

# ROUND 2022

## Contemporaries



9th Jan - 5th Feb, 2022

2pm - 6pm

National Museum, Onikan

[info@releartsfoundation.org](mailto:info@releartsfoundation.org)

rele  
ARTS FOUNDATION

# Gallery Statement

The Rele Arts Foundation is pleased to present the Young Contemporaries 2022. Initiated in 2016, the programme identifies, mentors and promotes emerging and early career artists from Africa, by equipping them with tools and resources for artistic development. Each year, the Foundation guides artists through its Bootcamp/residency programme towards the creation of critical projects, encouraging innovative explorations of existing inquiries as well as the birth of fresh ideas.

This year's edition presents new works by six artists working across a diverse range of mediums; engaging issues from collective identity to reincarnation, time travel and contemporary beauty standards. This seventh iteration of the Young Contemporaries project presents the audience with a collection of distinct and exciting perspectives on contemporary issues while also drawing attention to the exciting and critical work being done by a younger, emerging generation of contemporary African artists.

In 'Spaces of Scent', Michael Jackson Blebo draws from ant nests in investigating naturally occurring geological formations and their occupation of public space. Exploring the biomorphic, his works examine organic architecture as well as imagining life behind these structures. Incorporating painting and sculpture techniques, Blebo probes the two-dimensionality and perceived 'flatness' of paintings. The works blend elements of form, space and the kinetic, confronting the viewer with shifting perspectives on materiality and the fluidity of organic forms.

Rooted in her experiences as well as her mother's in dealing with Alopecia – an autoimmune disorder that causes hair loss – 'Chronicles of Esther' is Jessica Soares's reflection on shared trauma, vulnerability and social standards of beauty. Her paintings illustrate a journey across generations, from self-stigma to solace and acceptance. The works also explore the intimate relationship between the artist and her mother as a result of this shared experience as well as challenging societal ideals of feminine beauty.

&Co. is a series of intricately fabricated works by Ayobami Ogungbe that looks into the notion of shared identity and communality, particularly within Nigerian societies. Combining photography, weaving and collage, he chronicles a practice that underlines familial, religious and socio-political affiliations. Used to refer to a group of people associated with someone as well as the practice of wearing outfits cut from the same fabric, ' &Co' highlights codes of belonging and social solidarity as well as emphasizing fashion as self-expression. Here, Ogungbe depicts the associative qualities of fabric.

Presenting photography, film and performance, Nothando Chiwanga's work challenges the domestication of wives within the patrilineage of the Maungwe in Rusape, Zimbabwe. Her exhibited series, 'Muroora Weguta' (Shona for 'bride of the city') considers the relationship between patriarchal enforcement and the roles of women in African society.

Neeq Nonso's series 'What Was Dead Was Never Dead' is an ongoing project that treats the belief in reincarnation and posthumous existence of dead relatives. Showcasing still images and augmented reality, the works here juxtapose life with the afterlife, mining intimate family stories and histories in a bid to exhume memories, popular myths and taboos surrounding death, reincarnation and the popular belief of life after death.

Kenneth Oghenemaro's presented series 'Fast Traveler' employs elements of science fiction and the futuristic in dialoguing with past events. Inspired by his childhood experiences dealing with asthma, the works in this series imagine the possibilities of time travel as means to rewrite history. In 'Fast Traveler', Oghenemaro builds fantastical worlds that fictionalise an alternate reality, one of boundless energy, devoid of limitations.

# Ayobami Ogungbe

Ayobami Ogungbe (b. 1993) is a visual artist whose work unites photography, weaving and collage techniques in constructing layered compositions that reflect on cultural practices, colonialism and history. Telling contemporary stories about his environment, Ogungbe's work invites the viewer in exploring various aspects of human existence and interaction that may appear mundane to the outsider. His practice also interrogates the relationship between humans and the environment, presenting the former as repositories of experiences, bearers of distinctive identities and custodians of culture.

