

CONVERSATION WITH CHIDINMA NNOLI

Artist of the Month in December 2022



Chidinma Nnoli was born in 1998, in Nigeria. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Benin. In 2020, she was selected for the Rele Arts Foundation Young Contemporaries exhibition. Chidinma's work, painted predominantly in oils, confronts entrenched structures in our society, including the patriarchal power structure and misogyny. Her work as a visual artist challenges stereotypes, psychology and the cultural conditioning of women.

"I was born in Enugu, Nigeria and I currently live and work in Lagos. I grew up Catholic and much of that Catholic upbringing has become the basis of my work. As a child I was mostly interested in drawing motifs and decided to study fine arts to major in textile design but I changed my mind at the university and majored in painting instead because it was a more flexible means of creating the way I really wanted. I've been practicing in arts since 2018."

On personal education, and creative education viewed locally and globally

I got my Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Benin, Edo state. It was an interesting experience but for the most part the education didn't focus on critical discourse or freedom of expression and how to be an artist when you graduate. I learned to find my own way after I graduated by learning via YouTube and observing other artists online.

Much of my work has been inspired by poems I wrote as a teenager, mostly influenced by my catholic background, I explore my conflict with self and a background mostly saturated with religion and gendered obligations. This is the primary basis of my practice. I am interested in creating paintings that feel like a hazy yet vivid memory while exploring the emotional link between body and space and its reaction to change.

Messaging with art



On Art as a representation of reality or escape from it

I do think art is reflective of contemporary reality but at the same time can be relatable across different cultures and times. I sometimes reference old master paintings in my work because I like to show how historical issues can find its way into contemporary stories.

