

Celebrated Nigerian artist highlights ecological disaster

Artist Amarachi Okafor's latest work highlights the growing problem created by cigarette butts on the environment; exhibition ongoing



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Well-known for the powerful messages conveyed across various media, Nigerian-based artist Amarachi Okafor decided to tackle a large-scale ecological disaster created by countless small, discarded cigarette butts in her latest work.

Now that effort will be featured in an upcoming exhibition, *Announcing beauty, mercy, kindness, and*

love, a rare retrospective exhibition chronicling 20 years of practice by the critically acclaimed Nigerian artist and curator. The exhibition opened on October 29 at the Lagos' Red Door Gallery.

As part of the symbolic exhibition, a selection of rare paintings, sculptures, and installations will be showcased for the first time, giving audiences a unique insight into Okafor's work over the last two decades and how it has continually evolved.

"There is a lot of beauty and tenderness that can be transmitted to us, to others, and to the places where we move and live," Okafor said. "I want to encourage and inspire the audience to think about that as they explore the exhibition, especially how this newest work reflects the major impact the smallest items can have on the world."

She hopes that when she asks, "What would happen if we all showed kindness to everything and everyone?" the audience will take stock of their actions and how they have created ripples in their communities and beyond.

Further, she hopes viewers will learn to accept responsibility for finding beauty in the world around them.

"I have always believed that beauty goes beyond the visual; it is a function of the circumstances," Okafor said. "When people show kindness to others, they are showing responsibility on their part. It is through that process that strong communities are built."

That desire to be socially conscious, whether with art or personal actions, like discarding cigarette butts properly, has been an ongoing theme over her two decades of work.

Due to her education and work, she has been exposed to cultures across the globe from a genuinely unique perspective.

And so, as Okafor prepared for her latest exhibition, she wanted to weave current issues into her work since they are reflected locally, nationally, and globally.

"I have witnessed a commonality among people throughout my travels," Okafor said. "By bringing that connection into my work, I intend to explore the inspiration that seeps in from local culture and how we can all harness that connection to create a better world."

As a trained artist, Okafor has lived and worked in Nigeria and the U.K. She currently resides in Abuja, where she works. She creates paintings, sculptures, and participatory public art projects based on her experiences and observations of people, culture, and society.

"I want to expand and extend my reflection of the community, of the way we work, play, and relate to one another," she said. "In my work, I study people's motives and how they interact and relate to one another in small and large ways. This latest exhibition will showcase that evolution with 42 works on display highlighting over 20 years of work."

Despite her experience, she continues to hone her craft, exploring how we act and think and why.

"It is a pleasure to take on this mission and to learn how to share important ideas with my audience," Okafor said. "I hope this latest exhibition is enjoyed and understood by all those that visit."

For more about Amarachi Okafor Orié, visit her website, amarachiokafor.art.

She also maintains a presence on social media, including [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#).

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