Ayobami Ogungbe holds a BA in Mass Communication from the University of Benin, Edo state. He lives and works in Lagos.

# Artist Statement

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**Another style**

Matte and fabric print | 40 x 44in | 2021



**Be like that**  
Matte and fabric print | 44 x 49in | 2021



**Eleyin 'Ju ege**  
Matte and fabric print | 44 x 47in | 2021





**Ewa ibeji**  
Matte and fabric print | 44 x 49in | 2021



**Wolimo**

Matte and fabric print | 39.5 x 46in | 2021

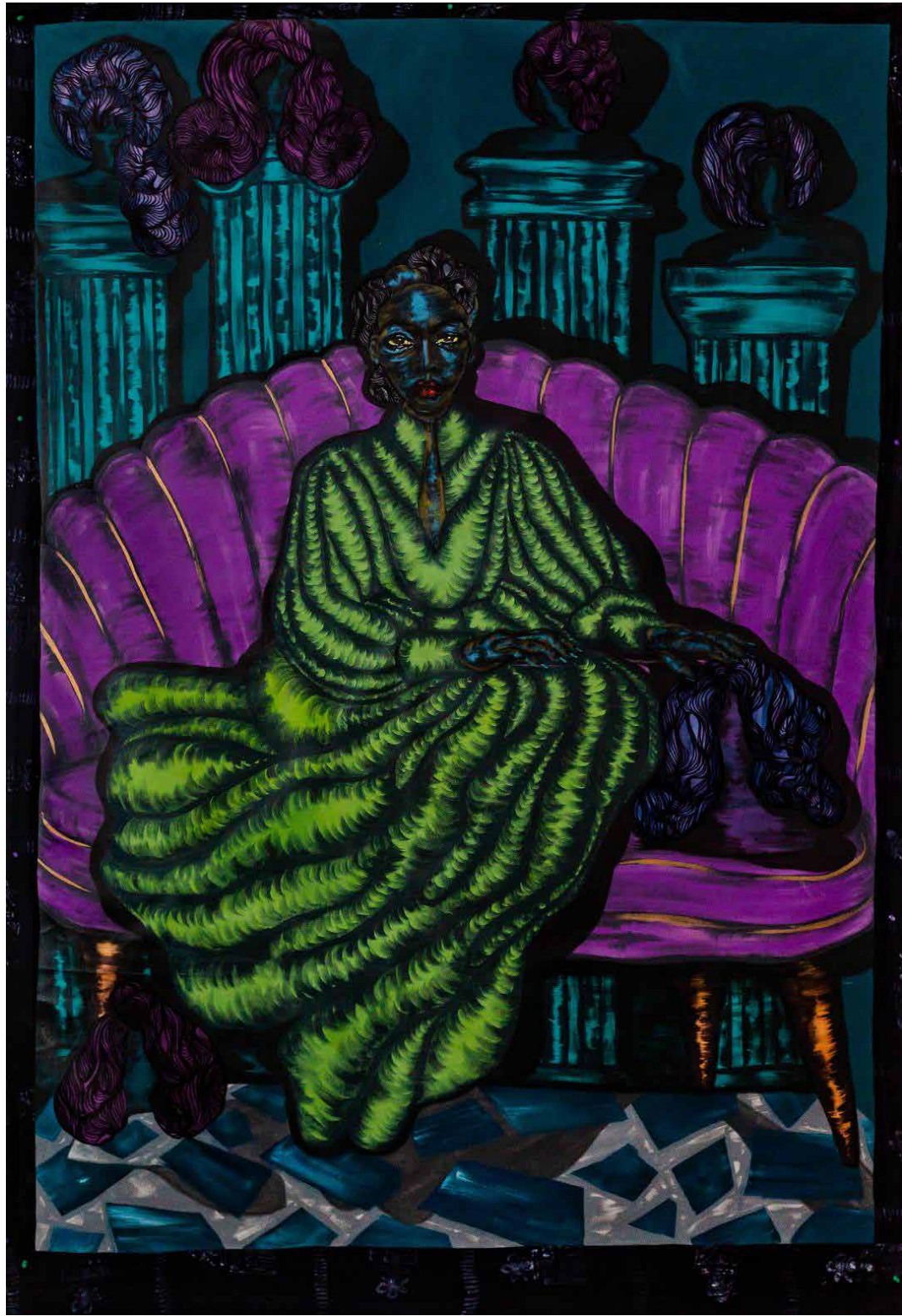
# Jessica Soares

Jessica Soares (b.1990) is a self-taught artist, with a background in Marketing from Redeemer's University. Mixing drawing and painting techniques, her works stem from personal experiences in questioning the complexities and social notions around women's hair in contemporary society. Featuring elaborately detailed figures swathed in colourful fabrics, her works also apply Adire fabric in exploring issues of legacy and familial bond.

Jessica Soares lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria.

# Artist Statement

Rooted in her experiences as well as her mother's in dealing with Alopecia – an autoimmune disorder that causes hair loss – 'Chronicles of Esther' is Jessica Soares's reflection on shared trauma, vulnerability and social standards of beauty. Her paintings illustrate a journey across generations, from self-stigma to solace and acceptance. The works also explore the intimate relationship between the artist and her mother as a result of this shared experience as well as challenging societal ideals of feminine beauty.



