the braided hair of her female forms, Modupe weaves a tight and precise philosophical narrative expressed through the reoccurring symbol of water which depicts the excitement, complexity, and thrill of life as an artist.

Modupe's ivy league schooling in engineering, economics and education gave her a cross-sectorial perspective and dogged impatience to comment on Nigeria's gross inequalities in education and the employment crisis through an ingenious, game installation. *The People's Algorithm* installation catapulted her to the very top of the competitive art world earning her the Prof El Anatsui's *Outstanding Production Prize* at the African Artist Foundation National Art competition in Nigeria in 2014, the prestigious Dakar Biennale Grand Prize in 2016, and a presentation at the Gare Saint Saveur museum in Lille, France this year.

In typical Disney fashion, her *People's Algorithm* speaks on multiple levels to old and young players who grapple with how to solve Nigeria's education crisis by assuming the role of student, teacher or policy maker. Before starting full-time studio practice in 2014, Fadugba's employment as Director of Student Affairs at the African University of Science & Technology (Abuja) and engagement with an initiative teaching marginalized Nigerian girls business skills formed the foundation of her unique development perspective. Through her artistic practice, she assumes the roles of philosopher-teacher, revolutionary, and free spirited feminist.

As an artist and teacher, her game theory laid the groundwork for the 25 artworks being presented in this exhibition. Works from her “heads or tails”, series explore the principles of value, hierarchy & heroism through the symbol of ancient coins. Her philosophy of competition and collaboration shines through the “tagged”, and “synchronized swimmers” works, where a shimmering swimming pool filled with groups of swimmers at rest, at play & in synchronized dance, become a metaphor for life.

She offers life advice in her *Dear Young Artist* letter, displayed on the walls of the Temple Muse swimming pool, which was inspired by the writing of Kenyan artist Wangechi Mutu and “Letters to a Young Poet” by the famous German writer Rainer Maria Rilke, which helped to keep aligning her personal compass during her rapid rise to success. The letter serves as a backdrop to Fadugba's “Tagged” series in which she paints swimmers competing for a red ball in a glistening pool, painted sometimes in pastels, and mostly using bright red and black color, and gold leaf highlights.

The red ball signifies the sought after red dots used to tag works in the commercial art world. She warns her swimmers about the dangers of losing themselves by getting caught up in the battle between commercial value and true worth, and encourages them to keep their head up and keep swimming.

However, her latest "synchronized swimmers" artworks emphasize the need to work together, a communal value which, beyond individual achievement, she believes will lead to overall progress in her beloved Nigeria.

These large 2-3 meter high burnt paper drawings, depict the inter-twined bodies of young female swimmers, caught up in a flurry of movement. She draws them from an under-water perspective, or from on high, observed almost like a coach, from the pool's edge.

Whether diving, dancing, or competing, Fadugba's swimmers splash through glistening pools of reflections, drawing us back to childhood memories of carefree play in summer heat. In some of her newer works, her swimmers have become mostly faceless, while the strong red ball motif has diminished to a shimmering shadow, reflecting a shift in focus from pure competition to exploring how to succeed as a community in the game of life.

And in the spirit of collaboration, Fadugba has cooperated with popular Nigerian rap artist MI, who has set her "Dear Young Artist" to a powerful beat and turned her emotional life lesson into a pulsating music track, showing an artist ready to embrace new media in strengthening his expression.

For the opening of this exhibition, she has worked with the synchronized swimming team of the International School in Ibadan, creating a live installation in the Temple Muse pool, in which synchronized swimmers perform to MI's music, surrounded by the "Dear Young Artist" letter stenciled on the pool walls.

Fadugba's fascinating technique of burning patches into her intricate pencil and ink paper works draws on memories of seeing holes and craters on bombed out buildings in Rwanda after the genocide; she spent many a school holiday visiting her parents in Kigali, where they worked for the Criminal Tribunal. These deep visual memories appear as burn patches in her art, reminding us of the fragility of life and the physical and emotional scars which remain forever.

Finally, in her "heads or tails" series Fadugba uses the metaphor of the coin toss to explore chance vis-a-vis human agency, and portrays beautifully adorned black women on burnt coins, drawing attention to the lack of female role models on international and local currency. While continuing the exploration of heroism, value and worth, she draws soulful portraits of women's faces, adorned with intricate patterns and motifs, reminding us that eyes are not the only window to the narrative of her subjects.

The burnt texture of these intricate coin works, adorned with Roman numerals are almost an anachronism in an age where virtual financial transactions have almost entirely wiped out our need for physical currency and coins. They have become relics and touchstones of a long gone era, which the artist hopes will one day become like “memorabilia” for future generations.

For this exhibition she created a paper coin work with the face of Dr. Stella Adedevoh, the brave physician who identified the first ebola victim in Nigeria in 2014, alerting local and international health authorities and paving the way for the rapid and successful response to the pandemic.

“Having successfully prevented an epidemic in the most populous city in Africa, we can only wonder what would have been, if not for Dr. Adadevoh” states the artist paying tribute to this important Nigerian hero. “She lost her life for many of ours. A true hero”, Dr. Stella Ameyo Adedevoh is a HEADS in my art.

Using Adedevoh to celebrate true commitment to collective progress, Modupe concludes that “together we can go farther” and challenges each of us in the beauty and philosophical depth of her amazing artworks presented in *Heads Up, Keep Swimming*.

Sandra Mbanefo Obiabo
Curator

"What is at stake here is what Ernst Bloch once named the essential question: the question of the "We" in an over competitive world. I can't help to perceive in the message that the artist is unveiling before our eyes an urge to change the way we deal with each other"

- Simon Njami



modupeola fadugba



Modupeola Fadugba (b. 1985 in Lomé, Togo. Lives and works in Abuja, Nigeria) is a multi-media artist working in painting, drawing, and socially-engaged installation. With a background in engineering, economics, and education, she works at the nexus of science, politics, and art. Fadugba works in series addressing cultural identity, social justice, game theory, and the art world within the socio-political landscape of Nigeria and our greater global economy.

Fadugba holds a BEng Chemical Engineering / MA Economics (University of Delaware) and MEd (Harvard University). Recent solo exhibitions include Prayers, Players & Swimmers (Cité des Arts, Paris, 2017) and Synchronised Swimming & Drowning (London, 2017). Selected group exhibitions include The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition (Royal Academy, London, 2017); Afriques Capitales (Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, 2017); Dakar Biennale (Senegal, 2016); The Art Energy (London, 2015); and Design is the Personality of an Idea (Ford Foundation & African Artists Foundation, Lagos, 2015). Fadugba's interactive game installation, The People's Algorithm was awarded El Anatsui's Outstanding Production Prize (2014) and a 2016 Dakar Biennale Grand Prize from Senegal's Minister of Communication. She recently presented on this work and her practice at TED Lagos. Fadugba has works in the collections of The University of Delaware, the Sindika Dokolo Foundation and Liberian President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Together they say we can go farther, at the expense of going faster. This is in the context of reaching a predefined outcome. In choosing to take one of these approaches over the other, we must reconcile the potential for shared benefits arising from collective effort with the guarantee of attainment when one acts independently—and hence, sometimes faster. There are several implicit assumptions to be made explicit, if we wish to take an enlightened viewpoint in addressing this reconciliatory exercise. First, what is the desired outcome and how is it defined as such? Second, is this so-called end goal worth reaching? Third, is the value of the result altered by virtue of how it is achieved: individually or collectively? And lastly, is it worth it? Similar to themes I touch upon in *The People's Algorithm*, I present you with ideas and choices upon which to reflect, but there are no answers. The offering of an answer finality and as such, inherently prevents further engagement, save another answer relative to that which previously existed. I substitute the closure epitomized in answers with a scope of meanings instead.

