



G B E N G A   O R I M O L O Y E

iwe - an art exhibition at terra kulture gallery



“Gbenga Orimoloye is a Nigerian painter. Several works by the artist have been sold at auction, including ‘ONIDIRI META’ sold at Arthouse Contemporary Limited ‘Modern & Contemporary Art’ in 2013.”

- *Mutual Art* [[www.mutualart.com](http://www.mutualart.com)]

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Gbenga Orimoloye has an amiable but quiet disposition, but still water runs very deep. Behind that quiet façade is a creative aggression and energy quite visible in his works. I have followed his development since his student days, the commitment, hard work and determination he showed then is still very much visible. I think I can safely say that most of his classmates are no longer involved in studio practice.

Although he uses water colour quite well, I believe his medium of preference is oil applied with palette knives with rich and heavily layered impasto. A warrior doesn’t go to war with his weakest weapon. Orimoloye is fast becoming a master of impasto painting. He remains true to himself and has not allowed himself to be contaminated by the fashion for abstract paintings and installations. He is undoubtedly a good draughtsman who continues to elevate his skills through hard work.

- *Kolade Oshinowo* [*“Gbenga Orimoloye and Iwa” - from the catalogue of the solo exhibition, Iwa, 2011*]

I first encountered the works of Gbenga Orimoloye at the 1991 Tower Aluminium art exhibition, in the Indian High Commission in Lagos. I liked his work immediately. Here was a young artist recently out of college, painting with a very definitive and mature style. Clearly confident and with a very direct approach to using a palette knife with oil on canvas, he managed to capture so much with the few yet generous strokes that he applied. The energy, the movement, and the flavour of the moment were not lost in his subjects; and yet the faces remained shadows – each part of a story that seemed never to be fully told.

The painting that I picked to buy at that exhibition was not to be mine as it was adjudged the winning painting and was retained by the sponsors.

- *Ike Osakwe* [*Foreword - from the catalogue of the solo exhibition, Ona, 2013*]

Catalogue of the exhibition “Iwe” by Gbenga Orimoloye  
at Terra Kulture, Victoria Island, Lagos. 7th - 15th May, 2016.

Photography and design by Gbenga Orimoloye.  
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[www.orimoloye.com](http://www.orimoloye.com)  
<http://twitter.com/orimoloye>

But blessed are your eyes, for they see  
Matthew 13:16

Cover (detail): Iwe (5). Oil on board, 2016. 123 x 82 cm



Iwe - milestone. Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



His paintings deal not only with tensions between opposites, abstract and realistic insertions; but also of a vivid focus on content within the domination of formalistic elements. His softly modulated semi-abstractions are pleasing and poetic, with their lyrical forms and delicate monochromes creating flowing fields of colour.  
- **Mike Omoighe** [*"A clear dream and vision"* - from the catalogue of the solo exhibition, Vivid Impressions, 1992]

It is impossible to view his work and not feel uplifted, with a fresh hope in potential of the human spirit. Most of his portfolio can be viewed simply for the beauty he commits to his art, but there is a strong allegorical and metaphorical dimension to his painting that offers even more to the viewer who spends longer savouring the images he has created. Orimoloye's work is at once lyrical and poetic: like a ballet dancer he gracefully celebrates the joy in those he portrays, allowing them to speak through his canvas. And in allowing them a voice he wins an audience for himself.  
- **Colin M. Blakely** [from *"Orimoloye - The Voice of The Artist"* - Epping, Essex, 2004]



Iwe (4). Oil on board, 2016. 123 x 82 cm



Iwe (2). Oil on board, 2015. 123 x 82 cm





Iwe (1). Oil on board, 2015. 123 x 82 cm



Polo (from the genre). Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Untitled. Oil on board, 2016. 123 x 82 cm





Iwe (5). Oil on board, 2016. 123 x 82 cm





Within striking distance (from the genre *Polo*). Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Iwa l'ewa (from the genre). Oil on board, 2016. 123 x 82 cm





Atilogwu dancers. Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Iwe - girl reading. Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



The sustained. Oil on board, 2016. 30 x 30 cm



Sustenance. Oil on board, 2016. 30 x 30 cm





Iwe - Reclining figure reading. Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Unpainted houses (Ibadan). Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Iwe - the nuances. Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Brown and green tops (Abeokuta). Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm





Iwe - we must excel! Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Old house on Old Yaba Road (from the genre). Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Iwe (3). Oil on board, 2015. 123 x 82 cm



Polo (2) (from the genre). Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm





In the morning. Oil on canvas, 2016. 82 x 62 cm



Untitled. Oil on canvas, 2016. 80 x 60 cm

## PROFILE

Place of birth: Lagos Nigeria, 26 November 1966.  
Married: three children.