**Esther**

Acrylic, acrylic marker on canvas | 72 x 72in | 2021



**Her mother's daughter**

Acrylic, acrylic marker on canvas | 72 x 72in | 2021



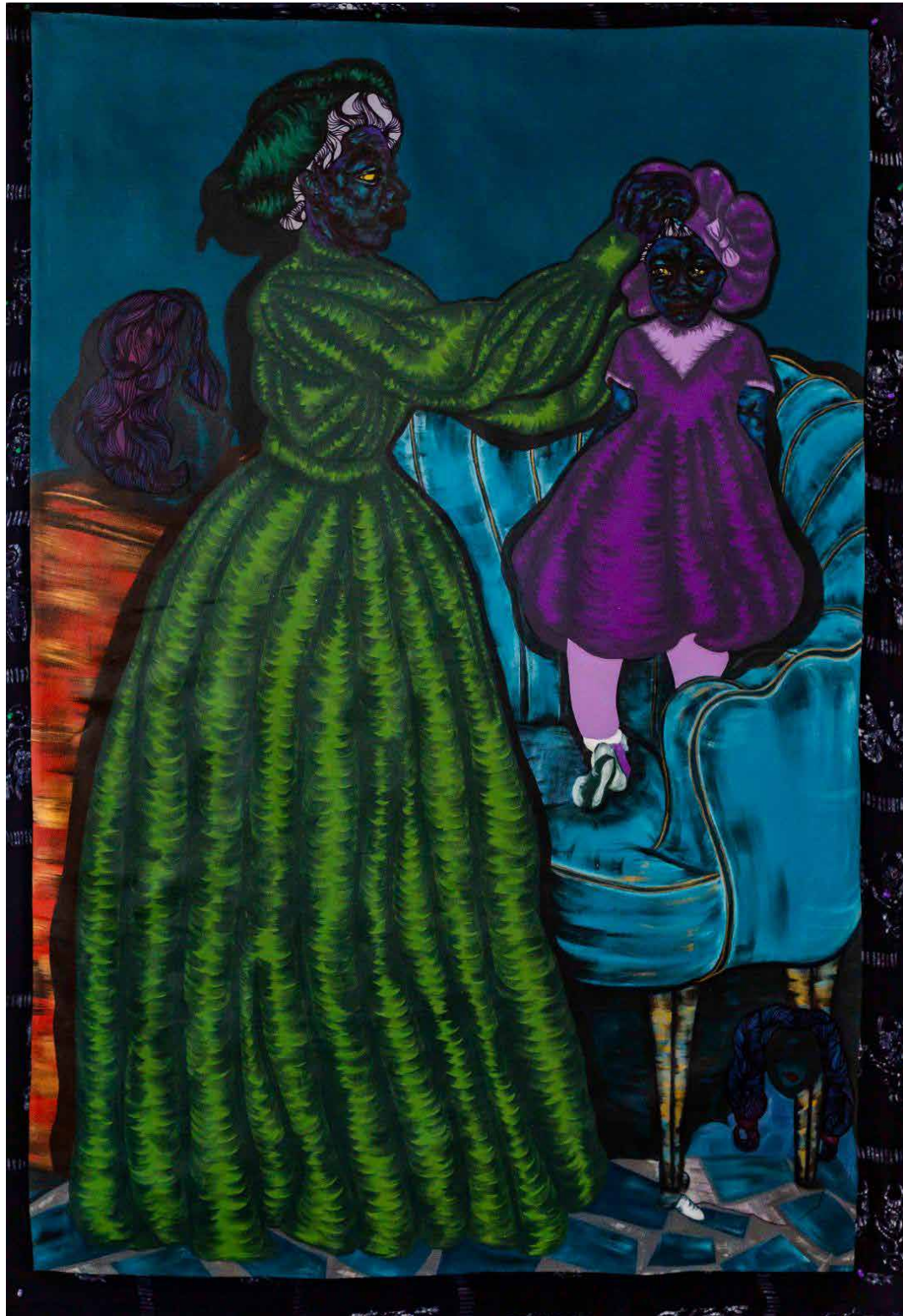
**Make believe**

Acrylic, acrylic marker on canvas | 72 x 72in | 2021



**Nnene, my mother's mother**  
Acrylic, acrylic marker on canvas | 72 x 72in | 2021





**The Beret**

Acrylic, acrylic marker on canvas | 72 x 72in | 2021



**Uncertain**

Acrylic, acrylic marker on canvas | 72 x 72in | 2021

# Kenneth Oghenemaro

Kenneth Oghenemaro(b.1995) holds a BFA from the University of Benin. Working primarily in oils, he creates futuristic and allegorical scenes that explore issues from the personal to social, political, religious and historical events. Done in a realistic style, Oghenemaro presents surreal landscapes populated with machines, natural elements and hybrid bodies depicting the interplay of time and memory.

In 2019 he exhibited in [Re:]Entanglement, an exhibition by SOAS(University of London), University of Cambridge and Nosona Studios. He lives and works in Benin.

# Artist Statement

Kenneth Oghenemaro's presented series 'Fast Traveler' employs elements of science fiction and the futuristic in dialoguing with past events. Inspired by his childhood experiences dealing with asthma, the works in this series imagine the possibilities of time travel as means to rewrite history. In 'Fast Traveler', Oghenemaro builds fantastical worlds that fictionalise an alternate reality, one of boundless energy, devoid of limitations.



