

# Lagos Art World: The Emergence of an Artistic Hub on the Global Art Periphery

Jess Castellote and Tobenna Okwuosa

**Abstract:** The global geography of art has changed greatly in recent years. Whereas global art hubs were formerly found only in the West, they now exist in locations all over the world, including Africa. Though some art worlds in Asia and Latin America have been studied in recent times, there is insufficient empirical data on art worlds in Africa. This is a study of the Lagos art world, which shows how an “art system,” with all of its attendant structures and agents, has emerged in the city of Lagos, Nigeria, in the last few years. Lagos reflects the dynamics of globalization and is building up the art infrastructure and the critical mass needed for a sustainable art world: an ambitious and fast-growing group of young local collectors, an art fair, an international photography festival, regular art auctions, new art galleries, historical and critical publications, a university art museum, symposiums, art foundations, residencies, and competitions. Lagos is becoming not only a “global city,” but also a “global art hub.”

**Résumé:** La géographie mondiale de l'art a considérablement évolué ces dernières années. Les centres artistiques mondiaux ne se trouvent plus seulement en Occident, ils existent maintenant dans d'autres régions, notamment en Afrique. Certains mondes de l'art en Asie et en Amérique Latine ont été étudiés récemment, toutefois les données empiriques disponibles sur ceux d'Afrique sont insuffisantes. Voici une étude du monde de l'art de Lagos. Elle démontre comment a émergé dans la ville de Lagos, au Nigéria, au cours de ces dernières années, un « système de l'art, » avec ses structures et ses agents. La ville reflète la dynamique de la mondialisation. Elle a produit une infrastructure artistique et une masse critique nécessaire pour

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*African Studies Review*, Volume 63, Number 1 (March 2020), pp. 170–196

**Jess Castellote** is the Director of the Foundation for Contemporary and Modern Visual Arts, Nigeria. His main area of research is the development and structure of the Nigerian Art System. He is a doctoral student in Art History at Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid. E-mail: jesscastellote@gmail.com

**Tobenna Okwuosa** is a visual artist, art critic, and writer. He is a lecturer in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa, Nigeria. Okwuosa received his PhD in Studio Arts. His areas of research include modern and contemporary Nigerian art practice and history as well as the art market. E-mail: descrollstudio@gmail.com

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doi:10.1017/asr.2019.24

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créer un monde de l'art durable: un mouvement de jeunes collectionneurs ambitieux, une foire d'art, un festival international de la photographie, de fréquentes ventes aux enchères, de nouvelles galeries d'art, des publications historiques et critiques d'art, un musée d'art universitaire, des symposiums, des fondations artistiques, de résidences et concours pour artistes. Lagos est en voie de devenir non seulement une « ville globale », mais également un “centre mondial de l'art.”

**Resumo:** A geografia global da arte sofreu grandes alterações nos últimos anos. Os centros artísticos globais já não se encontram apenas no Ocidente, e hoje é possível encontrá-los noutros lugares, nomeadamente em África. Apesar de haver estudos recentes sobre alguns mundos da arte na Ásia e na América Latina, não dispomos de suficientes dados empíricos relativos aos mundos da arte em África. O presente estudo dedica-se ao mundo da arte em Lagos (Nigéria). Aqui se demonstra que, nos últimos anos, emergiu em Lagos um “sistema de arte,” com as suas estruturas próprias e os seus agentes. Nesta cidade, que reflete as dinâmicas da globalização, está em curso a criação de infraestruturas da arte e da massa crítica necessária a um mundo artístico sustentável: um conjunto ambicioso, e em rápida expansão, de jovens colecionadores locais, uma feira de arte, um festival internacional de fotografia, leilões regulares de obras de arte, novas galerias de arte, publicações de história e de crítica de arte, um museu de arte universitário, simpósios, fundações de arte, residências e concursos para artistas. Lagos está a tornar-se não só uma “cidade global,” como também um “centro de arte global.”

**Keywords:** Lagos; Nigeria; art world; postcolonial modernism; art system; globalization; art market; global art hub

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In the last few decades, the global geography of art has changed and expanded considerably. As Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg have remarked, “The global reality is, in fact, no longer synonymous with the all-encompassing term ‘world,’ but is composed of a multiplicity of worlds. This conclusion is not only valid for societies and cultures at large, but also includes the newly established art worlds” (2013:28). Contemporary art has ceased to be created, distributed, interpreted, and collected exclusively in London, New York, Paris, and other great Euro-American cities. The art world has become the art worlds. In this shift from art world to art worlds, new art hubs keep emerging in what—from a Eurocentric perspective—has traditionally been considered the periphery. Connections between these new and old art worlds have been greatly facilitated by globalism, that is, “networks of connections that span multi-continental distances” (Nye 2002). Cities in Asia and Latin America have already become prominent new art hubs. Lagos, the former political capital and still the economic and cultural capital of Nigeria, is in the process of becoming an art hub as well.

Since Nigeria’s independence from Britain in 1960, the Lagos art world has continued to evolve, becoming one of twenty-first-century Africa’s fastest-growing art economies. Lagos has progressively developed most of the elements that characterize the social system generally described as an

“art world.” Although stating that Nigeria has a financial, educational, or health system might elicit few queries, affirming that Nigeria—and Lagos, in particular—has already developed an “art system” (Luhmann 2000) may be more surprising and require greater clarification. This is the main objective of this article.

Not infrequently, discussions about globalization and the arts are based on artistic, sociological, and anthropological discourses and theories not sufficiently supported by empirical data. Any significant contribution toward the understanding of the Lagos art world—and its position within Nigerian, West African, African, and global networks—must be based on empirical information. Only then it is possible to address “the theoretical discussions of cultural globalization in the high arts” (Quemin 2006:523).

Within the West African art scene, there are several localized art worlds, but despite the recent growth of Accra as a focus of artistic activity, it is only in Senegal and Nigeria that two major art hubs exist: the cities of Dakar and Lagos. Nigeria and Senegal both won their independence in 1960. It is informative to consider Dakar as a point of comparison for artistic activity in Lagos. The Dakar art world got a head start in the 1960s when Léopold Sédar Senghor, the first president of Senegal, a poet and a founding member of the *Négritude* movement, made the arts an integral part of the country’s post-independence modernist and nationalist projects. “*Négritude* held promise as a counter-discourse, developed partly through a process of appropriation and rearticulation of earlier European ideas about Africa and its peoples and partly as an exercise in remembering, inventing, or re-constructing African history, myth, religion, and languages” (Harney 2010:485). In line with the nation’s objective of promoting African values and aesthetics through art and cultural events, Senghor initiated the Festival Mondial des Arts Negres (FESMAN), which was held in Dakar in 1966. Ten years after FESMAN, Nigeria hosted the Second World Festival of Arts and Culture, specifically called Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), in Lagos. In 2010, thirty-three years after FESTAC, the third iteration of the World Festival of Black Arts was held in Dakar. The state-sponsored art projects and institutions in Dakar have facilitated the development of its art world; and its growth owes much to the processes of globalization.

