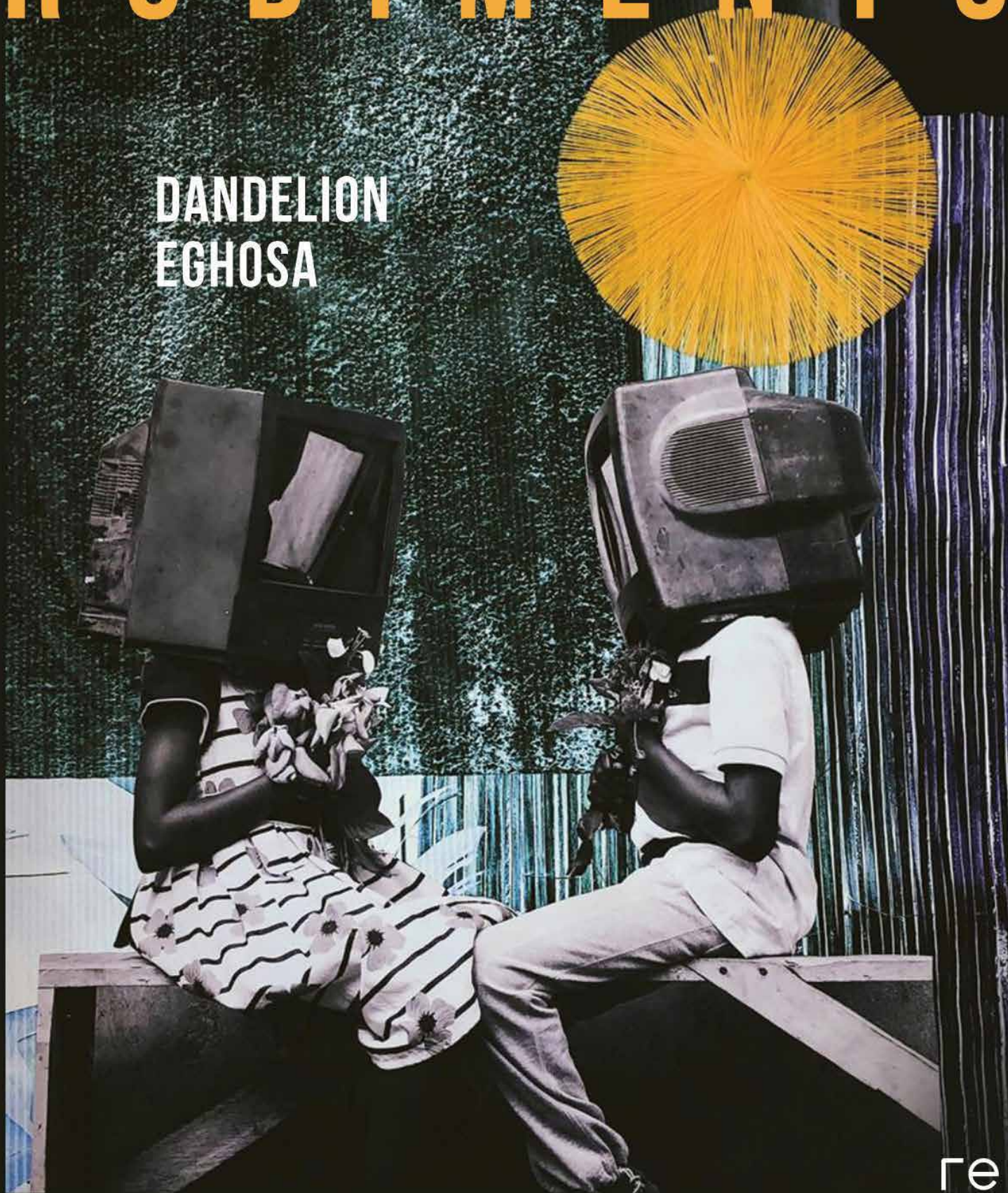


UNSPOKEN RUDIMENTS

DANDELION
EGHOSA



DANDELION
EGHO
EGHOSA

U N S P
O K E N

R U D I M
E N T S

Curatorial Statement

Rele Gallery is pleased to present “Unspoken Rudiments”, the first solo exhibition of multimedia artist, Dandelion Eghosa. The entire exhibition is an expression of inherent gender forms and existential principles of sexuality that are often silenced and ignored. Comprising of 2 distinct body of work “Home” and “Is This a Woman?” – the exhibition draws from personal experiences and encounters in a society laced with contradictions.