In the *Synchronized Swimmers* series, this scope of meanings is that around value and its redefinition. To define this scope, let us trace the narrative thread from my *Tagged* series: a display of black female swimmers as objects under observation. Or, dare I call them actors? Value in *Tagged* was physically and metaphorically marked by a red circle. Externally, this red circle symbolizes the monetary value associated with the artwork. Looking inward, this same red circle acts as the desired end goal, innately embedded in its obtainment. The swimmers as objects or actors actively engage with this assignment of value, and whether together or alone, the gaze is on the red circle—even when instructed to ignore it. Although value is assigned in this way, we still question its ability to reflect worth. Noting that worth is not value, we can derive the meaning of value by its process of creation. Quite literally, this manifests in currency. In *Heads or Tails*, I choose the faces of black females once again with braided hairstyle to adorn my coins. In so doing, I create value that disrupts social hierarchies that have throughout history placed white men as default figures on monetary objects. Yet, looking to these new swimmers, what is to happen when there is no visible indication of value in sight?

Led by the desire to see all of us working together, and to further deconstruct these structures that I purport falsely assign wealth and value, I am currently painting a new set of synchronized swimmers. In these paintings, each individual plays her part to benefit the collective. The eye is no longer on the prize, pushing us to grapple with identifying and acknowledging the swimmers' onus to action. And what is ours?

-Modupeola Fadugba



TOGETHERNESS

Swimming is an interesting word. It refers to water, to exercise, to leisure, in our contemporary times. It is sport that we can admire during Olympic games, with all those athletes perfectly fit, bodies carved as if they were ancient gods. Modupeola has deliberately chosen to depict a discipline where competition is the key word. There is only one golden medal at the end of that journey of vanity. Her synchronized swimmers should teach us another lesson. They should celebrate the magic of achieving something as a team. But yet, this very team does not erase the other teams against which it fights. But if we look at it more closely, this work deals more with the impossibility for a true togetherness than anything else. The figure of a swimmer becomes a metaphor of the self. It is the same feature that is multiplied and scattered like in some strange mirror that would break any attempt to reach unity into pieces. The work illustrates a process rather than a result. The golden medal finally does not matter. What is at stake here is what Ernst Bloch once named the essential question: the question of the "We" in an over competitive world. I can't help to perceive in the message that the artist is unveiling before our eyes an urge to change the way we deal with each other. And when I look at the quiet swimming-pool clear water, but another theatre of struggling for survival, contrary to the metaphysical space offered by the artist, I see a concrete and brutal one: the Mediterranean Sea where people from Africa are drowning by numbers. This series is not about swimming at all. It is the mirror of our vanities, a reflection on the conflict between the ego and the collective. It may be applying solely to Africa, but we all know that we are all concerned. The message, a SOS, applies to us all. "Together, says the artist in her statement, we can go farther, at the expense of going faster". It is up to us to choose between the two.

Simon Njami
Independent Curator & Art Critic



CONTEMPORARY PAINTING IS NOT DEAD

Every so often we read the obituary of the art of painting speciously argued by a young upstart curator who ventures beyond necessary admonition of an all-embracing approach to contemporary art making to predict the redundancy of one of the oldest forms of artistic expression. That ostentatious and meaningless display of craftsmanship posed as art is redundant; however the report of the death of painting is a great exaggeration.

Contemporary painting today has become even more relevant and meaningful because new media and photography have become relentlessly self-obsessed. The smarminess of costly installation pieces and the sameness of it all is stultifying. Inertia and lassitude have taken root in the art world and the metabolism and inventiveness of the art world is seemingly at a loss. Everything else around us seems to happen at such rapid speed with social media and relentless commentary on global conflicts accelerated to the point where meditative reflection is outmoded and instability is the new normality.

Cheer up, *'Heads Up, Keep Swimming'* is Modupe Fadudgba's response to this challenge. The series of 25 paintings on canvas and burnt out paper in this oeuvre are brilliantly rendered and made with assurance. The quiet gestures sublimate her message but allow the viewer a period to gestate more personal sensibilities and ideas.

Heads or Tails (2014-2017) Imagine emigrating to the United States from Togo, a country where your appearance, colour, race, currency are all taken for granted and all of a sudden planted in a new home where you slowly become alien, *the other* and those symbols of assurance not always visible. You look to the currency and not a single African face on all available currency. This was Modupe Fadugba's first symbolic encounter with the United States as a five year old. It clearly stayed with her and now the artist questions and re-writes her own history. She also explores that ever dominant narrative, present in all her work—*chance*, and its role in shaping our individual and collective destiny. She explores multiple scenarios and the role of the individual in shaping our collective futures through individual action. Her interest is not the assurance of a communist's certainty but the randomness of the vicissitudes, the strands, networks and ultimately the seemingly unfairness in the very DNA of our beloved capitalist and democratic institutions. This body of work is ultimately iconoclastic. She first paints beautiful fulsome African women on paper and then lets the paper burn, obfuscating aspects that we will never know. This final act is her way of bringing home the pressing issues facing post-colonial structures that have decimated and devalued economic powers on the African continent where most countries on the continent still benchmark their currency to the mighty United States dollar.

Detail: *Set Your Intention*, 60" x 60", Acrylic, Oil, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017

Synchronised Swimmers is a more personal reflection on the contradictions in Modupe's experience as a professional artist. Always the outsider, Modupe observes keenly with an author's interest the treacherous terrains of swimming with art world sharks. You go faster alone but you get snapped up and gobbled up quickly. The series of abstract expressionist paintings decorated in shiny colours: gold, patent green, red and muted blue tones are dazzling and entertaining. There is much to admire in Modupe's artistic vision.

This early career retrospective closes with a heartfelt and vulnerable letter to young up and coming artists. It is embodied in a reflective self-portrait with a sober and contemplative artist absorbed in thought while pondering her image in the swimming pool. It is no surprise that Modupe obsesses about chance, Modupe came to nationwide attention in Nigeria at the 2014 National Art Competition. She ruminates on the multiple scenarios, and contemplates the "what ifs". If she had not applied, if she had not won, what if Professor El Anatsui was not the head juror? ; If the other jurors were not inspired by her work, and so many scenarios that are testament to her humility and cogency. It keeps her humble. The truth is her talent, application, and the vulnerability that she explores in her artistic practice is really what counts. This early career survey is testament to the fecundity of painting when an artist has discovered her own style and the ideas expressed and rendered with conviction.

