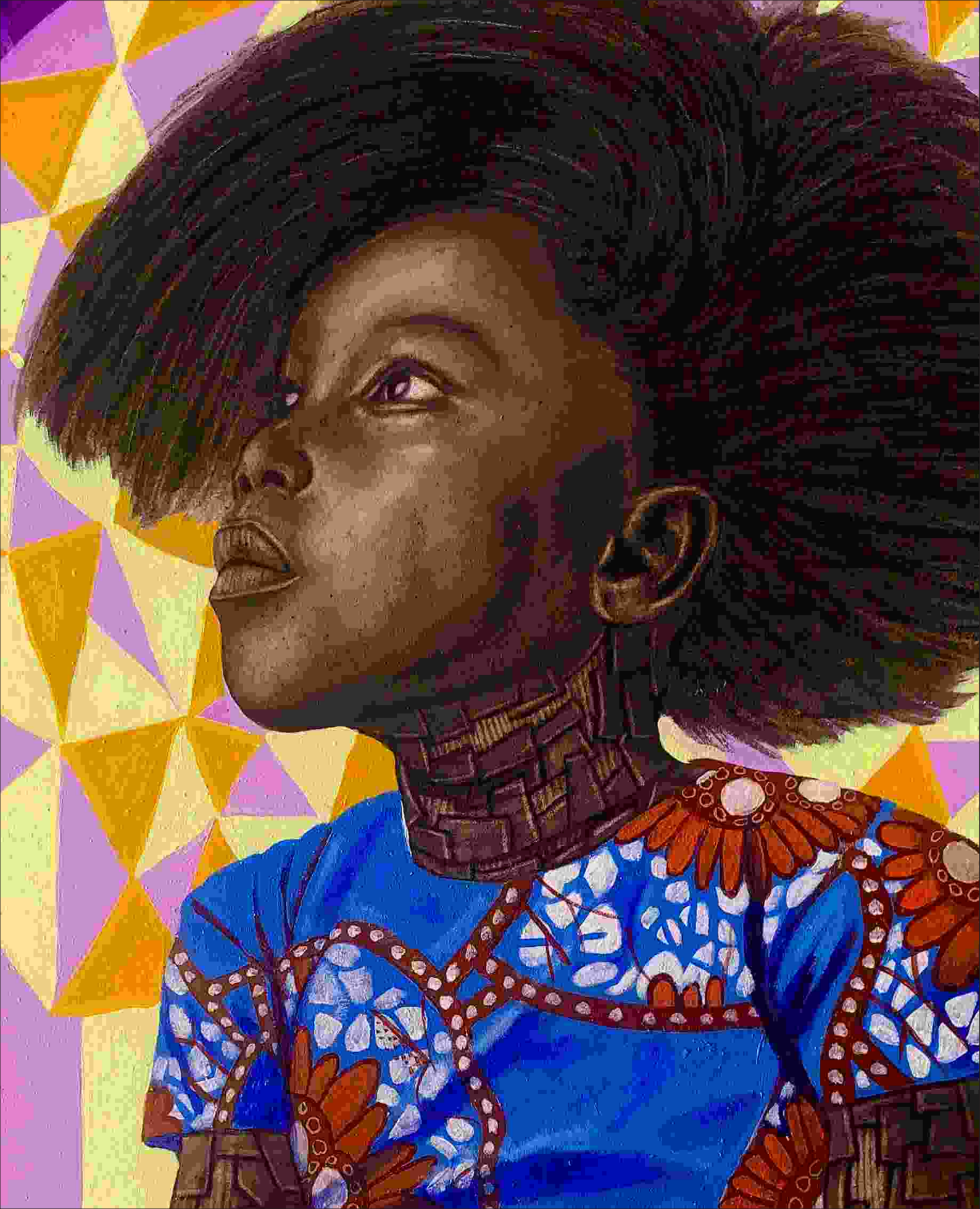


A ROOM WITH ALL OUR THINGS

ABISOLA GBADAMOSI
TOLULOPE DARAMOLA
TOJU CLARKE
PAUL AYIHAWU
SAMUEL VITTU



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12-26th December 2021

@
Art Pantheon Gallery
12D Bosun Adekoya Street,
Oniru, Lagos

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A ROOM WITH ALL OUR THINGS: THE GALLERY STATEMENT

Art Pantheon Gallery is delighted to present *A Room with All Our Things*, a group exhibition of the works of five artists: Toju Clarke, Abisola Gbadamosi, Tolulope Daramola, Paul Ayihawu, and Samuel Vittu. The exhibition offers a room of varied presences, moods and affects. It makes apparent what a shared space of mutual recognition and consolation can be, probes into the possibilities such a space can unlock.

Toju Clarke, a painter who employs sgraffito (a technique of scratching) to his canvases, shows works that utilize muted tones of brown, gold and black to depict attitudes and states of mind. Shadows and scratches lend depth and a convincing air to the faces of his subjects. With intense gazes, deep joy, and torrid aspects, the paintings take a grip of us and do not let go easily; they go with us even after we've turned away from the canvas.

Abisola Gbadamosi, a visual and multidisciplinary artist, brings to her canvases a distinctly feminine energy. She employs whorls, curves and misty colours to draw us into a bold and sensuous world. In her paintings, we see something of our fire, dreams and desires, and from her we learn not to be frightened by them, and even more importantly, not to apologize for them.

Tolulope Daramola, in his realistic portraits, employs dark-toned colours to evoke the moodier sides of the human psyche. The subjects of his paintings are often sombre, contemplative. Their eyes, skin tones, and aspects evince an air of melancholy. In their faces, painted against ordinary everyday settings, we glimpse the deeper textures of human experience.

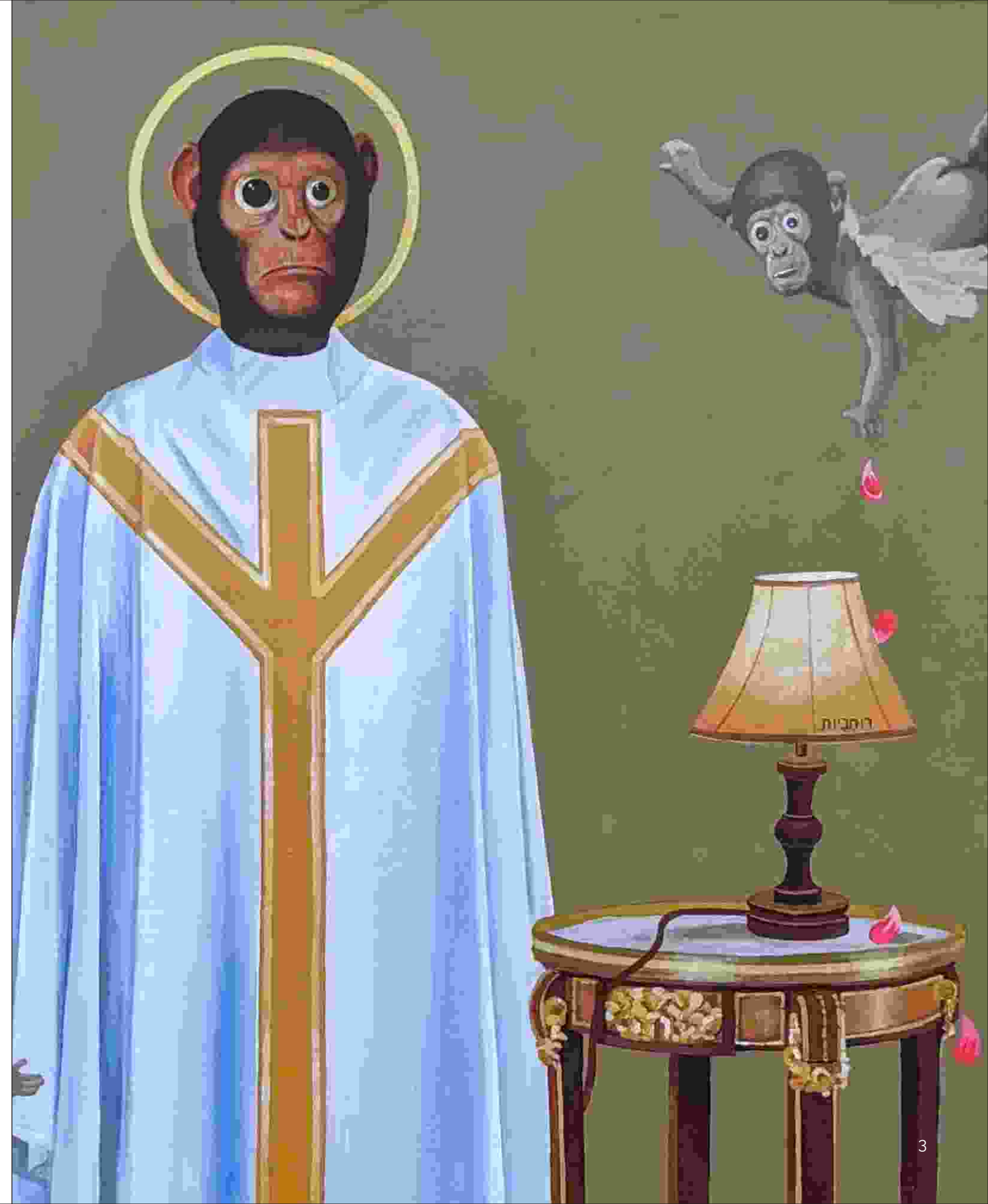
Paul Ayihawu, a realist painter, is a painter of stillness and emotion. Ayihawu puts at his service colour, tone and texture to create portraits of quiet, riveting power. His are paintings that instil us with silence.

Samuel Vittu, in paintings like *A Gentle Man's Rose* and *This Side of Heaven*, shows us the textures and colours of comfort and aspiration. His paintings are rendered with pastel tones for the background, with warm colours for the heads of his animal-face subjects and soft bright ones for their clothes. The subjects in his paintings are sure of their place in the world. They are satisfied and positive. And Vittu paints them with such affection that we warm towards them.

Their voices are different, their styles unique, but in *A Room with All Our Things*, these five artists have fashioned a common space for us all, a room of their things, and ours.

