

CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | LONDON | 1 SEPTEMBER 2023

CHRISTIE'S COLLABORATES WITH MUSEUM OF WEST AFRICAN ART (MOWAA) TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CREATIVE DISTRICT AND INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

WORKS DONATED BY KEHINDE WILEY, YINKA SHONIBARE,
TUNJI ADENIYI-JONES, LAKWENA MACIVER AND
VICTOR EHIKHAMENOR
TO BE OFFERED DURING FRIEZE WEEK AS PART OF
CHRISTIE'S 20/21 SALE SERIES

ADDITIONAL ARTISTS TO BE ANNOUNCED



From left to right: Tunji Adeniyi-Jones (b. 1992, UK), Yinka Shonibare (b. 1962, London), Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977, Los Angeles)
Lakwena Maciver (b. 1986, London), Victor Ehikhamenor (b. 1970, Nigeria)*

London – Christie's and the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) in Nigeria are collaborating to raise funds for MOWAA and its initiatives to create a cultural ecosystem in Benin City, based on the art of the past, present and future. A number of artists have generously agreed to donate original works of art to the auction, including Kehinde Wiley, Yinka Shonibare, Tunji Adeniyi-Jones, Lakwena Maciver and Victor Ehikhamenor, with additional artists to be announced. Proceeds from the sale of the works will go towards MOWAA initiatives including the presentation of the Nigerian Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia, 2024—commissioned by the Governor of Edo State and also curated by Aindrea Emelife—and the 20-acre Creative District, including the Rainforest Gallery.

Designed by the Dakar-based architecture firm Worofila, the Rainforest Gallery will be dedicated to showcasing Modern and Contemporary art, as well as historic exhibitions.

Aindrea Emelife, Curator for the Nigerian Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia; Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, the Museum of West African Art: *"MOWAA is thrilled to partner with Christie's during this year's Frieze London. Through the generosity of artists and collectors we are able to bring a collection of incredible works to auction. This will directly benefit core parts of our mission and creative initiatives from providing critical infrastructure and programming to supporting contemporary creatives and cultural heritage specialists in West Africa. I am deeply grateful to all of the artists for their advocacy and support. MOWAA presents an important moment for us all. This is not just an opportunity for Africa, but for the world. How can we imagine the art of tomorrow when we don't really know the full expanse of today or our many pasts? By investigating, researching, looking back and dreaming, MOWAA allow us to tell a fuller story of the world. There is power in the imaginary and in discovery. We must come together and re-dream. And, we must know who we are; all of us."*

Anthea Peers, President EMEA, Christie's: *"The London art community is coming together this October to celebrate 20 years of Frieze Art Fair and the city's unique and pivotal position within the global art ecosystem. Christie's collaboration with MOWAA for our London sales epitomises the vibrancy of the capital, highlighting the international vision of artists whose works have been so generously donated to support this seminal institution in West Africa. We are delighted to showcase these works within our Frieze Week programming."*

Isabel Bardawil, Specialist, Post-War and Contemporary Art, Christie's, London: *"Christie's is proud to collaborate with MOWAA in the third phase of their fundraising initiatives. Having partnered with Aindrea Emelife on Bold Black British, an exhibition held at Christie's in 2021, we are thrilled to collaborate again as she brings her curatorial vision for MOWAA and the Nigerian Pavilion in Venice to the forefront in London. Contemporary art from Africa and the diaspora has been a seminal element of our Frieze Week programming since 2020, and includes our ongoing relationship with 1-54, now in its fourth year, and the presentation of the Sina Jina Collection, the largest collection of contemporary art from Africa and the diaspora to be offered at auction, in 2022. We look forward to welcoming our clients to view the incredible works so generously donated by artists and private collectors to support MOWAA, as London celebrates 20 years of Frieze art fair."*

The Nigerian Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia, 2024 will be curated by Aindrea Emelife. Eight artists have been selected to be featured in the group exhibition: Tunji Adeniyi-Jones; Ndidi Dike; Onyeka Igwe; Toyin Ojih Odutola; Abraham Oghobase; Precious Okoyomon; Yinka Shonibare CBE RA; and Fatimah Tuggar. Emelife has asked them to respond to the theme and title *Nigeria Imaginary*. Once the presentation at the Biennale has concluded in November of next year, the exhibition will travel to international institutions, after which it will inaugurate the Rainforest Gallery at MOWAA as it opens to the public in 2025.

PRESS CONTACTS:

Christie's Communications – Sara Macdonald | +44 (0)20 7752 3136 | saramacdonald@christies.com
MOWAA Communications – Temi Williams-Davies | +44 749 657 1120 | Temi.williams-davies@emowaa.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

***Photographers credits:** Tunji Adeniyi-Jones (Photography: On White Wall), Yinka Shonibare (Photography: Tom Jamieson), Kehinde Wiley (Photography: Brad Ogbonna), Lakwena Maciver (Photography: Danika Magdalena), Victor Ehikhamenor (Photography: Ayobami Ogungbe)

About the artists

Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977, Los Angeles) is an American artist best known for his portraits that render people of colour in the traditional settings of Old Master paintings. Wiley's work brings art history face-to-face with contemporary culture, using the visual rhetoric of the heroic, the powerful, the majestic and the sublime to celebrate Black and brown people the artist has met throughout the world. In 2018

Wiley became the first African-American artist to paint an official U.S. Presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. Former U.S. President Barack Obama selected Wiley for this honour.