In 1989, the government of Senegal founded the Biennale of Dakar, *Dak’Art*, the first art biennial in sub-Saharan Africa. Originally conceived with the intention of alternating between literature and art, the Biennale has evolved to become, starting in 1996, a biennial exhibition of contemporary African art for African artists only. With its seventh edition held in 2006, *Dak’Art* is today the leading art biennial in Africa. Frank Ugiomoh, in his review, recognizes that “the aims of *Dak’art* provide a means of coming to terms with the knowledge of self, the opening up of knowledge within its formative boundaries, while at the same time keeping its sanctity” (2007:94). Even today, the ideological matrix of the Biennale encourages cutting-edge contemporary African art, and it also gives relevance to the “Senghorian *négritude* and his brand of Modernism” (Enwezor 1998).

Analyzing Dak'Art, Yacouba Konaté (2010), curator of the Biennale in 2006, has aptly considered the complexity of the relationship between art and the city and its role in facilitating the flow of people, artworks, and ideas in such a way as to allow us to view Dakar as a global art city. On her part, Joanna Grabski (2009:7) has also argued strongly that “Dakar’s art world and its city construct, inscribe, and call on each other in the making of an art world city.” Whereas Lagos has a vibrant, fast-growing art market—primary and secondary—that is sustained largely by local patronage, the Dakar art world has “only a small art world, [with] restricted possibilities for information flow” (Fillitz 2016:59). Despite their differences, the Dakar and Lagos art worlds are both part of a larger global network through which art is circulated and consumed.

Before entering into an analysis of the growth and evolution of the Lagos art world, it seems necessary to consider the scale of the analysis. The object of this study is not a hypothetical “African art world” or a “West African art world,” not even a “Nigerian art world,” but rather a localized social system structured around a city: the “Lagos art world.” Some authors, from Jane Jacobs (1969) to Peter James Taylor and Ben Derudder (2016), consider cities, rather than nations, as the basic units of economies. This idea seems applicable to art worlds as well. While in some cases it may be advisable to refer to national art worlds, generally, it would be more accurate to talk of local ones. For Lagos, that is indeed the case. Though Nsukka, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Enugu are important foci of artistic production, distribution, interpretation, or reception, Nigerian arts still insert themselves in global processes mainly through the links and flows emanating from Lagos.

Since Saskia Sassen published *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (1991), several scholars have studied the emergence and development of “global” or “world” cities. Their studies have generally focused on the networks and movement (flows) of capital and services. African cities are increasingly included in these analyses of globalization and cities, but the attention has frequently been directed toward the financial and professional services that link global companies. From the point of view of economic globalization, there is no doubt that Lagos is becoming a “global city.”

Recurrent concepts in the literature on globalization are “flows” (Appadurai 1996) and “networks” (Castells 2009). Manuel Castells understands spaces as realities structured and generated by social relations and, therefore, created by flows. For him, space is more the “space of flows” than the “space of places,” though both are interconnected in the “network society.” However, the reality in most parts of the world is more complex. Africa is not the only place where flows encounter numerous barriers and where economic or cultural nodes find it difficult to interrelate freely and easily and, therefore, networks do not function effectively. James Ferguson (2006:47) suggests that rather than talking of globalization “flowing” through the world, we should think of it “hopping” from one location to another, from one “enclave” to another. He asserts: “Flow is a particularly poor metaphor for the point-to-point connectivity and networking of enclaves

that confront us when we examine Africa's experience of globalization" (2006:47). Of the Nigerian cities, Lagos is the not only the biggest, but also the fastest growing. The speed of its urbanization is remarkable. According to World Bank statistics (2018), while in 1960 only 15 percent of the Nigerian population lived in urban areas, in 2017 almost half of it (49.5 percent) did.

The impetus for the Lagos art world as a structured social system for the production, distribution, interpretation, and reception of art, can be located in the effervescent and euphoric years that culminated with Nigerian independence in 1960. Nevertheless, it was not until the beginning of the twenty-first century that an important component of this social structure, the art market, developed in Lagos. The main focus of this essay is to show the dynamics and structure of the Lagos art world in the twenty-first century. To do that, it is necessary to look briefly at its evolution, particularly, the events of the last years of the twentieth century.

### **Building a Postcolonial Art Infrastructure**

Art worlds are complex social systems supported and made possible by what Howard Becker, more than thirty years ago, referred to as "cooperative networks":

All artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people. Through their cooperation, the art work we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be. The work always shows signs of that cooperation. The forms of cooperation may be ephemeral, but often become more or less routine, producing patterns of collective activity we can call an art world. (Becker 1982:1)

This complex system started taking shape in Nigeria in the years surrounding independence, in a fragmented, tentative, and unstructured way. The networks of communication and exchange of ideas, the structures, the organizations and groups of individuals with interests in various aspects of the art world, the educational and promotional institutions, art historians, critics, dealers, art galleries, and exhibition spaces began to develop more effectively in the cultural atmosphere of optimism and proud nationalism that existed after Nigeria's independence from England.

The first commercial art galleries appeared in Lagos in the 1960s. The first one, LABAC Gallery, was initiated by Afi Ekong. Omotayo Aiyegbusi opened the Mbari Mbayo Gallery in 1964, and Felix Idubor opened the Idubor Art Gallery in 1966. The Bronze Gallery, run by Afi Ekong, opened in the 70s, and Emily Aig-Imoukhuede opened the Gong Gallery in 1974. Quintessence was transformed from a furniture shop to an art and crafts gallery in the 1980s. Didi Museum was established in 1986, Abarts Gallery in 1987, and Mydrim Gallery in 1992. Pendulum Gallery and Nike Art Centre both opened in the final years of the twentieth century (Ikpakronyi 2008:4).

As artist, writer, and philosopher Manuel DeLanda (2006) has pointed out, art worlds are complex and interconnected “social assemblages” that play an increasingly important role, not only in global and local art systems, but also in the economic and cultural structures of cities. Lagos, as political, cultural, and economic capital of the young Nigeria, became in the early postcolonial years the center of the leading practices in modern Nigerian art. Most people who bought art in Lagos in the colonial and early postcolonial periods were expatriates, but by the mid-1980s—when the Lagos art market experienced an unprecedented boom—Nigerians themselves comprised the greater percentage of art buyers and patrons. The art boom of the mid-1980s to the early 1990s happened after the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1987. Ironically, this program, which brought serious economic difficulties to different sectors, caused a boom in the art business. SAP was “shrewdly manipulated by the then Babangida government to enrich some Nigerians,” who worked in the newly established “Merchants Banks, Credit and Finance Companies, and Bureaux du Change.” From 1987 to 1993, these financial institutions made a vast amount of money simply by selling their allocations of foreign exchange to “cash-starved commercial banks and ailing national and multinational industries” (Nzegwu 1999:2). The executives of the new financial institutions formed the nucleus of the art collectors and patrons who emerged in this period. With the banking crisis of 1993, most of these new collectors stopped buying art, and the art market experienced a sharp decline in sales.

### Internal Situations, External Interferences

When SAP’s economic hardships eventually came to light in the 1990s, many Nigerian intellectuals, artists, and other professionals migrated to the West. It was during this period as well that some Nigerian scholars, curators, and artists who had been based in the West started coming home to hold lectures and exhibitions. Their interventions were intended to educate the home-based artists and the art audience on the new trends in global contemporary artistic practices, such as installation art.

