

GUNS & RAIN

RMB Turbine Art Fair

11-14 July 2019

Ayobola Kekere-Ekun (Nigeria)

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Fascinated with lines, **Ayobola Kekere-Ekun** (b.1993) transforms paper – often seen as a common, neutral, unassuming material – into wholly fresh formations with a technique called quilling. Each strip of paper is individually shaped, placed and secured to capture pockets of light and shadow. Gradually, Ayobola's lines create personalities and stories. Methodical and labour-intensive, a single piece can take her three to seven weeks to complete.

Constantly experimenting with materials, Ayobola sees the intricacy of her work as a visual metaphor for the complexity of her chosen subject matter. "I find it intriguing how lines, a basic component of complex forms, can be so ambiguously loaded with meaning. A line can connect and separate, enclose and exclude, direct and mis-direct, all at the same time."

Ayobola's work explores gender, mythology, power and social structures, informed by personal experiences and observations. In her series, "E no concern me", she references a Nigerian vernacular phrase which roughly translates to "It's none of my concern" or "It's not my problem". Reflecting on socio-economic inequality in Nigeria, this series highlights how the privileged can detach themselves from the harsh realities of living and working in contemporary Nigeria. This false reality is symbolized by expensive, branded junk food and its position as a 'status symbol'. Sumptuous and enticing icecreams, lollies and bubblegum abound, to be consumed by poised, nonchalant women who often wear headphones, perhaps symbolic of their deafness to their surrounds. Junk food consumerism becomes an indirect mode of the privileged expressing that society's problems are "not theirs".

In her alluring new 'High Stakes' series, the artist finds an analogy for Nigeria's recent 2019 elections in a "never-ending card game". In a country with over 190 million citizens, pandering, corruption, rigging, and violence have been the highlight of Nigeria's democracy every four years for over two decades. Commenting on how skewed and performative the "democratic" process has become, Kekere-Ekun's glamorous card characters represent a handful of individuals who transform every election cycle into "an extended sequence of high stakes poker games straight out of a Hollywood blockbuster". Her series seeks to highlight how this state of affairs continues to mutate, dooming its citizens to an unending card game, where the players might change, but the game stays the same and the stakes only get higher.

Ayobola's work has been exhibited in several group shows in Lagos, as well as at ArtX Lagos in 2018. Her first solo exhibition, "Resilient Lines", opened at Rele Gallery, Lagos in March 2019. The exhibition is supported by a grant awarded by the Dean Collection, a contemporary art collection created by Alicia Keys and Swizz Beatz (Kasseem Dean). She holds a BA (Hons) in Visual Arts and an MA (Hons) in Graphic Design from University of Lagos. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Art and Design at the University of Johannesburg, examining advertising campaigns, place-branding and visual codes deployed by the Lagos state government.



E No Concern Me XI

2019

Paper, Fabric and acrylic on canvas

101 x 76 cm (Framed size: 115.5 cm x 90 cm x 4cm)



E No Concern Me XI

2019

Paper, Fabric and acrylic on canvas

76 x 101cm (Framed size: 115.5 cm x 90 cm x 4cm)



E No Concern Me XI
(Detail)



E No Concern Me XI

2019

Paper, Fabric and acrylic on canvas

101 x 76 cm

SOLD



E No Concern Me X

2019

Paper, Fabric and acrylic on canvas

101 x 76 cm

SOLD



E No Concern Me X
(Detail)