As a conceptual artist, Eghosa adopts the juxtaposition of photography and analogue collage experimentation to document the changing social trajectory of her immediate community as it relates to gender, sex and sexuality. These themes are immediately reminiscent of the work of South African visual artist and activist Zanele Muholi whose work not only reimagines black identity but also challenges the oppressive standards of beauty. While Muholi mainly creates histrionic self-portraits, Eghosa’s forms are layered with cut-out paper portraits, acrylic paint and most recently embroidery.

In the first body of work, Eghosa re-examines the notion of “Home” – visiting places and re-living childhood experiences and traditions that were once familiar, and of which now feels foreign and uncomfortable. In “I See You Seeing Me”, a young boy and girl sit on a bench with their bodies facing each other, both are holding flowers and old black and white television sets replace their heads. This image among many others in the ‘Home’ series is Eghosa’s way of understanding the parameters that are set very early on in one’s life and the subtle effect it has in shaping one’s future. With ‘Is This A Woman?’ series, Eghosa addresses the intolerance that exists within the society towards persons that identify themselves differently. In addition, Eghosa will present a short film titled “Ahoemeon- egbe” which means “love for one another” in Esan Language. Here, she explores perspectives on the meaning of love with older women in her home town in Ekpoma in a bid to understand if love is still love when you realize certain truths about a person.

With Unspoken Rudiments, Dandelion dives into uncharted territory using a layered approach of complex visual forms. She confronts the current realities and examines the future of a generation threatened by policies which restricts their freedom. The exhibition pushes the boundaries of stereotypes, such which is not commonly done in a society like ours. It is the artist’s means of challenging the viewers on the need for tolerance irrespective of gender and sexuality.



Is This A Woman? I
Mixed Media on Paper
32.5 x 46 inches
2019



Is This A Woman? II
Mixed Media on Paper
32.5 x 46 inches
2019



Is This A Woman? III
Mixed Media
32.5 x 46 inches
2019



Is This A Woman? IV
Mixed Media on Paper
46 x 32.5 inches
2019



Is This Colour, Is This Sex, Is This Poetry? I
Mixed Media on Paper
32.5 x 46 inches
2019



Is This Colour, Is This Sex, Is This Poetry? II
Mixed Media on Paper
32.5 x 46 inches
2019

Speaking Bodies



It has to be that a body carries within itself a certain consciousness that is unspoken yet apparent. I say this in response to a photograph from Dandelion Eghosa's Unspoken Rudiments. In the photograph, a woman is lying on a fading blue-patched floor, eyes closed. She is wearing high heeled boots and a black dress that ends around her thighs. On the floor beside her is a pair of sunglasses. At the edge of the photograph are sprouts of what is probably a flowerbed. Her body is spread out sensuously in a rectangle of sunlight. Her eyes are closed but her body is awake as if to say, "Yes, I know." But what does a body know?

In another photograph the same woman, at the same location, is lying on her chest. Her back is arched sensuously. Her limbs, long and tender, spread above and below her. But this time her eyes are open, and she looks directly into the camera. There is a small hint of suspicion in her eyes. She knows she is being watched, and it might be correct to say she knows that she might even be desired.

The question of what a body is saying seems to linger when one looks at Eghosa's photographs. Was she considering this question while creating the photographs? Was she listening to what the bodies of these people might be saying? It appears so. The postures in the photographs are tender yet weighty. They do not only speak, they translate. Even without any overtness we recognize immediately that this is about love, about desire. But we are not the only ones who have come to recognize this—Eghosa's photographs demonstrate how the body itself

recognizes what it loves, what it desires, and how it constitutes itself to translate these.