In 1996, one Nigerian artist living in Germany, Emeka Udemba, produced an installation titled *Floating Calabashes* on the lagoon adjacent to the Goethe-Institut on Ozumba Mbadiwe Road, Victoria Island, Lagos. This ephemeral art, created with colored calabashes, was heavily criticized. Some critics questioned the perceived merits of installation and postmodernist art and described installation as “anti-art forms.” Krydz Ikwemesi states: “When I am confronted by some postmodernist creations I feel terribly lonely and shaken; I wonder what would form the basis of tomorrow’s archeology, tomorrow’s anthropology, tomorrow’s history” (1999:10). Critical comments on installation art continued for a long time, with some artists and scholars arguing that installation strategy was essentially a traditional African protocol that had been appropriated by Western artists.

The final years of the twentieth century through the first decade of the twenty-first century recorded several critical debates between those whose understanding and practice of art were conditioned by different shades of modernism and academicism and those who had embraced radical global contemporary ideals. While most Nigeria-based artists were still upholding and defending the postcolonial modernist aesthetic, particularly the Natural Synthesis ideology that was propounded by the Zarianists, a small number of artists who had made their names exploring the Natural Synthesis ideology were already producing works that reflected contemporary global trends. (This new order rejected the use of indigenous artistic elements as markers of authenticity in the works of African artists). El Anatsui was one of those artists already working in this mode, and he was also teaching his students to follow the trend. Art historian Susan Mullin Vogel notes that “in the last years of the twentieth century, Anatsui was quietly redirecting his students toward a more contemporary and conceptual way of working, and away from Uli painting and the Nsukka school’s traditional cultural, almost ethnographic emphasis, which had been conceived in the heady 1970s and still carried weight” (2012:30).

The critical debates and other interventions that happened in the last decade of the twentieth century did not bring immediate results. Their effects started manifesting in the early years of the twenty-first century. In 1999, the first art auction in Nigeria—“Before the Hammer Falls”—was organized in Lagos by Chike Nwagbogu of Nimbus Art Centre, and it generated substantial sales and brought a rise in the economic value of modern and contemporary Nigerian art (Okwuosa 2012:82).

### **Lagos Art World Since 2000: Subversive Interventions and Remarkable Developments**

The twenty-first century began with some uncommon interventions and brilliance. Bisi Silva (1962–2019), an independent curator who was then living in Britain and who died in February 2019, initiated the IVAC Year 2000 Project with her Institute of Visual Arts and Culture (IVAC) in collaboration with Sinmi Ogunsanya, the owner of Mydrim Gallery. IVAC was established in 1998 to provide the needed critical discourse on global contemporary artistic practice and culture that was missing in Lagos. The IVAC Year 2000 Project was a series of lectures on contemporary artistic and curatorial practices in England, Japan, Cuba, and South Africa. The speakers were Eddie Chambers (UK), Katy Deepwell (UK), Hiroko Hagiwara (Japan), Gerardo Mosquera (Cuba), and Colin Richards (South Africa). The first guest speaker, Eddie Chambers, titled his presentation: “Some History, Some Identity, Some Nationality in the Work of Some Black Artists in England.” The level of critical thinking found in the works of the black artists that Chambers referenced was at that time lacking in most of the works produced by contemporary Nigerian artists working in Nigeria. Silva later revealed that while Chambers “found the level of

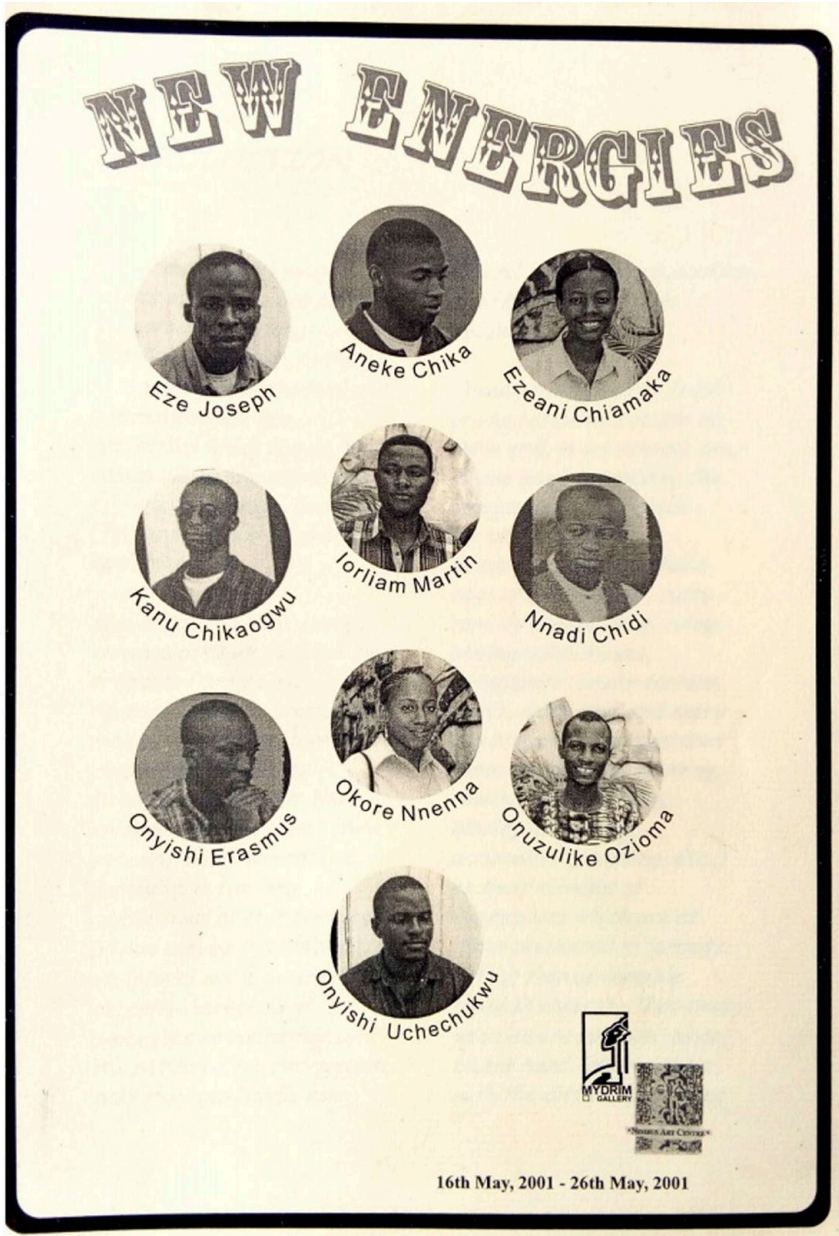
activity within the art sector considerably dynamic, he was nonetheless dismayed by the stasis of artistic output, considering it ‘apolitical’ and ‘ahistorical,’ existing largely in a contextual and temporal vacuum” (2009:40). Other scholars and artists such as dele jegede (2012:47), Ola Oloidi (2012:7), Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie (2009), have expressed views similar to those of Chambers.