Azu Nwagbogu
Founder & Director
African Artists' Foundation



Photography: Astrid bea Cazalet

SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMERS





Pink Lake: The One That Looked Back, 144 x 60 inches (triptych); 48" x 60" each, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017

This series is not about swimming at all. It is the mirror of our vanities, a reflection on the conflict between the ego and the collective.

Simon Njami



Black See II, 51 x 84 inches, Acrylic, Oil, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017

SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMERS (2016-7)

As a small child growing up in Togo, Modupeola Fadugba was terrified of the sea; its seemingly limitless depths and lack of boundaries perturbed her. The swimming pools that she encountered upon moving to the United States at the age of five felt less threatening, but she did not fully overcome her fear of water until faced with compulsory lap-swimming classes at boarding school in England, aged eleven. Teetering on the edge of the pool, revelling in the spectacle she was creating for her classmates, eventually she had no choice but to jump in. Her single lap, completed in a drawn-out two or three minutes, taught her that despite her misgivings, swimming was something that she could, and would, conquer.

Fast-forward twenty years, and Fadugba found herself once again teetering on the edge of a pool, this time in Ibadan, Nigeria, where she was spending time with her family. She had just decided to commit herself full-time to art, and was feeling nervous and excited. Her brother was diving from the highest platform, and Fadugba climbed up next to him, only to find herself terrified once more of the water. Diving in seemed like an impossible feat, but with calm encouragement from her sibling, she took the plunge. Applause rang out around the pool; people shouted "Leap for Nigeria!"

Fadugba remembers these incidents with amusement, but also appreciation for their role in her artistic development. She cites the popular motto to "Do something every day that scares you" (sometimes attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt) as a guiding philosophy, alongside the rhetorical reassurance, "What's the worst that could happen?". Yet more than maxims applied straightforwardly to everyday life, for Fadugba these are points of departure in a broader exploration of fate. Risk, agency, and the play of chance through people's lives occupy a central position in her artistic consciousness; swimming pools, with their moving human and aquatic bodies, are a natural environment in which to explore them.

Fadugba's "pool" works fall broadly into two series of paintings, *Tagged* (2015–2016) and *Synchronised Swimmers* (ongoing). In *Tagged*, swimmers, mostly young black women, forge through water in pursuit of a red ball. Their hair is piled in braids on their bobbing heads, and their bodies for the most part lurk indistinctly in the depths of the pool. The water itself glistens with gold or silver leaf, creating an oily-looking surface patterned with eddies and ripples; these waters are beautiful and beguiling, but quite possibly dangerous. Many of the swimmers project determination mingled with desperation as they attempt to approach the red ball floating just out of reach.

Synchronised Swimmers presents a different scenario, with Fadugba uniting her swimmers in a joint effort, their bodies clustering into living towers that uplift one of their number into the sky. In contrast to the figures in *Tagged*, these swimmers do not have defined features—rather, their faces are eerily blank—and identical hairstyles and sensible black bathing suits identify them as members of a sports team that finds its meaning in common purpose instead of individual achievement. Even this common purpose is a little ambiguous, however; the red ball still hovers enticingly, but the swimmers are not moving directly to capture it. The atmosphere is brighter, and the water seems comfortable instead of ominous.



The Mother and Child Painting, 26 x 59 inches, Acrylic, Gold Leaf, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017

Fadugba's plunge off the diving board in Ibadan coincided with her plunge into the art world, and in her subsequent work the pool has become a metaphor for this arena that she regards with wary anticipation. Indeed, Fadugba's practice has become a reflexive avenue for exploring and critiquing the art world, and the development in her work from *Tagged* to *Synchronised Swimmers* might be seen as a marker of her evolving understanding of the field and her place within it. As she has remarked, the pool, "not unlike the art world, represents luxury and risk simultaneously". In the depths of the swirling water, Fadugba represents the profundities of meaning and emotion expressed through art, hinting at the power of artworks to submerge us, their flow encircling us and swaying our thoughts in one direction or another. At the same time, directly confronting the construction of value in the art market, she incorporates the red ball as a sign of the red dot used to indicate sales of artworks. This transactional assessment of an artwork's value, she suggests, is both an important method of validation and a trap. The swimmers in *Tagged*, like artists, attempt to navigate their way through this watery landscape, with one eye on the ball and the other on their competitors. *Synchronised Swimmers*, by contrast, begins to explore more collaborative ways of being in the water together.

Fadugba's fondness for games weaves throughout her practice. In her writings accompanying *Tagged*, she stipulates only two rules for the game: stay in the pool, and (pretend to) ignore the red ball. Survival and success in the art world, she notes, depend not only on an artist's ideas and skills, but also her stamina and adeptness at surreptitiously courting the market. Individual works in the series explore different perspectives on the game of art, but also develop parallels between the art world's value system and unequal constructions and experiences of worth more generally. Fadugba visited China in 2013, and returned to Nigeria inspired by the idea that Chinese-style discipline could enhance Nigerians' efforts to tackle their own social issues. Her practice does not shy away from more didactic and activist modes, and while *Synchronised Swimmers* is not a direct call to action, it is a powerful proposition. Exactly what the red ball represents is left an open question, and the uncommon representation of a group of black women in a pool together adds another dimension to the work's interpretation.

Dr Evelyn Owen
Art Historian



Gold Water, 48 x 59 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Ibadan Synchronized Swimmers II, 22 x 30 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



How to do a Four Head Bend, 60 x 60 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



