

ART

Nontando Mposo

THE Cape Town Art Fair took place last weekend, bringing together an amalgamation of artists, art collectors, art buyers, gallerists and art lovers for a three-day art feast.

Held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from Friday to Sunday, the fair showcased some of the best contemporary art by emerging and established artists.

At the moment, South Africa boasts a vibrant and growing art scene with young artists such as Nelson Makamo, Tony Gum, Jody Paulsen and Zanele Muholi reaching international recognition.

With the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, the biggest contemporary museum in Africa, opening its doors at the V&A Waterfront in September, Cape Town is a melting pot where the art scene is in the spotlight.

I spoke to London-based art dealer Ayo Adeyinka, the founder of Tafeta, a private art dealership specialising in 20th century and contemporary African arts. Adeyinka's previous projects include advising on Africa Now, the annual sales of contemporary African arts at Bonhams, and gallery clients have ranged from individual collectors to established institutions like the National Museum of African Arts (Smithsonian Institution) in Washington, DC.

Adeyinka was responsible for bringing the sculpture *Champagne Kid: Fallen* by Yinka Shonibare MBE, a world-renowned British-Nigerian artist living in London, to the Cape Town Art Fair. The image was one of the most photographed artworks at the fair, with it doing the rounds on social media and various publications.

Yinka Shonibare MBE explores cultural identity in various media such as installations (such as the one on the cover), painting and screen prints. A private welcome event for Adeyinka and Tafeta was held at the Aguele home in Bantry Bay before the fair with some South African artists in attendance.

Why art? I always loved art, and I started out as a collector early which came in handy when I determined to switch from my previous career in finance as an accountant.

What are your thoughts on how the world views and understand African art at the moment?

It's certainly on an upward trend, but we still have lots to do. Contemporary art is getting a lot of attention, and the classical arts are well documented – but there is still a knowledge gap with the early to mid-20th century works. We



CONTEMPORARY: Ayo Adeyinka, the founder of London-based Tafeta, brought the Yinka Shonibare MBE sculpture to the Cape Town Art Fair, which was one of the most photographed pieces.

Picture: DAVID OTOKPA

AFRICAN ART PLACED ON A PEDESTAL



certainly need more publications focused on the modernist space.

Yinka Shonibare MBE's signature includes using mannequins with no face or head and also beautiful batik fabrics such as that worn by the *Champagne Kid: Fallen*. Why is this important so important? (Ayo Adeyinka answers on behalf of the artist) The absence of a head was done deliberately to make it difficult to

Artist Jody Paulsen's installation of US Vogue editor Anna Wintour was also one of the most photographed images at the Cape Town Art Fair. His solo exhibition titled *Pushing Thirty* is on display at the SMAC Gallery in Woodstock until March 25.

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read racial identity into his artworks. The fabric, which today is generally accepted as "African", was inspired by Indonesian design, mass-produced by the Dutch and eventually sold to the colonies in West Africa. It was in the 1960s that the material became a new sign of African identity and independence. Having described himself as a "post-colonial" hybrid, Shonibare's use of this fabric questions the meaning of cultural and national definitions.

Your thoughts on the current African scene and artists? Quite impressive, and the quality and diversity of production across the continent is refreshing. We just need to follow that up with the institutional support required so that these works are seen by a much wider audience.

Tell us about your experience at the CT Art Fair. I loved spending time with some of the artists. That was actually a highlight of this visit. Thanks to Onibespoke founder Lungi Morrison for hosting the private welcome event where Tafeta got to meet and interact with young leading artists from South Africa – Nelson Makamo, Tony Gum and Atang Tshikare.

I was also pleasantly taken aback by how incredibly young some of the South African artists were... it made me wonder what I did with my 20s. The presentation of our booth was made easier by the fact that we had one of Yinka Shonibare's iconic sculptures, so we gave it as much prominence as possible. We really enjoyed the fair.

How important is the act of collaboration in the arts industry to you? Collaboration in the industry is of utmost importance, in my opinion, especially across the African continent. We're currently working with one or two artists – we'll let you know when the time is right.

What is integral to the work of an artist? Consistency

Instagram bans 'nude' video of Himba woman

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A RECENT video post of a beautiful Himba woman celebrating her culturally-adorned hair and attire to the musical musings of Solange Knowles's *Don't Touch My Hair*, posted by photographer Trevor Stuurman on his Instagram page in October 10 last year was removed by the social media platform for not complying with the community rules.

The women as per tradition had their breast exposed. The Himba are an indigenous people

of Namibia, who are famous for their red ochre covered skin.

The women are known for the distinct hair and striking jewellery they adorn. Apart from the jewellery and their headdresses, they can be seen bare-breasted, while wearing a traditional skirt made from calfskin leather.

It is their bare breasts that have recently become the subject of censorship on the image-sharing social media platform Instagram.

This was the motive for Stuurman's exhibition at the Cape Town Art Fair where he showcased a

handful of the Himba women in their traditional attires.

His Instagram post during the fair, a video clip of his exhibition, garnered over a million views.

The context of his initial post was centred on the cultural significance and adornment of the native Himba women's hair, he explained.

"The post was meant as a celebration of this as I have used my page on Instagram to celebrate fashion and culture globally, but particularly on the African continent, as this is my home and first frame of reference.

"This exhibition seeks to tackle the hypersexualisation of the female form, particularly the black female body. The photographs were taken in an urban setting; illustrating that what is deemed 'traditional' and 'primitive' does and should exist symbiotically within modernity. The women exhibited are important and instrumental in dismantling the notion that one is obliged to choose between 'culture' and 'modernity'.

"The photos seek to dispel the understanding that the naked body is a sexualised body."



CULTURE: A Himba woman from Namibia displays her hair decorated with red ochre.

Picture: TREVOR STUURMAN