



Nigeria Announces Its Official Participation in the 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2024

*The Nigerian Pavilion has been commissioned by
His Excellency Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State on behalf of
Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Culture and Information
and is organised by the Museum of West African Art, Edo (MOWAA)*

[PRESS KIT](#)

21 July 2023, Edo State, Nigeria—Nigeria will present its national pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, from April 20 to November 24, 2024. The eight artists to be featured in the group exhibition are Tunji Adeniyi-Jones, Ndidi Dike, Onyeka Igwe, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Abraham Oghobase, Precious Okoyomon, Yinka Shonibare CBE RA, and Fatimah Tuggar.

The Edo State Governor, His Excellency Godwin Obaseki, is the commissioner of the Pavilion and has requested its organisation by the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) in Benin City, Edo State to be realised on behalf of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its Ministry of Culture and Information.

As commissioner, Governor Obaseki selected Nigerian-British curator Aindrea Emelife—who serves as the Contemporary and Modern Art curator at MOWAA—as curator of the exhibition. Emelife has selected artists to present works in response to the theme and title *Nigeria Imaginary*.

Aindrea Emelife said, “*Nigeria Imaginary* looks at the many Nigerias that live in our minds: the Nigeria that could be and is yet to be. The exhibition will explore different perspectives and constructed ideas, memories of and nostalgia for Nigeria, with a scope that is cross-generational and inter-geographic. The artists were selected for their unique visions of Nigeria, with a mixture of artists brought up in Nigeria and within the Diaspora curated to capture a sense of optimism imbued in inherited and collective cultural history. Articulated through many fields of reference and artistic disciplines, *Nigeria Imaginary* is a restless investigation of the present and a defiant imagining of what is yet to come.”

This marks the second time a Nigerian Pavilion has been included in La Biennale di Venezia's Exhibitions. The Nigerian Pavilion will be presented in a historical Palazzo of outstanding beauty in Dorsoduro, near the Gallerie dell'Accademia. The expansive venue will be open for Biennale the first time on this special occasion.

His Excellency Governor Godwin Obaseki said, “It is my honour and privilege to serve as Commissioner for the Nigerian Pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia in 2024. This exhibition, envisioned by Ms. Emelife with a diverse roster of accomplished artists, encourages us to revisit the past in order to create a bright future for Nigeria. The exhibition is deeply aligned with the vision of the Edo State Government for encouraging socio-cultural and economic development through the promotion of art and tourism, and I have every confidence in the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) to assist in organising a world-class exhibition.”

An expanded presentation of the Nigerian Pavilion, also curated by Emelife, will travel to MOWAA in 2025. This will be the inaugural exhibition in the Rainforest Gallery, the new contemporary art space in the MOWAA Creative District.

The exhibition will be produced by David Hrankovic and D.H. Office and the exhibition designers are Atelier Bruckner.

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Notes to Editors:

Curator:

Aindrea Emelife

Curator, Modern and Contemporary at MOWAA (Museum of West African Art, Edo)

Featured Artists:

Tunji Adeniyi-Jones, Ndidi Dike, Onyeka Igwe, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Abraham Oghobase, Precious Okoyomon, Yinka Shonibare CBE RA, Fatimah Tuggar

Commissioner:

His Excellency Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State, Nigeria



About Aindrea Emelife

Aindrea Emelife studied Art History at The Courtauld Institute of Art in London. As a curator and art historian, she has led a number of high-profile projects with a focus on modern and contemporary art, dedicated to investigating colonial and decolonial histories in Africa, transnationalism, and the politics of representation. Her recent exhibitions include *Black Venus*, a survey of the legacy of the Black woman in visual culture, which opened at Fotografiska New York in 2022, followed by a tour to MOAD (Museum of African Diaspora in San Francisco, California), and will open at Somerset House in London, England in July 2023. Emelife's first book, *A Brief History of Protest Art*, was published by Tate Publishing in March 2022. Emelife is currently working on her second book, to be published by Thames & Hudson in 2024. She has contributed essays to publications including *Revisiting Modern British Art* (Lund Humphries, 2022). In 2021, Emelife was appointed to the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm. Emelife is a Trustee of New Curators.