### Education:

University of Lagos Staff School (Primary).  
Govt College Ojo, Lagos / St. Finbarrs' College, Akoka Lagos (Secondary).  
The Polytechnic Ibadan (Eruwa Campus) Nigeria.  
Yaba College of Technology, Lagos Nigeria.  
University of Westminster, London.

### Qualifications:

National Diploma (Upper Credit) General Art. 1988.  
Higher National Diploma (Upper Credit) Painting. 1991.  
MSc. Interactive Multimedia. 2003.

### Awards:

1990. Academy Press Award for excellence in painting.  
1990. First prize, Lagos State Council for Arts and Culture Painting Competition.  
1991. First prize, Tower Aluminium Art Exhibition/Competition.  
1991. Lintas Award for best final year art student.

### Professional Experience:

To date: Studio practice.  
1999. Judge at The Annual Milldon Art Society Exhibition/Competition, Mill Hill, London.  
1998 Nov -1999 Apr. Watercolour painting Lecturer, Adult Art Classes, Triumph Press Art Club, Edgware England.  
1992-1994. Lecturer in Life Drawing, General Drawing and Painting, Yaba College of Technology, Lagos.  
1989. Illustrator, Graphic Advertising and Associates Ltd, Lagos Nigeria.  
1987. Sculpture apprentice, Art Studio, Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Lagos.

### Membership of professional body:

Founding member, Nigeria Art Society UK.

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

### 2016 - "Landscaping"- Solo Exhibition

at The European Medicines Agency, Churchill Pl, Canary Wharf, London - 18th January to 22nd April 2016.

### 2015 - "Ariya - A Celebration of Colour" Nigeria Art Society U.K.

NASUK exhibition at the WAC Gallery, 14 Baylis Road, London - 5th to 21st November 2015.

### 2014 - "Aso"- Solo Exhibition

of paintings hosted by Terra Kulture Gallery, Lagos Nigeria - 24th to 30th May 2014.

### 2014 - Solo Exhibition

at The Saffron Walden Gallery, Saffron Walden, Essex, United Kingdom - 22nd March to 5th April 2014.

### 2013 - Nigeria Art Society U.K, Winter Art Exhibition

at The WAC Gallery, 14 Baylis Road, London - 2nd to 21st December 2013.





**2013 - “Oju”- Solo exhibition**

of paintings hosted by Terra Kulture Gallery, Lagos Nigeria - 4th to 9th May 2013.

**2012 - “Ona”- Solo exhibition**

of paintings hosted by Terra Kulture Gallery, Lagos Nigeria - May/June 2012

**2012 - A Parent’s Eye View, ‘Education’ and ‘Cheltenham’** - Exhibition of paintings by Cheltenham Ladies’ College Parents. The Parabola Arts Centre, Bayshill Rd. Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England - May 2012.

**2012 - IMFFA Winter Art Exhibition.**

at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) HQ1, Washington DC, United States - February 2012.

**2011 - “Iwa”- Solo exhibition**

of paintings hosted by Nike Gallery, Lagos Nigeria - July 2011.

**2005 - A Tale of a Continent; Africa.**

Exhibition of Contemporary Art - June 2005. North York, Ontario Canada.

**2005 - Millinery Works Gallery, Islington**

Exhibition of Contemporary British Art, Islington, London - January 2005.

**2004 - Rainbow Art Exhibition** (40th Anniversary, African Development Bank Group - September 2004 ). African Development Bank Headquarters, Rue Pierre de Coubertin BP.323 - 1002 Tunis Belvedere, Tunisia.

**2002 - “Iya ni wura” Didi Museum, Lagos.**

Exhibition of paintings and drawings.

**1998 - “Africa at Whiteley’s” London.**

Exhibition of paintings and African sculpture, The Atrium, Whiteley’s, London, United Kingdom.

**1997 - “Colourful Moments” Didi Museum, Lagos.**

Solo exhibition of drawings & gouache paintings.