In 2001, El Anatsui confronted what he described as “a long crippling syndrome (on the local scene) of orthodoxy and conventionalism” with an exhibition in Lagos of unconventional artworks and installations, including sound art, by his students and young graduates who studied at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The exhibition, which ran concurrently at the Mydrim Gallery and Nimbus Art Centre, both in Lagos, was titled “New Energies” (Figure 1). These young artists (Nnenna Okore, Erasmus Onyishi, Ozioma Onuzulike, Joseph Eze, Uche Onyishi, Chika Aneke, Martins Orliam, Chikadibia Kanu, Chiamaka Ezeani, and Chidi Nnadi) explored “the energies of media” found in their environments by creating works that reestablished the role of art as a critical reflection on existential realities (Anatsui 2001). The exhibition challenged the widely accepted notions of art in Lagos, and by extension the whole of Nigeria. The sound installation by Ozioma Onuzulike, using recordings he had made at terminals, bus stops, and other busy parts of Lagos, was a major pioneering act. Emeka Ogbob, who graduated from Nsukka a couple of years after Onuzulike, started working in sound art and has achieved international recognition as a sound artist. Onuzulike mentioned that Anatsui’s statement, “Art is for all senses,” in a newspaper interview published in *The Guardian*, inspired him to explore sound as an art form in that exhibition. He made the recordings after the artists arrived at Lagos in preparation for the exhibition (personal communication, email, June 11, 2018). The works collectively showed a conscious subversion of Ulism, a Nigerian modernist artistic ideology that was synonymous with the Nsukka Art School for many years. The ideological thrust of the show was in line with the current global understanding that “In the twenty-first century, international curators . . . no longer demand that artworks be recognizably African” (Vogel 2012:100). The show was seriously criticized by those whose ideas of art were largely conservative, and who did not care about the validity and significance of the exhibition within the contemporary postmodernist context. Okechukwu Uwaezuoke, an art journalist, in his evaluation of activities in the Lagos scene in the first half of 2001, asserted that there were “no special landmark events.” He argued that

the rapid trends of the art scene seem to suggest that art is a playground for irresponsible fantasists waiting to unleash their ignorance on the viewers. Among these could be numbered many good-intentioned artists whose lot should normally have been cast with the demented folks....If what the artists of the New Energies had set out to achieve was to prove that experimentation was the in-thing, then it was obviously at the expense of aesthetics. (Uwaezuoke 2001:35)



Figure 1. Cover of the "New Energies" exhibition catalogue.



Uwaezuke's criticism and that of others caused Chika Okeke-Agulu, a Nigerian-born and U.S.-based university professor, artist, critic, and curator, to intervene with a lecture titled "What is Wrong with Installation Art?" given at Jazzhole, Lagos in 2001.

The antagonism that followed the postmodernist and contemporary art trends in the late 1990s and the early 2000s is no longer obvious. There are increasing numbers of artists whose works reflect new ideas and modes in global contemporary art practice. There are now artists who live and work in Lagos, and who participate frequently in international events in different parts of the world. Globalization has played an important role in the creation of cultural and artistic circuits and networks, which have greatly increased the opportunities and the visibility of African artists through the ever-expanding calendar of international exhibitions, biennials, and art fairs. These exchanges are contributing to the shaping of the contemporary African imaginary (Hall 2000).

### Defining Symposiums and Art Discourses

From the early years of the twenty-first century to the present day, there has been a steady increase in the number of symposiums and critical discourses in Lagos on artistic and curatorial practices, art history, and criticism. Much of this intellectual discourse has taken place outside academic institutions—where such activities were previously initiated and held—and it involved mostly professional artists, curators, art writers, and other individuals who work in the private art sector. Some academics have also taken part in these discussions that are held in conventional and alternative art spaces and galleries. In March 2002, Lagos hosted an international conference, “Cities Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Kinshasa, Johannesburg, Lagos” at the Goethe-Institut. This interdisciplinary conference, conceived by the late Okwui Enwezor, the Nigerian-born artistic director of *Documenta 11*, examined the complexities of life in African cities. This international conference was part of a series of dialogues (Democracy Unrealised [2001], Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation [2001], Creolite and Creolization [2002]) that took place in six cities across the globe before the exhibition opened in June 2002 in Kassel. According to Enwezor:

By operating first on the local level (Vienna, Berlin, New Delhi, St. Lucia, and Lagos) and by allowing these public dialogues and critical exchanges to precede the exhibition more than a year before the official unveiling of the Documenta 11 in Kassel, our hope is to dramatize and demonstrate on an immediate level the interdependence of the global paradigm, by revealing how local specificities create new orientations in the global discourse. (2002:4)

Presentations were made by urbanists, artists, architects, economists, sociologists, political scientists, criminologists, writers, intellectuals, and NGOs from Africa and abroad. By bringing such critical intellectual discourse to Lagos, Enwezor also subtly confronted the intellectual apathy and entrenched dichotomy between art practice and intellectualization of practice that most artists experience. Critics have noted the need for Nigerian

artists to reflect strong contemporary issues in their works, because “the contemporary artist is not independent of the contemporary world.”<sup>1</sup>

Many of the exhibitions held in the new galleries (those that began in this century) come with an artist talk and/or a panel discussion. Art centers and foundations such as the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) and the Ben Enwonwu Foundation (BEF) have organized many public lectures and panel discussions on different themes and areas in the arts. For example, the U.S.-based Nigerian artist, Victor Ekpuk, gave a talk about his work which he called “Drawing: Pencil to Pixel” at CCA in 2008. Ekpuk’s explanation of how he explores digital media in his work caused a heated debate (Centre for Contemporary Art 2008). The first African Nobel Laureate in Literature, Wole Soyinka, gave the Third Distinguished Annual Lecture of the Ben Enwonwu Foundation in 2006, titled “Art, Tradition and Modernity.” In the lecture he discussed Chris Ofili’s art practice with dung, the work of Damien Hirst, the Uli School, and other subjects within the context of tradition and modernity. In the concluding part of the lecture, he stated:

A new contemporary wave of which Chris Ofili, the artist with whom I begin this discourse is a part—constantly questions and expands even the modernist parameters of a world outside our own continent, just as the lesser known within the continent itself, continue to refurbish those forms that modernization or religious assaults have thrown onto the scrap heap of neglect and obscurity. (Soyinka 2006:30)

This discourse is one of the major lectures enriching contemporary artistic dialogue and practice in Nigeria. Indeed, there is a rising number of artists, particularly among the younger ones, who are interested in producing art-work with critical content that expresses contemporary issues and themes. Marc-Andre Schmachtel—when he was still the director of the Goethe-Institut in Lagos—noted that “over the last 10 years the artistic discourse has opened up very much internationally, with more and more artists forming part of the world-wide networks of art exchanges, residencies and international workshops” (Kinsman 2015).

### **Daring Advances**

Presenting a cartography of the Nigerian art world in the twenty-first century demands an examination not only of its physical and institutional structures—museums, galleries, auctions, art schools, art foundations, biennials, exhibitions of art, and publications—but also of other intangible aspects that contribute to shaping this art world. These intangibles include the “conventions” articulated by Howard Becker, or the processes of interpretation, legitimization, and validation by critics, historians, curators, cultural agents, collectors, and the other “gatekeepers” of the Nigerian art world.