Suite 1. No. 13
2019
Paper and Acrylic on Canvas
41 x 51 cm



Suite 1. No. 1
2019
Paper and Acrylic on Canvas
41 x 51 cm

RESERVED



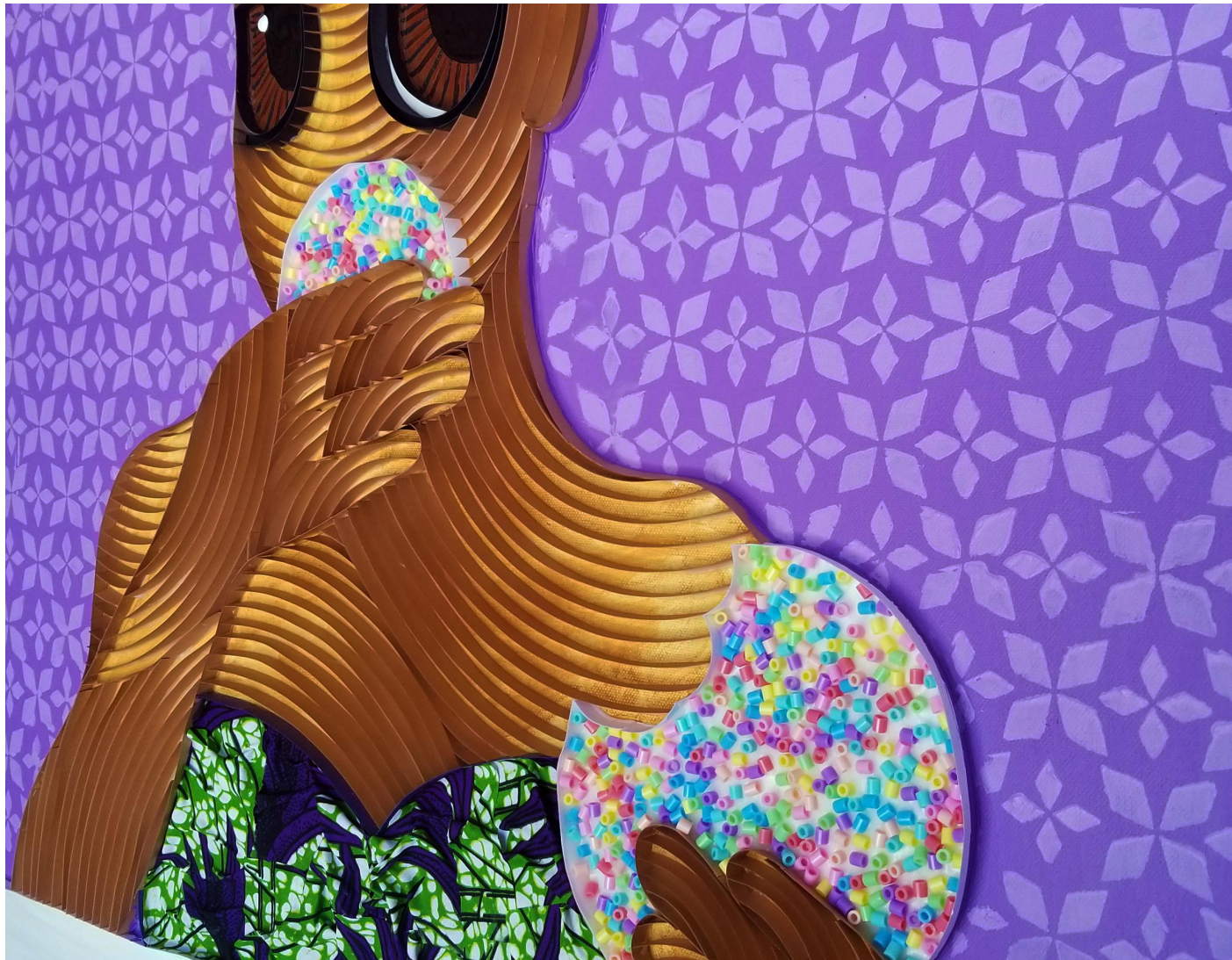
E No Concern Me XI
2019
Paper, Fabric and acrylic on canvas
101 x 76
SOLD



E No Concern Me XI
(Detail)



E No Concern Me XI
2019
Paper, Fabric and acrylic on canvas
101 x 76 cm
SOLD



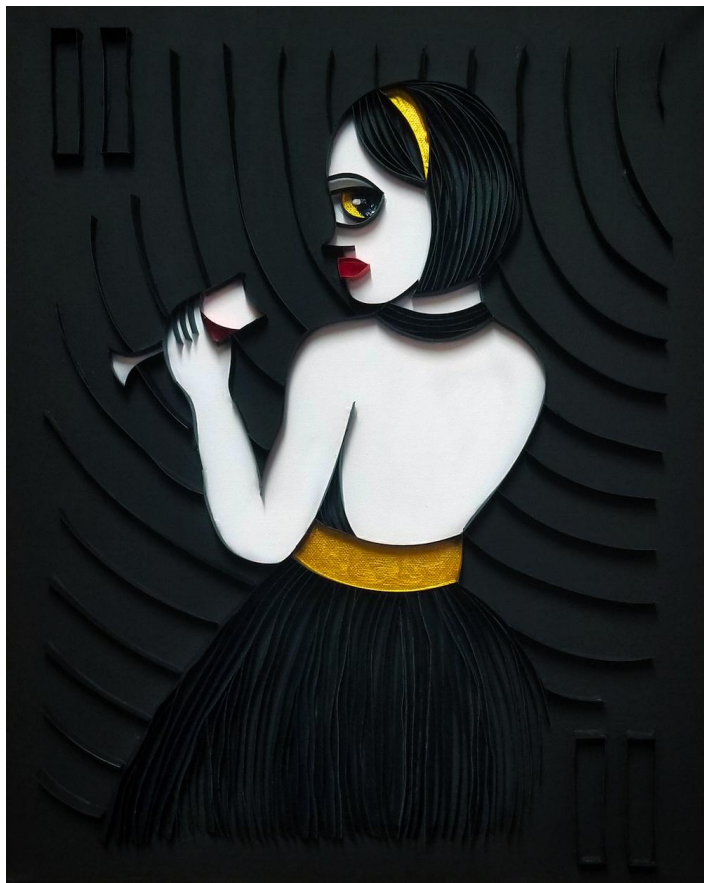
E No Concern Me XI (2019)
(Detail)



High Stakes. Suite 1. No. 6
2019
Paper and Acrylic on Canvas
51 x 41 cm



High Stakes. Suit 1. No. 2
2019
Paper and Acrylic on Canvas
51 x 41 cm



High Stakes. Suit 4. No. 11
Paper and Acrylic on Canvas
51 x 41 cm



High Stakes. Suit 4. No. 9
Paper and Acrylic on Canvas
51 x 41 cm



High Stakes. Suit 4. No. 4
Paper and Acrylic on Canvas
51 x 41 cm



'High Stakes' series: installation view