

Oluwole  
**OMOFEMI**

**A Woman's Worth**

9/4 - 22/5/2022

Barcelona, Spain

**Editor**

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**OLUWOLE OMOFEMI**

Born in 1988 in Ibadan, Nigeria  
Lives and works in Ibadan, Nigeria

# Oluwole Omofemi: 'A Woman's Worth'

2020 will forever be etched in history as one of the most life changing years in modern times.

Between enduring a global health pandemic and the restrictions, disruption and turmoil that came with it, to witnessing a huge uptake in socio-political activism, civil rights campaigns, and revolutionary sentiments spearheaded by the Black Lives Matter movement, the turn of the new decade has been nothing short of seismic.



◀ **UNTITLED YELLOW** | 2022  
26 3/8 in H x 27 11/64 in W | 67cm H x 69cm W | Oil and acrylic on canvas

In the midst of all of this chaos and uncertainty, with the art industry reeling from the hard blows of the pandemic forcing the closure of galleries, and the cancellation and postponement of major art fairs; all artists were faced with an existential dilemma; fight or flight?

To the credit of most artists, and indeed, the art industry at large, contrary to earlier predictions and expectations of a slump in the market reminiscent of the Wall Street crash a century prior, not only did many artists survive through the pandemic and experience greater productivity, and depth in their work, but they also thrived.



**SOUL PROVIDER** | 2022 ▶

70 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in H x 59 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>6</sub> in W | 180cm H x 150cm W | Oil and acrylic on canvas





With the industry pivoting to embrace the 'new normal' of virtual and online exhibitions, and with the lower barriers of entry and increased accessibility to artists by virtue of social media, a surge in the rise of new collectors, artists and industry players, reached a fever pitch, creating an unprecedented demand for contemporary art.

◀ **RESILIENT** | 2021  
59 3/16 in H x 59 29/64 in W | 150cm H x 151cm W | Oil and acrylic on canvas

The wake of this growing demand and access to contemporary art, took place against the backdrop of a heightened political climate; marked by the murder of George Floyd in the United States, the rise of right wing nationalism globally, and a growing cultural renaissance and spirit of self determination amongst the African diaspora.



**SITTING LADY | 2021 ▶**

65 3/4 in H x 58 17/4 in W | 167cm H x 148cm W | Oil and acrylic on canvas



## Enter: Oluwole Omofemi

Today, as Oluwole Omofemi begins his debut solo exhibition with Out of Africa Gallery, to describe him as a generational artist would be considered not only a matter of fact, but also an understatement.

Much like the post World War II abstract expressionism artists, such as Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock and Barnett Newman, Omofemi's rise to contemporary art stardom is rooted in the turbulent and revolutionary socio-political environment of the past, as well as in the times he now lives, and works in.



**ASSURANCE** | 2021 ▶

59 <sup>27</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in H x 53 <sup>35</sup>/<sub>64</sub> in W | 152cm H x 136cm W | Oil and acrylic on canvas





When speaking to the peers of Omofemi, artists from his native Nigeria, who he has come up with, or those he now mentors, they all speak with a great deal of pride, and adulation for him, describing him as a torch bearer and a vessel of hope for them.

Born in 1988, and hailing from the inner streets of South Ibadan, Nigeria, Omofemi's humble beginnings and steep ascent to the pinnacle of the contemporary African art scene is nothing short of inspirational. Readily identified by his neighbours and community as a promising artist from his early childhood, Omofemi would later use the proceeds he would gain from hawking beer, as part of the every day grind of living in Ibadan, to buy sketch books and art materials to facilitate and incubate his passion.



◀ **FEARLESS** (Invader Series) | 2021  
51 <sup>31</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in x 51 <sup>31</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in | 132cm x 132cm | Oil and acrylic on canvas



However, it wasn't the hustle and bustle of life in the vibrant Ibadan metropolis nor the early signs of his natural gift for creativity and art that would inform what would later make Omofemi one of the most serious and influential artists of his generation. That great honour and tribute is owed to his grandfather, whom Omofemi was deeply fond of, and influenced by. It was his grandfather's wisdom and guidance that impressed upon the young artist the importance of the preservation of culture, heritage and ancient customs, and instilled in the artist an appreciation for self love, pride, and determination, which today he captures and translates on his canvas through his endearing and masterful portraits.