Sincerely,

Nana Sonoiki
Art Pantheon Ltd.





A ROOM FOR EVERYONE

Every person is a half-open door leading to a room for everyone, writes Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer in his poem "The Half-Finished Heaven". Inside all of us are rooms, rooms so vast they can hold everyone. And we possess doors that open into these rooms. An exhibition is an outward expression of the rooms within the artist, a room of all she intends to show us. *A Room with All Our Things*, a group exhibition by five artists—Toju Clarke, Abisola Gbadamosi, Tolulope Daramola, Paul Ayihawu, and Samuel Vittu—brings us into a room of this sort, one filled with deeply affecting things.

Joy, masculinity, insanity, and human intensity are deftly portrayed in Toju Clarke's sgraffito paintings. Each of his subjects is presented with an immutable presence. Whether smiling or screaming or gazing out, the images are full, asserting a non-negotiable claim on the space. In *Watchers* (2021), three boys are shown from head to bust with contemplative faces. Each boy looks out. The boy in the centre fixes us with a sombre, harrowing gaze; the one to the right appears to be looking at something far off, and the one to the left at something closer at hand. Their gazes fill the canvas and imbue it with energy like a force field. In all of Clarke's paintings in the exhibition, this energy is present, but more inescapably in *Bipolar* (2021). The agony of mind and the turbulence on the faces of the subjects leave us a little disturbed. This tension and discomfort hold us in this state of mind which many of us are, to varying degrees, sometimes caught in.

There is a similar energy in Abisola Gbadamosi's paintings, although rendered and discharged much differently. One thinks again, though, of force fields. The lines and whorls feel like charmed circles, like charged paths. In *We Are One* (2021), a woman's head (with one eye without an iris) stands prominent in a cloud of purple, mauve, brown and pink. The woman emerges out of the colours, bold and enchanting, exuding an irresistible aura. In *Can You Hear Me* (2021) and *Can You Feel Me* (2021), there are only the clouds of colours and nothing else—two works of pure abstraction. Abstract works are not empty, but they are not completely filled out either; they are filled instead in ways that leave room for the viewer to enter, for them to layer in their own perceptions. We are invited to participate in Gbadamosi's paintings.

Portraiture has always been fascinating to painters for a number of reasons—as a measure of skill, as an exercise in mastering realistic portrayal, as a means of self-examination and reflection, and—perhaps most importantly—as a way to step into and accurately render on the face and through the body diverse emotional states. Tolulope Daramola paints portraits of ordinary people with deeply affecting moods. *Gentle Reminder* (2021) shows a person (whom I think is a woman) in a faded orange baseball cap painted against a green background. Her head is tilted slightly to the left and her eyes are sad. She is brooding and has a look of disillusionment on her face. On her cap is the phrase: NO FORGET. What are not to forget? Why are her eyes so sad? *In Her Own Crown* (2021) portrays a sombre woman in partial profile; Her arms are held around her body in contemplative silence. She is brooding as well; there is sorrow in the painting, but also tenderness. Daramola's portraits are contemplative. There is about them a solitude that borders on sorrow. They are inward-looking, even when they peep out at us, as the subject in *Fred Now Free* (2021) seems to be doing, from behind a gate with a hanging padlock. This inwardness, this solitude and graveness indicate the sensibility of the artist, but they also do more: they reflect back to us—when all has been stripped bare—a veritable texture of our lives.

Paul Ayihawu's paintings share the same quality of inwardness. They echo the still depths of emotions. When we look at them, we feel something so soulful it commands silence. In *Day Dreaming* (2021), a boy leans against the shoulder of a woman, and she rests her face against his head—they look like brother and sister. The boy is barefoot, the woman is wearing simple slippers. They are wearing simple clothes, the woman in bright lemon, the boy in striped purple. Their posture is tired and sad and they have around their heads a cap and scarf respectively which stretch over their eyes, perhaps as a way to keep from seeing anymore what is painful, or perhaps as a way to better see and inhabit a world of dreams. What are their dreams? Why are their skins covered in scales—or armoured plates? Are they a mark of everything that has happened to them? If so, the marks do not so much scar them as make them distinct, even beautiful. Our trials may not necessarily mar us; they make us who we are; they make us beautiful. They too are part of our things.

Samuel Vittu, however, brings a lighter touch to the canvas. The animal-face subjects of his paintings float in an atmosphere of soft colours. *This Side of Heaven* (2021) shows a figure with a chimp's face wearing a red shirt with a large sunflower at the centre of the chest. On his head is a pink baseball cap on which is embossed the word: EPIC. In his left hand, he is holding a pink flower, and his right is in his pocket. He looks at the camera with a smile, his eyes big and bright, clouds floating about his head. The cat-face figure in *A Gentle Man's Rose* (2021) is wearing a plush brown coat, is carrying on his left arm a white Louis Vuitton bag out of which sticks a large pink rose, and has his right poised easily by his side, all in classic gentleman style. The bright soft colours of Vittu's accentuate the comfort, ease, and confidence of the lives of the subjects in his paintings. Their faces evince hopefulness and joy, an attitude of gentle aspiration towards which we feel ourselves warm.

In *A Room with All Our Things*, we stand in an atmosphere of emotions we recognize, amid a host of things we warm towards like familiar faces. Yet we are kept well aware that no two faces are the same, no two experiences, no two rooms. All are different, each room with its own dynamic and aspect. But different as they are, we recognize our bodies—our different bodies—in them. They are like a room of mirrors in which we recognize ourselves reflected back to us. In the colours of others, we see shades of the colours of ourselves; we know we have experienced similar sorrows and shared common joys. Our difference does not blunt this consolation and unifying power of our shared humanity. This is why we seek the company of others, why we put ourselves in rooms with them: for the recognition and mutual affirmation, for the consolation of knowing that there are others with us, others like us.

When we stand together in a room with them, provided there is no outright hostility, we feel a sense of this interconnectedness, even if only that of occupying the same space and standing next to one another in the proximity that a room affords. It can seem almost elusive, but with enough patience—with just the right amount of stillness—we would come, quite gradually, to the realization that we are sharing this moment of our lives with each other, that these sights and mutual presences are jointly owned, an atmosphere in which we affirm each other. In such a room, we feel a little less alone. Filled with works of great intimacy, privacy, grief, agency, aspiration, and ease, *A Room with All Our Things* offers such a room. In it, we are presented with what we—in our more private moments—are as people.

Joseph Omoh Ndukwu is a writer and editor. He lives in Lagos, Nigeria.

ABISOLA KUBURAT GBADAMOSI

Abisola Kuburat Gbadamosi is a narrative expressionist and nature lover originally from Ibadan, Oyo state but grew up in Lagos and London.

Abisola started experimenting with different mediums from an early age. Her ability to create stem from life experiences and lessons, which she now expresses through her art in hopes to create a cathartic experience for her audience.

After her first exhibition in London at the brick Lane gallery 2016, Abisola made an active decision to be an Art Teaching Assistant at her alma mater, British International school. She shared her truth, her past, and her creative process, in hopes to give the kids a piece of what her teacher gave her back in 2008.

By doing so, Abisola finally understood the quote by Pablo Picasso, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist when we grow up." It was in that moment she knew what she wanted to do for the rest of her life. To create art that people could relate to, art that people could inspire, art that would make people feel that same euphoria she felt when she was a little girl.