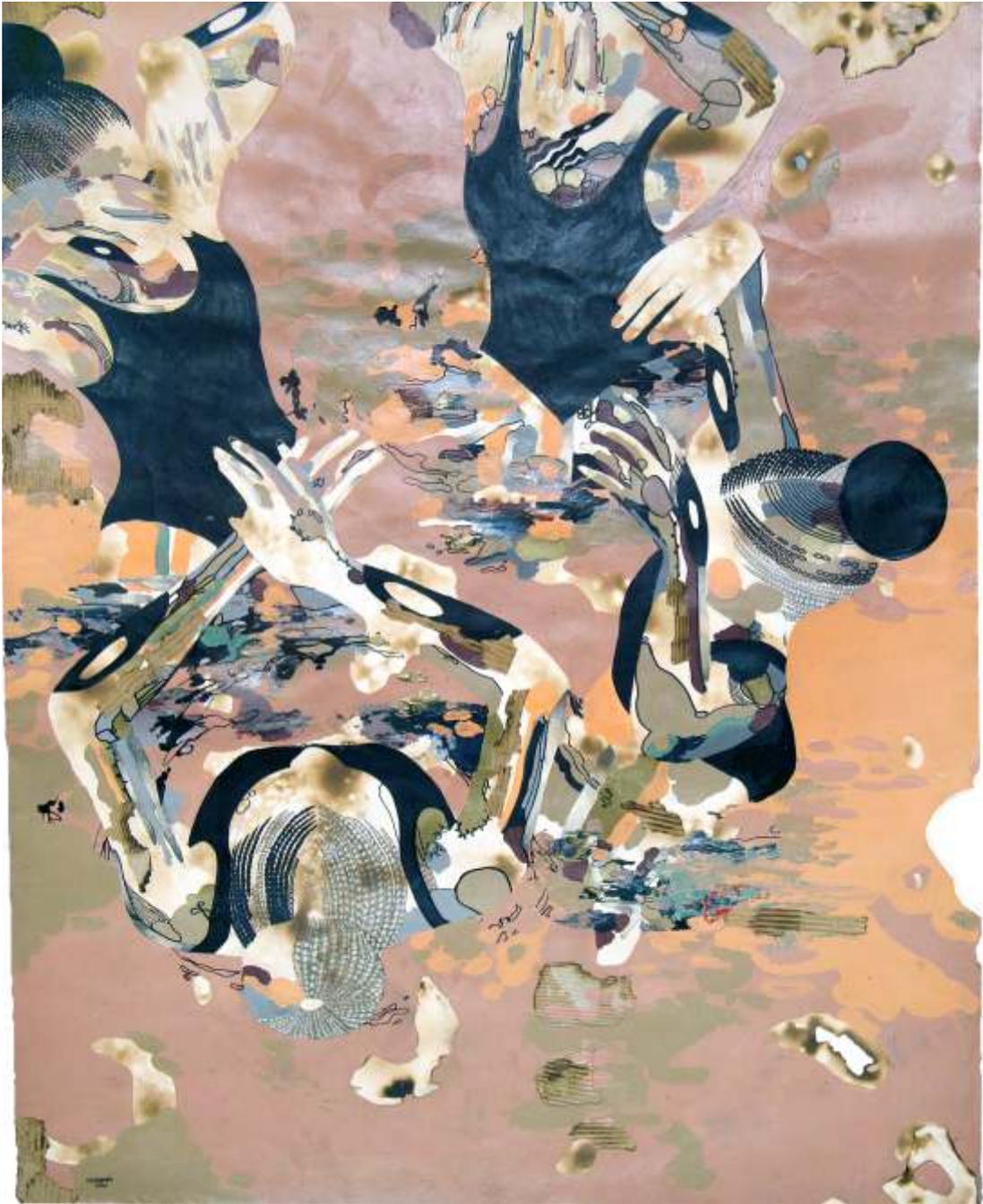
Ibadan Synchronized Swimmers I, 22 x 30 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Ibadan Synchronized Swimmers IV, 22 x 30 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Ready, Set, Dive, 48 x 51 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Pink Blossom, 47 x 59 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Pink Heights, 51 x 59.5 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Ibadan Synchronized Swimmers III, 22 x 30 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Ibadan Synchronized Swimmers V, 22 x 30 inches, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Salve Regina II, 20 x 25 inches, Color Pencil, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2015

MODUPEOLA FADUGBA, VISUAL STORYTELLER

Many of the themes in Modupeola Fadugba's work over the last few years of studio practice are echoed or taken further in 'Heads Up, Keep Swimming', her first solo exhibition in Nigeria. Her art is an evolving narrative woven by a visual storyteller, partly due to the constant iteration of the self in the works. Her active use of text bears this out, and connects her to those we would ordinarily call writers. Up to 90 per cent of the works in this exhibition are done on paper. "It feels closest to the fundamentals of the work," she says. "When I work with pencil, when I get to draw. I write in notebooks a lot, so, it also feels like writing. When I put ink to paper it feels like writing, like I'm recording, in a very organic way."

After we were introduced in 2014 by one of her early collectors, the late Professor Segun Adewoye, I made my way to the artist's studio space in Abuja. The theme of the Game was already strong then – some coin-themed works were also in view, as well as the Playing Cards. With the Coins especially, it is fascinating to see where Fadugba has taken them, and where they have taken her.

"I've kept up with the series because you can never explore it enough, when it comes to representation; the sheer effort and volume help to get the point across." The seed of this exploration was sown in Fadugba's youth. As a child in Togo, where she was born, she often wondered why faces like hers, her sister's or her mother's, were not on the currency - and the resulting impact of this oversight on the value placed on those who fall through the gaps in representation. In the 'Heads or Tails' series, therefore, currency becomes a metaphor for examining the role of chance or value in determining the course of our lives. "Within the very safe realm of my own artistic mint, so to speak, I paint these coins and I feature black females; corn-rows replace tiaras and hair blossoms from their heads in elaborate braided styles," she explains. "Since in Africa we seldom use coins - we tend to use paper notes - I paint these women on paper, to reflect the pervasive colonial links of African countries and Western economies and the resulting effect on the devaluation of our currencies."

Some of us recall a time when the 50 Kobo coin and lower denominations were in circulation in Nigeria – their disappearance a further commentary on the depreciation of the currency and the downward trend of the country's economic fortunes over time. Pottery artist Ladi Kwali is the only woman depicted on the Nigerian currency. Gambo Sawaba, Margaret Ekpo and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti were proposed for the N5000 note in 2012 by Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, then Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria. It never came to pass, one consolation being the fact that there was no public objection to the proposed use of the women's images *per se*. And so, for now, Ladi Kwali soldiers on alone on the 20 naira note. It is instructive that it has taken even Britain 200 years to put Jane Austen on a Bank of England note, making her the only British woman apart from the Queen to be so honoured.

Fadugba's insistence on interrogating spheres of exclusion by placing black women on currency notes, seems to have anticipated recent developments in monetary representation. In 2016, the US Mint and Treasury announced plans to honour abolitionist Harriet Tubman on the 20 dollar note; and early in 2017, the Mint released the design of its new commemorative gold coin depicting Lady Liberty as a black woman. Fadugba finds this encouraging, and says of black Lady Liberty as shown on the \$100 coin, "She has these corn-rows and twists in her hair, which look very much like [the women in my works]. The idea for [the US Mint and Treasury] is that they are trying to reflect the true ethnic diversity in the States. So these conversations have been a long time coming, and it's nice for countries to put their money where their mouth is, so to speak."

Fadugba's art will continue to show the way. The signature piece of her 'Head or Tails' series for this exhibition is a breathtaking portrait of Dr. Stella Ameyo Adadevoh, done on a 60 x 67 inches coin with the Lagos inscription 'Eko O Ni Baje'. Lagos of course was the place where Adadevoh made her last stand, against Ebola, laying down her life to avert a public health catastrophe. The now familiar image of the courageous medical practitioner is reimagined in the new work,

her hair transformed into a thousand intricate braids with the aid of pencil, gold ink and black ink. Her lips are done in oil, her earrings in 24-karat gold leaf; her eyes are two wondrous colours. A transfiguration. Fish motifs can also be seen on her dress ("Fish are so symbolic... teaching a man to fish and so on" – the artist muses). It is another strand of the continuing narrative. Adadevoh's face featured prominently in Fadugba's Game series, in 'The People's Algorithm', which won the El Anatsui Outstanding Production Prize at the National Art Competition in 2014. The interactive installation piece later won the Grand Prize at the Dakar Biennale in 2016; and has been on display for six months of this year in Lille, France.

