BOWMAN SCULPTURE

Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self



ADA
contemporary

Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN SCULPTURE

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Adora Mba, Founder of ADA Contemporary

Foreword

There are exhibitions that begin with a checklist of artists and artworks, and there are exhibitions that begin with a conversation. *Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self* began with the latter.

When Bowman Sculpture approached me to curate this group exhibition, I immediately recognised both the opportunity and the responsibility. For more than a decade, I have worked alongside artists, collectors and institutions across West Africa, witnessing the extraordinary breadth of sculptural practice from the continent. Yet despite this richness, many of these artists still remain underrepresented within international programmes.

From the outset, I wanted this exhibition to do more than introduce remarkable works. I wanted it to introduce remarkable voices, each with their own history, material language and perspective, while resisting the temptation to present African sculpture as a single narrative. There is no one African experience, no single aesthetic, and no singular story to tell.

Rather than seeking the definitive, we embrace plurality. Each work offers its own way of understanding tradition, memory, place and belonging through substance, form and process. Together, these sculptures invite us to consider the many ways in which these artists navigate inherited histories while imagining new possibilities.

This exhibition brings together artists whose practices speak to one another through curiosity, craftsmanship and individuality. Some work with wood, others with bronze or mixed media. Some explore reminiscence and heritage, while others imagine innovative futures. Together, they reveal the vitality, complexity and diversity of contemporary African sculpture today.

For me, this exhibition is also deeply personal. It reflects relationships that have been built over many years—with artists, with friends, families, estates, and with communities whose generosity has shaped my own understanding of art. It is a privilege to bring these conversations into dialogue with Bowman Sculpture and audiences in London.

I hope that visitors leave not simply having discovered new artistry, but with a broader appreciation of the richness, ambition and global significance of contemporary African sculpture.

Adora Mba
ADA Contemporary



Mica Bowman, Director of Bowman Sculpture

Director's Note

One of the ambitions I've had for Bowman Sculpture is to broaden the conversation around sculpture. The gallery was built on a foundation of 19th- and 20th-century European masters, but my belief has always been that exceptional sculpture deserves to be considered on its own terms, regardless of geography, period or tradition.

That ambition has also taught me something important: it is impossible to become an expert in every field and knowing when to recognise and value the expertise of others is a great strength. Contemporary African sculpture is an area of extraordinary richness and complexity, and *Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self* would simply not exist without Adora Mba's expertise, relationships and years of dedication to the artists represented here. It has been a privilege to work alongside someone whose understanding of this field is both academically rigorous and deeply personal.

Together, we wanted to present an exhibition that feels both exciting and meaningful. It introduces many of these artists to Bowman Sculpture's collectors and audience for the first time, while offering an opportunity to engage with distinct perspectives, histories and cultural traditions expressed through sculpture. Each artist brings a unique approach to their practice, revealing how material and making can become a way of exploring identity, experience and the world around us.

For me, *Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self* represents exactly the kind of dialogue I hope Bowman Sculpture can continue to foster: an opportunity to learn, to challenge assumptions and to celebrate remarkable sculptural practice that deserves greater international recognition. Above all, I hope visitors leave with the same sense of curiosity and admiration that I have felt throughout the process of bringing this exhibition together.

Mica Bowman
Director, Bowman Sculpture





El Anatsui

El Anatsui (b.1941) was born in Anyako, in southeastern Ghana, and trained at the College of Art University of Science and Technology, in Kumasi, Ghana. He has been teaching at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, since 1975. The work he created in Ghana is best known for the incisions made with hot irons on round or spherical market trays of Ghanaian wood.

At Nsukka, and later when he briefly resided in Wales, Anatsui worked in clay, often combined with manganese, to create unusual objects based on traditional Ghanaian beliefs and other subjects. He then turned to making wall panels formed from strips of wood placed side by side. Designs were cut into the surface with gouges and a chain saw, blackened with the flame of an acetylene torch. Some wood surfaces and some designs were painted. More recently he has fabricated freestanding wood pieces and entire installations. The aesthetic qualities of his wall-hung wood panels are heightened by the inclusion of several differently colored tropical woods.

A number of themes recur in Anatsui's art. One is the destruction and reconstitution of materials as metaphors for life, experience, and changes in Africa under colonialism and since independence. A second theme is associated with textiles and traditional African crafts. His concern over Western scholars' misinterpretation of African history and the distortions it has caused forms a third theme.

Already utilizing *uli*, *nsibidi*, and Ghanaian motifs, Anatsui continues to search for African design systems, written languages, and other indigenous forms of communication to incise in the hewn surfaces of his imposing wooden sculptures.

Untitled

Carved and incised wood panels
Height: 47.6” (121 cm)
Unique











Alimi Adewale

Alimi Adewale (b.1974) is a Nigerian artist who uses the medium of painting, sculptures and installations to explore urban issues and the lives of everyday people in cities.

His practice combines elements of minimalism and abstraction to evoke the dynamism and intensity of the cosmopolitan environment.

Most of his work has a profusion of rich textures and oftentimes an uncommon sculptural finish. Whether utilizing photography and oil paint or thick lump of oils that takes years to dry, Adewale mines the endless possibilities of a particular material to introduce an additional dimension into the work: that of time.

Imbued with their own mortality, his sculptures cultivate the experiential function of art compared to the traditional African sculptures.

Earthly Forms Series I

Acrylic on carved wood
Height: 16.5” (42 cm)
Unique





Earthly Forms Series VI

Acrylic on carved wood
Height: 18.1” (46 cm)
Unique











Myles Igwebuike

Myles Igwebuike (b.1993) is a Nigerian-American artist and spatial practitioner working at the intersection of material intelligence and speculative archaeology. His research engages the polyphonic dimensions of space, positioning indigenous technological knowledge not as cultural artifact but as living methodology—a framework for collective world-making and agency.