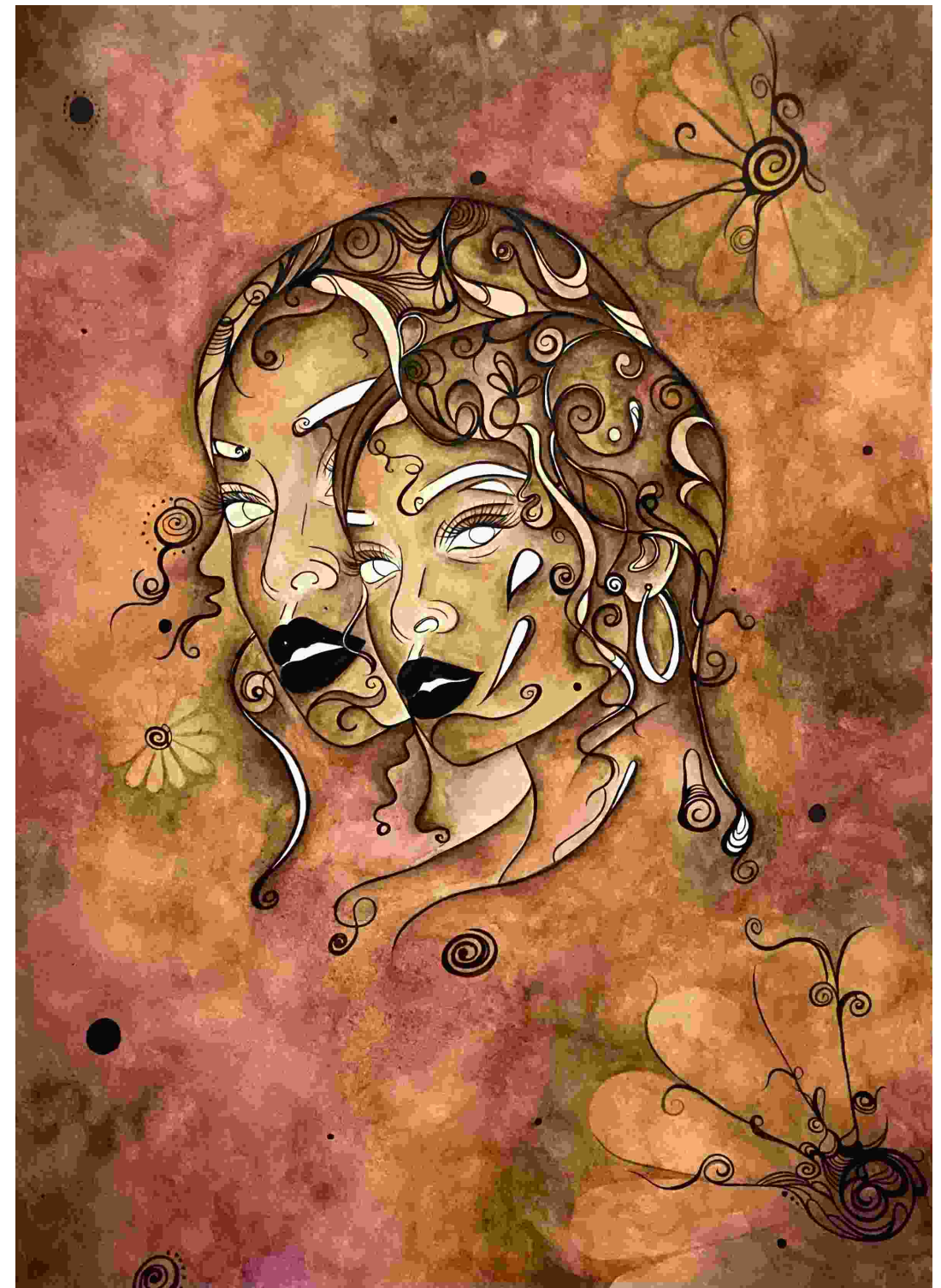
GOD CONSCIOUSNESS

2021

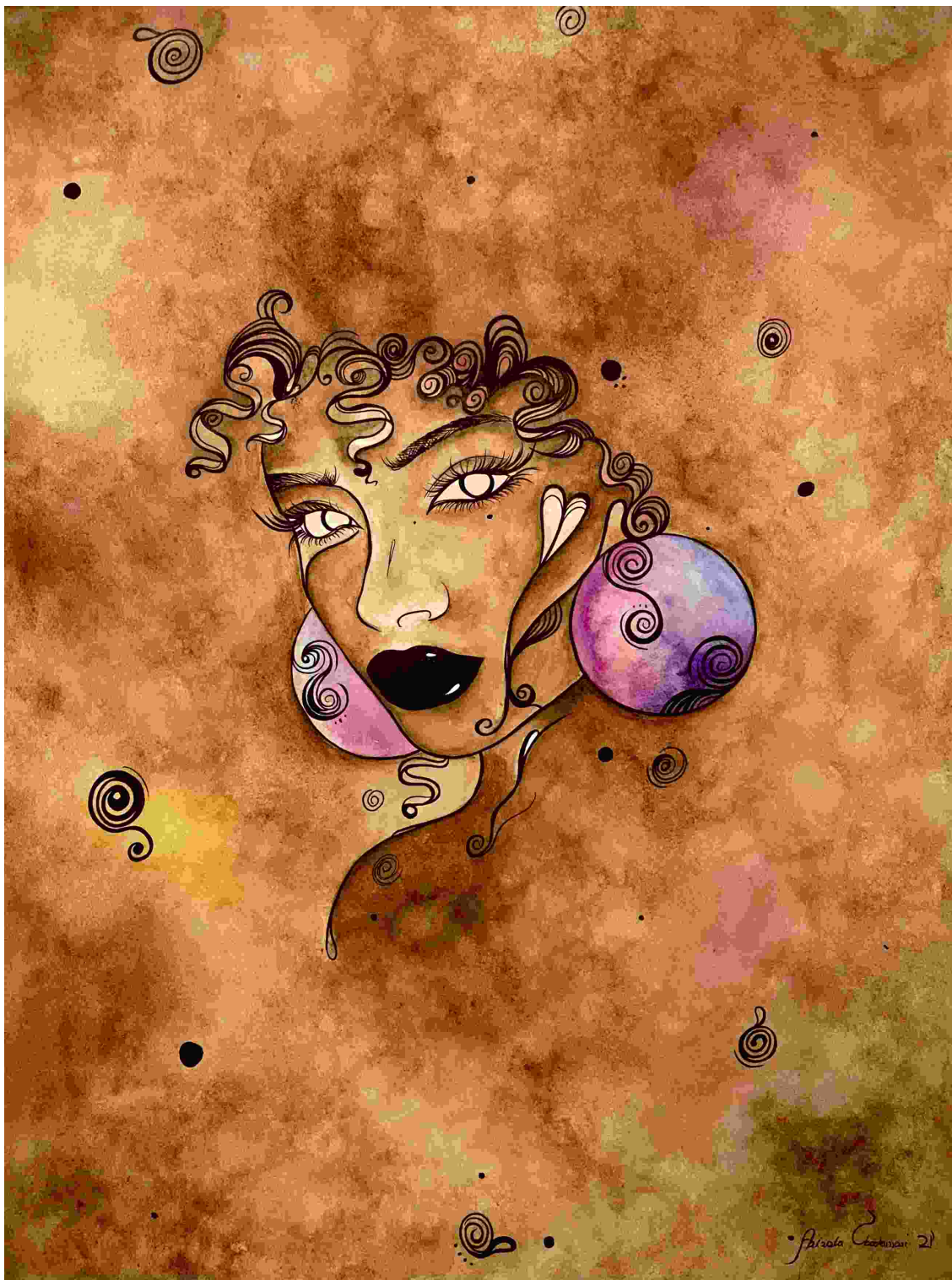
Watercolour on paper
27 x 21 in (69 x 54 cm).



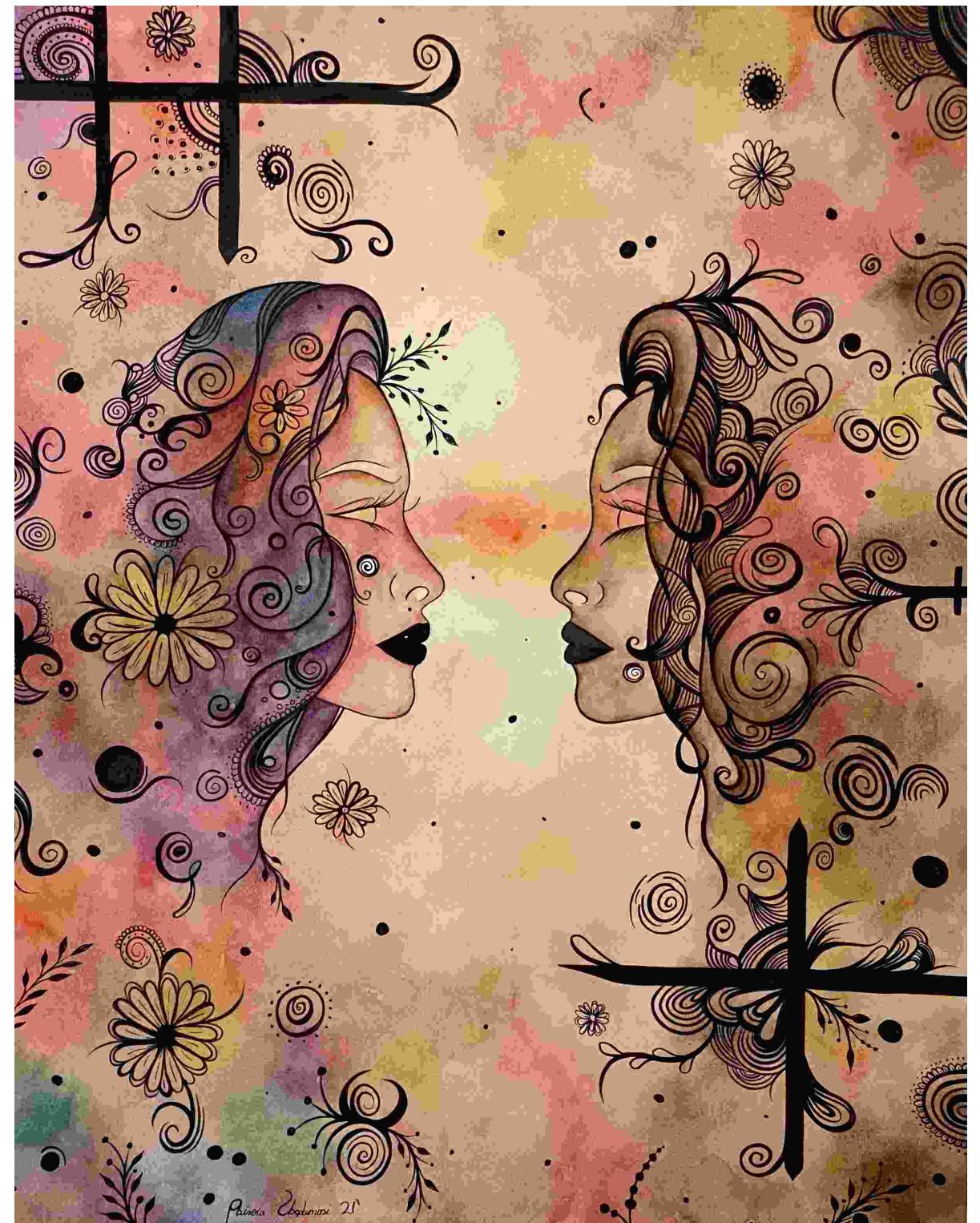
WE ARE ONE
2021
Watercolour on paper
27 x 21 in. (69 x 54 cm)