Bodies are of course acutely aware. They are aware first by reason of a need to survive: of hunger, of heat, of cold, of pain. But bodies are also aware of desire, of love. How then does a body constitute itself in a community that labels the kind of love it wants as illegitimate?

Sometimes a mask reveals more than it hides. In another set of images two people on a beach are dressed in flowing wedding gowns. They are wearing large, rounded, feminine hats. The photograph is monochromatic, so it hard to tell what color the hat is. What is even harder to tell, at first consideration, is the gender of the people in the images. Because they are dressed in women clothes it is easy to assume that they're female. But on closer look, in one of the images, we can tell that the person looking beneath the gown of another figure is male.

His beard is dark and almost unnoticeable below his hat. This subtle reveal by the photographer communes even further with the idea of unspoken rudiments. The mask is there, yet the body exists exactly how it wants, regardless of whatever labels we might place on it.

To take ownership of one's body one has to first listen to what their body is saying. The process of listening to one's own body is an intimate, individual thing. In two of Eghosa's photographs a woman is touching her body tenderly. The kind of intimacy

in these photographs seeks to move beyond approximation to precision—the precision of how a body might be loved. The individuality of this process is further heightened by the anonymity of the figures in both photographs. What is presented is only the essential: a body and its owner in a knowing embrace.

B Again, the idea of a mask. In many patriarchal societies women have survived by speaking in codes of silence. This silence—worn as a mask—reveals an inner intent, message, thought or feeling decipherable only by the initiated. And who are the initiated? I am speaking here about women of a community that has suffered collective domination, women that have had to conform to societal demands. It is inside this society of initiates that Eghosa has chosen to create *Aheomeo- egbe*, a film on the viewpoints of women in rural communities and what they consider to be the meaning of love.

Aheomeo- egbe is Esan for Love. In the film, Eghosa contemplates the strides feminism has made in local communities and the effects it has had on the lives of women in these societies. Yet what seems of interest to Eghosa is how one's definition of love changes as one ages. What is the disposition of these women towards love now? What does the knowledge provided by hindsight afford them? Eghosa's journey into the lingua franca of silence practiced by these women evokes a new voice from them. This voice is one of poignancy. These women, now old, seem to long for something else. But time is stubborn, stiff, irreversible.

Yet it is not only the memory of others that seems important to Eghosa. In another body of work titled *Home* Eghosa focuses on her childhood memories. Memory is never a single, solid unit—it is a collection

of multiple instances. This is why the word recollect exists. When we remember, we gather together bits and pieces of events, people, places, sounds, feelings. Memory is therefore a collage. The images in *Home* seem to acknowledge this. Each image in the series look like a set of layers and textures joined together to form a single image.

How does one perform childhood? This consideration is an obvious motif in the images from *Home*. The images show two children—probably teenagers—seated on a bench, clasping flowers to their chest. A child is expected to be a good, infallible, pretty, living thing. This seems like a simple task but anyone that has ever been a child knows that it is an impossible idea—children are like every other human being: fallible, problematic, hopeful, alive.

What stands out in these images is perhaps what also makes them peculiar to Eghosa's memories of her own childhood. The children in the images have large television sets around their heads so that their identities are absent. What we see when we look at children is a reflection of what we expect of them. But deep in their minds their individuality remains, growing with them. Is this why when we grow into adults we become unrecognizable to our parents? Regardless, Eghosa's work appears to be teaching us to look at children closely, not just as models to be beaten into a shape we desire, but as individuals with peculiar personalities. And she has taken us on this journey through her own memories.