**BOSS LADY** (Invader series) | 2021 ▶  
51 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in x 51 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in | 132cm x 132cm | Oil and acrylic on canvas

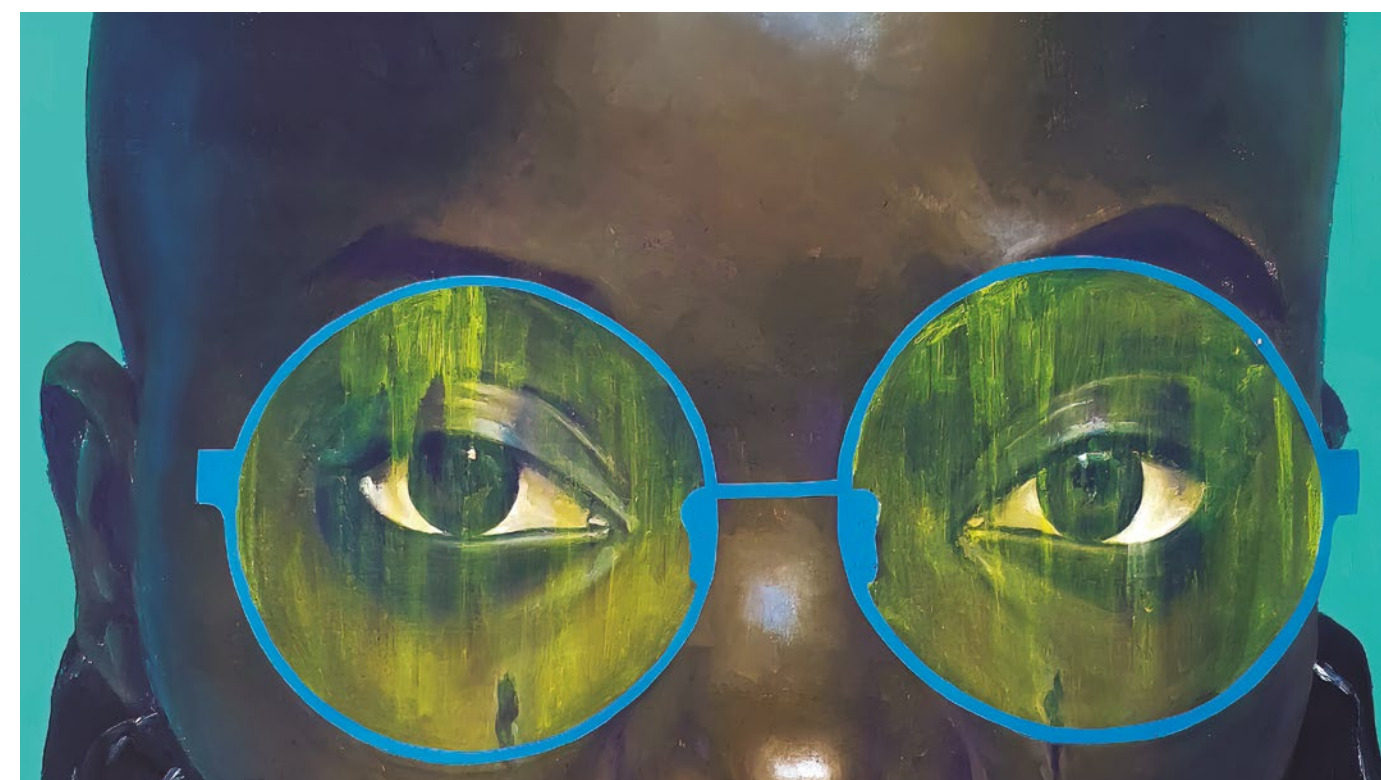




Indeed, Omofemi's work has always elevated his subjects, most of whom are either friends and relatives of his, or strangers he encounters. Pride, self esteem, authenticity, and heritage, are all keys, recurring motifs that weave together the entirety of his oeuvre, often manifested in his honorific, striking portraits of independent black women, crowned either with halo-esque afros, cornrow braids, or completely bald, 'sakora' hairstyles, indigenous to, and ubiquitous amongst his fellow compatriots, and dating back a millennia.

*'A real man, knows a real woman when he sees her...  
and a real man just can't deny a woman's worth'*

Alicia Keys



◀ **BEYOND NOW** | 2021  
58 <sup>21</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in x 58 <sup>21</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in | 149cm x 149cm | Oil and acrylic on canvas

Inspired in part by the lyrics of Grammy award winner, Alicia Keys, iconic single, 'A Woman's Worth', the singer muses that... 'a real man, knows a real woman when he sees her....and a real man just can't deny a woman's worth'.

To this end, 'A Woman's Worth' the solo exhibition is by all intents and purposes an extension of Omofemi's ongoing narration, musings and reflections on what it is to be a woman of note, self respect and integrity, through the lens of a black man, striving to not only uplift his fellow sisters, but also to hold his fellow black brothers to account to encourage and promote that they do the same.



