

ISSUE #33

- Shristi Sainani

Exhibition : *Working Through an Impasse*

Artist : *Ndidi Dike*

Venue : *Art Twenty One (Lagos, Nigeria)*

Dates : *17th July - 25th September 2021*



Building Blocks of Desire and Consumption - Wall piece (2021)

source : Art Twenty One

Ndidi Dike (b.1960, London) is a leading visual-artist based in the city of Lagos in Nigeria. Her work is engrained in research which explores personal and cultural narratives to examine global records of the past. Using a variety of media, she addresses concerns of, or related to, memory, gender inequality, consumerism, indigenous and colonial history.

Dike is a sculptor, also working in the mediums of photography, video, collage, painting and installation. She graduated from the University of Nigeria with a Diploma in Music Education, followed by a B.A in Fine and Applied Arts in 1984 where she majored in Mixed Media Painting.

Her solo show, *Working Through an Impasse*, explores the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The exhibition sheds light on the social, economic and political impact of the virus on Nigeria. *Dike* explains, “*What’s more, I found myself overly concerned about the virus on Nigeria, my country with its population of 200 million plus people. What about NEPA? The daily wagers who make up 80 percent of our informal economy, and who live precariously from day-to-day in and beyond Lagos, Nigeria’s heartbeat and commercial center. How on earth can we adhere to social distancing in our markets and “face-me-face you” accommodation?*”

Favourites from the show ‘*Working Through an Impasse*’ are:

- **Panoramic Meditation :**
Windscreen wiper totem , 2020–2021



source : *Art Twenty One*

The *Panoramic Meditation* series evokes the representational character of found objects. In the case of the mixed-media installation '*Panoramic Meditation: Windscreen wiper totem (2020-2021)*', *Dike* calls upon the daily wage workers who earn their bread through cleaning glass-panes of cars passing by, on busy roads with heavy '*go-slow*'. She addresses the loss of their source of income.

• The Luxury of Distance: Between Empathy and Apathy,

2020 – 2021



source : Art Twenty One

'The Luxury of Distance: Between Empathy and Apathy (2020 - 2021)' puts forth basins on pedestals, with an overhung organisation of gold-painted soap dispensers. Measuring 800 x 243.84 cm, the installation beautifully composes the most familiar domestic entities in the era of the pandemic. With its purity, austerity and grace, the installation is reminiscent of the popular music video on COVID-19 by Nigerian artiste, Cobhams Asuquo which says,

*You too much o, you get power
You can conquer anything
Only if you hear word and obey laws
And exercise discipline
Wash your hands, love one another
We go win o*

- **Panoramic Meditation – Set of ٦, ٢٠٢١**



source : Art Twenty One

Ceremonial masks are vital to traditional art of the people in Nigeria. They hold spiritual and religious significance, dominantly used in communal events or ritualistic dance performance. The *Panoramic Meditation* series evokes the representational character of found objects. For this installation, Dike assembles a variety of masks facing the viewer, instead of having a ‘face to face’ with one another. The backdrop seems like that of a local market, a common location of gathering for people. Through this work, *Dike* comments on the pandemic stripping away a sense of community, and forcing people into isolation. The viewer experiences each mask individually, rather than in the traditional context of a communal celebration.

REFERENCES

Art Twenty One :

Art Twenty One. (2021). Retrieved 30 July 2021, from <https://arttwentyone.ng>.