"This rendering of this coin is just my own small gesture, to say: if we ever print any money in Nigeria, we should have her face represented on such money. It would be a very progressive way of saying that there are female heroines and they deserve to be honoured as such," Fadugba says of her Adadevoh coin. As for me, I can only hope a Nigerian collector with sufficient vision and commitment will see the importance of this potentially iconic piece staying in the country, and snap it up.

Acquiring a Modupeola Fadugba work goes beyond the act of collecting itself; it is an experience. It is freeing oneself to the idea of becoming part of a narrative that shows every promise of a significant studio career. Fadugba's trajectory over the last three years already bears this out. She has exhibited in Paris, London and New York – taking the quieter route in favour of a purposeful website with academic writings. She has been patient. And with this Lagos exhibition – at home – she is, in her own words, "going rogue". Her engagement is even more enriched with collaboration, hardly surprising, perhaps, for an artist who instituted her own self-funded internship programme, now in its second year. "I decided to err on the side of giving," she says, sharing with mentees those ideas and insights the self-taught artist wished she'd received when she was starting out.

For this exhibition, she collaborates with music artist M.I. on an audio track for her piece, 'Dear Young Artist', which comes complete with a letter of advice to those following behind ('Make Haste. But tread slowly'). There is also collaborative engagement with the synchronized swimming team of the Ibadan International School, sparked when she was invited to speak at the school in 2016. The resulting works, in the Synchronized Swimmers series, have a generous use of pink in the background – inspired by the Pink Lake in Senegal where women harvest salt. One piece is titled, 'The One Who Looked Back'. Like Lot's wife.

The idea of black bodies in synchronized swimming formations seems inconceivable at first, until the discovery that a school in Ibadan actually has a team of teenage girls doing exactly that. Swimming is also the focal point of the 'Tagged' series, which explores the artist's relationship with the art market. Fadugba uses her 'swimming' artworks to counter the clichéd use of black female bodies in a pool. "Usually, when you see a black woman's body in a pool (in music videos), it's twerking – 'dropping it like it's hot' – which seems exploitative. Now, with these works, the focus is on what a body can do, rather than how you can exploit it. To swim, you have to be strong."

Collecting from Fadugba in 2014 was a most satisfying experience. The pieces were delivered complete with replicas in miniature, thus expanding the realm of encounter, allowing each piece to live twice, in two locations at once. The invoice came with the artist's signature burnt patches singed into the paper. In the box was a slip of paper with words penned by Fadugba about the works I'd acquired. It remains a unique experience in my little collecting endeavour thus far.

Fadugba first used the burning technique at age 15 at school in England, to give a dated look to schoolwork on Jane Austen. She had also spilled tea on the sheets of paper to enhance the effect. But the burning was imprinted in the psyche earlier, when Fadugba was 11 in Rwanda, where her father was working for the Criminal Tribunal on the genocide. Two years after the atrocities, the young Modupeola was struck by Parliament buildings in elegiac shades of Pink,

Mint Green and Egg Yellow. "There were bullet holes, everywhere, on these buildings; and huge chunks and craters that had removed a considerable side of the structure. I found it disturbing, in a way, but it also had this alluring quality to the whole thing, in the aftermath. First of all, it was quiet. It was quiet and still and it called you to just stop, look and observe."

Now 32, the artist, who also works in development, marvels at how far Rwanda has come since those dark days. "It's just encouraging to see that in my short lifetime, I'm seeing these changes take place. So, again, the burning is to reflect that after some trauma there can be growth and development as well; and something beautiful can arise from the ashes." Therefore, she uses burning "as a sort of performance in various patches and holes in sections of the paper. I let the paper burn."

On my way back to Fadugba's studio recently, I remembered one of her series, comprising five paintings, titled, 'Chief and His Wives' and I was eager to find out what had become of them. I was reunited with all five. The artist had kept them all. She let it be known that views expressed by Prof. Adewoye and I three years before - that Chief and his wives should not be collected separately but as a family - had influenced her decision to keep them so. Maybe a museum will come for them. Maybe not. It is all or nothing.

It was deeply satisfying and illuminating, this possibility of a dialogue between the collector, the works and the artist. This, in a way, is what I mean when I speak of the collector becoming part of strands of narrative weaved by Modupeola Fadugba, the visual storyteller.

Molara Wood
Writer, Literary Editor & Critic



DEAR YOUNG ARTIST/TAGGED





Dear Young Artist Part II: Before You Go In, I Should Tell You a Few Things
180 x 72 inches (triptych) 60 x 72 inches each
Acrylic on gold leaf on canvas, 2017



Dear Young Artist,

Before you dive into the deep end, I should tell you a few things:
Firstly, there is no shallow end. Tread slowly.

If no one has taught you to swim, you must quickly learn how to learn.
Go with the flow and gradually, you will find your own pace.

Young artist, do you see that red ball in the corner? Yes, that big red one, there. Your very survival depends on it, but you must ignore it at first. Or at least pretend to. My young artist, all adults pretend. Ignore the ball. That is the first rule.

You see, young artist, rich people are quite fond of swimming pools. They will come here from time to time to watch you swim, bearing big red shiny red balls. If you can manage it, put on a small performance for their pleasure. Do a little dance. Twirl. But don't get carried away. Remember the first rule.

As you swim, young black woman artist, you must keep your hair plaited at all times. Other styles are a hassle for serious swimmers. They slow you down. As a woman, for obvious reasons, time is not on your side. Make haste.

But tread slowly.

Dear young artist, whether red balls abound or the red ball is a long swim away, know that this race is long. Far long after you are gone. And in the end, it is only with yourself.

Chasing the ball is tiring. And it's all fun and games, until someone drowns.

Oh my dear young artist, you will tire often! When you do, if you must, rest against the pool's edge. Whatever you do, young artist, stay in the pool. That is the second rule.
Tread slowly, young artist.

You must continue swimming.

- modupeola fadugba



Women and Children First, 60 x 60 inches, Acrylic on Canvas, 2015

HEADS OR TAILS



At Face Value I, 13 inches Diameter, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



At Face Value V, 13 inches Diameter, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017

Of all the elaborate patterns, symbols, inscriptions, and mottos on the American dollar bill, one of the most curious is *Annuit cœptis*. These Latin words come from the Great Seal of the United States, and appear on the note's obverse, hanging diadem-like above the unfinished pyramid with the Eye of Providence at its peak. The US Mint translates *Annuit cœptis* as "He [God] has favoured our undertakings," and the United States' official motto—"In God We Trust"—emblazoned across the centre of the bill leaves no doubt as to God's supreme presence. Yet the original Latin could be more accurately translated as "our undertakings have been favoured"; there is no direct mention of God, no certainty as to who is bestowing the favour. Once noted, this discrepancy becomes troubling. For those who trust in God in the first place, can they really be sure that he is always watching over them? Is he truly omnipotent, or are our undertakings sometimes a game of chance? And if we don't trust in God, who guides and uplifts our everyday actions, if anybody?