One problem that currently prevails in Nigeria is that of an art practice that does not give attention to critical content. In the words of Sylvester

Okwunodu Ogbechie, “The landscape of contemporary Nigerian art today is full of moribund ideas and practices, laden with regressive forms from artists who are not focused enough on professional development or too focused on commercial success” (Ogbechie 2009). And dele jegede sees among artists in Lagos, “the race to produce a marketable commodity.” He wonders: “When will representational art be complemented or even challenged by conceptually formidable, temperamentally daunting, or insanely provocative art in Nigeria?” (2012:47). Although many contemporary Nigerian artists practicing in Lagos have continued to produce “marketable commodities,” there are still a few who do not pander to the dominant local aesthetic values. These few cerebral and unconventional artists (some of whom do not reside in Lagos) are among those extending the boundaries of contemporary art practice in Lagos.

Bright Ugochukwu Eke is one of those artists who has shown “conceptually formidable” art in Lagos, with his 2006 “Environs-Scope” exhibition at the Goethe-Institut. Eke exhibited six installations including his seminal piece, *Acid Rain* (2005), composed of acidified water tied in cellophane to resemble water droplets, and suspended with strings (Figure 2). This is his artistic statement on the problems of acid rain caused by oil exploration, extraction, and processing in the Niger Delta. Ozioma Onuzulike (2006) notes that “Bright Eke has elected to be part of the global creative tendency in which commonplace materials and ideas are appropriated for the sake of addressing commonplace (yet crucial and urgent) issues of local and global importance.”

**Figure 2. Bright Ugochukwu Eke, *Acid Rain*, 2005, water, ammonium chloride, cellophane and string, dimensions variable. Installation view at the Goethe-Institut, Lagos 2006. Photo by Tobenna Okwuosa, 2006.**



Eke was one of Anatsui's students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He developed the idea of using water as a medium during his MFA in sculpture which was supervised by Anatsui, who is well known for encouraging students to explore unconventional materials and strategies. Apart from those who were his students at Nsukka, Anatsui's artistic practice has influenced (and continues to influence) many other artists in Nigeria and beyond. Ogbechie (2009) declares that "Anatsui's success as a globally validated installation artist is driving modern Nigerian art in an entirely new direction. The new focus on recycilia [sic] in contemporary Nigerian and African Art bespeaks this paradigmatic shift."

Other noteworthy developments in the contemporary art practice in Lagos at the turn of the century happened in the areas of photography and performance art. Bisi Silva has done much to establish photography as an important form of contemporary artistic practice through lectures, exhibitions, and publications. Silva began her photographic crusade with her IVAC Year 2000 Project, where she clearly stated that the series would "challenge traditional hierarchies by highlighting debates on the place of photographic practice within the visual arts."<sup>2</sup> Photography gained a significant following and acceptance within the first decade of the twenty-first century. A number of those who developed an interest in photography were trained and practicing artists. Some of the new photographers felt the need to operate in groups. The first collective to emerge was Depth of Field (DOF), composed of Kelechi Amadi-Obi, Uchechukwu James-Iroha, Amaize Ojeikere, and Toyin Sokefun. The decision to form DOF came after they attended the fourth African Photography Festival in Bamako, Mali, in 2001, where their photographs were shown in an exhibition curated by Akimbode Akinbiyi, a Nigerian photographer based in Germany (Depth of Field 2003). The collective's first exhibition titled "Lagos Inside" (2003) took place at the French Cultural Centre in Lagos.

In 2007, Silva transformed her Institute of Visual Arts and Culture (IVAC)—which never had a space of its own—into the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), with a space in Yaba, Lagos. CCA opened with a curatorial project titled "Democracy" that featured three solo exhibitions. One was a photography exhibition: "Paradise Lost: Revisiting the Niger Delta" (2008) by George Osodi. CCA has also become known for promoting animation, film, video, and performance art.

Performance art is now a recognized form in Lagos, largely due to the practice of Jelili Atiku (Figure 3). However, before Atiku began creating performance art in 2004, Dilomprizulike, the Junkman from Afrika, had already enacted performances at the Goethe-Institut and at the Junk Museum of Awkward Things in Lagos. Atiku is a sculpture graduate who has achieved great recognition nationally and internationally as a performance artist. He has become one of the African peripatetic artists who "live in a multiverse of many histories, times, and worlds at once" (Clark 2013:200). In 2015, he received the Prince Claus Fund Award as an acknowledgement of his contribution toward the growth of performance art in Nigeria.

**Figure 3. Jelili Atiku, Red Day (In “The Red Series” #17), performance with Peter Alo Oluwatobi, Joe C. Samuel, Vincent Obinka Ikenna, Anthony Ajaero, Akinrinola Abiodun, Taiwo Aiyedogbon, Opoku Mensa, Okafor May, Titilope Salami, Remi Durosinmi-Etti, Adeoye Ogunlesi, Paul Oyetunde, Jamiu Sanni, Omokeko Olufela, and Silas Mensah in Lagos Biennial, Railway Compound, Ebute Metta, Lagos, Nigeria on Thursday October 19, 2017. Photo by Ayo Akinwade, 2017.**



These developments in the Lagos art world are very much in line with what Miguel Rojas-Sotelo has described as “a post-conceptual turn towards relational and site-specific aesthetics, materialization of installation as an art form, and the acceptance of photography and performance art as valid forms of contemporary production” (quoted in Nzewi 2013:214–15). The exploration of global contemporary art idioms by Nigerian artists and other developments in the Lagos art scene have brought some vigor to an art world that was previously characterized by conservatism. Oliver Enwonwu (2013) observes: “In the past few years, the Lagos contemporary art scene has become ‘hotter’ judging by the exhibitions of new cutting-edge work, the growing number of foundations to foster art globally and the auctions aiming to establish a credible art market.”

### **The Anatomy of the Lagos Art World**

In any developed society, the art world is the result of the theory and practice of its main agents—personal, academic, corporate, institutional, and commercial—and the structures in which they operate. A multiplicity of people and institutions share that space: artists, dealers, gallery owners,

historians, private and institutional collectors, critics, curators, journalists, art philosophers, cultural agents, auction houses, museums, biennials, art fairs, art foundations, art competitions and awards, cultural policy makers and administrators, art investors, companies, foreign cultural institutions, and a fast-growing presence on social media and the Internet. The influence of these agents in shaping an art world varies greatly according to cultural and historical circumstances. In the case of Lagos, we are confronted with a local art world in transition but one that has some identifiable features to be analyzed.

As Nigeria's art capital, Lagos is home to the highest number of professional artists in Nigeria. Most of these artists were academically trained through formal education in universities, polytechnics, or colleges of education in Nigeria or overseas. Some of the well-known tertiary institutions that teach art in Nigeria are the University of Nigeria in Nsukka, Enugu State; Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Kaduna State; Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Osun State; University of Benin in Benin City, Edo State; Auchi Polytechnic in Auchi, Edo State; Yaba College of Technology in Lagos, Lagos State; and the Institute of Management and Technology in Enugu, Enugu State. Most of these institutions have evolved certain ideologies, styles, and pedagogical discourses for which they were or are still known. The Nsukka Art School artists were known for their uli art, but the school has also produced renowned artists who do installation art; the Ife Art School is known for Onaism; the Auchi Art School is known as a colorist school; the Yaba Art School is known for their realistic paintings of urban life. Nigerian polytechnics show a strong emphasis on technical and professional formation. Symbolic meaning and theoretical issues (which one gets in a few universities) have little place in a curriculum and a pedagogical narrative geared mainly toward the acquisition of skills. In addition, a number of polytechnics are located in less developed areas of the country with little contact with centers, initiatives, and spaces of cultural activity, not just locally but at the international level as well.