**1995 - Texaco Exhibition, TOPCON Building, Ikoyi, Lagos.**

Exhibition of paintings and drawings.

**1993 - Private show at The Syrian Club, Ikoyi, Lagos.**

Solo exhibition (Salon) of paintings.

**1992 - “Vivid Impressions”- Solo Exhibition**

of paintings and drawings at the Russian Cultural Centre, Lagos Nigeria.

**1992 - The Artist Now, National Museum, Lagos.**

Exhibition celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA).

**1991 - Tower Aluminium, Indian High Commission, Lagos.**

Exhibition of paintings and sculpture - November 1991.

**1990 - Young Masters Art Trust, Quenelle, Lagos.**

Exhibition of paintings, sculpture and drawings.

**1990 - Exhibition of sculpture and painting** at Master Craft Surulere, Lagos.

- More info on exhibitions available at [www.orimoloye.com](http://www.orimoloye.com)



## WORKS IN PUBLIC COLLECTIONS / OTHER NOTABLE INFO

Shell, Chevron / Texaco, Statoil, Tower Aluminium, Lagos State Government, The Cheltenham Ladies' College, Cheltenham plus several other public and private collections all around the world.

-Two paintings featured in McDougal Littell Literature book (hardback, ISBN-13:978-0618-98379-7 or ISBN-10: 0-618-98379-1), published in the United States. Orimoloye's paintings are featured on pages 899 and 903 respectively.

## SELECTED ART AUCTIONS WITH WORKS SOLD

Years; 2014, 2013, 2011, 2010 - Art House Contemporary, Lagos.  
March, 2011 "Africa Now" - Bonhams, New Bond Street, London.

## SELECTED NEWS FEATURES

- Orimoloye returns with Aso, urges passion for leadership - The Guardian, Friday May 30, 2014.
- Interrogating social media in Orimoloye's Oju – The Guardian, Friday May 17, 2013.
- The Ways of a Genius – Arts, Books & Culture, Thisday, Saturday Newspaper, May 12, 2012.
- Ona.. a metaphor for life's journey – The Guardian, Sunday, May 20, 2012.
- The Narrow Road - Arts & Review, Thisday, Sunday, June 3, 2012.
- Character in the beauty of Art – Arts & Culture supplement, Next on Sunday, 26th June 2011.

## CONTACT DETAILS

[www.orimoloye.com](http://www.orimoloye.com)



Old Yaba (from the genre *Old Yaba*) Oil on board, 2016. 82 x 62 cm

## IWE - THE THOUGHTS. THE THEME

Iwe is a Yoruba word for book. Though, depending on context or in common explicit use, it is often mentioned when talking about academia, a person's intellect, study, education, etc. The word School for instance is expressed as *ile iwe*.

Nigeria is a great nation of resources and talent. It's people are amongst the world's brightest, most gifted and most hard working. This is especially so in academia. There is this cultural drive to excel that comes across. Advanced university degrees are rated very highly, being of great cultural and social significance.

There is absolutely no doubt that education is important. However my sensibilities were challenged in a conversation with a dear friend not too long ago. I was fascinated by his positing that, generally, our very high academic standards and qualifications do not seem apparent societally, when you consider the general state of the nation, it's infrastructure, communities, lifestyle and so on.

This insight coupled with my personal experience growing up in Nigeria and from encounters with the Nigerian diaspora, I think that the realities of the times in which we live are beginning to really question just what "education" means or can mean - in our societal and individual contexts. It is as if some kind of revision of the whole concept is taking place, whether we'll like to acknowledge this or not.

What motivates our quest for scholarly excellence and how far will we go? Once the milestones thereof become ours, how exactly will we use these, precious as they are? How relevant will these milestones be and what problem(s) will they solve?

**Gbenga Orimoloye**

April 2016

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Almighty Father, my utmost gratitude to you for life, good health, the calling, the grace you constantly supply and all you do.

My dearest Gloria, my one and only iyawo.... it's 20 years this year and still getting better! Thank you.

The coolest crew, Zoe, Oluwajomiloju and Faith, I'm so proud of you.

Thank you Mum, family and my dear friends.

My collectors, The Terra Kulture crew, and, every one of the wonderful people I am so blessed to know! Thank you all so much for being a part of my unfolding story.





Sustenance. Oil on board, 2016. 30 x 30 cm