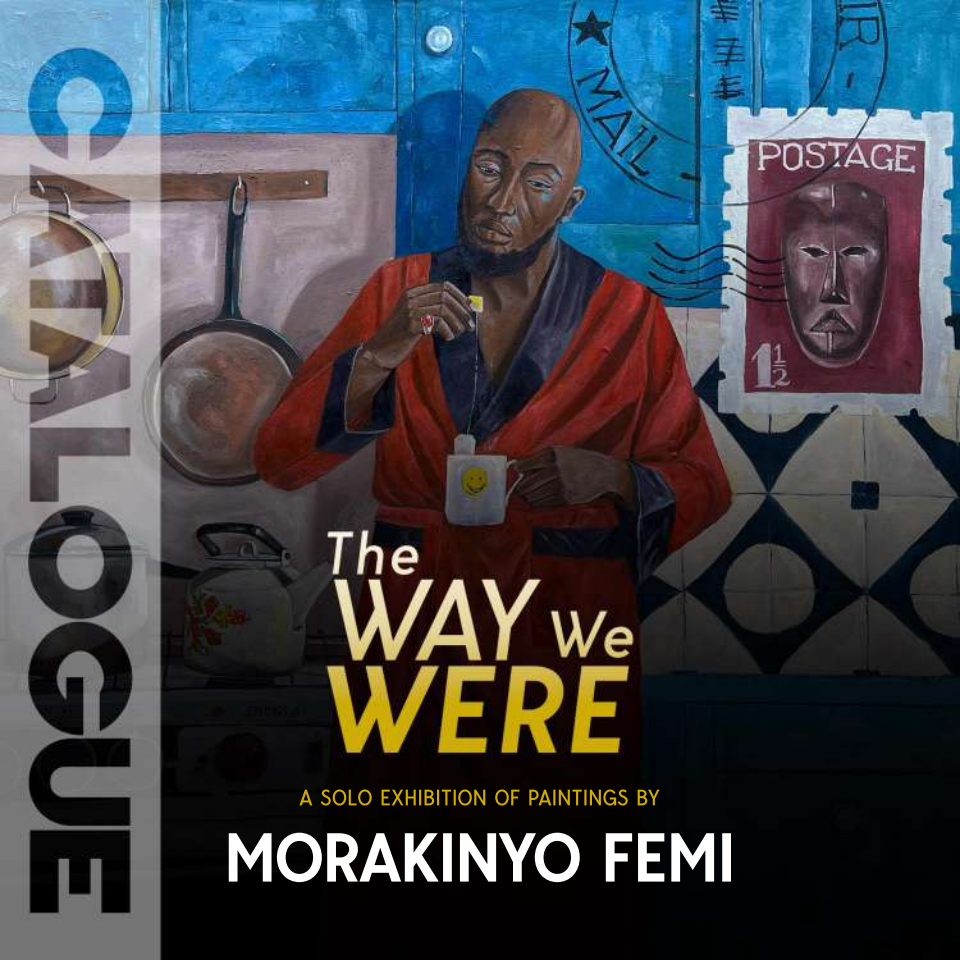




CATALOGUE

The WAY We WERE

A SOLO EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY

MORAKINYO FEMI

The **WAY** *we* **WERE**

SUNDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 2024



12D BOSUN ADEKOYA STREET ONIRU, LAGOS. NIGERIA



AIR POST



GALLERY STATEMENT : **The Way We Were by Femi Morakinyo.**

In "The Way We Were," Femi Morakinyo invites viewers to journey through a selection of memory, identity, and cultural resonance. This exhibition is a profound exploration of the past, reflecting on how our histories shape our present and inform our future.

Morakinyo's works are rooted in personal and collective narratives, blending traditional techniques with contemporary perspectives. Each piece serves as a serious reminder of the stories that weave through our lives—stories of joy, struggle and resilience. Through rich textures and evocative imagery, Morakinyo captures the essence of human experience, prompting us to reflect on our own histories and the connections that bind us.

The exhibition invites engagement, encouraging dialogue about the complexities of identity and the fluid nature of memory. As we navigate the fragments of our past, Morakinyo challenges us to consider not just who we were, but who we aspire to be.

Join us in this immersive exploration of memory and identity, and discover the shared narratives that unite us all. In "The Way We Were," Morakinyo's artistry becomes a mirror, reflecting the myriad ways we remember and reimagine our lives.

Nana Sonoiki

Art Pantheon Gallery



ARTIST STATEMENT

"The Way We Were" is a nostalgic reflection on the cultural heritage, memories, and societal changes within Nigeria and Africa as a whole. This exhibition is deeply rooted in my personal history, inspired by the stamps collected by my father, a passionate philatelist. The stamps, with their detailed designs and markings, ignited my imagination, allowing me to dream of distant places while remaining deeply connected to my African identity.

My art is both a journey through time and a bridge between the past and the present. Through my paintings, I aim to remind viewers of the simplicity, beauty, and humanity that often marked life in earlier times. These works also aim to serve as a reminder to future generations, that art can be used a tool for preserving

and celebrating our traditions, customs and the lived experiences of those who came before us.