Modupeola Fadugba approaches these questions as an artist, seeking not certainties but insights, connective threads, and pathways to more questions. Dollar bills were her first introduction to the United States, a country she emigrated to with her parents at the age of five, and the themes of value and worth, particularly as they relate to wider social systems and structures, have assumed a central role in her practice. Having grown up with colourful Togolese francs, the green American banknotes were something of a mystery to her, and led her to believe that America itself would be green-tinted too, a vision that despite its naïveté speaks powerfully of the imbalances—or perhaps the tonal variations—that come with the circulation and unequal distribution of money. As the text and symbolism of the dollar bill remind us, such matters cannot easily be disentangled from questions of faith, trust, and chance; currency, then, is a potent metaphor for probing these issues further.

In the series *Heads or Tails* (2014–2016), Fadugba considers the role of chance and value in determining the course of our lives. The series consists of several painted paper coins that vary in size and are rendered

on almost-square paper, the smallest measuring around 50cm on each side and the largest around nine times that size. Each coin features a black female face encircled by a beaded rim. The faces are not identical, but share many characteristics: full lips, high cheekbones, and sumptuous eyelashes. Hair blossoms from their heads in elaborate braided styles. Some of them gaze straight out, while others glance off to the side, although whether through distraction or boredom is hard to say. The individuality of each is further suggested by the surfaces of their skin, which are painted as delicate layers of colourful organic forms. Enhancing these complexities is the paper itself, which has been burnt in patches, leaving holes edged by dark scorch marks that contribute both mystery and melancholy, and create a subtle surface on which Fadugba's painted female figures emerge and dissolve.

The coin toss is a recurring theme in Fadugba's work, signposting her preoccupation with luck and human agency. It first occurs in *The People's Algorithm* (2014), an interactive game installation where players may be asked to spin a larger-than-life coin and learn their destiny. In this work, Fadugba seeks to highlight the agency of Nigeria's population in addressing its own social issues. She has remarked that the religiosity of many Nigerians is both their great strength and their weakness; in embracing their own ability to make transformations in their lives, instead of relying only on God, she believes there is potential for greater empowerment and change for the better.

In *Heads or Tails*, Fadugba returns to this theme, but with rather different results. Instead of the participatory, multifaceted game scenario developed in *The People's Algorithm*, *Heads or Tails* offers a more traditional, directional viewing experience. In choosing the faces of young black women to adorn her coins, Fadugba turns currency into a symbol of disruption and upends social hierarchies that have throughout history placed white men as the default figures represented on monetary objects, particularly in the United States. Instead of a straightforward substitution, however, Fadugba proposes a game of chance with a different starting point, that considers how black women perceive themselves and their worth. She has reflected, "In the beginning of time, if Eve came first and Adam was created from her rib, or if light was bad and dark was good, our perception of gender and colour might be different. Maybe the Black woman would have been heads and the White man tails." Yet historically this has clearly not been the case, and we are left pondering an unresolved tension between chance, on the one hand, and on the other, the deliberate



At Face Value VI, 13 inches Diameter, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



At Face Value VII, 13 inches Diameter, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017

construction of inequality by those who seek to benefit from it.

The deeper intrigue of this series lies in the fact that viewers can quite literally only see one side of the coin. In naming it *Heads or Tails*, Fadugba implies the existence of two possible outcomes to any coin toss, but in showing only heads, she indulges her playful instincts as well as the question of fate. In what kind of world is the result always “heads”? In such a world, what might “tails” look like? When currency circulates, to what extent does it perpetuate power disparities which result in certain people and places occupying the “head” of any situation, while others bring up the rear? We are left considering these questions under the gaze of Fadugba's enigmatic faces.

Dr. Evelyn Owen
Art Historian



Black Crown, 31 inches Diameter, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



At Face Value VIII, 13 inches Diameter, Acrylic, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017

Five Years Old

Several months before our departure from Togo, my parents told my siblings and me that we would be moving to America. I was five years old and had not heard much about America before that point. In fact, my only reference was the green dollar notes my father earned from freelance interpreter jobs at the United Nations. They were quite the departure from the colorful Togolese francs I had grown to trust as valuable.

I studied the green-tinted old white man on the front, and the green pyramids on the back. I concluded that America would be a green place. Not green in the figurative American dream sense - I literally assumed that the sky, buildings, people, and clothes would appear as if viewed behind a green filter. It turns out, (as in the case where I believed the world was flat); I came to some radical conclusions about the world in my early years. These days, as I explore concepts of value, my paper coins bring to remembrance, my earliest understandings of worth.



Five Years Old, 60 x 60 inches, Acrylic, Oil, Gold Leaf, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2016

Late Dr. Stella Ameyo Adedevoh is the Nigerian doctor at the fore of curbing the spread of the Ebola outbreak in Lagos in 2014. Having successfully prevented an epidemic in the most populous city in Africa, we can only wonder what would have been, if not for Dr. Adedevoh. She lost her life for many of ours.

Dr. Adedevoh has received several posthumous awards for her sacrifice and bravery including, Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Baze University and the National Open University of Nigeria; Leading Woman of 2014, CNN; 2014 SEC Integrity Award, Security and Exchange Commission; Nigeria's Hero of The Year Award, The Sun Awards; Number 1 Humanitarian Everyone Should Know About (2014), International Medical Corp UK; Woman Who Shaped 2014, The Guardian; First Woman, First Bank of Nigeria; Distinguished Service Award, Guild of Medical Directors FCT Abuja, Number 1 Global Thinker of 2014, Lo Spazio della Politica and several others

A true hero, Dr. Adedevoh is HEADS!!!

SPECIAL TRIBUTE



DR. STELLA AMEYO ADADEVOH

Stella Adedevoh, 60 x 60 inches, Acrylic, Oil, Gold Leaf, Ink and Pencil on Burned Paper, 2017



Self Portrait for 2014, 36 x 36 inches, Acrylic on Canvas, 2014

IN CONVERSATION WITH MODUPEOLA FADUGBA

Sandra Mbanefo Obiagio: Let me start by saying I am excited about your work and the rich context of your art. You have a scientific background, with degrees in chemical engineering, economics, and education technology and innovation. How have these disciplines influenced your artistic practice and do you feel your art actually contributes to Africa's development? Where does your art connect with your desire to use education as a tool for progress and development?

Modupeola Fadugba: That is a really good question. I think the strongest link when I studied economics was the importance of education on all levels, not just school education or even civic education. That culture of learning led me to study education, and is still a pervasive topic that I'm trying to explore in my works. The game in '*the Peoples Algorithm*', talks about the importance of education. I think we Nigerians actually place a very high value on education so it is quite surprising that our education system is in the state that it's in. With my works, I'm talking about learning, putting structures around making things successful, and understanding how to acquire knowledge when there are gaps, in order achieve a certain positive outcome.