About Tunji Adeniyi-Jones

Tunji Adeniyi-Jones (b.1992, London, UK; lives and works in Brooklyn, New York). In 2014 he received his BA from The Ruskin School of Art, Oxford University, UK, and in 2017 he received an MFA in painting and printmaking from the Yale School of Art, New Haven, Connecticut.



About Ndidi Dike

Ndidi Dike (b. in London, England; lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria) is a multidisciplinary artist who spent her early years in London before relocating to Nigeria. She completed her degree in Fine Arts at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka in 1984. Dike is known internationally as a self-taught sculptor working across diverse contemporary art forms that engage with contemporary politics, the geo-political history of natural resource extraction and the pre- and post-colonial history of the enslaved among others. Recent exhibitions this year include *A World In Common: Contemporary African*

Photography (Tate Modern, London), Lagos, Peckham, Repeat: Pilgrimage to the Lakes (South London Gallery, London) and African Modernism in America 1947 - 1967 (Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Missouri).



About Onyeka Igwe

Onyeka Igwe (b. 1986 in London, UK) is an artist and researcher working between cinema and installation. Her work comprises untying strands and threads, anchored by a rhythmic editing style, as well as close attention to the dissonance, reflection and amplification that occurs between image and sound. Her works have been shown in the UK and internationally at film festivals and galleries. She was awarded the New Cinema Award at Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival 2019 and the 2020 Arts Foundation Fellowship Award for Experimental Film.



About Toyin Ojih Odutola

Toyin Ojih Odutola (b. 1985 in Ile-Ife, Nigeria; lives and works in New York, NY) is best known for her multimedia drawings and works on paper, which explore the malleability of identity and the possibilities in visual storytelling. Interested in the topography of skin, Ojih Odutola has a distinctive style of mark-making using only basic drawing materials, such as ballpoint pens, pencils, pastels, and charcoal.



About Abraham Onoriode Oghobase

Abraham Onoriode Oghobase (b. 1979 in Lagos, Nigeria) is a visual artist living and working in Toronto, Canada. In his photography-based practice, he engages with issues around knowledge production, land, colonial history and representation by deconstructing traditional modes of making, and by experimenting with the narrative and material potential of images and objects. Oghobase's work has been exhibited widely, and he is one of seven artists featured in this year's New Photography exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Oghobase holds an MFA in Visual Arts from York University, Toronto.



About Precious Okoyomon

Precious Okoyomon (b. 1993, London, UK) is a poet and artist. Their work considers the natural world, histories of migration and racialization, and the pure pleasures of everyday life. Okoyomon has had institutional solo exhibitions at the LUMA Westbau in Zurich (2018), the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt (2020), Performance Space New York (2021), and the Aspen Art Museum (2021). Precious Okoyomon was included in the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia and the 58th Belgrade Biennial as well as group exhibitions at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, and LUMA Arles, France. Major performances have been commissioned by the Serpentine Galleries, London (2019) and the Institute of Contemporary Art, London (2019).



Photo credit: Tom Jamieson, 2023

About Yinka Shonibare CBE RA

Yinka Shonibare CBE RA (b.1962 in London, UK) is an interdisciplinary artist born in London and moved to Lagos, Nigeria at the age of three. He lives and works in London. Shonibare's practice explores cultural identity, colonialism, and post-colonialism within the contemporary context of globalisation. His works comment on the tangled interrelationship between Africa and Europe, and their respective economic and political histories. He was a Turner Prize nominee in 2004 and was elected as a Royal Academician in 2013. He was awarded the honour of Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 2019.



About Fatimah Tuggar

Born in Kaduna, Nigeria, interdisciplinary artist Fatimah Tuggar engages dialogue and discovery within intercultural praxis as a central artmaking approach. In her work, technology is both medium and subject, serving as a metaphor for power dynamics. She challenges technologies impacting local and global realities by combining objects, images, sounds, and interactive experiences, including diverse geographies and histories. Tuggar's artwork has been consistently exhibited in over twenty-five countries. She has received accolades, including a Guggenheim Creative Arts and W. A. Mellon Research Fellowships. She is an Associate Professor of AI in the Arts: Art & Global Equity at the University of Florida.