In global art circles there is a vibrant discussion about the meaning, philosophy, objectives, and methodologies most appropriate for art education in the twenty-first century. Unfortunately, this pedagogical debate has barely begun in Nigeria. Most art teachers in Nigerian universities and polytechnics focus on the transmission and acquisition of technical artistic skills. Only a few aim at conveying to their students the critical and theoretical tools that will allow their participation in global discourses of contemporary art. Undoubtedly, this weak institutional artistic foundation is hampering the development of the visual arts in Nigeria. At the end of 2017, sixteen Nigerian universities offered art studies at the tertiary level. In addition, seventeen polytechnics offered programs in art and design. These programs range from traditional fine arts studies to those that focus on design, industrial arts, or applied arts.

Unlike what happens in other African countries, most artworks in the Lagos art market are produced by art school graduates. However, there are

also traditional works and crafts produced by those who did not study art and design formally. One also finds in the art market modern art by non-Nigerians, particularly works by Ghanaians. It is evident that the art market is growing, as is the number of those who are participants in the system.

The introduction of Internet access has had a significant impact on the Nigerian art world. There are now a significant number of artists in Lagos who have their own websites and sell their works via the Internet. They are now active members of what Sara Giannini (2013:54) called the “hyper-interconnected globe.” Olu Oguibe insists that “the Net enables communication and collaboration between content producers within and outside the cultural arena. It also serves as a means of information and commodity exchange—in other words, as an increasingly important element of the global trade in cultures” (2004[1999]:170).

The easy accessibility of global news and information through the Internet and cable television has expanded the horizons of a significant percentage of contemporary Nigerian artists at home, who now see, on a daily basis, art activities in global art worlds such as New York, London, and Paris. These persons have become more global citizens than citizens of a nation-state, and some of them reflect their new global identity and consciousness in their creative works. With the improved condition and democratization of communication, African artists no longer have to live and work in the West to be seen. Nonetheless, Sidney Kasfir (2008:10) maintains that “the African artist working in London or New York is far more likely to receive critical recognition than one in Yaounde, Kampala, or Addis Ababa, not because of any conspiratorial power-brokerage as is sometimes alleged, but because of the far greater visibility in the West of his or her practice.” Things have changed sufficiently in the last few years. Established Nigerian artists in the Diaspora frequently ship their works to Lagos for exhibitions, auctions, and art fairs, taking advantage of its vibrant and financially rewarding art world.

## The Market and Collectors

Factors affecting the production and distribution of art have significant influence on the emergence and development of art hubs, but as Aidan White has indicated, “it is also worth pointing out that, from Florence in the fifteenth century, through Dutch and Flemish cities in the seventeenth century, to post-war New York, the major artistic centres have also tended to represent major concentrations of disposable wealth” (White 2003:252). Lagos is a clear case in point:

Lagos, in 2016, registered 59 percent higher disposable income per household than in the rest of the country. When compared to other major cities in Sub-Saharan Africa, Lagos (USD13,300 average disposable income per household in 2016) stands above Douala (USD6,600)



and Nairobi (USD4,700), but lags behind South African cities such as Cape Town (USD17,000) and Johannesburg (USD20,900). (Euromonitor International 2017)

This increasing growth and spread of disposable income in Lagos has led in recent years to the emergence and expansion of a thriving secondary art market. This is arguably the most significant development in the Lagos art world in this millennium, and further evidence that Lagos is becoming a global art city.

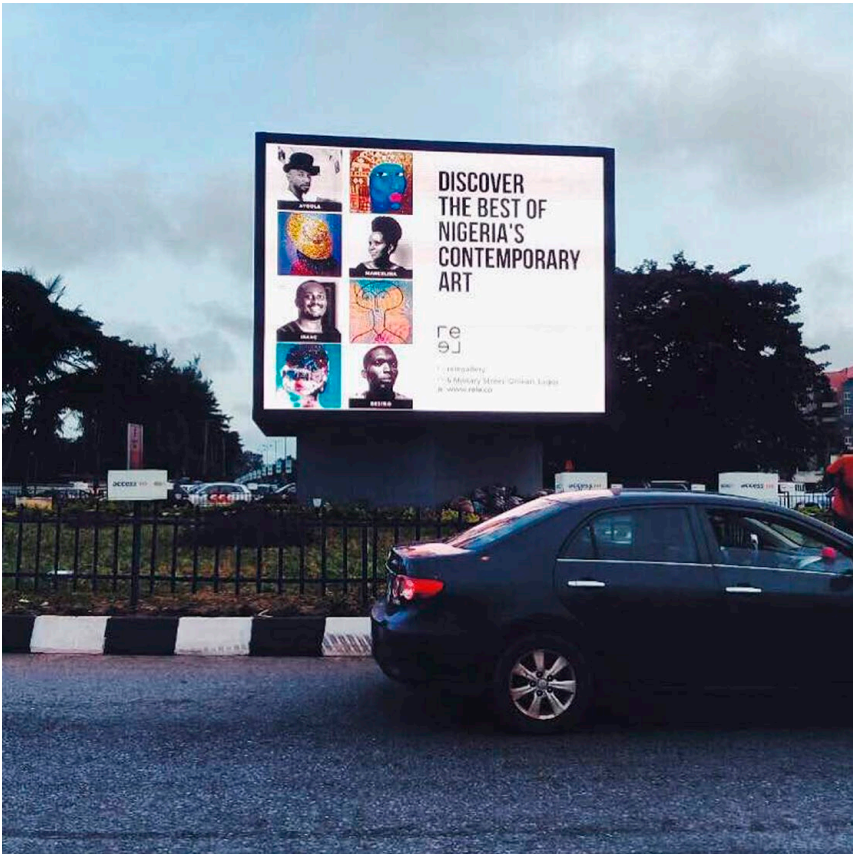
The commercial gallery is a major agent in the art business in Lagos. Since the beginning of the new millennium, more commercial galleries and art dealerships have opened: TerraKulture, Art 21, Alexis Gallery, Red Door Gallery, Rele Gallery, SMO Contemporary, Bloom Art. It has been argued that most of the galleries in Lagos lack professionalism (Oyelola 2003:59; Enwonwu 2013:30), but there are also clear signs of improvement, notably in the relationships between artists, galleries, and collectors, and the spread of internationally accepted practices. Some of the new galleries have been innovative in their programs and in the way they promote their artists. Rele Gallery used billboard advertising in public spaces—the first such use of this medium—to promote their artists (Figure 4). Besides hosting exhibitions and talks in their local spaces, these galleries also participate in international art fairs, biennials, and exhibitions in different parts of the world.

The increasing presence of contemporary Nigerian art produced by artists at home in global art events is a recent development that attests to the recent growth of the Lagos art world. This has been facilitated by the founding of the first art auction house in Nigeria, Arthouse Contemporary, in 2007. Arthouse Contemporary was founded by its CEO Kavita Chellaram, and its first auction was held in April 2008. The global recession of 2008 did not affect the Nigerian economy, and the Lagos art market experienced good growth and buoyancy in that period.

