

# ART X Lagos: Reinforcing Visual Arts As Component Of Creative Industry

By **Yemi Adebisi** - September 29, 2018

*Senior Brand Manager, Seven Up, Segun Ogunleye (left); Founder/Director, ART X Lagos, Tokini Peterside (centre); and Group Head, Corporate Communications & External Affairs, Access Bank Plc, Amaechi Okobi during the briefing.*

**LAGOS** – “After the success of ART X Lagos 2017, we are delighted to return for a third edition. We are validated in our decision to develop this vital platform for the growth and increased visibility of African artists and galleries. This would have been impossible without the phenomenal support of the galleries, sponsors and partners, who took a huge leap of faith and committed to support us from ground zero, for which we are most grateful. In six weeks, we will open the doors to ART X Lagos 2018. We look forward to welcoming a vast and varied, local and international audience as we seek to reinforce Lagos’ position as an emergent cultural capital on our continent.”

This was part of the opening speech presented by Tokini Peterside, Founder and Director of ART X Lagos at a press parley held recently.

Announcing the take off of the third edition of the annual fair, from Friday 2nd November to Sunday 4th November 2018, the West Africa’s premier international art fair is billed to hold at The Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos and it plays host to some of Africa’s most sought-after established and emerging artists, as well as leading galleries.

This edition will host 18 prestigious galleries from a variety of countries worldwide, such as: Art House – The Space (Nigeria), Addis Fine Art (Ethiopia), Circle Art Agency (Kenya), Stevenson Gallery (South Africa), Gallery 1957 (Ghana), Tafeta (United Kingdom), Tiwani Contemporary (United Kingdom), Nike Art Gallery (Nigeria), and Out of Africa Gallery (Spain) amongst others.

These galleries were chosen by a Selection Committee led by Advisory Board members, N’Goné Fall, the renowned Senegalese curator, art critic and cultural consultant, and Femi Lijadu, one of Nigeria’s most respected art collectors and leading commercial lawyers.

Defending its pan-African identity, widening Nigeria’s connection to the contemporary African art world, ART X Lagos will host East African artists to the fair for the first time, featuring critically acclaimed artists such as Kenyans Paul Onditi and Cyrus Kabiru.

This edition appears to be exclusively loaded with varieties such as exhibitions, talks, sales of artworks among others.

Yinka Shonibare, a British-Nigerian artist living in the United Kingdom, whose work explores

cultural identity, colonialism and post-colonialism within the contemporary context of globalisation will be the keynote artist in a curated project showcasing his work.

Some Africa's hottest artists whose works would be readily available for sale include Zanele Muholi, Joy Labinjo, Na Chainkua Reindorf and Cyrus Kabiru. ART X Talks, curated by Missla Libsekal, will feature a series of exciting and engaging presentations from key stakeholders in Africa's art economy.

The ART X Prize with Access will bolster the efforts of emerging artists who have demonstrated a commitment to careers as professional visual artists. It would be recalled that Bolatito Aderemi-Ibitola, who emerged as the winner in June 2018, after a rigorous selection process, received a grant of N1 million naira and will have a solo presentation of her project, 'Scraps from Mama's Floor' at this year's fair.

ART X Live!, the live art and music performance, will also feature some of Africa's most talented rising artists, curated by Lanre Masha, with Odunsi the Engine as creative director. The show will see performances by Teni the Entertainer, Ghanaian musician Amaarae, and BOJ, accompanied by some of Lagos' finest emerging visual and graphic artists.

The annual festival enjoys the partnership of such organisations like Access Bank (Gold Sponsor); Ford Foundation (Diversity and Education Sponsor); Stanbic IBTC Pensions, H2Oh!, Anap Jets and Chapel Hill Denham (Bronze Sponsors); Lufthansa, Absolut, Budweiser, Leadway Assurance and Metro Capital (Category Sponsors).

Speaking at the press briefing, Duke Asidere, one of Nigeria's leading contemporary artists said Art X has made artworks more elastic. "With Art X, artist has a lot to gain and to lose. Arts become a big book. The festival is really a plus for everybody."

Dotun Popoola said it was his first time of showcasing his work in Nigeria. "It pushed me into 24 hours of busy work. My hands were no longer romantic. I came up with what I call Hybrid Structure- Irin ti a jo," he said.

Nike Okundaye, foremost Nigerian batik and textile designer, said joining the crew of Art X for the festival was an exciting experience. "They have brought the art into limelight. I join because of the treasure and it's a great opportunity," she said. Access Bank, the gold sponsor represented by Amaechi Okobi, Group Head, Corporate Communications & External Affairs, said "Anyone that does anything that brought pride to Nigeria, we all support. Nigeria has a lot of talents. 2018 will surely be a phenomenon."

Launched in 2016, ART X Lagos is West Africa's first international art fair which was created to showcase the best and most innovative contemporary art from the African continent and diaspora, and to widen Nigeria's connection to the art scene across Africa and internationally.

Through its contribution to the increased visibility of African artists, ART X Lagos aims to reinforce the visual arts as an important component of the creative industry in Nigeria and Africa, and to position Lagos as an emergent cultural capital on the continent.