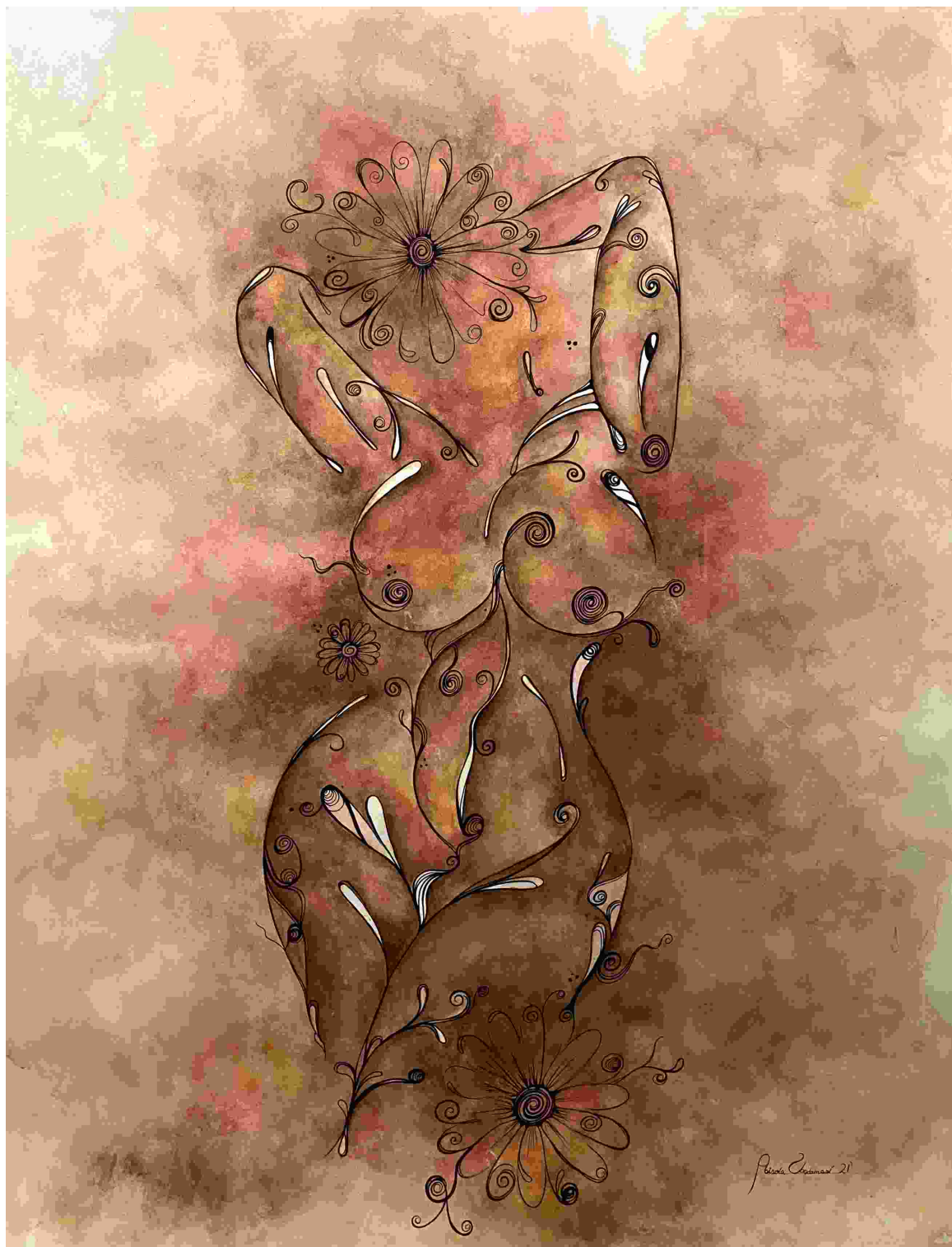
LOVE AFFAIR
2021
Watercolour on paper
30 x 22 in. (76 x 56 cm)



WHERE ARE YOU WHEN NO ONES WATCHING
 2021
 Watercolour on paper
 30 x 22 in. (76 x 56 cm)



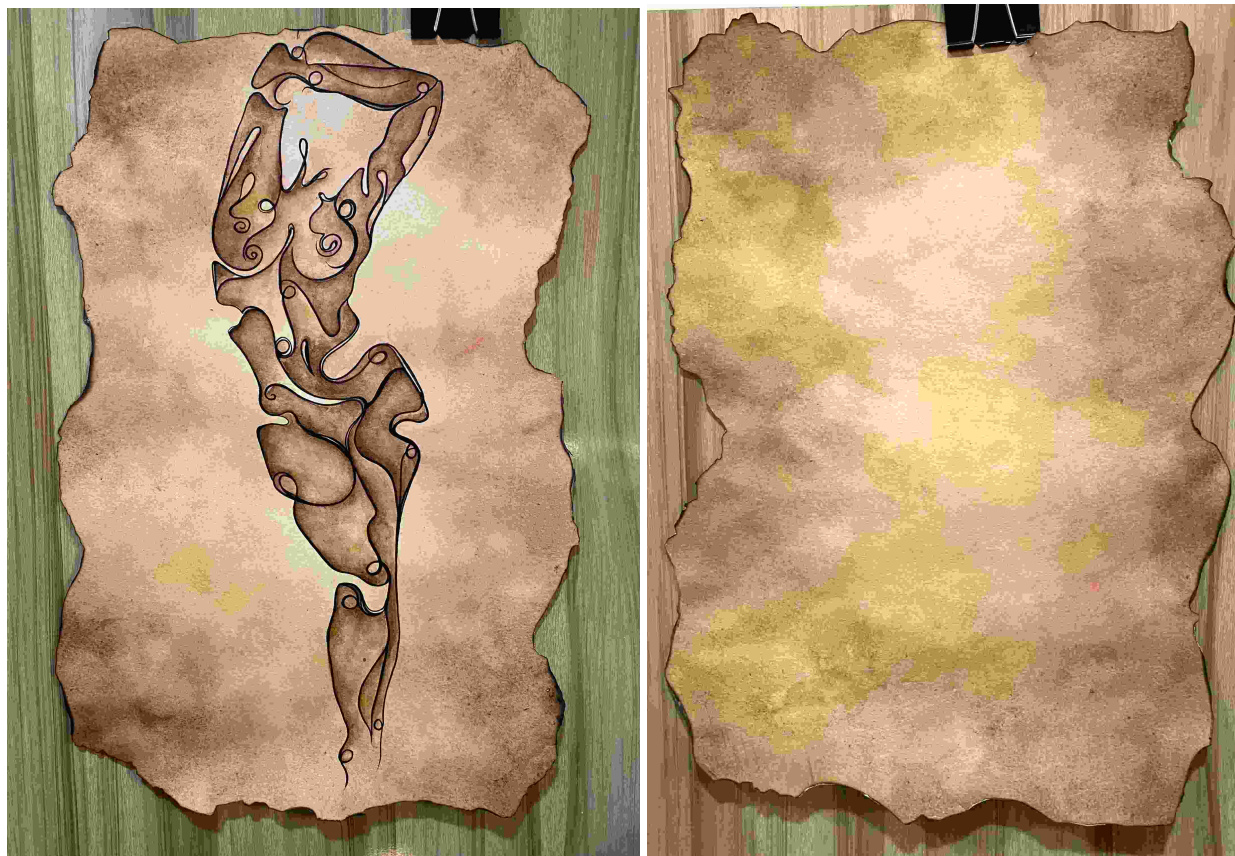
TRUE COLOURS
 2021
 Watercolour on paper
 30 x 22 in. (76 x 56 cm)



AURORA-THE NEW ERA
2021
Watercolour on paper
42 x 32.5 in. (107 x 83 cm)

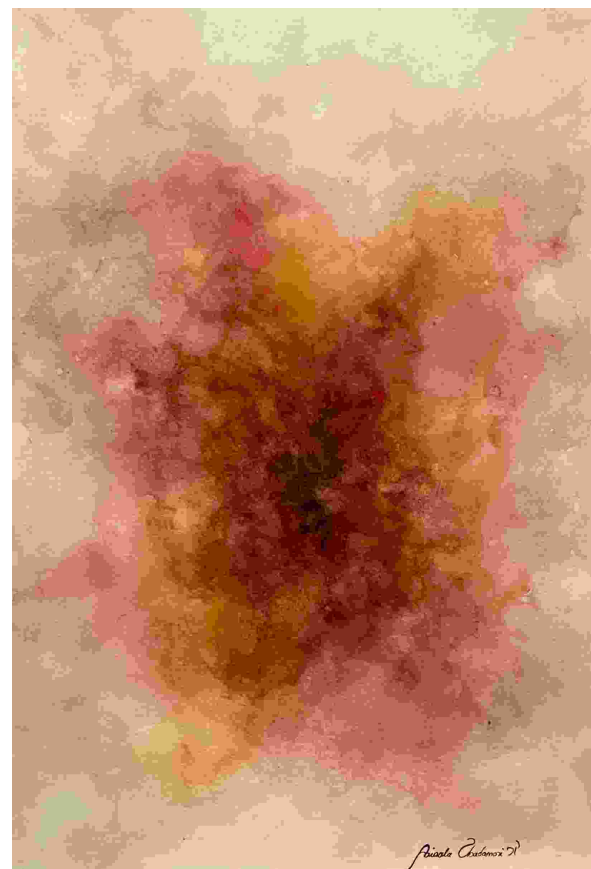


TRAPPED IN THE MIND OF THE...
2021
Watercolour on paper
30 x 22 in. (76 x 56 cm)



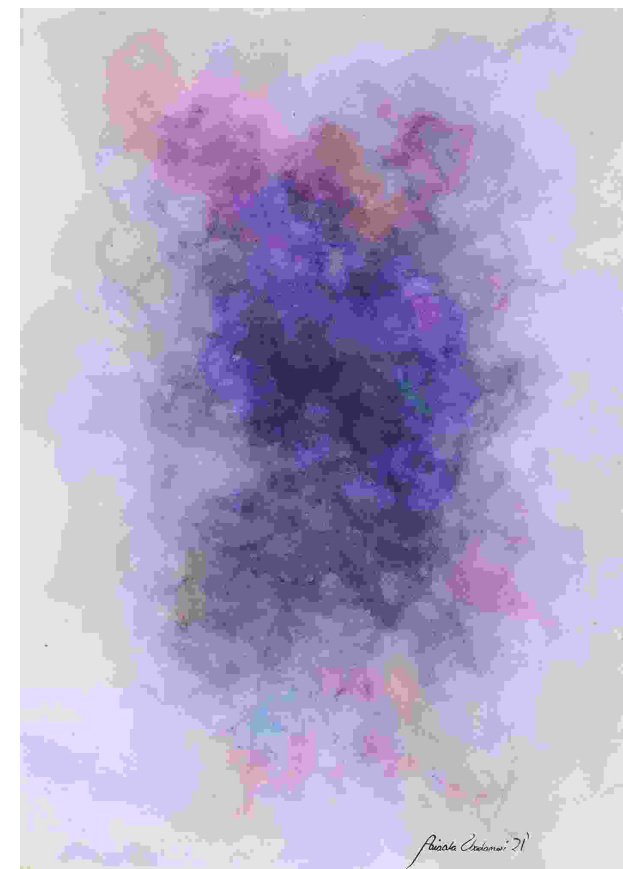
UNWRITTEN

2021
Watercolour on paper
22 x 15 in. (56 x 38 cm)



CAN YOU FEEL ME?