SMO: Tell us about your socially engaged installations. Your '*Peoples Algorithm*' looks at complex social issues through game theory. How important are games to our development as individuals, as a society, and as artists?

MF: I really like games, as they are a very simple approach to looking at complex issues and interactions. If you're looking at something very complex like the education system, you can break it down in such a way that you could explain it to a five-year old: these are the players, these are the rules, and if the players act

in certain ways, these are the consequences. If many people act in a specific way, then there are big consequences and if there aren't enough people acting in a certain way, then there are no consequences. I explore the idea that when you do something within a given context or system, it affects what others are doing. So how do you come up with the optimal balance of actions and inactions to make everyone happy?

In the *Prayer series*, I broadly address the question of faith. I ask, what do you believe in? What makes you wake up in the morning to do something? What makes you continue to want to be an artist even though it's not a particularly easy life? Is it faith in one's self, or is it faith in one's country? I happen to have a lot of faith in Nigeria, and sometimes I'm not entirely sure why. I'm very optimistic about Nigeria, but the evidence is not congruent with our faith in the country. So what keeps you continuing to believe and root for the country?

SMO: What would you say is the role of the artist in the game of life?

MF: The role of the artist is to express, in the most natural and truest form, and to shed light. I think it's a bit unfair to say that all artists should be politically and socially engaged. I happen to be one of those artists who does that with their work, but I don't think that all artists necessarily have to focus on such issues. But if you are going to be a socially or politically engaged artist, then do it well; study, do your research, and make sure you are informed.

SMO: How do you reference feminism in your work? Do you use subject, colour, and composition to address these issues?

MF: I guess the word feminism has gotten a bit of a bad rap over the years because it brings so many different connotations

and one has to be careful when using it, particularly in Nigeria, because context is everything when you're talking about feminism. All of my works have female subjects in them; that's largely because I'm female and black, so all of the figures I typically paint look kind of like me or my sister or my mum. Look at it another way. In the beginning of time, if Eve came first and Adam was created from her rib, or if light was bad and dark was good, our perception of gender and color might be different. Perhaps the Black woman would have been heads and the White man tails." In *The Chief and his Five Wives* I am exploring the hierarchy between men and women in Nigeria. In 2013 I picked a story of women trying to navigate their way through a Chief's life and then one day they decide to revolt. I've left the series hanging but it's actually supposed to be continued, looking at each of the wives' lives after they leave Chief. But the truth is, this kind of situation would probably never happen. You would never have five women simultaneously leave a wealthy man unless they all have a very good reason to. So it brings into question economic dependence or independence of the women, as the case may have been in this fictional revolt.

SMO: It's interesting that in some of your works, you have faces and in other you don't. Why are you moving from faces to facelessness. Is this intentional?

MF: It is intentional. The swimmers represent artists navigating their way through a pool, trying to get these red balls which symbolize the sale of an art work. I'm moving away from that now because the idea of art as commerce has become less of a mystery to me. Building requires the effort, strength and cooperation of others. With the *Synchronized Swimmers* it's more of a collaborative effort. You see there's movement of the body in some of the

stunts they are creating. You can see the body language. In *Pink Lake* for example, you see someone who is apart from the rest of the group looking back and almost looks afraid, like something, or a creature in the water catches her off guard. You don't know why she's looking back, maybe she wants to swim back to where she came from, or there's danger, or maybe she recognized a weak spot and is trying to make the others aware, but we aren't entirely sure. It's examining group dynamics, moving away from this pursuit of the ball into this collective pursuit of something greater. Now what this 'something greater' is, is left to the imagination but it's something greater than the individual effort, and that's where the synchronized swimmers come in.

SMO: Let's look at body language and being a black woman. Your women are athletic, swimming and doing stunts.

MF: Before I started the *Synchronized Swimmers* series, I did research and it's no surprise I found very little about black synchronized swimming groups. I think that stems from a prevailing myth that black people can't swim. So I'm sort of challenging the stereotypes around black people in general but also black women not swimming. The hair is also a big thing, before a woman gets into water, it's like a whole ceremony with the hair. The easiest way to swim and swim regularly is to always have your hair in braids, preferably cornrows so I've also styled them accordingly.

Hair will always be a topic of discussion for black women. For me personally, I used to braid hair when I was younger, in fact that was my first means of income. From the time I was maybe ten, I always had money because there was always somebody's hair to braid. So for me it was a sort of bonding experience, learning what's going on in women's lives while I



was doing their hair and they were speaking about their experiences; it's personal and also political.

SMO: Absolutely. Let's look for a moment at the technique you use for your art which is so unique. You burn holes into your paper works. Talk to us about this technique you developed to create a style which is unmistakably Modupe.

MF: The first recollection that I have of burning paper was when I was about fourteen, I was known in school for being the person that always infused something artistic into their work. I wanted to make an English literature report look dated in some way, so I just burned all the sheets and then I submitted it.

SMO: I'm sure you got an A on that book report right?

MF: Yeah I got an A in English Literature for GCSE's. I was just being extra. In 2004 I had a series of works called *Le Papillon – the butterfly series*, and they are various butterflies that I named after different African cities that I've visited or lived in, and they are created on burnt paper. I thought 'hmm this looks interesting'. It reminded me very much of growing up in Rwanda shortly after the genocide. When we moved there, the signs of war were still very much visible. We would drive throughout the city and there were these big beautiful buildings in lovely pastel colours, but they had bullet holes all through the buildings and big chunks missing where parts had been bombed. They had this very strange and alluring quality. The war had ended but there were still visible signs of trauma and you could only imagine what had happened behind those walls. I was eleven at the time. Looking at these buildings was strange and interesting; it was beautiful in and of itself. How could something undergo so much trauma and

destruction and still have the appearance of something beautiful? For me it's very symbolic because in my lifetime I've seen Rwanda go from a war-torn country to one of the darling success stories of Africa in terms of development. That's very symbolic.

SMO: That's interesting. As they say "every difficult experience makes you better" right? It brings out that diamond in us. It reminds me of Eastern Nigeria after the Biafran war and going to school in buildings that were totally bombed out. There are the emotional and physical bruises and how that affects us as a society, and hopefully we learn from those experiences, not to repeat the same cycle of war.

Speak to us about your focus on heroism, which is so important, especially celebrating female role models such as the amazing Stella Amayo Adadevoh. Well done for that.

MF: In *Heads or Tails* I say that representation really does matter. What we see on bank notes matters on a conscious and subconscious level. Every adult transacts with money every day, I think it's important that it represents what we respect, value and honour. While I have several coins with faces of everyday Nigerian women on them, I have put the image of Stella Adadevoh on one of the coins; her legacy should be honoured and remembered in Nigeria.

SMO: Which brings us back to living beyond yourself....

MF: I'm finding that as an artist, despite individual effort, relationships and collaborations that are nurtured make the work that much stronger and it reaches a broader audience. I think with the synchronized swimmers, that's what I'm trying to say, and this reflects in my



Photography: Astrid bea Cazalet

work and also in questions of development. You can have a lot of bright people, but each person has to bring their strengths into a collaborative effort for a greater good even though we all want to be recognized individually for our own talents and strengths.

