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| MAY 3, 2020

## **Gerald Chukwuma's New Works "Ikwokirikwo: Dance of the Spirits" Showing in Berlin** **(https://thesoleadventurer.com/gerald-chukwumas-new-works-ikwokirikwo-dance-of-the-spirits-showing-in-berlin/)**

The Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in Berlin presents a mixed-media exhibition titled "Ikwokirikwo: Dance of the Spirits" by Nigerian artist, Gerald Chukwuma. The show, opening on May 9, captures and represents mediations of the *Ikwokirikwo* dance, an ancient and almost forgotten tradition of the Igbo people in Nigeria.

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Gerardo Chulwuma's New Works "Ikwojinkwo: Dance of the Spirits" Showing in Berlin





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Gerald Chukwuma, "After", (2020), mixed media. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

*Ikwokirikwo* is a form of communication combining elements of the Igbo culture, religion, ritual and invocation. It is a dance performed by a woman to lure warriors. "To make these works", says Chukwuma, "I had to go where the dancers go when they dance, to enter that same state of elevated consciousness. During all the time I spent with them, I never saw a single written document; but it's hard to imagine how words would capture it – a quality that certain very specific movements of the body have acquired over centuries – but art has that power. To perform what the spirit feels – to invoke what the dancers invoke."

According to the Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, the size and vibrancy of works in the exhibition, created over three months, reflect the painstaking process involved in their production – of building, cutting, nailing, burning, chiselling, and painting. The spiralling figures draw the viewer into their dance and the flashes of colour.

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Chukwuma describes his work as a visual orchestra; the mix of woods like a series of bass tones, the use of fire to bring out the black, nails hinting at percussion, playing with found pieces from aluminium cans and phone cards. “Beautiful, durable, and colourful”, they form the melody.

For many years, the artist's work has drawn inspiration from Uli art. A gift from Awa, the goddess of earth, these patterns and designs are traditionally applied to women's bodies or the walls of a house, disappearing after a few days or when rain arrives to wash them away. In Chukwuma's hands, they become not merely transient but transcendent.

Chukwuma (b. 1973) lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria. He graduated in 2003 with first-class honours in Fine and Applied Arts from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. As one of Nigeria's fast-rising contemporary artists, he is noted for his intricately crafted sculptures on wood panels. The use of traditional Uli and Nsibidi symbols links his work to the Nsukka art tradition, which is credited with expanding the Igbo cultural aesthetic in modern interpretations. He explores migration as a constant process of transformation and reinvention.

Gerald Chukwuma's New Works "Ikwokirikwo: Dance of the Spirits" Showing in Berlin



In the course of his career, Chukwuma has participated in numerous exhibitions in Nigeria and internationally. His solo presentations in recent years include "Wrinkles", Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London (2019); "Standing Ovation", Gallery 1957, Accra (2017); "People's Paradise", Temple Muse, Lagos (2016); "Soaking Up Beauty", Constant Capital, Lagos (2014) and "Highlife II", Ethnocentrique, Lagos (2013). Selected group exhibitions include showing at 1-54 London with Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery (2019); "Kubatana", curated by Kristin Hjellegjerde, Vesfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Norway (2019); "A Journey into Contemporary African Art", Belvedere Art Space, Beirut, Lebanon (2010); ART X Lagos, Civic Center Lagos (2018); The Art Story, Cartool Art Gallery, UAE (2018).

"Ikwokirikwo: Dance of the Spirits" opens to the public from May 9 – June 13, 2020, at the [Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery](https://kristinhjellegjerde.com/). (<https://kristinhjellegjerde.com/>) Berlin.

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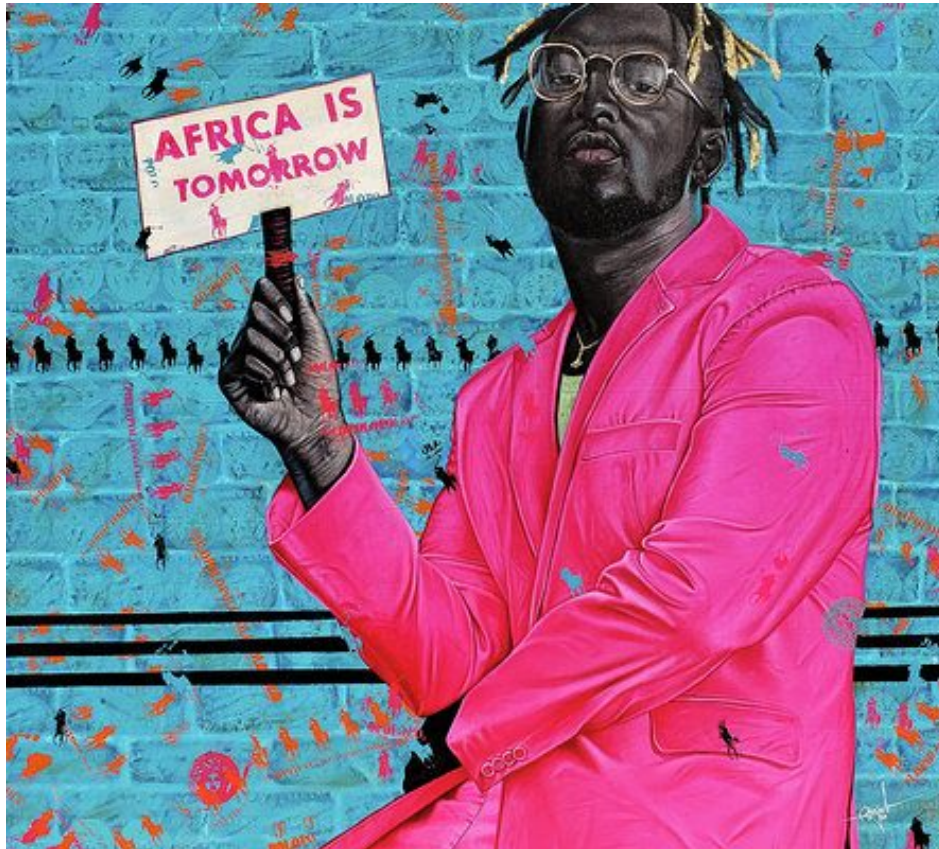
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