2021
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER
22 x 15 in. (56 x 38 cm)



CAN YOU HEAR ME?

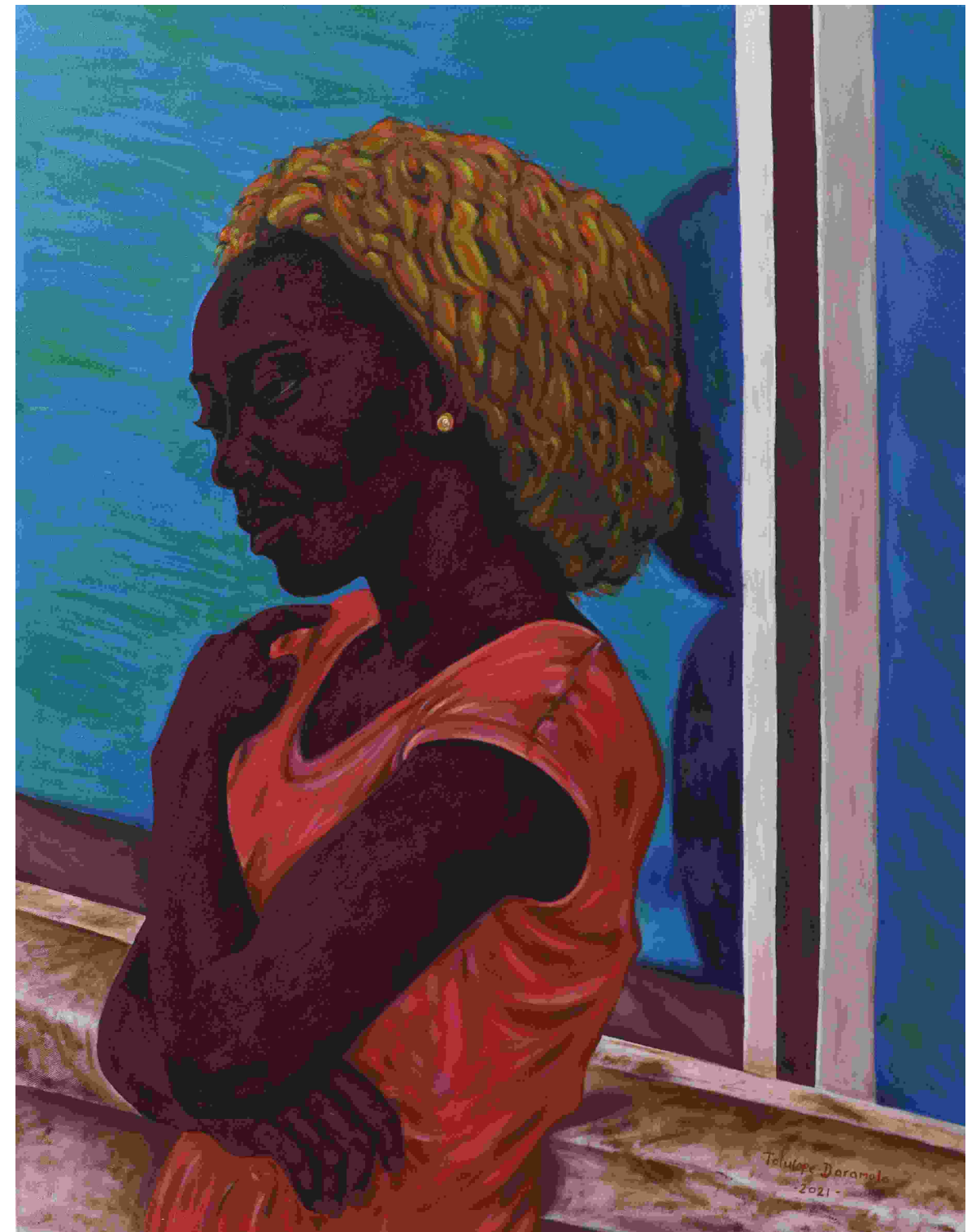
2021
Watercolour on paper
22 x 15in. (56 x 38 cm)

TOLULOPE DARAMOLA

Tolulope Daramola is a self taught visual contemporary artist whose works evokes deep emotions, questions of identity and Skin pigmentation via the essence of the human physical features. Being of Yoruba heritage from the western part of Nigeria, a people whose expression of feelings are etched in Ostentatious cultural lifestyles, most times it's arts and their way of life sometimes to affirm life and Joy in "Owanbe" a form of celebration of life, achievements and other feats by wearing colourful attires, whining and dinning together as happy people.- He celebrates his background by the use of carefully picked subtle colours inherent in his works, speaking of colours, this is the ideal segue into the red hue on black skin conversation in his works, it spells the uniqueness in the identification of a valuable sentiments, at times Anger against white supremacist and racism, also it's a reminder that a good mental exhaustion could have history rewritten through his visual story telling.

He seeks a full-cycle of life unfolding in stages on his canvas; childhood, adulthood, and the transition of self awareness, through The striking poses and the looks of his subjects.

"Be it an Omg! Wow! C'est tres bien! exclaimed when people see my paintings, I am fulfilled that my work finds expression," he says.



IN HER OWN CROWN

2021

Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
35 x 45 in. (89 x 114.5 cm)



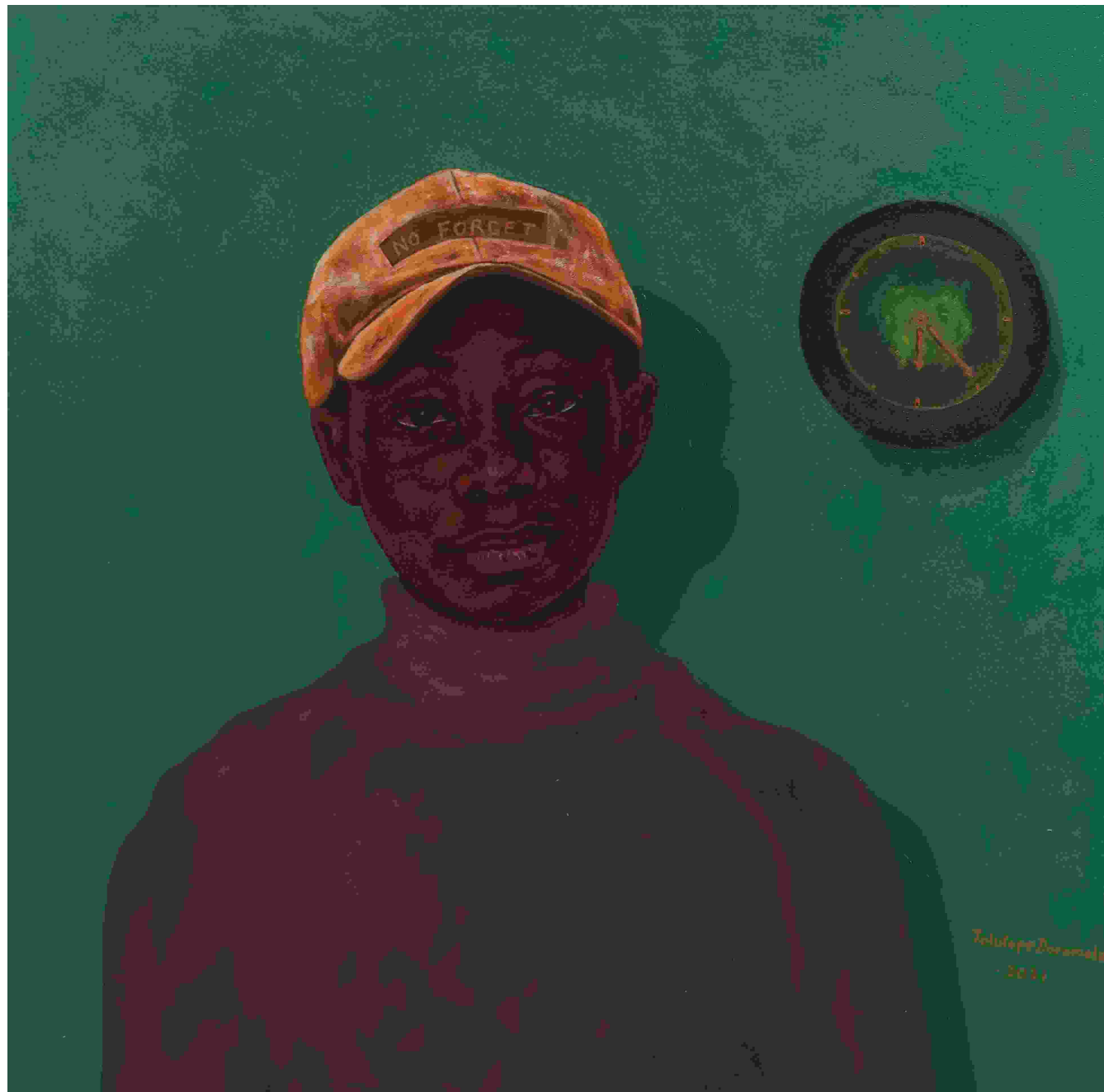
DANIEL COLE

2021
Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
25 x 35 in. (64 x 89 cm)



FAMILY TREE

2021
Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
35 x 45 in. (89 x 114.5 cm)