Yinka Elujoba
is a Nigeria writer and art
critic living in Lagos



I See You See Me 1
Mixed Media on Canvas
39.5 x 58 inches
2019



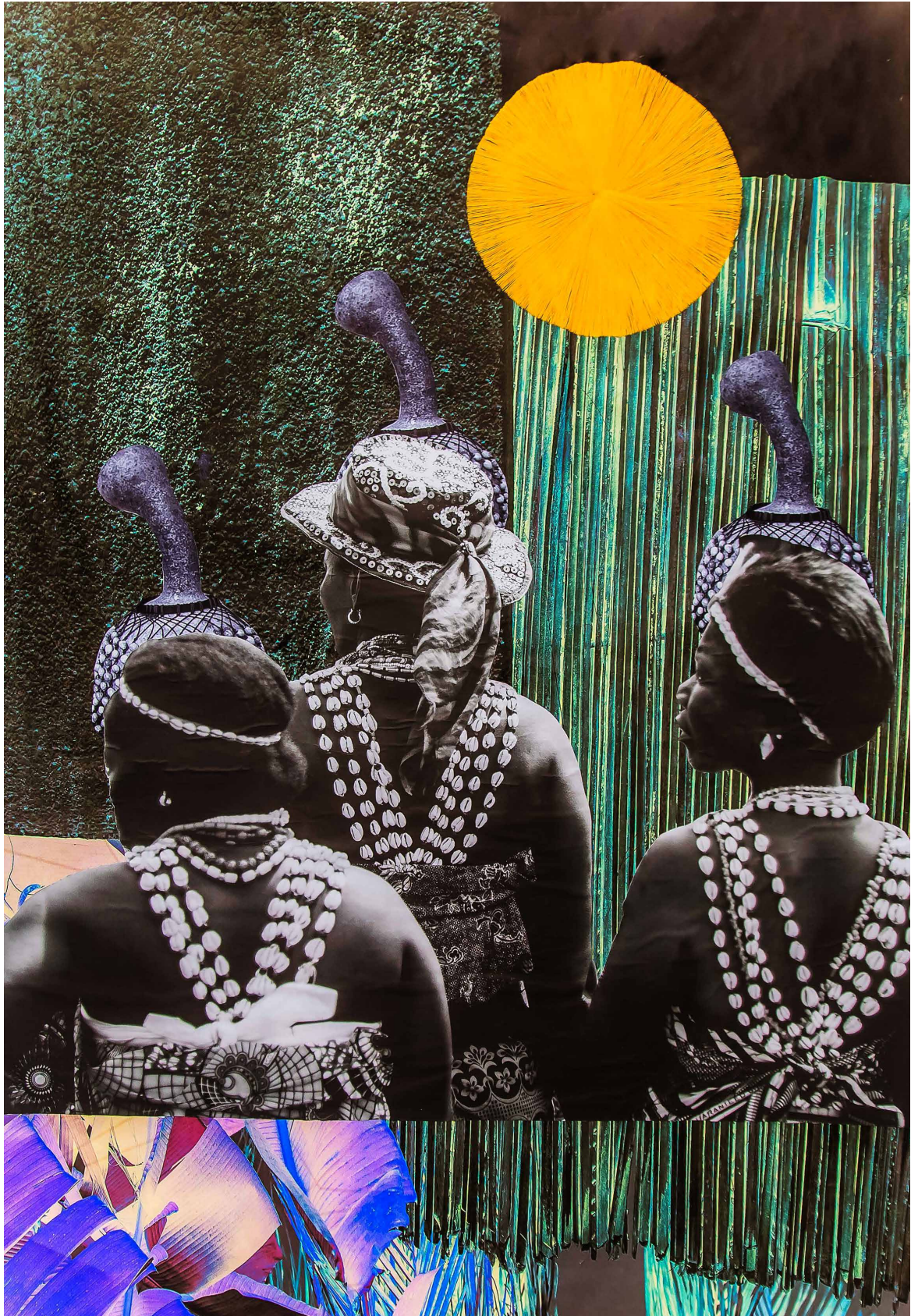
I See You See Me II
Mixed Media on Canvas
39.5 x 58 inches
2019