SMO: What role does music play in your work? Especially in light of your recent collaboration with MI?

MF: I'm a huge fan of MI. He is a real artist in every sense of the word. I have been following his work since 2009. When we met this year, he was impressed by my *Dear Young Artist* letter and asked whether he could record it. What struck me about MI was that the whole time he was recording, he was mentoring, teaching, and being genuinely encouraging to at least six young people.

SMO: I can see that the idea of mentorship is important to your life's philosophy. You've said you're inspired by Wangechi Mutu's letter and Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*.

MF: I guess I can link it back to what keeps you practicing as an artist even when you're not thriving. The letters from Wangechi Mutu and Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*, are so encouraging. I read them very often, particularly Wangechi Mutu's letter, because it tells you that this is not an easy life. Yet she encourages you to build a community and seek out other

artists; actually the best allies are other artists. But it also tells you that artists are inherently selfish because there are only so many resources to go around. However, sometimes you come across artists who will help you, and you will in return help them; these are relationships to be cherished.

I have a group of artists I'm mentoring, and they are also a great support to me. I hope that I can help them on their journey and maybe try to demystify things for them so they have something of a blueprint.

SMO: So what is your blueprint? You speak about the stresses of being commercial versus following your own artistic expression irrespective of whether it resonates with the market or not. If you had to give 3 important principles that you think are absolutely vital to a worthwhile life as an artist, what would they be?

MF: I think the first thing I would say is, be willing to adapt to change. I would have said strategize, but you can come up with a strategy and then it goes out the window because things change. The second thing is to build a lovely community whether it's your family or your friends; they might not know anything about art, but just knowing that you have that support is good for mind, body, and soul. Thirdly, be prepared to work really hard.





MODUPEOLA FADUGBA

EDUCATION

2012—2013

Masters of Education, Technology, Innovation, and Education
Harvard Graduate School of Education

2008—2010

Master of Arts, Economics
University of Delaware

2003—2008

Bachelor's of Engineering, Chemical Engineering
University of Delaware

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Prayers, Players & Swimmers

28 March—3 April, 2017

Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France

Synchronised Swimming & Drowning

8 March—12 March, 2017

Presented by Ed Cross Fine Art, London, UK

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Afrique Capitales: Cape Of Good Hope Here We Come

6 April—3 September, 2017

Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, France

The People's Algorithm 2.0

3 May—30 May, 2016

Dak'art Biennale, Dakar, Senegal

Design is the Personality of an Idea

19 July—3 August, 2015

Organized by the African Artists' Foundation

Ford Foundation Offices, Lagos, Nigeria

*Art | Energy: Ablade Glover, Polly Alakija, Cyril Oma, Fatai Adewale, and
Modupeola Fadugba*

February, 2015

Organized by Red Door Gallery

Kent House, Knightsbridge, London, UK

COMMISSIONS

University of Delaware Commissioned Painting: Beyond the Blackboard"
2008
Colburn Laboratory, Chemical Engineering Department

ART FAIRS

2017, May 5—7
1:54 Art Fair, New York, USA
Presented by Ed Cross

2016, October 6—9
1:54 Art Fair, London, UK
Presented by Tafeta

AWARDS

2016
Prize from Minister of Culture and Communication for "The Peoples Algorithm"
Dak'Art Biennale for Contemporary African Art

November, 2014
National Art Competition, Winner: "Outstanding Production Prize" for "The People's Algorithm"
Grand Banquet Hall, Civic Center, Victoria Island, Lagos

PRESENTATIONS

2017
TEDLagos Ideas Search, February 11, 2017

2016
Sirleaf presentation



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TO THE SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMERS OF
IBADAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



SPONSORS



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In addition, Zircon Marine provides Charter services to the downstream and Upstream sectors, via the NOGIC platform and as one of the few approved Vessel providers on the Nigerian Content Development Board (NCDMB) platform and on the approved list for most of the International Oil Companies in Operating in Nigeria.

The IOF, the umbrella acronym for Zircon's CSR initiative is named after late founder, Innocent IK Okoye (1971 – 2012), whose dream and passion for a world-class Nigerian Marine services and charter company, lives on. Zircon Marine's CSR initiatives are generally centered on sports development, Art & Culture and Women empowerment primarily in the Marine Industry.

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For over 230 years, the House has stayed true to its motto: "Only one quality, the finest." Support for the arts and culture figures at the very heart of the Parent Company Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton. LVMH's diverse patronage for the arts and culture spans several areas in France and other countries: restoration of historical monuments, acquiring works for major museums, contributing to major national exhibitions and supporting the work of contemporary artists. The support given to more than 45 major exhibitions in France and overseas has enabled millions of visitors to discover important artists from both the history of art and more modern works.

GALLERY



Having opened its doors in May 2008 Temple Muse is West Africa's leading luxury concept store focusing on designer home & giftware, fashion & accessories as well as art & design. Our strength not only lies in offering the very best of world-renowned brands, but also in nurturing homegrown talent from across the continent.

The iconic flagship store equipped with its very own champagne bar is located in the heart of Lagos and possesses a "gallery-like" open feel, where clients can relax & indulge in all things wonderful.

Over the years Temple Muse has developed a reputation as being one of the leading art spaces in Nigeria having hosted a number of critically acclaimed exhibitions, and through continuously offering its clients cutting edge contemporary art.

www.temple-muse.com

CURATOR

Adolphos Opara



Sandra Mbanefo Obiago is a multi-faceted writer, photographer, poet, art collector & curator, and award winning filmmaker. She has curated art shows and worked with the local creative industry to promote the best of Nigerian art.

She ran the communications program in Sub-Saharan Africa for environmental group, WWF International for eight years before founding and running *Communicating for Change*, a media for development social enterprise in Nigeria for fourteen years. She is a social activist and her campaigns, films, radio programs and publications have touched on themes such as human rights, women's empowerment, health including HIV & AIDS, environment, democracy and good governance. She organized conferences, workshops, and symposia for Nigeria's growing film industry and helped develop a course on *Media Enterprise* at the Pan African University.

Obiago produced and directed many films over the years, including a five-part documentary film series, *Red Hot: Nigeria's Creative Industries*, featuring artists from the film, music, performance and visual arts sectors. She was Associate Producer of the feature film, *Half of A Yellow Sun*, adapted from the award winning novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

She has been involved in many community initiatives and served as a trustee of the Convention on Business Integrity (CBI), was a member of the Advisory Council of the Nigerian National Film Institute and has served as a member of the jury of the *Nigeria Media Merit Awards*. Obiago is a Fellow of the Aspen Institute's *African Leadership Initiative for West Africa (ALIWA)* and has served as Sunday School teacher since her teens. She received an M.A. in Telecommunications from Michigan State University, and a Bachelor of Education degree in English and German from the University of Manitoba, in Canada. She is happily married with three children.

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CONTEMPORARY ART







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