...NOT IN THISDAY STYLE? THEN YOU'RE NOT IN STYLE

YINKA SHONIBARE
AUTHENTIC

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Nigeria’s golden girl Tobi Amusan is fast rewriting the record books and is setting a new pace for young African athletes, especially Nigerians, to follow in the World of sports. In this interview, she speaks to Funke Babs-Kufeji about failure, winning and becoming a world champion.

I first heard of Yinka Shonibare when I stumbled upon his headless art sculptures during a random Google search. I was so intrigued with his work that I got lost in hours of research, drinking up every piece of info on this very talented creative. Every painting, sculpture, photography, film and installation he created was geared towards examining race, class and cultural identity. From the headless sculptures to the oversized Nelson’s ship in a battle and his creative use of brightly coloured Ankara fabrics, it was all so fascinating.

What struck me about him was how effectively he communicated his art despite his disability. He decided that being in a wheelchair wouldn’t stop him. And to be honest, one can only imagine how difficult it was for him. While working on this edition, someone mentioned that if Yinka Shonibare were resident in Nigeria, he wouldn’t be as successful, and my response was that it is debatable considering we have produced the likes of Cobhams Asuquo and Yinka Ayefele, who are great success stories in their own right. But that conversation also served as a reminder that when you have a physical disability, you have to fight harder than most of your peers to reach your goals. And you have to fight even harder to prove that you got there because you deserved it, not because the world felt sorry for you. When you think about it, success stories about persons living with disabilities are often reduced to singular charity narratives and inspirational speeches, regardless of how hard they strive to be more than that. As someone who grew up with a very close relative who is disabled, I know this to be true.

The sad truth is that in these parts, disability per se is still considered a barrier to self-enhancement and making significant contributions to society. And that is largely because we live in a society that is subconsciously and consciously socialised to have negative attitudes towards the conditions of persons with disabilities. Yes, there are discussions around inclusion which often centre on infrastructure and equal treatment without recognising that equality cannot be achieved when people are not starting from the same point. This is a conversation that would go on for a very long time. It’s easy to assume that because you are understanding and supportive towards people with disability, discrimination never occurs, and full equality prevails. What we need to remember is that equality cannot be achieved when people are not starting from the same point. That special breed of men and women who inspired our own quest as watchmakers. Rest assured, it is a path we intend to keep on exploring. The Explorer II.

Winning in spite of

WHAT IS THE QUEST?

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Since 2016, Lagos has been hosting the biggest art exhibition in West Africa, bringing thousands of artists, connoisseurs, visitors and tourists from across the continent and different parts of the world to what has now become a major event in the nation’s culture and tourism calendar. Known as ART X Lagos, the fair was launched as a dynamic platform to showcase and support the breadth of contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora. Founded by Tokiniti Peterside-Schwebig, the exhibition hosts every first weekend in November.

This year’s edition, the seventh and its most ambitious to date, took place between Friday, November 4 and Sunday, November 6 at Federal Palace, Victoria Island. Over 120 artists from over 40 countries across Africa and in the Diaspora, presented by 31 leading international galleries, participated. There were live exhibitions, talks, installations and performances, in addition to a virtual fair on ARTSY for the benefit of the global audience.

For the first time this year, the Access ART X Prize, an annual award for emerging artists was expanded to award 2 emerging artists - one from Nigeria and one from Africa/the Diaspora who will receive three-month residencies at Gasworks, in London UK and at Yinka Shonibare’s GAS Foundation in Lagos, Nigeria respectively, in addition to a $10,000 grant towards an exhibition at ART X Lagos and tailored mentorship and opportunities for cultural exchange.

The beauty of ART X Lagos lies in its huge contributions to the growth of tourism in the country and in positioning the city of Lagos as a place to visit every November.
Recently, the GBC Health celebrated the launch of Future United with the Future United Awards in New York. The award ceremony was sponsored by the Aig-imoukhuede Foundation and Merck, two visionary organisations supporting GBCHealth in its quest to future-proof the world against global health challenges and mitigate global health risks.
Highlights from Art X Lagos 2022

Art lovers from around the world gathered to celebrate the dynamism and diversity of art at the Art X Lagos 2022 exhibition.

The event, which took place at the Federal Palace Hotel, Lagos, brought together 31 leading international galleries representing over 120 artists from 40 countries, celebrating the very best of contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora.

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Congratulations on your 60th birthday celebration. As a conceptual artist, you are internationally renowned for turning brilliant ideas into reality. Your public artworks also attest to your greatness. How does it feel now, at 60, that you have become a colossus in the art scene?