Tunji Adeniyi-Jones (b. 1992, UK), born and educated in the UK and now living and working in the USA, his practice is inspired by the ancient history of West Africa and its attendant mythology, and by his Yoruba heritage. Addressing the perception of the black body within Western painting – and in particular, its association with physicality – Adeniyi-Jones uses the body as both narrative instrument and primary tool of communication. His paintings emerge from a perspective of what the artist describes as ‘cultural addition, combination and collaboration’.

Yinka Shonibare CBE RA (b. 1962) in London, UK, studied Fine Art at Byam Shaw School of Art, London (1989) and received his MFA from Goldsmiths, University of London (1991). His interdisciplinary practice uses citations of Western art history and literature to question the validity of contemporary cultural and national identities within the context of globalisation. Through examining race, class and the construction of cultural identity, his works comment on the tangled interrelationship between Africa and Europe, and their respective economic and political histories.

Victor Ehikhamenor (b. 1970, Nigeria) is a Nigerian-American multidisciplinary visual artist and writer known for his vibrant and incisive works that engage with African cultural heritage, its resonance within the global African diaspora, and the postcolonial politics of his native Nigeria. Ehikhamenor’s work has been exhibited worldwide, including at the first Nigerian Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017. He has also been included in solo and group exhibitions at museums, galleries, and biennials including the Pinakothek der Moderne (Munich, Germany), Fondation Blachère (France) and St. Paul’s Cathedral, (London, UK).

Lakwena Maciver (b. 1986, London) combines vibrant colour and bold text in her joyful and gently subversive work. Her paintings, murals and installations often reference everyday shared experiences and popular culture, such as songs, fashion and basketball. Based in London, Lakwena’s work has been shown internationally in cities including London, Paris, Rotterdam, New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Miami, and at institutions including the Tate Modern, Tate Britain, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Somerset House, the Southbank Centre in London and the Kunsthal Rotterdam.

About MOWAA

The EMOWAA Trust was established in 2019 as a not-for-profit foundation incorporated as a company limited by guarantee (like many educational and not-for-profit organisations in Nigeria). It is the promoter of the planned Museum for West African Art (MOWAA) and is currently in the process of developing the 20-acre Creative District in the historic heart of Benin City, now under construction. The MOWAA Complex will collect, preserve and display works from the artistic heritage of West Africa, connecting them to the work of today’s artists in West Africa. MOWAA will also provide infrastructure, research and education, as well as help establish building opportunities for scholars and creative professionals across West Africa.

About the Nigerian Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2024

Nigeria will present its national pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, from 20 April to 24 November 2024. The eight artists to be featured in the group exhibition are Tunji Adeniyi-Jones, Ndidi Dike, Onyeka Igwe, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Abraham Oghobase, Precious Okoyomon, Yinka Shonibare CBE RA and Fatimah Tuggar.

The Edo State Governor, His Excellency Godwin Obaseki, is the commissioner of the Pavilion and has requested its organisation by the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) in Benin City, Edo State to be realised on behalf of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its Ministry of Culture and Information.

As commissioner, Governor Obaseki selected Nigerian-British curator Aindrea Emelife—who serves as the Contemporary and Modern Art curator at MOWAA—as curator of the exhibition. Emelife has selected artists to present works in response to the theme and title *Nigeria Imaginary*.

About Aindrea Emelife

Aindrea Emelife is the Curator, Modern and Contemporary at MOWAA (Museum of West African Art, Edo). A Nigerian-British curator and art historian, she specialises in modern and contemporary art with a focus on questions around colonial and decolonial histories in Africa, transnationalism and the politics of representation.

Born in London, UK, Emelife studied at The Courtauld Institute of Art before embarking on a multifaceted career as a curator and art historian, producing highly acclaimed exhibitions for museums, galleries and private collections. Recent exhibitions include *BLACK VENUS*, a survey of the legacy of the Black woman in visual culture, which opened at Fotografiska NY and will tour to MOAD (San Francisco, USA) and Somerset House (London, UK) in 2023. Emelife’s first book, *A Brief History of Protest Art*, was published by Tate in March 2022. Emelife has contributed to exhibition catalogues and publications, most recently including *Revising Modern British Art* (Lund Humphries, 2022). In 2021, Emelife was appointed to the Mayor of London’s Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.

About Christie’s

Founded in 1766, Christie’s is a world-leading art and luxury business with a physical presence in 46 countries throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, and Asia Pacific, and flagship [international sales hubs](#) in New York, London, Hong Kong, Paris and Geneva. Renowned and trusted for our expert live and online-only auctions, as well as bespoke [Private Sales](#), Christie’s unparalleled network of specialists offers our clients a full portfolio of [global services](#), including art appraisal, art financing, international real estate and education. Christie’s [auctions](#) span more than [80 art and luxury categories](#), at price points ranging from \$500 to over \$100

million. Christie's has sold 8 of the 10 most important single-owner collections in history, achieved the world record price for an artwork at auction, launched the first fully on-chain auction platform dedicated to exceptional NFT art and manages an investment fund to support innovative startups in the art market. Christie's is also committed to advancing responsible culture throughout its business and communities worldwide. To learn more, browse, bid, discover, and join us for the best of art and luxury at christies.com or by downloading Christie's apps.

** Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium.*

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

