

ISOLATION INTERVIEWS  
RICHARD AYODEJI IKHIDE





## ISSUE 17

Continuing the Isolation Interviews: a series of weekly artist and curator profiles highlighting current concerns, accompanied by a selection of available works.

We know that these are precarious and uncertain times for everyone and with so many people staying at home, self-isolating or social distancing, we want to be able to continue sharing some of our favourite art and artists with you. The Isolation Interviews are a weekly series of conversations with artists and curators that will explore how these new circumstances are affecting their practices, projects and productivity. We'll hear how they are finding solutions - and even opportunities - and what their plans and hopes are for the future.

Brooke Benington is committed to supporting and creating opportunities for artists. We believe that this is needed now more than ever. Most artists are self-employed, often supplementing their income by working as technicians, fabricators, assistants, teachers and a whole host of other jobs. Now, many have very suddenly lost a vital source of income. With this in mind, we are accompanying each Isolation Interview with a curated selection of work by that artist, available for purchase.

Thank you for your continued support. Stay safe and look after one another.

Lily & George  
Directors, Brooke Benington



Before moving to Britain as a teenager you spent your childhood in Lagos, Nigeria, a city and a time of life that seems to resonate through your paintings today. You have also spoken previously about how Carl Jung's theory of ancestral memory impacted on you. How significant a role does your personal history together with your deeper cultural history play in your work?

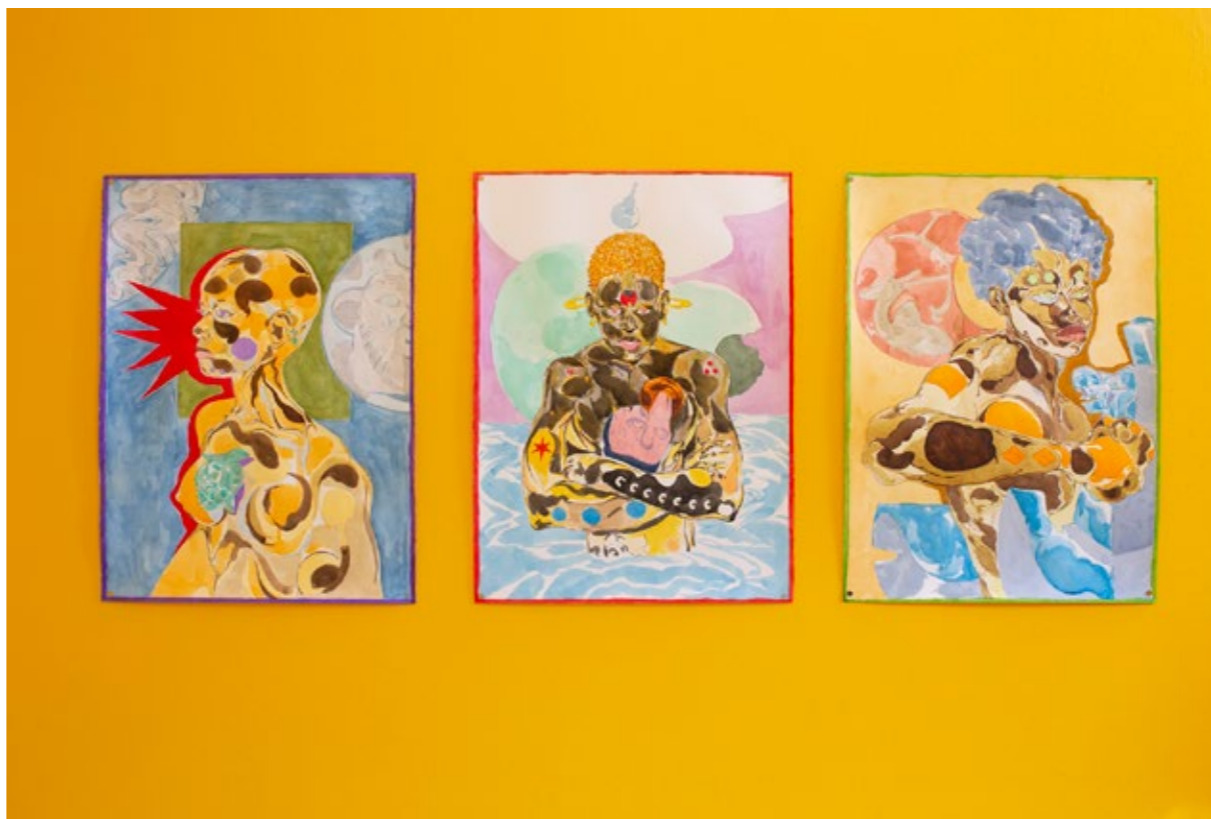
For me, ancestral memory is very important in how it shapes and moulds us as individuals. My formative years in

Lagos play a big role in my self-identity and how that identity comes into my practice. Being told about the ancient history of the Benin Empire and its folktales by my grandfather contributed largely to my interest in mythology. From a young age, it seemed apparent to me how important it was to take pride in one's ancestral history as my grandfather and father would always tell me to remember I am from Sabongida Ora a Town in Edo State where my family originates from. My grandfather was a chief, and so was his father, so being exposed to various

traditions and cultural rites through my family helped shape my appreciation for the importance of understanding how we as humans have used these traditions and cultural elements to make sense of our place in the world and develop our idea of the self, and how this self is also connected to larger parts of society through said traditions and cultural elements. These are aspects which are explored within my practice.