**Beam me up**

Oil on canvas | 48in in diameter | 2021



**Finding air (I)**

Oil on canvas | 48in in diameter | 2021



**Finding air (II)**

Oil on canvas | 48in diameter | 2021



**The alternate fall (I)**  
Oil on canvas | 36 x 48in | 2021





**The alternate fall (II)**  
Oil on canvas | 36 x 48in | 2021



**The ameliorator**  
Oil on canvas | 48 x 60in | 2021

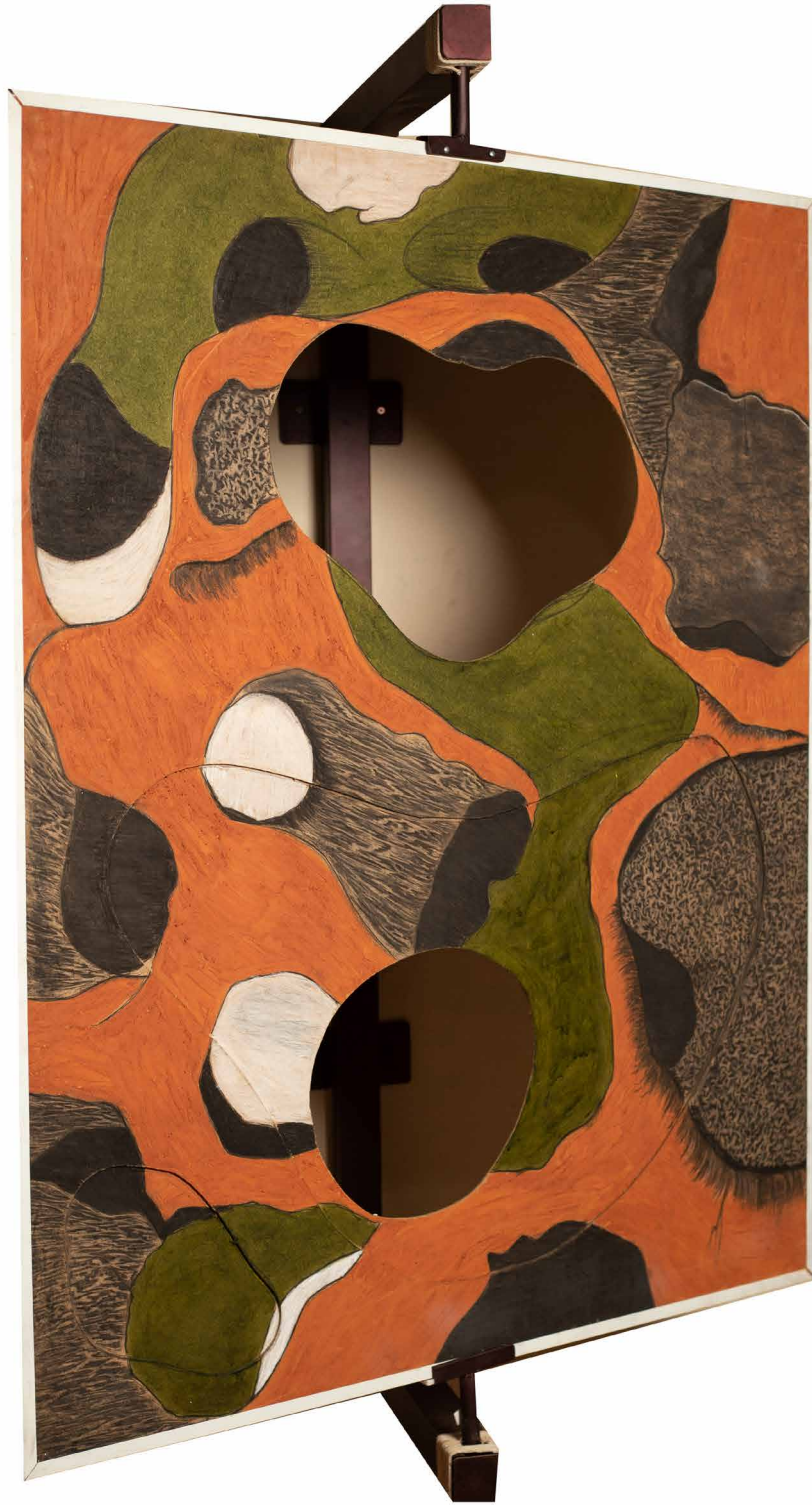
# Michael Jackson Blebo

Blebo Michael Jackson (b.1993) is a Ghanaian artist who lives and works in Ada. He holds a BFA in sculpture from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi-Ghana. Blebo recruits drawing, painting, sculpture and installation in his exploration of geological formations, material memory and architecture while expanding existing modes of work-making and presentation. His practice utilises materials like charcoal, phyto(natural pigment), earth colours (red ochre), bentonite clay and steel pipes. These elements are usually constructed together into installations that reference aesthetic ideas of abstraction, kinetic sculpture and minimalism.

