



THE ART AND POLITICS OF COVID-19: WEST AFRICA CONFERENCE



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



Welcome

'Coronavirus is not an election' a Nigerian instagram post announced on the 17th of April as it posted a picture with a counter of the number of cases and deaths in Nigeria. The COVID-19 global pandemic has affected individuals across the globe in different ways and in Nigeria politics plays out even as the country goes into lockdown. Instagram posts and Twitter feeds with hashtags like [#Nigeria](#) [#CoronaVirusNigeria](#) [#TheLockdownNigeria](#) document a range of citizen journalist commentaries on the experiences of social distancing and the impact these measures are having upon their daily life and the struggles they face. Nigerian artists have responded in their own ways, taking to digital spaces creating work that engages with the global effort to educate people in the effort to stay at home, personal hygiene, or inversely to document namely through photography the lived experiences of Nigerians across the city as far as they are able to. Whilst mainstream media does its part in Public Service Announcements (Effiong et al. 2020).

In 2019, the AHRC funded ArtoP Project began its research into the visual articulations of politics in Nigeria. Partnered with institutions such as University of Lagos and Bayero University, it has been collecting, documenting and archiving the range of material created by artists in Nigeria that expresses the 'politics of everyday'. This online conference is a direct response to the effect of the Covid Pandemic in West Africa. The panels in this conference draw attention to the various forms of artistic engagement and creative responses to Covid-19 and how it connects to political aspects of life in Nigeria. Whether this is considered from a local or transnational perspective, as cartoons, fashion, or performance. It will be presented as online podcasts and video conversations between panelists, as enforced lockdown changes the modes of interaction within the academic space.

Dr Paula Callus & Dr Charles Gore

PI & Col for ArtoP: The Visual Articulations of Politics in Nigeria

THE ART AND POLITICS OF COVID-19

Schedule: At a Glance

27th July 2020

12:00 - Online Waiting Room Open

13:00 - Welcome and Introductions - Dr P. Callus & Dr C. Gore

13:15 - Panel 1: *Public Health and Creativity*

14:00 - BREAK

14:15 - Panel 2: *In the Crossfire of COVID-19: Religion, Culture, Politics and the Challenges of the new pandemic in Nigeria*

15:00 - BREAK

15:15 - Panel 3: *African History in the time of Covid-19: Comics and Cartoons during the Pandemic*

15:45 - BREAK

16:00- Panel 4: *Digital Creativity & Online Spaces*

16:30 - Plenary Closing

28th July 2020

12:00 - Online Waiting Room Open

13:00 - Plenary

13:15 - Panel 5: *Artists Panel : Personal Responses to COVID-19*

14:00 - BREAK

14:15 - Panel 6: *Pandemic Cartoons*

15:00 - BREAK

15:15 - Panel 7: *Visual Arts: Economics and enterprise in the time of COVID-19*

16:00 - Plenary Closing

16:15 - Discussions - Breakout Rooms

Panel 1: Public Health and Creativity

Documenting COVID-19: Body Art Practices and its Photographic Narratives

Dr. Quadri Oluwasegun Olawale, PhD, UNILAG

Fashioning Safety: Emerging Designers and the Politics of Safety during COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

Chukwuemeka Nwigwe, PhD, and Chijioke Onuora, PhD, from University of Nigeria

Masks Against COVID-19: Facebook Expressions in Creativity

Kehinde Adepegba, MA, Lagos State Polytechnic

Panel 2: In the Crossfire of COVID-19: Religion, Culture, Politics and the Challenges of the new pandemic in Nigeria

In the Crossfire of COVID-19: Religion, Culture, Politics and the Challenges of the new pandemic in Nigeria

Chuu Krydz Ikwuemesi, PhD, Michael I. Ugwueze, PhD, University of Nigeria Nsukka and George C. Nche, PhD, Department of Religion Studies, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Music to the Rescue: A Discourse Analysis of Covid 19 Songs in Northern Nigeria

Dr. Nura Ibrahim, PhD, Bayero University

In the Spirit of Passover: A Graphic Response to Covid-19

Chuu Krydz Ikwuemesi

Panel 3: African History in the time of Covid-19: Comics and Cartoons during the Pandemic

Introductions and presentations from three Nigerian comics publishers and studios discussing how lock down and Covid-19 has impacted upon the production and dissemination of comics. What new stories have emerged from this experience and how have new and old heroes risen to 'take on' the virus?

Tunji Anjorin, Panaramic Studios. Peter Chizoba Daniel, PEDA entertainment and Onibudo Oluwaseyi, Comicwox.