The subjects in my paintings are not entirely abstract figures, but people I encountered throughout my upbringing—family members, neighbors, and everyday individuals who shaped my understanding of the world. Through them, I seek to capture a moment in time, a way of life that, while perhaps simpler, was also filled with a distinct richness.

Vintage elements frequently appear in my work: the grandfather clock, the coal iron, old telephones, transistor radios, decorative aluminum pans, typewriters etc. These objects, some now out of use, were once important to daily life, and they hold within them stories of past generations. Fashion, too, plays a

significant role, as I explore the elegance of vintage prints and attires that speak to an era of grace and pride in our history.

This exhibition seeks to create an awareness on the importance of preserving and reviving African culture on a global scale. Each work acts as a vessel for stories that spread to generations, reminding us of our collective responsibility to honor and pass down our traditions, while also embracing how far we've come. Through this body of work, I hope to inspire viewers to engage with the richness of African heritage and to recognize it's continued relevance and influence in shaping the world at large. Ultimately, "The Way We Were" is not just a collection of paintings; it is a love letter to memory, history, and the powerful way art preserves and shares our collective journey.

Through this exhibition, I hope to offer viewers a glimpse of the past, reminding us all of the places we've been, the people we've known, and the cultural richness that continues to shape who we are today.



One Day at A Time

Oil on Canvas

54x48 inches

2024



Matrimony

Oil on Canvas

48x48 inches

2024

Matrimony: *A Celebration of Love* is a captivating painting that beautifully emphasizes the essence of love and unity through the lens of an African couple dressed in vintage English wedding attire. The artwork masterfully blends cultural heritage with a nostalgic feel to the past, creating a harmonious visual narrative that resonates.

Matrimony is not just a portrayal of a wedding; it's a tribute to the enduring bonds of love, the beauty of shared traditions, and the promise of a future together. This painting invites us to reflect on our own relationships and the joy that comes from celebrating love in all its forms. As viewers, we are reminded that while styles may change, the essence of love remains timeless.



Tiwalade

Oil & Acrylic on Canvas

48x48 inches

2024

"Tiwalade" is a painting that captures the essence of Yoruba culture through the lens of a young girl, embodying the meaning of her name: *"royalty comes from home."* In the painting, the girl stands proudly, cradling her beloved African doll—a symbol of connection to her heritage and the stories passed down through generations. Her gaze is encapsulating the innocence of childhood.

Positioned beside her is a nostalgic grandfather's clock, its elaborate design serving as a reminder of the passage of time and the importance of familial ties. The clock symbolizes wisdom and continuity, reflecting the enduring values instilled by her ancestors.



Association Day 1
Oil & Acrylic on Canvas
48x48 inches
2023



Association Day 2

Oil & Acrylic on Canvas

48x48 inches

2024

"Association Day" is a painting that brings to life a vital aspect of African community life, focusing on the themes of unity, problem-solving, and empowerment. Set in a vintage 1980s-style sitting room, the painting depicts a woman dressed in her association's traditional attire, Ankara or Aso Oke, preparing for her monthly association meeting. This gathering, a symbol of collective action and empowerment, reflects a practice common in many African communities where members come together regularly to discuss issues affecting the community, foster development, and support one another.

In this painting, the woman's poised demeanor reflects the important role women play in driving social change and community development. The setting, though modest, portrays the vibrancy and resilience of the women's associations that have long been instrumental in African societies.

The uniformed traditional attire worn by the women is an important cultural marker. Whether it is the vibrant Ankara or the more intricate Aso Oke, these fabrics are more than just clothing—they symbolize unity, solidarity, and shared purpose. The association's decision to wear uniformed attire signifies the importance of togetherness and a shared identity within the group. This practice is common in many African women's organizations, where such meetings are seen as sacred and the attire underscores their pride in being part of the community.

The artist likely used warm, earthy tones to evoke a sense of nostalgia and authenticity, capturing the essence of a 1980s African sitting room. Rich browns, golds, and reds may dominate the color palette, bringing warmth to the room and reflecting the richness of African culture.



Rise and shine

Oil on Canvas

36x36 inches

2024



A Gentle Man's Morning

Oil & Acrylic on Canvas

48x48 inches

2024

"Rise and Shine" and "A Gentleman's Morning" are paintings that captures the quiet and disciplined morning routine of a stern man as he prepares to kick-start his day. These artworks evokes a sense of calm determination, portraying the everyday ritual of breakfast, often viewed as a simple yet grounding moment before the busyness of the day unfolds. The man, with an air of formality and self-assuredness, is seated or standing, ready to enjoy a classic breakfast of an omelet with tea or coffee, setting the tone for a structured and purposeful day.

In the painting, the man is the central figure, depicted in a posture that reflects his seriousness and discipline. Whether he is sitting at a neatly arranged table or standing, ready to move, his facial expression reveals focus and perhaps contemplation. His attire may be formal—perhaps a crisp shirt and trousers—suggesting that he is a gentleman of routine, who values order and precision in his life. This morning moment, simple as it may seem, is part of a daily ritual that symbolizes control and preparedness.