Michael Jackson Blebo is a Absa L'atelier 2021 Ambassador and currently works as a sculptor and a museum guide at Nkyinkyim Museum at Ada, Ghana.

# Artist Statement

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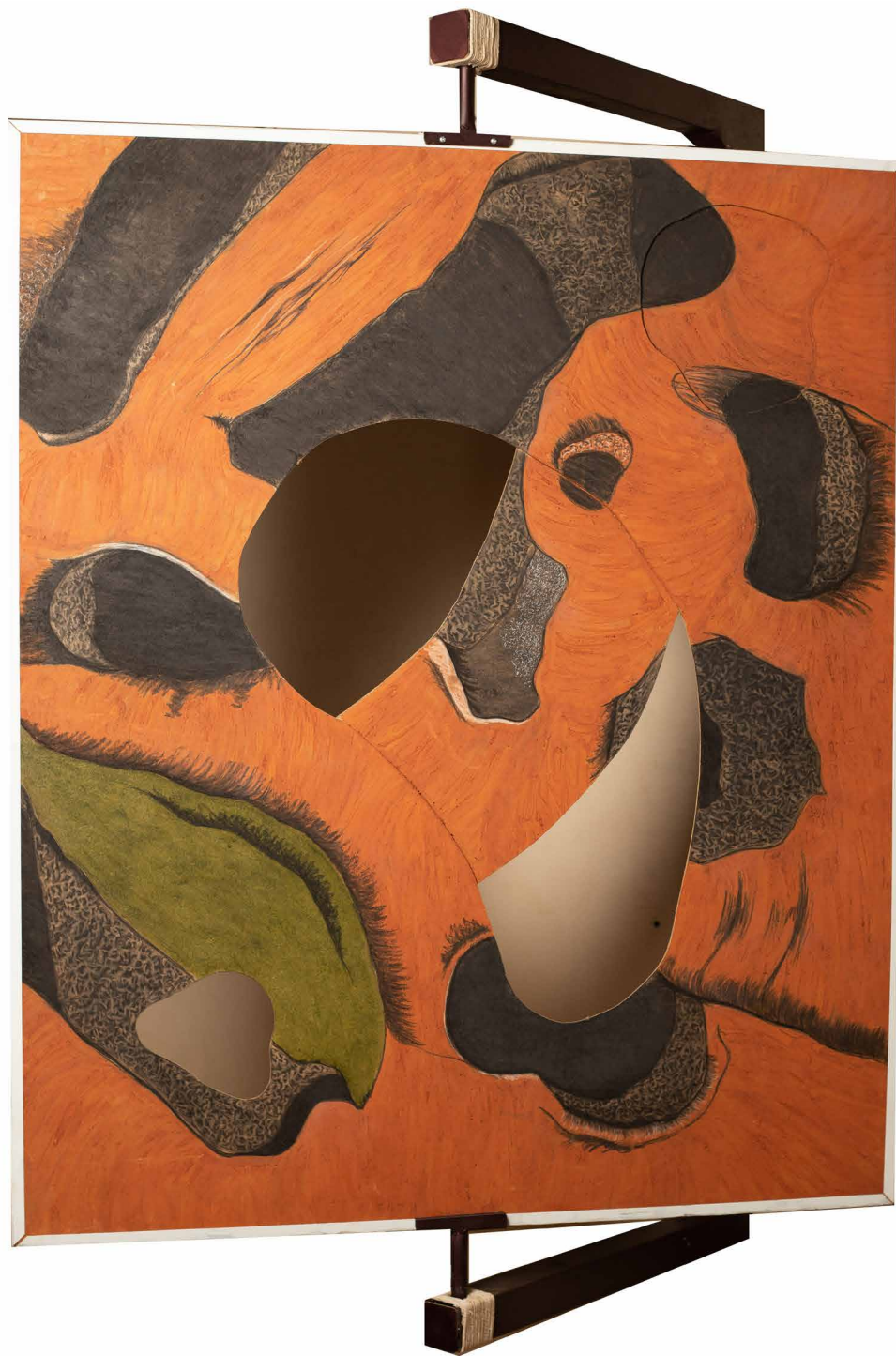
**Fully empty**