A Royal College of Art alumnus (MA, Design), Igwebuike's inquiry is grounded in restorative practice: the idea that how we imagine and construct space becomes an act of sovereignty and repair.

This vision animated his contribution to the curatorial team of the Sharjah Architectural Triennial, *The Beauty of Impermanence*, and his subsequent curation of the Nigeria Pavilion at the London Design Biennale, which received recognition for its navigation of layered cultural narratives.

In autumn 2026, Igwebuike joined the Yale School of Architecture to continue this trajectory of research and critical practice.

Odu

Resin
Height: 37.7” (96 cm)
Unique





Ijeanya

Resin
Height: 15.7” (40 cm)
Unique





Abo

Resin
Height: 37.7” (96 cm)
Unique





Nkume

Resin
Height: 37.7” (96 cm)
Unique











Amanda Offor

Amanda Offor (b. 2000) is a Nigerian-American artist whose practice spans charcoal, oil, acrylic, pastel, ceramic and glass. Working between London and Jingdezhen, China, she investigates grief, memory and loss, often exploring the ways nostalgia can be reconstructed or falsified.

Offor commenced her BFA Fine Art (Painting) at Cornell University before continuing her practice at the Slade School of Fine Art, London which she recently completed in 2026.

Her work has been exhibited internationally and acquired by the Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art, Nigeria.

Across mediums, she combines material experimentation with conceptual rigor, using diverse materials to convey emotional and psychological landscapes.

Through her interdisciplinary approach, Offor demonstrates a sustained professional commitment to craft, creating work that is technically skilled, materially inventive and deeply engaged with the human experience of memory and loss.

Grandma

Underglaze, acrylic paint, gold luster on porcelain
Height: 73.6” (187 cm)
Unique




WEDDING

Mpa

Underglaze, acrylic paint on porcelain
Height: 63” (160 cm)
Unique





A Hụrụ M Gị N'Anya (I Love you)

Underglaze, acrylic paint on porcelain
Height: 59" (150 cm)
Unique





Betrand's Heaven

Underglaze, acrylic paint on porcelain
Height: 39.3" (100 cm)
Unique




2025


NINAKAIBEYA





Niyi Olagunju

Niyi Olagunju (b.1981) lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria and Texas, USA. He holds a BA Fine Arts (Hons) degree from the University of Oxford and a MA in Fine Arts, with a specialisation in sculpture from Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas. Before his degree at Oxford, Olagunju served with the British Army from 2002 through to 2006.

The artist's primary focus has been global trade and its effects on his birth continent of Africa; a recent subset now investigating the global trade is classical African art and antiquities.

Work from Olagunju's *Baga Nimba* series was shown as part of *Get Up, Stand Up Now*, a major exhibition celebrating the past 50 years of Black creativity in Britain and beyond, at the Somerset House, London. Another museum showing in 2019 was at the Vestfossen Kunstlabratorium, Oslo, Norway.

Olagunju's sculpture is represented in the permanent collection of the House of European History, Brussels, Belgium.

Baga Boy III [Gold Chrome]

Wood, chrome plated aluminium
Height: 63.7" (162 cm)
Unique





Sekere

Hand blown glass, gold leaf, threaded “Sekere” seeds
Height: 13.3” (34 cm)
Edition of 5











Reuben Ugbine

Reuben Ugbine (1956-2021) was born of Nigerian parents in Anponya, Ghana, and was a renowned Nigerian artist known for his unique blend of traditional culture and artwork manifestation characterised by 'figurative terracotta' (an art style that focuses on traditional costumes and everyday life themes).

A master storyteller with a keen eye for detail whose creative flair permitted him to translate human experience into visual narratives, Ugbine's work has the ability to draw the viewer's attention to the nuances of multiple lives and conditioned behaviours, shedding light on how one collectively occupies space in Nigerian civilisation.

Throughout his career, Ugbine designed and executed a range of sculptural pieces using ebony and iroko wood, terracotta, metal railings and other materials. He has participated in several solo and group shows across Africa and internationally including Germany, Netherlands, Lebanon, South Africa and Ghana. Ugbine was a member of society of Nigeria (SNA) and the Guild of professional fine artists of Nigeria (GFA). His surviving family manages The Artist's Estate.

Meditation

Oak wood
Height: 14” (35.5 cm)
Unique





Head

Ebony wood
Height: 38.5” (98 cm)
Unique







Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self

What happens when we stop asking sculpture what it remembers, and begin to question what it knows?

For generations, African stories, proverbs and histories have travelled through oral customs, carried from one era to the next. The sculptures shown in *Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self* continue that lineage of storytelling, asking not to be decoded, but instead encountered as living systems of thought that invite interpretation, challenge certainty and generate new concepts and realities.

Presented by Bowman Sculpture in collaboration with ADA Contemporary, this group exhibition brings together six West African artists from the established El Anatsui, Alimi Adewale, Niyi Olagunju and Reuben Ugbine, to emerging voices Myles Igwebuike and Amanda Offor.

Working across wood, metal, ceramics and glass, they reveal that while materials evolve, the questions remain:

What if indigenous knowledge was never obsolete? What if it was always speculative?

What survives when form changes? Does knowledge reside in material, process or intention?

And how do we remain accountable to inherited knowledge while inventing a language of our own time?

Their works meet here in conversation across time, tracing how inherited knowledge is carried, challenged and reimagined through sculpture. Heritage is not something that is preserved intact; it is translated—through new materials, methodologies and ways of thinking.

It is within this process of translation that the fractured self emerges: it is the space between inheritance and reinvention where knowledge is carried forward, reshaped and renewed.

These objects are not relics.

They are data.

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