



Title:

MmUỌ NKA+TA(a):

A word divination with Alfie Nze and Chuma Anagbado decoding Igbo words into text and Images.

The Prelude: Unveiling the Essence

African arts as symbols of democracy. No honest observer would miss the democratic nature of various forms of African artistic expression, from dance to drawings, music, poetry, sculptures, theatre and masks. I will illustrate this by giving two examples. The first is the absence of a secluded space like a museum where art lovers and experts visit to enjoy such forms of expression. Growing up in Ekwe, Imo state, I witnessed shrines where various objects representing deities were housed for all to marvel at. You didn't have to pay a ticket to visit them, and you didn't need an "expert" to explain the statue of Ala: her legs spread wide, while her arms held her firstborn son. Without any form of artistic education, you know you are standing before something sacred and sublime as you watch the solemnity and power of that artistic/spiritual expression. Neither did I need a professor to explain the creative mastery of Ikenga or the totem's spiritual importance. It is well-known that complex art patterns adorned ancient Igbo doors and walls for a visitor or passerby's aesthetic satisfaction. But these were not often explained as "arts", they were rather just there, democratically enjoyed by all until our shrines became houses of the "devil" and museums places where you go to visit artworks.

The other example is the theatrical performance of Mmanwu, poorly translated as "Masquerade". Mmanwu protects the person called upon to wear it and act out the "mma/beauty" of "anwu/sun" or "undying beauty". Knowing fully well the intricate nature of performance, the ancients wanted to protect the actor who steps into Mmanwu and the spectator. By protecting the identity of the actor/wearer, the artist is free to return to his daily life unscathed once the performance is over. This way, everyone will go home with the satisfaction of having participated in something sublime, devoid of the actor's ego. This act of protecting the actor/artist/wearer is certainly in line with the work of the Dibia, the Igbo mystic.

The work **Mmụọ Nka+Ta(a)** body of work follows the original line of Igbo/African artistic expression by exploring the various stages of the spoken word, from the conceptual to drawing, music and performance. So, Mmụọ Nka+Ta(a)'s various branches are therefore explorations of ancient popular Igbo arts.

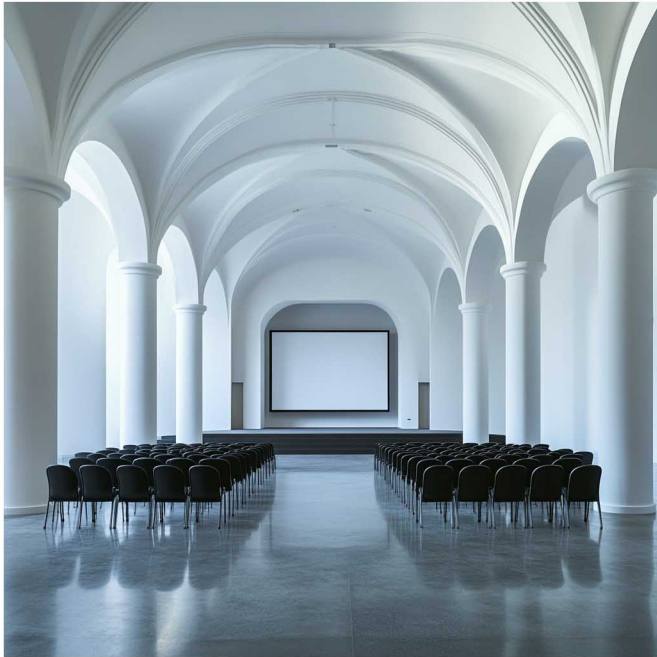
Everyone, rich, poor, royal or subject goes to the Dibia consultation. And, as directed or elected by the gods, one can decide whether to accept the "result" of the divination or not because "arushi kpaa nga nga, egoshi ya oshishi ejiri tụ ya/if the totem of a god misbehaves we will show it the wood from which it was carved".

During divination, the Dibia can recommend the making of a totem, dance or any form of expression, yet the declaration that "if the totem of a god misbehaves we will show it the wood from which it was carved," is the highest expression of a people's independent spirit and democratic values. The Igbos cannot be ruled by decree because even a god is expected to act according to an individual's will. This concept of individual agency is expressed philosophically in the saying, "onye kwe Chi ya ekwe/ if one agrees with their Chi, their Chi will carry the decision" This is the true mark of democratic independence.

Mmụọ Nka+Ta(a) is a divination in words, a performance that is a return to the original spirit of "coming to a Dibia to consult the inner world". It is a conversation whose direction is not determined by the artist/dibia, but rather by the individual who approaches the Igbo worldview.