Panel 4: *Digital Creativity - Online Spaces*

Emergence of Web Art Education and Virtual Art Studio Enterprise during the Lockdown

Dr. Kehinde H. Shobukonla, PhD, University of Benin.

Animated Covid Memes and Instagram - Creative Responses

Kanso Ogbolu, #thesmilinghat, OBK Studios

Digital Photography and Instagram during Lockdown

Omoregie Osakpolor, Ebunoluwa Akinbo, Neece Nonso, 1884

Panel 5: *Artists Panel : Personal Responses to COVID-19*

Introductions and presentations from contemporary Nigerian artists working with a range of materials, in painting, sculpture and performance reflect upon the experience of COVID-19 in their own practices. Dr. Charles Gore - Convenor.

African Indigenous Herbs - Got Power

Jelili Atiku

Point of No Return on Investment

Ayo Akinwande

Masquerading Plastics

Omokeko Olufela

Lockdown Chronicles

Christopher Obuh Nelson

Panel 6: *Pandemic Cartoons*

Humour in a Time of Horror: Articulating Politics during COVID Times in Nigeria

Ganiyu Jimoh, PhD, UNILAG

Framing the Rhetoric of Moral Justice and Governance in Nigeria in COVID-19 related political cartoons'

George Odoh, Chijioke Onuora & Nneka Odoh, University of Nigeria Nsukka.

Personal Reflections on Pandemic Cartoons

Albert Ohams, The Brush

Panel 7: Visual Arts: Economics and enterprise in the time of COVID-19

The COVID-19 Impact Survey: African and African Diaspora visual arts communities

Stacey Kennedy, University of Birmingham

Renegotiating the Economic Constraints of COVID-19 through New Strategies of Art Production

RitaDoris Edumchieke Ubah, PhD, University of Nigeria

Impact of COVID-19 on creative economies

Chime Uchenna Martin, University of Nigeria Nsukka

SPEAKERS

Albert Ohams, *The Brush*

Albert Ohams, known also as 'The Brush' - is one of Nigeria's renowned cartoonists and a painter with a career that spans over 30 years. The award winning cartoonist has worked in various media houses, including being the Editor for Cartoons at the Sun Newspaper. His work raises different viewpoints on national and global events through comedic devices and humour.

Ayo Akinwande

Ayo Akinwándé is an artist, curator, and writer based in Lagos, Nigeria. He has an academic background in Architecture. His practice is multi-disciplinary, working across lens-based media, installation, sound, and performance. He explores power dynamics, the relationship between the "powerful" and the "powerless," as it manifests in the multi-faceted layers of human reality. Akinwándé co-curated the 2017 Lagos Biennial, and was a participating artist at the exhibition held at the Nigerian Railway Museum. He was selected for the 2nd Changjiang International Photography and Video Biennial, and was part of the "Chinafrika-under construction" exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Arts, Leipzig. In 2019, he presented solo exhibitions in Nigeria, Scotland, and Cuba for the 13th Bienal De La Habana.

Chijioke Onuora

Chijioke Onuora is a member of faculty in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka where he teaches sculpture and drawing.

Chime Uchenna

Chime Uchenna is a lecturer in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Christopher Obuh Nelson

Christopher Obuh Nelson is a photographer who is based in Lagos Nigeria. He has been documenting the city with his words and images for sometime now. Some of his works are based on the daily happenings of this beautiful city, Lagos, that he represents. His work has often reflected upon the changes in the urban environment and the political aspects of these developments. In 2019, Christopher Nelson was a shortlisted finalist for the Art X Access Bank Prize and shown at the exhibition 'this time shall pass' for the Lagos Biennale 2019.

Chukwuemeka Nwigwe

Chukwuemeka Nwigwe is a Nigerian artist, and art historian who teaches fashion/textile design and art history at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. He holds a PhD in art history, MFA in textile design, and BA in fine and applied arts from the same university. Nwigwe's current research is on identity, exemplified in two recent publications: "Fashioning Terror: The Boko Haram Dress Code and the Politics of Identity" (*Journal of Fashion Theory*, January 2018) and "Breaking the Code:

Interrogating Female Cross Dressing in Southeastern Nigeria” published in the same journal in 2019.