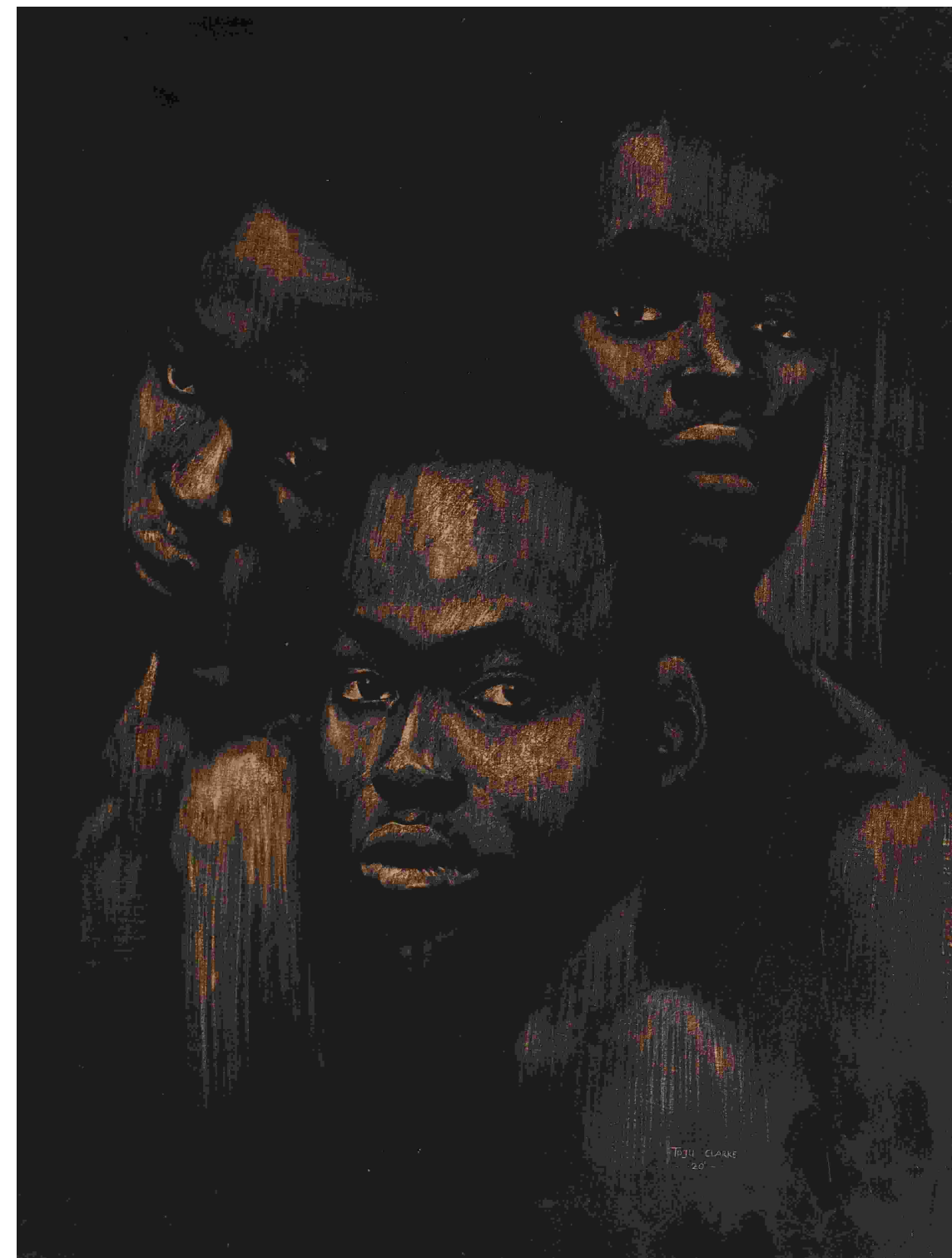
GENTLE REMINDER
 2021
 Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
 35 x 35 in. (89 x 89 cm)



FRED NOW FREE
 2021
 Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
 35 x 35 in. (89 x 89 cm)

TORITSEJU CLARKE

Clarke Toritseju Favour (b.1996) also known as Toju Clarke is a Nigerian Sgraffito and Digital artist. His search for a unique language of expression as seen him explore art traditionally by scratching on canvas and digitally over the past few years. A graduate of Yaba College of Technology, majoring in Graphic design. His knack for arts has led him to become a top finalist at NSAC (Nigerian Student Art Contest) in 2018, Art Director for TRIBE-FEST in 2018, the Best Graphic/ Digital Art at LIMCAF (Life in my city art festival) in 2019. 3x3x3 Artist residency in 2020, He is an Alumni of Next Economy/Fate Foundation and a member of The Executive Helping Initiative. He has spoken words about his art through a host of media houses including platforms like Unilag fm, silverbird, Television continental (TVC), Channels TV's Art House. He looks forward to creating awareness on issues that affects humans through his works and hope his art inspires people to take a leap, like he does every time he puts needles to scratch and hands to screen.