The great success recorded by Arthouse Contemporary caused some commercial galleries to organize their own auctions (which all happened in Lagos; except one that took place in Abuja, the Federal Capital). TerraKulture and Nimbus Gallery collaborated on an auction in December 2008. Tribes Art Gallery had its first auction in December 2009. In April 2010, Nike Art Gallery held its first and only auction. TerraKulture collaborated with Nimbus Art Gallery again to organize an auction called “Golden Jubilee Art Auction: Celebrating 2000 Years of Afrika,” in April 2010. In 2011, TerraKulture organized auctions in Lagos in May and in November, and it also held an auction in Abuja in collaboration with Mydrim Gallery. The two galleries have now launched the TerraKulture Mydrim Gallery (TKMG) Auction House. Signature Gallery joined the auction trend with its first Sogal Auction in October 2014.

The auction results show that Arthouse Contemporary is the leading auction house in Nigeria. Arthouse holds three auctions annually; the third one,

**Figure 4.** A billboard advertisement by Rele Gallery showing Gbolahan Ayoola, Marcellina Akpojotor, Isaac Emokpae, and Sejiro Avoseh, in a public space in Ikoyi, Lagos. Photo courtesy of Rele Gallery.



called “The Affordable Art Auction,” was inaugurated in February 2016. Chellaram states: “The Affordable Art Auction aims to engage emerging markets and the rise of a new collector base.... Each work in the auction is valued below USD1,500....we seek to open more opportunities for artists in Nigeria to sell their work” (Chellaram 2016:6). The secondary art market grew strongly until the first half of 2016, when the Nigerian economy suffered a recession, the worst in almost three decades. However, Nigeria recovered from the recession in the later part of 2017, and the art market is recovering gradually. The activities in the secondary art market have given value to art as an alternative investment. The works of Ben Enwonwu (1917–1994) are the most highly valued in the market. Enwonwu’s new auction record in Nigeria is USD145,000 recorded for a bronze copy of his famous *Anyanwu* (1954–55), commissioned by the Nigerian Federal Government. This bronze copy (ca. 1975; Figure 5) was sold at the Arthouse auction in June 2018.

**Figure 5. Ben Enwonwu, Anyanwu, ca. 1975, bronze, 93 cm. Photo courtesy of Arthouse Contemporary.**



In 2017 there were nine African Art auctions in which there was a predominant or significant presence of artworks by Nigerian artists. Four of them took place in Lagos: Arthouse Contemporary (three) and Sogal Auctions (one). Three others were held in London: Bonhams (two) and Sotheby's (one). The ninth one took place at Piasa, in Paris. In total, 323 (225 in Lagos and 98 in London and Paris) artworks by 140 Nigerian artists were sold at these auctions for a total value of USD5,539,648. A more detailed analysis of this basic data shows a growing trend toward the movement of top artworks from Lagos to London; while the value of works by Nigerian artists sold at the African Art auctions in London was USD4,655,076, the value of those sold in Lagos was only USD858,188 (Castellote 2018).

In the absence of strong institutional or corporate support for the arts in Nigeria, art collectors play a determining role in shaping the Nigerian art scene. In 2012, the estimated total number of regular art collectors (indigenous and expatriate) in Lagos was about seventy-five.<sup>3</sup> Out of this number, Prince Yemisi Shyllon is widely said to have the largest collection consisting of mostly modern and contemporary art. Shyllon is the main sponsor of an art museum that will be named for him, currently under construction at the Pan-Atlantic University in Lagos. It will be the first privately constructed museum built to international standards in Lagos. Although Lagos has several government agencies that are responsible for promoting visual art, such as the National Gallery of Art (NGA) and the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), none of them has much impact on the Lagos art world. Indeed, the influential structures that exist in the Lagos art world are mostly private initiatives. One curator of the National Gallery of Art, Simon Ikpakronyi, hints at the federal government's lack of strong commitment to the visual arts when he says: "While it is true that the NGA is the apex agency for the promotion of modern Nigerian visual art, but it seems also that due to the government's attitude to visual art, the NGA alone cannot meet all the expectations of Nigerian visual artists" (Ikpakronyi 2010:12).

Lagos also has a run-down national museum that was established in 1957. Artists will, on occasion, rent the museum's gallery space for exhibitions. The museum's premises were used for the four editions of ArtExpo Lagos (2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011), a three-day art fair that involved members of the Art Galleries Association of Nigeria (AGAN). Though it was a great idea, unfortunately the ArtExpo never lived up to expectations nor had a significant impact on the Lagos art world. Apart from the ArtExpo, NGA has sponsored a few publications on art, conferences, and other projects. But generally, government sponsorship is hardly visible, and most projects are privately funded. There is also some degree of sponsorship from corporate bodies and foundations (local and foreign).

Foreign institutions and cultural centers such as the Goethe-Institut and the French Cultural Centre have been very supportive of Nigerian artists and the local art world through sponsored exhibitions and other art-related events in their venues. They have given more support to those

whose work is unconventional and shows critical thinking, such as *The Junkman from Afrika* and *Bright Ugochukwu Eke*. Most of their remarkable events were held in the conducive and spacious places they have occupied in Victoria Island and Ikoyi for several years—French Cultural Centre and Alliance Française occupied a building on Kingsway Road, Ikoyi; and Goethe-Institut occupied a large part of a big building on Ozumba Mbadiwe Road, Victoria Island.

### Contemporary Initiatives

More foundations, projects, events, art spaces, and establishments have been created in Lagos since the beginning of the millennium. The Ben Enwonwu Foundation (BEF) was established by his family in 2003. The African Artist Foundation (AAF) was established in 2007 by Azu Nwagbogu. Yinka Fisher and Jess Castellote started the Foundation for Contemporary and Modern Visual Arts (FCMVA) in 2014. The Revolving Art Incubator (RAI) was opened in 2016 by Jumoke Sanwo, while Sandra Mbanefo Obiagu started the Sandra Obiagu Contemporary (SMO) also around that time.

In 2010, Azu Nwagbogu initiated the first major photography event in the country, the LagosPhoto Festival. Through an extensive program of events spanning a month and presenting exhibitions, public interventions, workshops, and seminars, the festival has been able to engage local audiences and attract significant global interest (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. LagosPhoto Festival 2018 grand opening reception at the Federal Printing Press Building, Lagos Island. Photo by Benson Ibeabuchi, 2018.**



In 2016, Tokini Peterside started Art X, the first international art fair, in Lagos. The first edition in November 2016 and the second one in November 2017 received over 15,000 visitors. This figure may seem small compared to the number of those attending major global art fairs, but it is significant in the context of the growing Nigerian and African art market. The number clearly demonstrates the potential for future growth. As Peterside puts it: “There are many industry players who believe that the collector base is saturated and stagnant, whereas I take a different view. I believe there are thousands of as-yet-unknown aspiring collectors locally, who can be cultivated to become avid supporters of our artists and art practitioners” (Castellote 2018). Another major development in the Lagos art scene is the Lagos Biennial, initiated by Folakunle Oshun. This is the first biennial in Nigeria, and its maiden edition, “Living on the Edge,” was held between October 14 and November 22, 2017. This event did not have as much impact as it deserved, due mainly to insufficient funding.

