

SPOTLIGHT

# Spotlight Multidisciplinary artist Ken Nwadiogbu

Championed by Simon Butler

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Above Portrait of Ken Nwadiogbu, courtesy of the artist



Above Courtesy of the artist

Interview KEN NWADIOGBU

26 July 2023

In 2016, Simon Butler set up Migrate Art to use the power of the art world to create social change. It collaborates with some of the world’s most renowned contemporary artists to raise funds for displaced and homeless communities across the globe. In 2021, Butler met multidisciplinary artist Ken Nwadiogbu and enlisted his help too.

Butler says: “I met Ken through a mutual friend, shortly after he had moved to London from Lagos in Nigeria. Most of the people I knew in London were feeling quite fatigued by Covid and the various lockdowns, and energy in the city felt quite low. Ken came to the city full of life with such a refreshing energy, which I knew I wanted to be around more of – it was the perfect antidote to lockdown. We first met in his temporary studio in Tottenham, and after chatting over a bottle of Corona (the

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embracing hyperrealistic charcoal drawing before moving on to more conceptual works and a wider array of techniques, focusing on painting and installation. He says: “My influences and inspirations come from a confluence of personal experiences, social commentary, and the desire to create.

“My most significant accomplishment thus far has been gaining acceptance to the Royal College of Art for my Masters in Painting. Coming from a civil engineering background without any formal art training, this milestone holds immense importance to me. Completing my studies in September this year fills me with excitement as I anticipate receiving my certificate and dedicating it to my late father. He held a deep belief in the value of education, and this achievement will undoubtedly bring him great joy in heaven.”

In October, Nwadiogbu will also be presenting new work as part of a solo exhibition at the Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in London. Through a visual exploration of images captured in London, the exhibition will examine the experiences and challenges faced by Black immigrants in the UK.

Butler says: “Ken’s work mixes together a multitude of stories and addresses many of the most pressing issues of our time including displacement, Black representation, migration and socio-political control, but does so in a way that guides you through his journey with compassion and kindness. He is joyful and playful in all aspects of his life, but is dedicated and serious when it comes to his art practice.”

He adds: “He has a rare genuineness and authenticity that means he has a positive impact on anyone he meets and any room he steps into. I really look forward to seeing how his work and career develop over the next few years, as he deserves all the success that comes his way.”

### *About the champion*



Deeply affected by a visit to the Calais Jungle in 2016, Simon Butler decided to use his experience working in contemporary art galleries and with contemporary artists to help in some way. In just seven years, the social enterprise he created, Migrate Art, has raised over £1.5 million for its charity partners and

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also sourced unusual materials from around the globe, such as pencils salvaged from the school of the demolished Calais camp, and sent them to artists to create brand new work with.

“He has a rare genuineness and authenticity that means he has a positive impact on anyone he meets and any room he steps into.”



Above - Courtesy of the artist

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Nigeria

*Education*

Civil Engineering BSc at the University of Lagos  
Painting MA at the Royal College of Art

*Awards, Accolades*

Future Africa Awards – 2019  
Outstanding Personalities, Guardian Life – 2019  
Founder, Contemporalism

Royal Academy Summer Exhibition

*Spiritual guides, Mentors*

God is the greatest!

*Advice*

Self-investment is the best thing you can do for yourself.

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