Chuu Krydz Ikwuemesi

Chuu Krydz Ikwuemesi (b. 1967), painter, art critic, ethno-aesthetician and cultural entrepreneur, has a BA (First Class Honours) in Fine and Applied Arts, an MFA in Painting and a PhD in Art History from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He is the founder of the Pan-African Circle of Artists (PACA) and Emeritus President of The Art Republic (Centre for Arts and Cultural Democracy), Enugu. He has participated in workshops and creative residencies and has directed Afrika Heritage (the PACA Biennale), Overcoming Maps (PACA Study Tour of Africa), and the Mmanwu Theatre in Enugu. Ikwuemesi has researched and published on aspects of ethno-aesthetics with special interest in Igbo and Ainu (aboriginal Japanese) arts.

Ebunoluwa Akinbo

Ebunoluwa Akinbo is a Nigerian documentary photographer and an aspiring filmmaker with an interest in exploring societal and cultural issues as well as questions of identity. She was the winner of the Fashola Photography Competition in 2018 and in the same year participated in several renowned workshops including Canon Basic DSLR and GTBank Days of Dorcas female photographers' workshops. Also in 2018 she was commissioned by the New York Times to document the #Thisis18 project in Lagos. Her work 'The passing of time' also exhibited at the Lagos Photo Festival of the same year. In 2019 she was nominated for the annual Canon Storytelling Master Class (Nigeria).

Ganiyu Jimoh

Ganiyu holds a PhD in Art History from the University of Lagos, Nigeria where he is also a lecturer. He was a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Arts of Africa and Global Souths research programme, Department of Fine Art, Rhodes University, South Africa in 2019. His research, which focuses on contemporary art, new media, satire and cartoons has attracted significant awards. Ganiyu is a recipient of the 2019 African Studies Association Presidential fellowship. As a scholarly writer who is also a practising political cartoonist, Jimga (cartoon signature) has several local and international exhibitions to his credit.

George Odoh

George Odoh teaches painting, drawing and contemporary African Art in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Jelili Atiku

Jelili Atiku is a Nigerian multimedia artist with political concerns for human rights and justice. Through drawing, installation sculpture, photography, video and live art performance; he strives to help viewers understand the world and expanding their understanding and experiences, so that they can activate and renew their lives and environments. His work is internationally renowned with work shown in Tokyo, Paris, Berlin and Madrid, having performed at the Venice Biennale 2017, shown at the Tate Modern and Tiwani Contemporary in London, his work is often described as avant-gardist, provocative and political. By drawing upon pre-Christian beliefs of the

Yoruba people of South West Nigeria he reflects upon wider environmental concerns and the connections between man and environment.

Kehinde Shobukonla

Kehinde Shobukonla currently teaches Computer-Aided Design (CAD), Designing for Web, Art Education and Research Methods at the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Benin, Nigeria. He is a veritable visual art consultant to a number of organisations in Nigeria and overseas. He has featured in several group and solo art exhibitions traditionally and virtually. He has organised, convened, initiated and packaged several art exhibitions nationwide. He is the founder and CEO of Ednounce SK, a digital art promotion and communication outfit in Nigeria. His recent research is Web Art for the development of academic digital archive for visual art coined ADAVA.

Kehinde Adepegba

Kehinde Adepegba is an artist, art critic/historian, a creative writer and a bilingual author. He possesses National Diploma (ND) in 1989; Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Fine Arts in 1993; Master of Arts (MA) degree in Visual Arts (History of Arts) in 2006; Master of Arts (MA) degree in African Art Studies in 2006 and now a Ph.D (African Art Studies) student. He is Lecturer in the Department of Art and Industrial Design, Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu, where he is currently the Head of Department. He is a member of Society of Nigerian Artists, Lagos Studies Association among others.

Neec Nonso

Neec Nonso is a Nigerian documentary photographer. He works predominantly, in digital format and travels extensively across Nigeria to capture the beauty and chaos in the society; challenging stereotypical narratives about Nigeria and Africa at large. An attempt at this made him co-found #northisnotnot, a collective of photographers and storytellers focused on challenging stereotypical stories about Northern Nigeria. In October 2018, he founded Aguleri stories - an online based media platform that focuses on telling the inside stories of aguleri, an important igbo community of eastern nigeria, notorious for the boundary wars with neighbouring communities. Neec Nonso is also part of the 1884 Collective, a pan African storytelling collective made up of photographers, filmmakers and writers.