These initiatives are slowly succeeding in bringing audiences to art events and linking pan-African collectors, artists, and galleries, thereby contributing toward the establishment of the city of Lagos as a global art city. The growth in the Lagos art world has continued to inspire new projects with an increasing number of people getting involved. In the last ten years, several important books have been published, mostly on modern and contemporary Nigerian art. Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie published *Ben Enwonwu: The Making of an African Modernist* (2008) and *Making History: The Femi Akinsanya African Art Collection* (2011). Ben C. Bosah and George Edozie co-authored *101 Nigerian Artists: A Celebration of Modern Nigerian Art* (2010); Bosah also published *The Art of Nigerian Women* in 2017. Chika Okeke-Agulu published *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-century Nigeria* (2015) and *Obiora Udechukwu: Line, Image, Text* (2017). Onyema Offoedu-Okeke, a trained architect and self-taught artist, wrote *The Artists of Nigeria* (2012). Also in 2012, a book on Nigerian art collectors, *Contemporary Nigerian Art in Lagos Private Collections: New Trees in an Old Forest*, edited by Jess Castellote, was published in Nigeria. Castellote also co-authored book monographs on two contemporary Nigerian artists: *Osaghae: Visual Chronicles of a Society in Flux* (2014) and *Kolade Oshinowo* (2016). Art criticism, writing, and book publication are important aspects of every art world, but the progress in these areas is not on a par with progress recorded in other parts of the local art structure in Lagos. As Chike Aniakor, a professor of art history and criticism, has rightly noted, “In a country like Nigeria, the quality of art criticism that one glimpses from our newspapers and journals betrays classical ineptitude in the critical evaluation of artists and their works” (2005:81). What Pierre Bourdieu (1993) would call the “habitus” of each of the agents in the art field is shaped by the profoundly entrenched traditions, skills and dispositions that we possess due to our life experiences. This is obvious in Nigeria.

## Conclusion

Lagos is becoming a global city, and global cities are more than just economic or political centers. As Taylor has rightly observed, they are “important cultural centres and they are the sites where global social practices are emerging. In other words, they can be interpreted as the organizational nodes of global governance and global civil society as well as of global economy” (2005:706).

The increasing flows and exchanges of capital, goods, services, and people into and from Africa—that is, economic globalization—have had an impact also on the entry of the continent into cultural globalization processes. The transnational flow of cultural goods, ideas, people, and practices has in recent years increased considerably. This development has been particularly acute in the big African metropolises. Economic and cultural globalization has resulted in a hierarchical positioning of cities in the global map. In this tiered order, Lagos has been for the past decades one of the fastest-growing cities, not only in population, but also in its position in this hierarchy of cities. In other words, Lagos is rapidly developing into a “global city,” and its art world is becoming a new “global art hub.” In this pyramidal order of cities, the biggest African metropolises do not automatically occupy the highest positions. In their most recent ranking (GaWC 2018) of cities based on business service connections, using an interlocking network model based on the location of services firms (Taylor 2001), the first African city is Johannesburg. Continuing down the list are—in this order—Casablanca, Lagos, Nairobi, Cape Town, Kampala, Harare, and Accra. In the 2018 Global Cities Report published by A.T. Kearney (2018), Johannesburg occupies also the first position, followed by Cairo, Cape Town, Nairobi, Lagos, Abidjan, Accra, Casablanca, and Kinshasa. These lists may be criticized (Myers 2018) for being too reductive in their understanding of economic globalization, but they are still useful to confirm that, at least in financial terms, Lagos is rapidly becoming a “global city.”

Unfortunately, there are no similar resources to produce a valid analytical study on the impact of globalization on cultural networks in different African cities. Global city rankings give an indication of the integration of African cities into global economic networks, but in the cultural map of Africa, the population and economic weight of these big cities does not always translate into a higher position in the cultural order. The importance of Dakar, Marrakesh, Kampala, or Luanda as vibrant artistic hubs, despite their smaller size, buttresses the case that population and economic weight do not necessarily make a city a “global art hub.”

As a result of the cultural, economic, and political shifts in Nigerian society in the past fifteen years, its art world—and particularly, its art market—has grown considerably. Lagos’ image as a cultural hub is expanding, and a new set of art collectors is emerging. Although interest in Nigerian traditional art is very low, contemporary art is perceived more and more by the social elites as a desirable “commodity” along with other

luxury items. However, the Nigerian art world appears to be divided into two camps: on the one side is an art world focused on an art produced, distributed, and received by the local elites as a “commodity,” and on the other side a much smaller faction, but one which is connected via transnational discourses to the global art world. All in all, the Nigerian art world is largely self-referential and suffers from what Quemin has called the “national territorial factor.”

The territorial dimension certainly has not disappeared. Fashionable phenomena such as “globalization,” mixing and cultural relativism and the tremendous opening to other world cultures, touted in the world of contemporary art in recent years, are to a large extent illusory.... Although artistic events have spread around the globe, this has not led to a displacement of the most important zones or even to any real sharing between center and periphery. (Quemin 2006:546)

Despite its growth, the Nigerian art world remains not only self-referential, but also peripheral. Access to international art markets generally occurs through art fairs and biennials, international auctions, major exhibitions in museums and international galleries, or through the presence of Nigerian art in worldwide publications. Until the beginning of this century, these channels were largely inaccessible for Nigerian artists. The situation is progressively changing, and not only due to the physical presence of Nigerian artists outside the country’s borders. Increasingly, the Internet works as a conduit for artistic communications between the local and the global, between the centers and the peripheries.

“The social production of art is a collective practice that depends on complex interactions between artists and a range of ‘art world’ actors—or art makers—such as patrons, dealers, critics, gallery owners and collectors” (While 2003:252). There is no doubt that the Lagos art world is more and more part of the global network of relationships identified by Nathalie Heinich (2004). Lagos is becoming an important “art hub” in the Global South. Siddhartha Mitter, in his recent article published in *The New York Times*, notes the dynamic and chaotic nature of Lagos, a city where “commerce, music, fashion, have long thrived amid the chaos. And now, with its solid collector base and thickening web of galleries and alternative spaces, the art ‘ecosystem’—the word everyone uses—is achieving critical mass” (2019). Piece by piece, an art world is taking shape in Lagos.

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## Notes

1. Okwui Enwezor quoted by Chika Okeke-Agulu in his newspaper article "Documenta XI Heats Up the Lagos Scene," published in *The Guardian*, March 16, 2002, 28; cited in Emmanuelle Spiesse's article "Lagos: A City Under Siege (The Works and Words of Lagos Artists)," in *Modern History of Visual Art in Southern Nigeria*, 2003, 67.
2. The Institute of Visual Art and Culture's general aims and objectives, and the specific objectives of its IVAC Year 2000 Project are included in the leaflet with the title "Lectures on Contemporary Art and Culture Featuring International Speakers 2000."
3. The estimated established Nigerian collectors were about twenty-five, the established expatriate collectors were about twenty, and the emerging collectors were between twenty and thirty. See "Collectors and their Collections" by Jess Castellote (2012:60).