On the table before him lies a well-prepared omelet, possibly steaming with warmth, alongside a cup of tea or coffee. The meal, though modest, represents sustenance and the practical approach he takes toward life—nourishment is just another step in maintaining his balance and composure. The utensils are likely laid out meticulously, further emphasizing his structured nature.

Themes and Symbolism

Discipline and Routine: "Rise and Shine" or "A Gentleman's Morning" is a painting that captures the value of routine. The man's breakfast ritual is a reflection of his broader approach to life—methodical and deliberate. The act of starting the day with a hearty meal is symbolic of his readiness to face whatever challenges lie ahead. The omelet and tea or coffee are not just elements of a meal; they symbolize simplicity, efficiency, and the fuel needed to power through the day.

Self-Reliance and Independence: The man's presence in the painting hints at self-reliance. He is calm, undistracted by the external world, and in control of his environment. This focus may represent an independent spirit, someone who takes pride in his ability to navigate life's demands with poise and confidence.

Nourishment and Balance: The choice of food—an omelet with tea or coffee—speaks to the idea of nourishment, both physical and mental. Breakfast is often considered the most important meal of the day, and in this painting, it serves as a foundation for balance and strength. The simplicity of the meal mirrors the man's no-nonsense approach to life. The tea or coffee adds an element of warmth and ritual, suggesting that while he is stern and focused, he also values these small moments of comfort.



Reflections

Oil on Canvas

36x36 inches

2024



Siblings

Oil on Canvas

48x54 inches

2024

Siblings captures a tender moment of a young sister and her younger brother, both dressed in their school uniforms, ready for the day ahead.

The sister's protective posture toward her brother reflects the nurturing bond often seen in African families, where older siblings take on caregiving roles. The brother's innocent gaze hints at the curiosity and adventure of childhood.

Through its rich details, the painting not only tells a story of a typical school morning but also serves as a tribute to the enduring essence of African family life, blending tradition and the journey toward modernity. The vintage items in the room root the scene in history, reminding the viewer of the timeless values of love, care, and preparation for the future.



Orekelewa
Oil on Canvas
48x48 inches
2024



Ajike

Oil on Canvas

36x36 inches

2023



Washline
Oil on Canvas
42x42 inches
2023



ARTIST BIO

Morakinyo Femi is a visual artist born in Akure, Ondo State Nigeria in 1984. At an early age, Femi was intrigued by the stamps collected by his banker father which have now become a major source of inspiration for his art style. In his early age, Femi lived briefly with his grandmother who was a connoisseur of old textiles, hand painted aluminum pans and vintage items. He was captivated by most of these items and spent a great deal of time drawing them.

A Fine Art graduate of Yaba College of Technology in Lagos (majored in painting), Femi is currently a Senior Art Director in a leading digital advertising agency in Lagos, Nigeria where he works across diverse areas such as motion graphics, illustrations and designs. As an artist, Femi explores classic and stunning storytelling, capable of evoking nostalgic feelings and taking his viewers on a journey of visual pleasure using his unique stylized painting employing acrylic, oil, charcoal and pastel mediums. He portrays his love for vintage art by fusing antique objects into everyday scenarios in dramatic and sometimes amusing ways.

His artistic process involves a synthesis of various mediums, including acrylics, oils, charcoal, and pastels, allowing him to employ a unique approach that is both vibrant and evocative.

Femi explores themes of sociocultural issues bordering especially on gender and educating on the importance of cultural and historic preservation. His recent paintings, titled: Kindergarten, Association day, Unknown Soldier, Better days ahead e.t.c are testaments to his ongoing exploration of these themes which has been well-received by both critics, collectors and the public.

2024 Group Exhibition, Madeke Virtual Modern Art exhibition, England.

*2022 Group Exhibition, Metacognition - Awareness of Thought
by Constance and sons gallery via ARTSY, New York.*

*2022 Group Exhibition, From Lagos with love Art curated by art.ng,
Lekki, Lagos Nigeria.*

*2022 Group Exhibition, Nostalgia II curated by The Holy art
London Gallery.*

*2022 Solo Exhibition, Stamps of Memories, Mydrim art gallery
Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria.*

*2021 Group Exhibition, Defiance: Creativity in Times of Crisis, (COVID-19)
Virtual Reality show by Breathe of Hope Africa Gallery, Lagos Nigeria.*

2020 Affordable Art Auction, Arthouse Contemporary Lagos, Nigeria.

*2020 Group Exhibition, New affordable art launch Zarnellia art gallery
Lagos, Nigeria.*

*2019 Group Exhibition, Holiday Art party by ArtOja at Raddison Blu Hotel,
Lagos, Nigeria*

2019 Affordable Art Auction, Arthouse Contemporary Lagos, Nigeria.

2018 Affordable Art Auction, Arthouse Contemporary Lagos, Nigeria.

2017 Affordable Art Auction, Arthouse Contemporary Lagos, Nigeria.