Nneka Odoh

Nneka Odoh teaches painting, drawing and traditional African Art in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Nura Ibrahim

Nura Ibrahim, BA, M.Sc., PhD is the Head, Department of Information and Media Studies, Faculty of Communication, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria. He is teaching Journalism related courses. He has attended conferences both at the national and international levels. He has published widely nationally and also internationally in journals such as *Hemispheres*, and *Journal of African Media Studies* (UK). He has contributed chapters in books such as *9/11 and its Remediation in Popular Culture and Arts in Africa* and co-edited *Media, Knowledge Transfer and African Identity: A Festschrift in Honour of Abdalla Uba Adamu*. His main research areas include

Olufela Omokeko

Graduated from an alternative art school initiated by Vernacular Art Space Laboratory Foundation supported by Prince Claus fund. Particularly interested in Performance Art, Installation and Photography. He has once time participated in a solo exhibition (Tailor Scissors) as a performance artist curated by Leon Hoesl and later commissioned to replicate (Masquerading Plastics) by H Factor a creative hub in Lagos, Nigeria as a video art shown at the museum of United Nations at live virtual exhibition. He worked alongside Aderemi Adegbite, on Peju Alatise Installation, Sculptural assistance with Folakunle Oshun on his Horse Project and presently working as curatorial Intern with Centre For Contemporary Art, Lagos.

Onibudo Oluwaseyi

Onibudo Oluwaseyi founded and leads the team at Comicwox Nigeria. Comicwox Nigeria runs a digital platform for African and Black artists, www.comicwox.com, to host their comic books online so it can be read by a worldwide audience. To date 60 studios from Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroun, Kenya, US and The Netherlands have hosted over 100 comic titles and almost 200 comics in the 1 year 11 months that www.comicwox.com has been online.

Onuora, Chijioke

Onuora, Chijioke (Ph.D) is the current chair of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His latest research is Museum Affordances / [Re:] Entanglements – Artistic interpretation of Northcote W.Thomas Archive in collaboration with Prof Paul Basu (SOAS) and Dr George Agbo (Cambridge University), UK. Between 2014 and 2016, he did a book project on Nigeria Biafran war ammunition (in commemoration of Nigeria's 2014 centenary) based on affordances kept at the National War Museum Umuahia. He wrote Beautiful Maidens: Frank Dei's Painted Pots, Ceramics Art and Perception, with Odoh, G. and Obodo, E. in 2019.

Omoregie Osakpolor

Omoregie Osakpolor is a documentary photographer and filmmaker based in Benin City and Lagos, Nigeria. His photographs tell stories of people, places, and events that are not adequately or accurately portrayed by mainstream media. He is a member of 1884 Collective (a pan African storytelling collective made up of photographers, filmmakers and writers) and a mentee at the ongoing the Nlele Institute Mentorship Programme. He was nominated for the Edwin George Prize for Photography at The Future Africa Awards for his ongoing multimedia documentary project, "Nation Forgotten." He has shown his works in solo and group exhibitions in Lagos, Abuja, Benin City, Salzburg and North Carolina and has been published by CNN Africa.

Peter Chizoba Daniel

Peter Daniel is the lead illustrator, concept designer and creator of the Nigerian comic book NewbornSaga. He is also the creative director at PEDAs studio Lagos famous for producing comics with a focus upon African narratives with heroes that come from different countries across the continent.

Rita Doris Edumchieke Ubah

RitaDoris Edumchieke Ubah, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Fine Art at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. She is also a practicing artist specializing in textiles drawing upon Igbo Uli motifs in her fabric compositions she reflects upon the intersections between tradition and modernity.

Stacey Kennedy

Stacey Kennedy, is a PhD Candidate at the School of History and Cultures, College of Arts and Law, University of Birmingham.

Tunji Anjorin

Tunji Anjorin is the President/Editor-in- Chief of Panaramic Entertainment. Tunji Co-founded the company to develop, produce, and distribute original content, premiering with comic books for the Nigerian reading public and to export these comics as local content to international markets. Panaramic's premier title is Okiojo's Chronicles: Promoting & Preserving the Nigerian History and Culture. Okiojo's Chronicles is marketed as a mix between education and entertainment expressed in comic book format available in print and in digital.

Quadri Oluwasegun Olawale

Oluwasegun O. Quadri is a graduate of Fine and Applied Arts (Graphic & Painting) from the Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka. He obtained his B.A, M.A and Ph.D in 2008, 2010 and 2017 respectively from the University of Lagos Akoka Specializing in Visual Arts (Ceramics and Art Education). He has participated in some group exhibitions and workshops. He taught Art History and Multimedia & Management Policy in Dalewares Institute of Technology, Lagos (2010-2015). He won University of Lagos Best Researcher Award in Arts and Humanities in 2013 and Green Springs Award of excellence in Visual Arts and Mentoring in 2018. He is a research assistant on the ArtoP: The Visual imagery articulations of Politics in Nigeria (AHRC) project, funded by Bournemouth University, United kingdom (2019-2020).