Red clay soil, bentonite clay, phyto, charcoal on chipboard | 39 x 47 | 2021



**In my dreams**

Red clay soil, bentonite clay, phyto, charcoal on chipboard | 39 x 47 | 2021



**Romance of time**

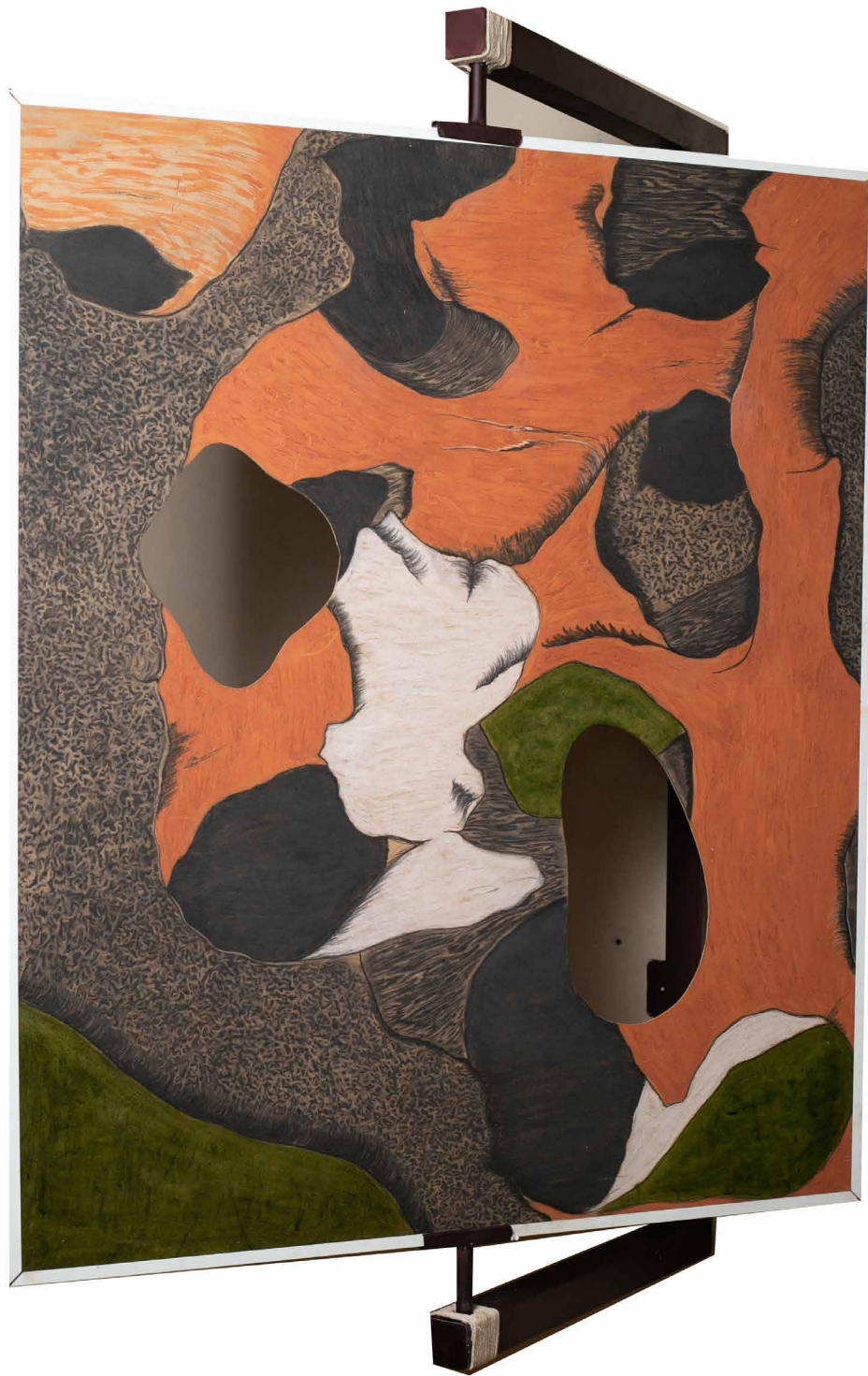
Red clay soil, bentonite clay, phyto, charcoal on chipboard | 39 x 47 | 2021