Your paintings often summon a dream-like or even hallucinatory quality through the juxtaposing of real and imagined figures, objects and landscapes. Are the subjects of your paintings drawn from your life or are they more totemic or talismanic, frameworks to hold and explore other ideas?

These dream-like qualities come from me trying to explore this in-between space which resides in the potential future and our ancient past. In regards to subjects within the works, the human body was the first signifier and tool for communicating outside the self. The figure functions as a symbol to express the ideas that inform my work.



The subject then becomes a way to play around with things and see how it can embody certain ideas as I want the works to also embody aspects of the psyche. A totem or symbol communicate in ways words can't and reach the deepest recesses of the human subconscious.

Before re-training as a fine artist, you pursued studies in print and textile design at Central Saint Martins. How important do you think this foundation was in developing your own visual language within your paintings?

Textiles was a big influence on my understanding of colour and how colour can be used to convey certain emotions, ideas e.t.c. I specialised in print design while at CSM, mostly working with screen printing which was informed by my drawing. I would look through archives online and visit the VA to find visual information on old tapestries from Europe, India, Africa which influenced the work I was making then.

The idea of a motif in textile design is something that was brought forward into my Fine Art practice, in the sense that subjects within my works become



motifs for ideas. Culturally, one can also see how textiles were used as a way of communicating, these are elements within my practice I feel my time on the Textiles BA at CSM has had an impact on.

There is often a dense layering of images and ideas within your paintings and drawings which invite examination to find a narrative or thematic through-line. Do you intend for your works to be "read" in this way? Or are the concepts held in the works more abstract than that?

With the work I want the viewer's psyche to also play a role in activating the image. Jung talks of the collective mind and how we are all connected to it but express these archetypes in different ways yet the core remains constant. The narrative reading examination of the work is definitely encouraged, as I seek to create a sort of personal mythos, a microcosm of a larger macrocosm which is the collective mind that Jung talks about.

By referencing objects from humanities ancient past it brings some sort of familiarity to the viewer by creating a

sort of free association with the works to build and immerse themselves within the images, the narrative elements aren't clearly defined because the viewer also has a role to play in how they read the image.

You're currently on residency with V.O Curation working towards a show in January. How has lockdown directed/refocused this new body of work if at all?

The show at V.O has been pushed back to January due to the recent lockdown announcement which has been a blessing in a weird way as it's given me more time to explore certain threads that were beginning to take root within the work. Also, to be able to present a good body of work which communicates the current themes I'm exploring during the residency - I'm grateful for the extra time despite it being due to the pandemic.





## RICHARD AYODEJI IKHIDE

Richard Ayodeji Ikhide (b. 1991, Nigeria, lives and works in London) studied BA (Hons) Textile Design at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London and recently completed a Postgraduate Diploma at The Royal Drawing School, London. Exhibitions include: Zabludowicz Collection Invites: Richard Ayodeji Ikhide, Zabludowicz Collection, London (2019); Bloomberg New Contemporaries (2018), John Moores University, Liverpool and South London Gallery, London (2018); Best of Drawing Year 2017, Christies, London (2017); Obscurity, Somewhere to, London (2015).



AWÓN OŠERE 1, 2020  
Watercolour & acrylic ink on 300GSM Waterford paper  
63.5 x 56 cm  
25 x 22 in.  
Unique



AWÓN OŠERE 2, 2020  
Watercolour & acrylic ink on 300GSM Waterford paper  
63.5 x 56 cm  
25 x 22 in.  
Unique



Omo, 2020  
Oil on wood  
24 x 24 cm  
9 1/2 x 9 1/2 in.  
Unique



Arabinrin, 2019  
Watercolour on 300GSM Waterford paper  
76 x 56 cm  
30 x 22 in.  
Unique



NOK JANUS, 2020  
Oil on wood  
45 x 34 cm  
17 3/4 x 13 1/2 in.  
Unique



SISUN, 2020  
Watercolour on 300GSM Waterford paper  
57.3 x 63 cm  
22 1/2 x 24 3/4 in.  
Unique

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Photographs courtesy of Richard Ayodeji Ikhide  
and Zabłudowicz Collection

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