

ARTS

# The woman putting Lagos on the art map

Tokini Peterside gave up law to promote contemporary African artists in her home city. Lucy Bannerman meets her

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Lucy Bannerman

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The art fair organiser Tokini Peterside  
ZAC FRACKELTON FOR THE TIMES

Ayo Adeyinka says he has noticed a marked shift in the people buying art from his gallery, Tafeta, in central London, which specialises in contemporary African art. His clients used to be mainly Nigerians of a certain age, but he has recently sold three pieces for £10,000 to a British-Nigerian lawyer in her mid-twenties. “That’s new.”

Fresh from exhibiting work at the 1:54 fair in Somerset House, Adeyinka is looking forward to going to Lagos next month. “I’m expecting the same energy there. I’m hearing lots of good things about the young entrepreneurs [visiting] the Tech Space and I’m hoping to make collectors out of one or two of them.”

There’s another advantage to opening up the art market beyond the usual big-money buyers, he says. “Creators will get bored making work if the only people who they can sell to are the ones with the houses in the country. That’s not to say they don’t appreciate selling to big collectors, but a different audience gives a different energy. It’s good for everyone if the power centre is more diverse.”