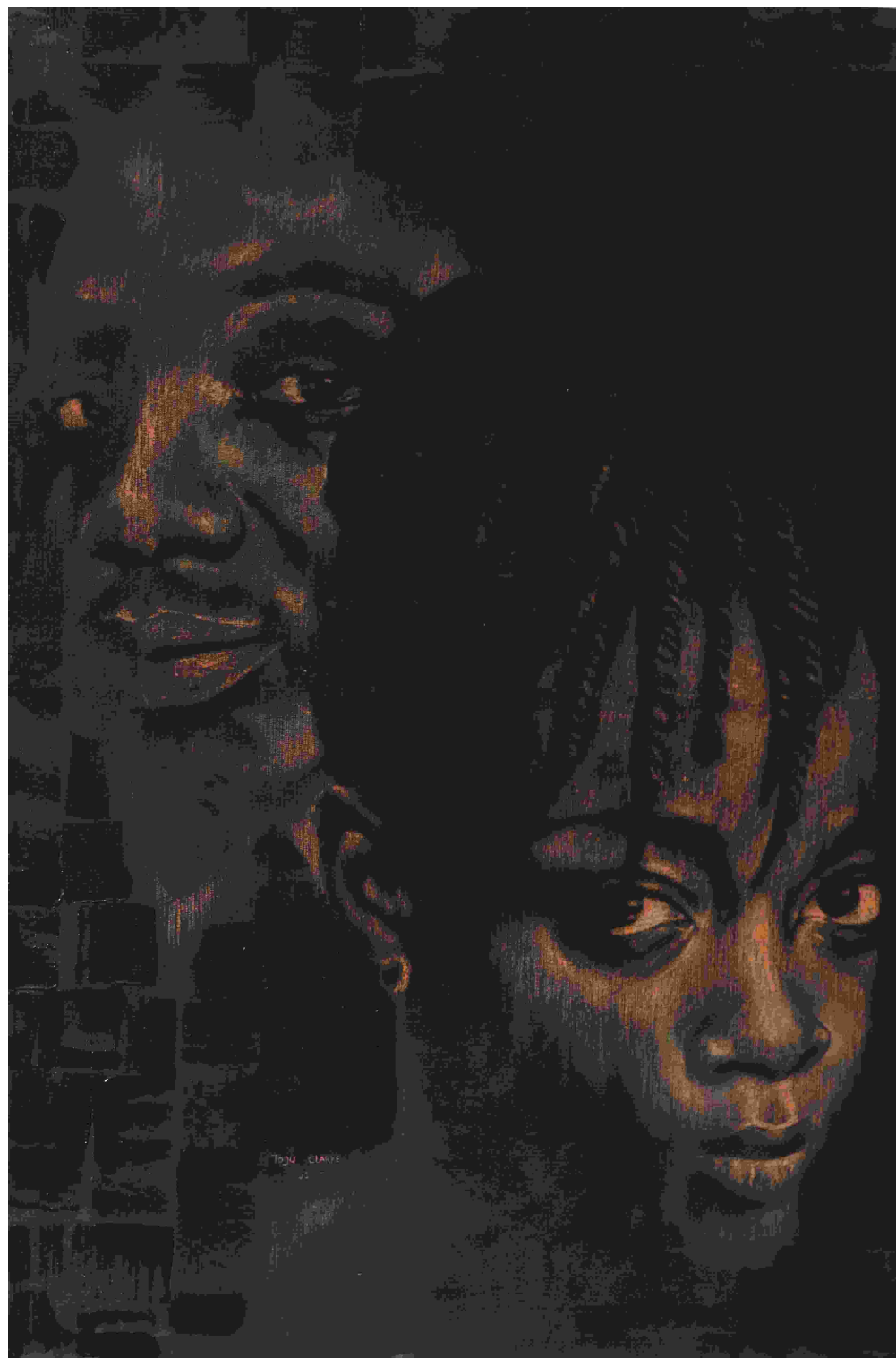


WATCHERS

2021

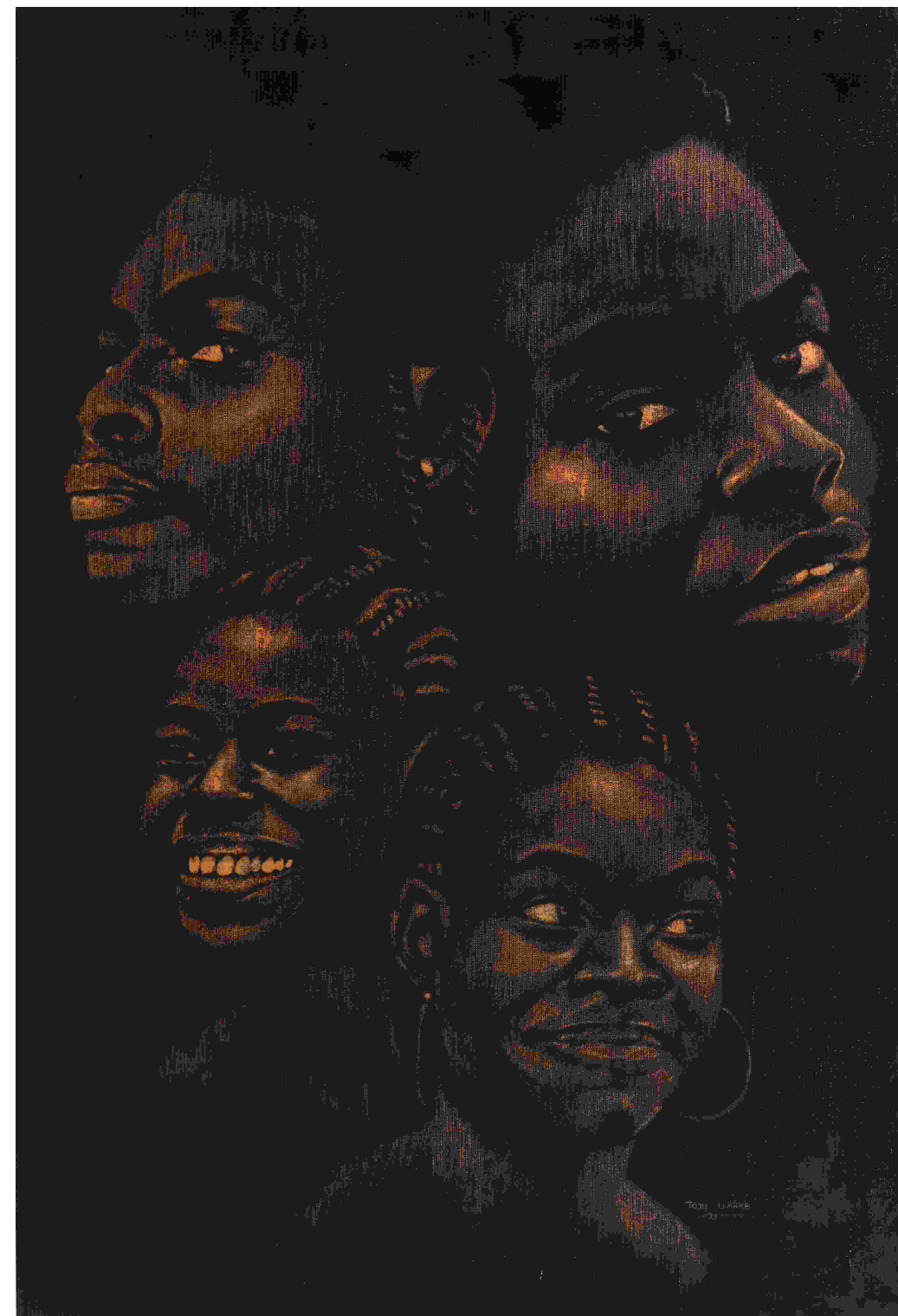
Sgraffito (scratching on canvas)

36 x 48 in. (76 x 122 cm)



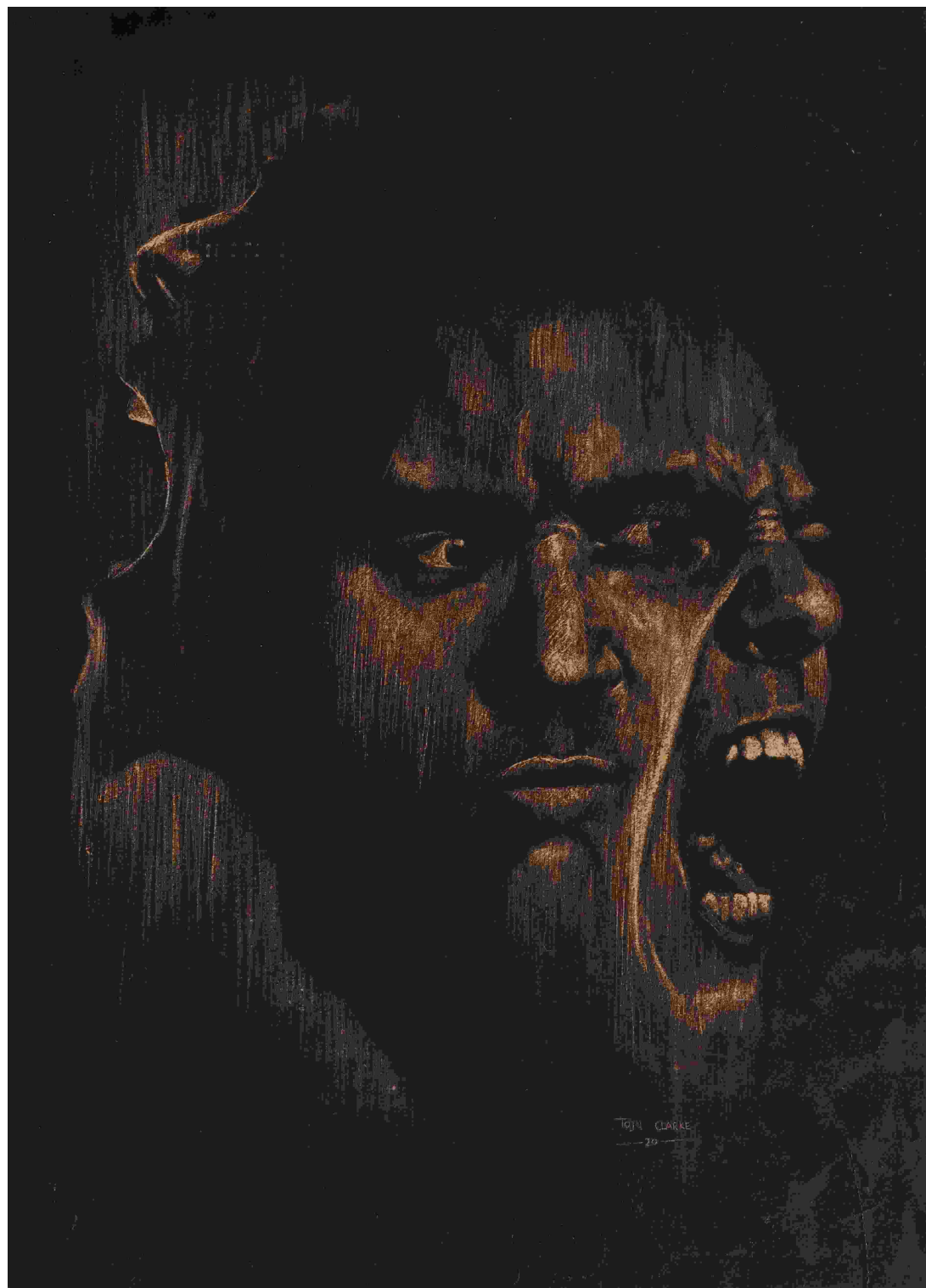
PERSPECTIVE I

2021
Sgraffito (scratching on canvas)
50.5 x 75 in. (129 x 190 cm)



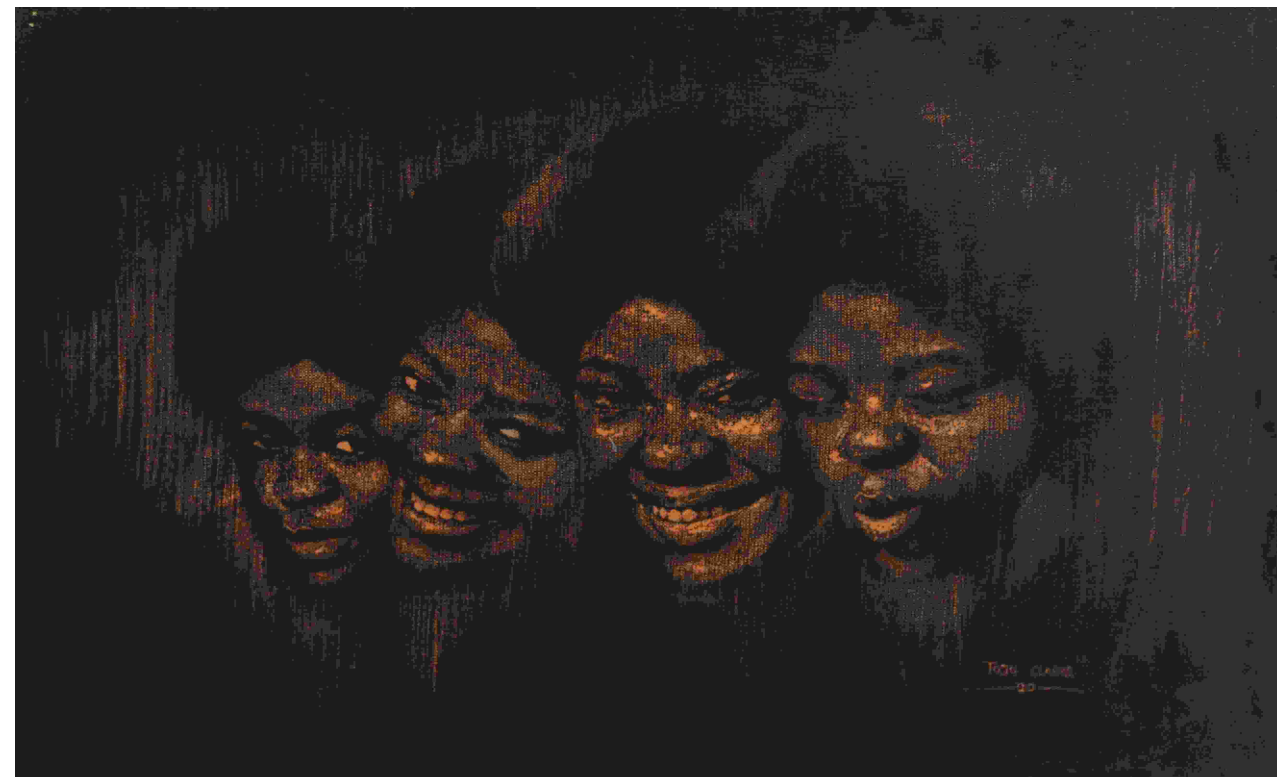
PERSPECTIVE II

2021
Sgraffito (scratching on canvas)
50.5 x 75 in. (129 x 190 cm)



BIPOLAR

2020
Sgraffito (scratching on canvas)
42 x 30in. (107 x 76cm)



LACUNA (THE MISSING PIECE)

2020
Sgraffito (scratching on canvas)
30 x 48 in. (76 x 122 cm)

PAUL AYIHAWU

Nigerian-based contemporary african artist Paul Ayihawu uses charcoal and acrylic to tell the story of african in a new light. His work focuses more on the social-cultural issues and the impact of colonialism on African cultures and values. He expressed this often with flipped portraits of black people dressed in a hybrid of western and African dresses.