Everyone is welcome to participate in this lay divination between artists, a collector/spectator and the work that will come out of this encounter.

Mmụọ Nka+Ta(a), a lay divination in arts/words.



Overview

This unique performance art event features Alfie Nze and Chuma Anagbado, who will collaborate to decode Igbo words into numbers, text and art.

The event, themed Mmuo Nka-Ta(a) which translates to “The Spirit behind Art and Conversation Today” explores interplays between numbers, words/digital/drawing and fuses these elements to create an immersive experience, illustrating the richness of diverse cultures through contemporary art.



Objectives

Cultural Exploration: Decode and interpret Igbo words, presenting them through digital and physical art forms. The work also intends to motivate artists and enthusiasts to go within and explore indigenous languages in their creative practice.

Interactive Dialogue: Engage the audience in a live divination of the decoded works, a conversation of the creative process between Alfie and Chuma.

Phygital Integration: Utilize digital technology to enhance the traditional art forms, offering a unique interactive experience.

About the Duo



Alfie Nze is a Nigerian-born, naturalized Italian artist based in Milan. An award-winning creative film maker with a background in Social Theatre Writing; Nze is also a visiting lecturer at the Mohole art academy and Bibocca University, both in Milan. His work focuses on socio-cultural themes. He is author and director of various performances *Iwa Oji/Igbo Communion* (Milan and AAF Lagos) *A Dance in Palermo Forest* (Palazzo Sterri, Palermo) and *Reeducation of An Igbo Mask* (MUDEC, Milan) *Human Installation* (Venice Biennale 2022) and many others. His first book *MmUO NKA+TA(a)* is an esoteric treatise on the Igbo language.

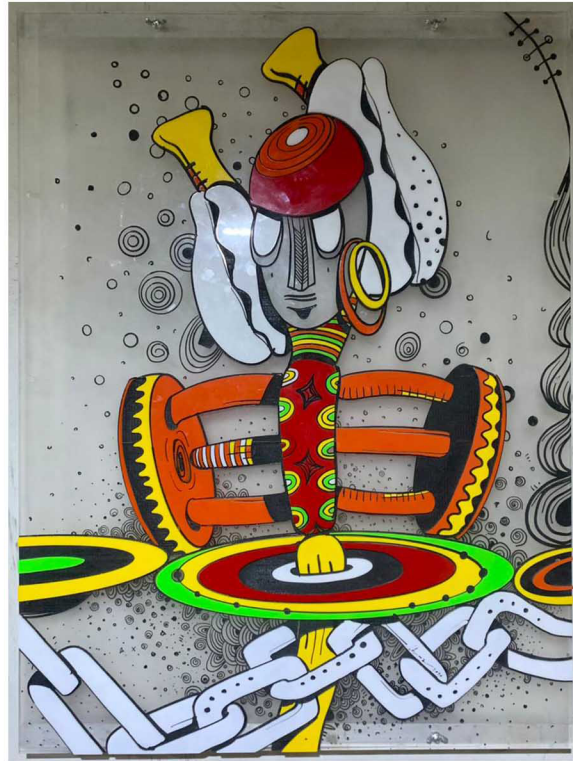


Chuma Anagbado (b. 1982, Nigeria) is an innovative Nigerian artist and designer. He majored in Sculpture at the University of Benin and holds a master's in Design from the University for the Creative Arts, UK. Co-founder of Aziza Design and Mbari Uno, Chuma creates 'phygital' art influenced by Igbo culture. His notable works include a dynamic data-driven project, 'Tracing the Wild,' and exhibitions worldwide. Chuma's art is part of the Center for Memories in Enugu and the Yemisi Shyllon Museum in Lagos, cementing his role as a pioneering digital and cultural artist.

FEW ARTWORKS FROM THE SEVENTEEN DECODES



Art title: Dibia
Size: 61cm x 81cm
Material: Plexiglass



Art title: Azu
Size: 61cm x 81cm
Material: Plexiglass



Art title: Nkata
Size: 61cm x 81cm
Material: Plexiglass

Exhibition Details

- Venue: Turin, ItalyNigeria
- Month: May 2025

Logistics

- Flight Tickets: €1,725 (Both Artist)
- Accomodation: €325 (Airbnb x 5days)
- Artwork shipment: €2000
- Per diem: €1000 (Both Artist)
- Total: €5000

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Grazie . Thank You