A Lake That Bears My Name I
Mixed Media on Canvas
32.5 x 37 inches
2019



A Lake That Bears My Name II
 Mixed Media on Canvas
 32.5 x 37 inches
 2019



A Song of Three Voices
Mixed Media on Canvas
39.5 x 58 inches
2019



Rhythm of Tenderness I
32.5 x 38 inches
Mixed Media on Canvas
2019



Rhythm of
Tenderness II
Mixed Media on Canvas
32.5 x 37 inches
2019



Rhythm of Tenderness III
Mixed Media on Canvas
32.5 x 37 inches
2019



Surrendering to the Shimmering Spray
Mixed Media on Canvas
39.5 x 58 inches
2019

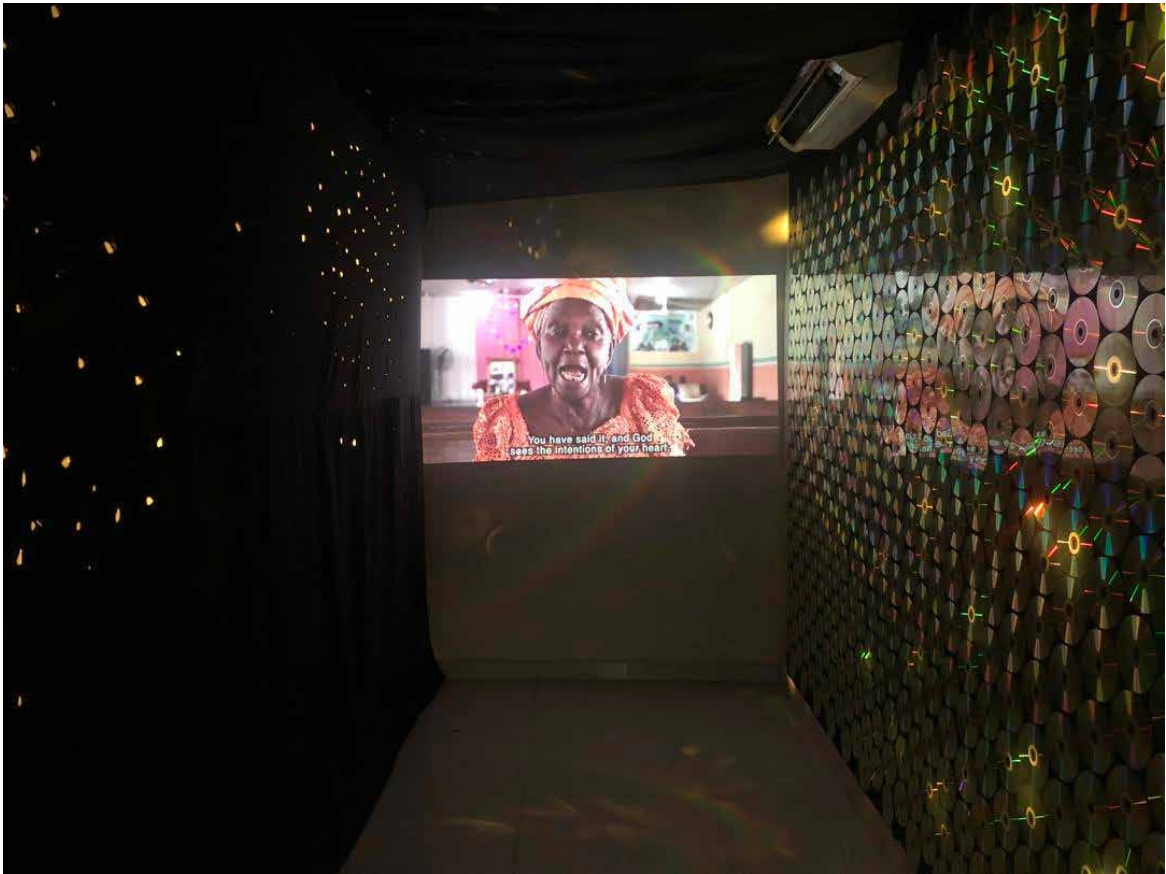
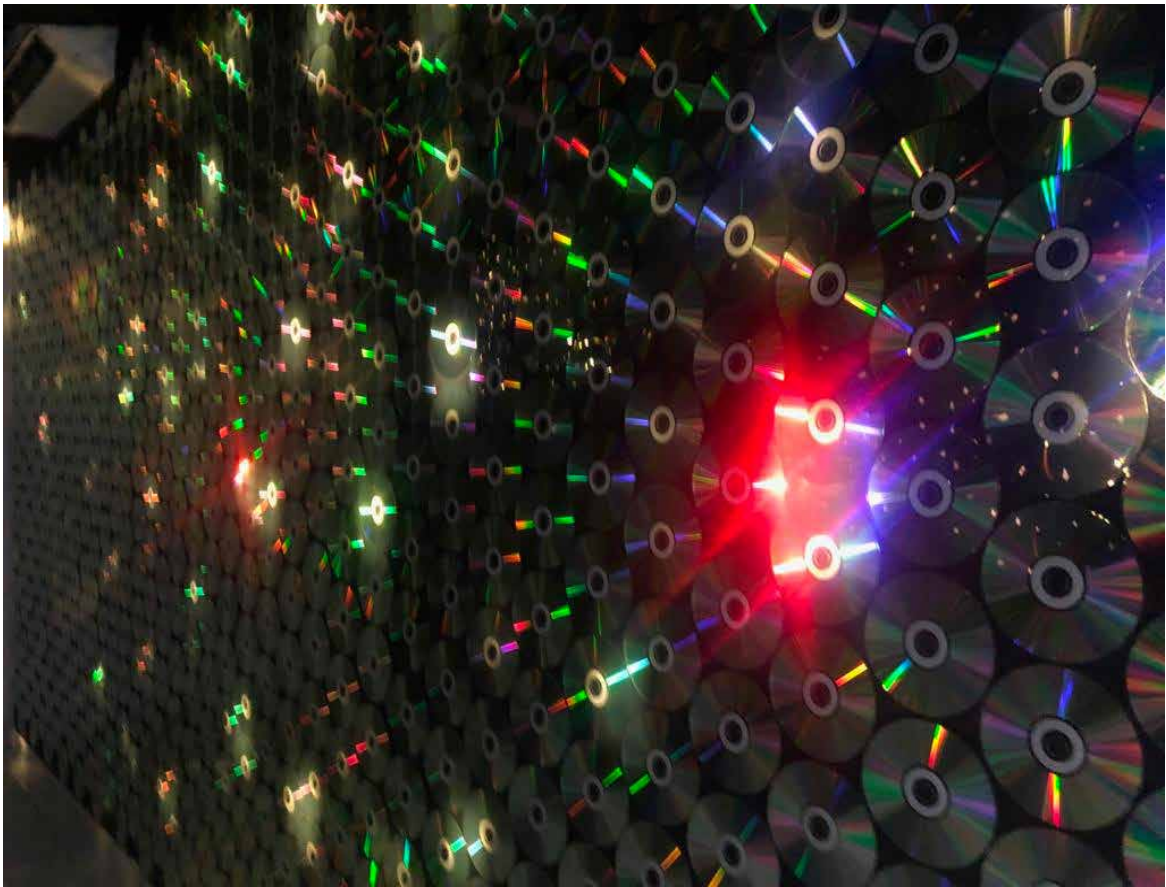


Surrendering to the Shimmering Spray 1
Mixed Media on Canvas
32.5 x 37 inches
2019

The Thinking Space 2019

Installation







Dandelion Eghosa

Dandelion is a photographer and multimedia artist from Edo State. She graduated with honours in Modern Language from Ambrose Ali University, Benin City in 2014 and has practiced as a professional artist since then. She is a 2018 Young Contemporaries Alumni.

In March 2018, Dandelion was selected as one of the four artists featured as part of the group exhibition, "The E- qualities of Women" at The National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare. She was also selected to participate in the inaugural Experiential Pavilion at the Art Summit Nigeria in October 2018. She was shortlisted for the Photography and Social Justice Fellowship by the Magnum Foundation. Her work has been acquired by reputable collections and also featured at art auctions, Magazines and African literature journals such as Brittle Paper and Blush + Brews Zine have published her work.

As a conceptual artist, Eghosa adopts the juxtaposition of photography and analogue collage experimentation in her creative output. Her forms which are layered with cut- out paper portraits, acrylic paint and her most recent embroidery technique, documents the changing social trajectory of her immediate community as it relates to gender, sex and sexuality; paying special attention to the mental health of its members. Eghosa offers a fresh perspective on sexuality in Nigeria.

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