He is fervent about telling the untold, unheard and silent stories of the black community. His works are in private collections in USA, South Africa and Nigeria

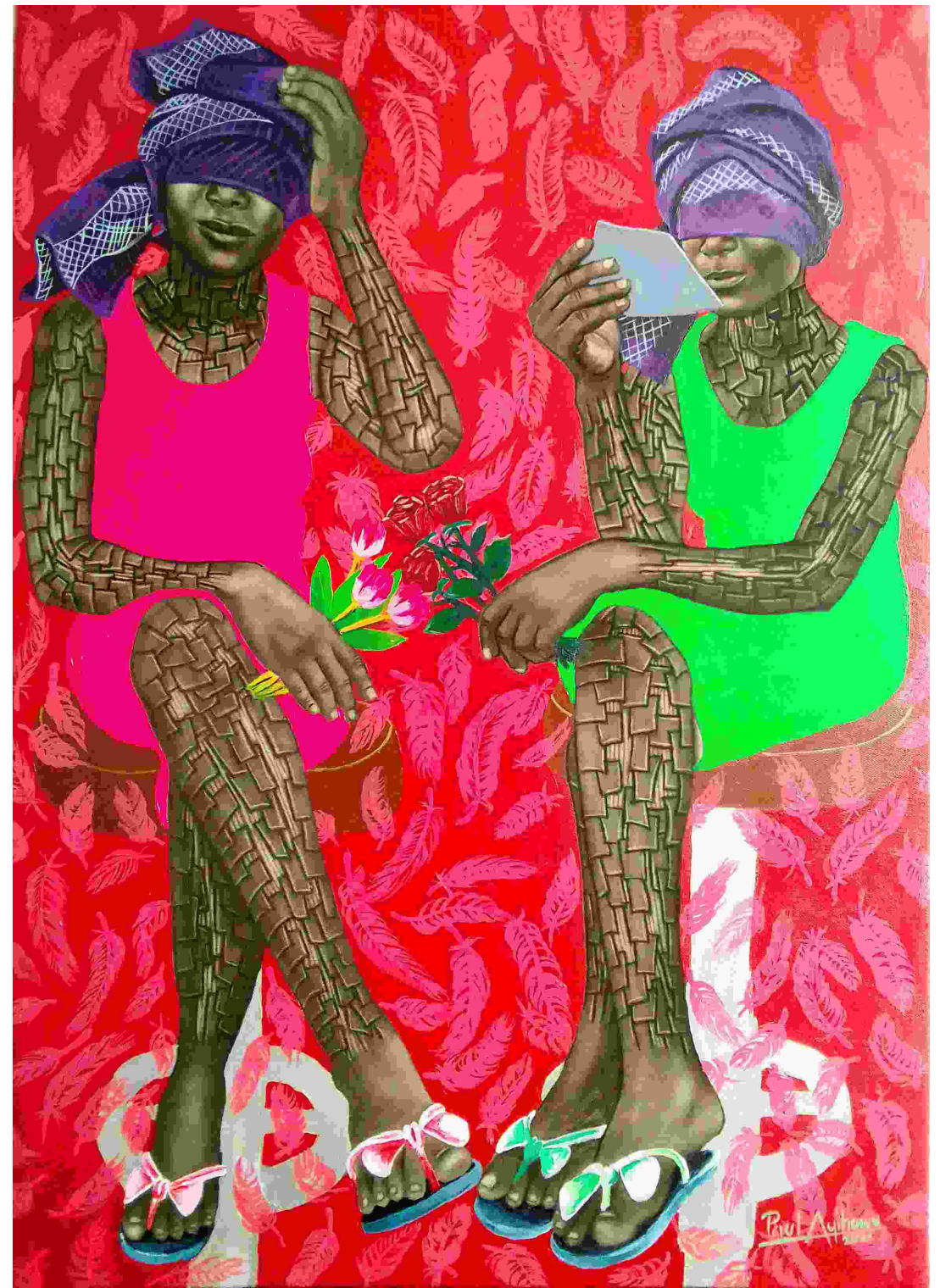


BORNO'S BLOOM

2021
Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
41 x 30in. (104 x 76 cm)



DAY DREAMING
2021
Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
48 x 36 in. (122 x 91.5 cm)



TULIPS AND ROSES
2021
Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
42 x 30 in. (107 x 76 cm)



EYIN JU

2021

Charcoal & acrylic on canvas
41 x 30in (107 x 76 cm)

SAMUEL SEMAKO VITTU

Samuel Semako Vittu (b. 1991), in Badagry, a coastal town of Lagos, believes that the face is laced with diverse stories. His work constantly interrogates the exterior of the face as an entry point into larger issues in the society with the use of acrylic, oil and charcoal. He fuses portraiture with anthropomorphism, employing bulgy eyes as windows and zoom lens into the happenings, experiences, thoughts, and crisis that goes on in the mind of his subjects.

Samuel comes from a family where an uncle had studied art, and had given him the basic and formidable training during his formative (artistic) years. Those years could be described as one of concerted exposition.

As a trained painter and art educator, he holds a Nigerian Certificate in Education from Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education as well as a Bachelor of Art Education in painting from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

As a practicing artist, Samuel works chiefly across painting and drawing. Working with charcoal, oil, acrylic and canvas has been his chosen media to register and visualize his inspiration, ideas and imaginations. The resulting artworks from his usually mixed-media experimentations are figuratively conceptual, suggestive, evocative and formalistic.

Samuel has participated in exhibitions such as Life in my city, Lagos zone at the National Gallery in (2013), he was also a participating artist in the (2019) group exhibition tagged "DREAM" at Vivid exclusive art gallery. In (2021), he was part of the exhibiting artist at the Refrigerator poetry online exhibition, On Display, Wielding power at Gallery at the Landmark (2021)

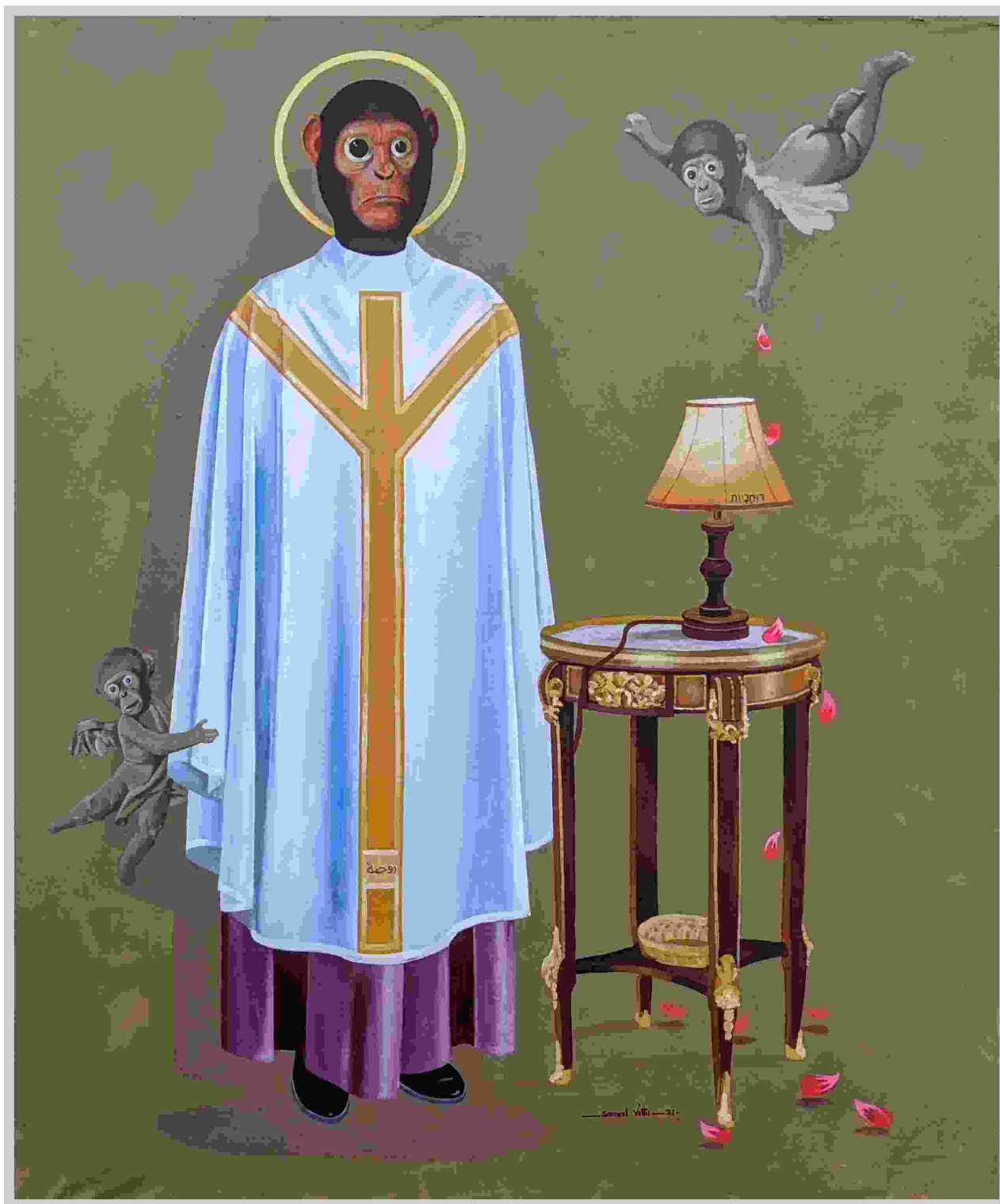
Samuel lives and work in Lagos, Nigeria.



A GENTLE MAN'S ROSE
 2021
 Oil & acrylic on canvas
 51 x 45 in. (130 x 114 cm)



THE DAMAGE OF PAIN I
 2021
 Oil & acrylic on canvas
 52 x 45 in. (132 x 114 cm)



NOT HOLIER THAN THOU
2021
Oil & acrylic on canvas
50 x 43 in. (127 x 109 cm)



THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN
2021
Oil & acrylic on canvas
48 x 44 in. (122 x 86 cm)