*ATTITUDE* | 2021 ▶  
72 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in H x 57 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in W | 185cm H x 145cm W | Oil and acrylic on canvas

Additionally, in Omofemi's own words, his aim and inspiration behind this new series, was to capture the very 'essence' of his subjects; who they are, and what they represent outside of their roles, experiences, obligations and accomplishments. Many of his sitters are wives, mothers, sisters, with various occupations, and varying degrees of success and achievements, but beyond the tangible, and their readily accessible characteristics, the artist's boldest attempt in this series is to strive to capture the transcendent nature of his subjects, to allow the viewer to truly connect with, see and understand them for who they are.



◀ **BOND** | 2021  
72 <sup>53</sup>/<sub>64</sub> in H x 55 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in W | 185cm H x 140cm W | Oil and acrylic on canvas

## So, why Oluwole Omofemi, and why now?

This is the question that often springs up when contemplating the rise of the artist, the insatiable demand for his portraits, and the increasing prices that his work now commands, both on the private and secondary market. For ardent followers of modern and contemporary African art, the answer is quite simple, and straight forward.

In an industry in which figurative portraiture has dominated and become the modus operandi for most artists across the African diaspora, few artists are able to cut through the noise, and have their work stand out, enchant and inspire audiences quite like Omofemi has. Coupled by the socio-political themes that his work unpacks, his modern, yet old master sensibility, style and medium of choice, and the undeniable quality, beauty and boldness of his portraits, the artist has increasingly established himself as a master amongst a field of apprentices, and quite frankly, a cut above the rest.

Alongside his artistic forbears, contemporaries and compatriots, chiefly, modern contemporary African art, 'Godfather', Professor Ben Enwonwu, Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Toyin Ojih Odutola, Omofemi is playing a leading role in not only centering the gaze on Nigeria and its growing presence and reputation as a hub of artistic and creative talent, but more widely on the African continent, and it's increasingly significant contribution to the canon of Art history.

I suspect in a few years the art world will be discussing Omofemi's participation at the Venice Biennale, and first of many future major museum solo exhibitions, until then, his star is firmly on the rise, and one to follow closely.

**Raphael Dapaah**  
**Art writer & Art Consultant OOA Gallery**



Oluwole Omofemi and Jacques Collaer, Director de la OOA Gallery at the entrance of Moco Museum, Barcelona, Spain.



Oluwole Omofemi and Sorella Acosta, Director & Curator OOA Gallery à Art X Lagos 2021

# LIST OF SHOWS AND ART FAIRS

## SOLO SHOWS

2022 | “A Woman’s Worth” – OOA Gallery – Barcelona, Spain

2021 | “In our days” – Signature African Art – London, UK

2020 | “The Way we were” – Signature African Art – London, UK

2019 | “Irirí” (Experience) – Alexis Galleries – Lagos, Nigeria

## GROUP SHOWS

**2021** | 1-54 London Art Fair – OOA Gallery – London, UK

**2021** | 1-54 New York – OOA Gallery – New York, USA

**2021** | Duo show “Emancipation” with Rewa – OOA Gallery – Barcelona, Spain

**2020** | “Can’t stop our flow” – JM Gallery – London, UK

**2020** | “Locality and the Status Quo” – Pacers Art Gallery – Lagos, Nigeria

**2020** | “Say my Name” – Signature African Art – London, UK

**2019** | “Rise Up” – Signature African Art – London, UK

**2019** | “Mayfair” – Signature African Art – London, UK

**2019** | “Fashion and Art Show” – Belgium

**2019** | “Face & Phases” – Terrakulture Art Gallery – Lagos, Nigeria

**2019** | “Impact Artist Fair” – Eko Atlantic City – Lagos, Nigeria

**2019** | Second Ibadan Affordable Art Fair – Ibadan, Nigeria

**2019** | “Bald is Beautiful” – Alexis Galleries – Lagos, Nigeria

**2019** | “Starting point” – Lagos, Nigeria

**2018** | “New Horizon” – Discova Art Centre – Port Harcourt, Nigeria

**2018** | “Fair & Square” – Alexis Galleries – Lagos, Nigeria

**2018** | “Next of Kin” – Thought Pyramid Gallery – Lagos, Nigeria

**2016** | “Face & Phases” – Terrakulture Art Gallery – Lagos, Nigeria

**2015** | “The Return of the Slave” – Accra, Ghana

**2015** | “Art for Heart” – Lagos, Nigeria

**2015** | “Curore di Donna” – World Art Exhibition – Italy

**2015** | “Face & Phases” – Terrakulture Art Exhibition – Lagos, Nigeria

**2014** | “Emergency” – Lagos, Nigeria

**2013** | “Life in my city Festival” – Alliance Française – Ibadan, Nigeria

**2013** | “Unity” – National Museum – Ibadan, Nigeria

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