**Solitude**

Red clay soil, bentonite clay, phyto, charcoal on chipboard | 39 x 47 | 2021





**Urban Commons**

Red clay soil, bentonite clay, phyto, charcoal on chipboard | 39 x 47 | 2021

# Neec Nonso

Neec Nonso (b, 1990 in Aguleri, Anambra state) is a visual artist working predominantly with photography. His work captures everyday life and its nuances in communities across Nigeria. Driven by a goal to catalyse critical conversations, Nonso aims to evoke emotions while inviting audiences to excavate memories and experiences as they encounter his work.

In October 2018, Neec Nonso founded Aguleri Stories - an online-based media platform that focuses on telling the inside stories of Aguleri; an Igbo community of south-eastern Nigeria, notorious for its boundary wars with neighbours. In 2019, he also emerged as the winner of Best Portfolio, LagosPhoto Festival, and was awarded a one-year residency programme with African Artists' Foundation, Lagos. He lives and works in Lagos.

# Artist Statement

Nec Nonso's series 'What Was Dead Was Never Dead' is an ongoing project that treats the belief in reincarnation and posthumous existence of dead relatives. Showcasing still images and augmented reality, the works here juxtapose life with the afterlife, mining intimate family stories and histories in a bid to exhume memories, popular myths and taboos surrounding death, reincarnation and the popular belief of life after death.



**Abiku**

Giclee print on archival paper | 24 x 36in | 2021



**Babatunde**

Giclee print on archival paper | 24 x 36in | 2021



**The last supper**

Giclee print on archival paper | 24 x 36in | 2021



**Yéwande**

Giclee print on archival paper | 24 x 36in | 2021



**Babarinde**

Giclee print on archival paper | 24 x 36in | 2021





**Egungun**

Giclee print on archival paper | 24 x 36in | 2021

# Nothando Chiwanga

Born in 1997, Nothando Chiwanga's work is central to personal experiences, reinvention and everydayness. Reflecting on womanhood, she addresses themes like education, food, bereavement, home tools and traditions. Chiwanga employs her body as a medium of memory and fiction to reveal the complex world of young womanhood in a changing society where traditional values are hanging by a thread and changing to become more relevant to the times.

Nothando Chiwanga studied at the National Gallery School of Visual Arts and Design, Zimbabwe. She lives and works in Harare.

# Artist Statement

Presenting photography, film and performance, Nothando Chiwanga's work challenges the domestication of wives within the patrilineage of the Maungwe in Rusape, Zimbabwe. Her exhibited series, 'Muroora Weguta' (Shona for 'bride of the city') considers the relationship between patriarchal enforcement and the roles of women in African society.



**Hunhu wandinoda**

Print on canvas | 30 x 30in | 2021



**Kupira gotsi**

Print on canvas | 24 x 36in | 2021



**Mwenga wacho**

Print on canvas | 24 x 36in | 2021



**Yakakwana here**

Print on canvas | 24 x 36in | 2021

# MOJING 2022

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