Thank you. I am very pleased to be still working at the age of 60. I think that experience is the best teacher. My success did not come overnight. I had to work very hard. It’s not easy being an artist anywhere, let alone an artist of African origin in Europe. But with patience and perseverance, I have managed to get to where I am today, and I am very grateful for that.

Like Soyinka and perhaps other socio-politically conscious creatives of African extraction, your works tend to intersect cultural identity in colonial and post-colonial contexts. Does your upbringing in both worlds (UK and Nigeria) play a role in the message behind your art?

As an artist of African origin, it is impossible not to explore subjects about your identity. Particularly when you live in Europe, you feel different and stand out. You have to understand why you are different, your history, and the relationship between Britain and Nigeria. That has formed my identity—I am a Yoruba speaker and an English speaker. When I started working, one of my tutors at the university in London suggested that I not make work about international issues but rather simply about traditional African art. But in reality, it’s impossible to stick to traditional art. I am part of a global discussion, and so that’s how I make my work. I make my work to reflect the reality of contemporary Africans.

The cross-cultural identity in your works still resonates with our contemporary world. This period is marked by the mass migration of Nigerians to other countries. How can African artists contribute to preserving our collective memory of who we are?

It is important for African artists to value their heritage and acknowledge that they are now influenced by what everyone else is influenced by—they are on social media like everyone else. They watch films and TV from different parts of the world too, so they will inevitably expand beyond African heritage. I think that coming back home and doing things outside will also help to keep the connection between the African artists in the diaspora and the continent itself, which is extremely important for our self-esteem.

You recently opened up an art space, G.A.S. (Guest Artist Space Foundation) in Lekki and another community-based project in Ogun State. Why are these initiatives dear to your heart?

Many of us complain that there isn’t a lot in Nigeria and we need more facilities, but if we all only complain about it and do nothing about it, we will not have those facilities. In Europe, the arts are partly funded by the government and the private sector, but in Nigeria, everything is done by the private sector, so those of us who can do something should do something.

Looking at your works’ visual aesthetics, the pieces are fashion statements—largely made of Dutch textiles and other mass media. Why did you choose these materials to work with?

African textiles are very well known, and they do express the African identity. I find the history of the textiles—inspired by Indonesian fabrics, produced by the Dutch, and then sold to Africa very interesting. Also, the fact that Africans have also adopted the fabrics, which are now being appropriated by African designers and African artists as well, I use the fabric as a starting point, a way to talk about many other issues.

How do you see the future of the arts for Nigerian artists, galleries, and curators, especially since you just opened up the G.A.S. space here in Lagos?

I think that ART X has been fantastic for Nigeria. There are also many areas we need to develop here in Nigeria, particularly curating, conserving art, and developing the careers of young artists here. The best way to do this is to have residencies like mine (G.A.S.), to bring other artists in, and to bring in researchers and local artists to exchange ideas with international artists. I think that’s how you develop an ecosystem that will end up becoming even bigger than we can imagine.

Now that you have invested in Lagos and Ogun State, are you moving back home?

The great thing about the world now is that none of us has to be static in one place. I have a work to do internationally, as I also have work here in Nigeria. It is likely that I will be moving between Europe and Nigeria.

African art is having a moment. Why do you think that is?

I think that the world is now recognising the work of African artists. African artists have always been there. It’s just that the world didn’t take notice. It’s great that the world realises this, and many exhibitions of African artists exist. This is a great moment. It is a kind of renaissance for African art, and long may it continue.

Looking back at all you have achieved, do you remember the earliest memory of when you wanted to do what you do today?

It is not easy to be an artist because there is no formula for success. I think that it is about focus and hard work. I remember when things were very difficult in the beginning. You do have to keep working to convince people that you have something valuable to contribute to the sector. It has been a very hard journey, but with patience and perseverance, I feel lucky that I managed to get there and now I am here.

Will you say your style of art has changed over time?

It is inevitable that an artist will evolve. You will not make the work you started out making because you will see more works by other artists. I continue to be inspired and keep adding new ways of working. I am very happy to continue learning, and I think that is very important.

How do you define success as an artist?

I don’t see just one way of being successful as an artist. I think that success is relative; everyone has their own level of success, and I wouldn’t define success in one way. Just managing to finish one piece of art for some is a huge success; for others, their work having some monetary value might be successful.

Lastly, what advice will you give to someone who has just started their artistic career?

My advice to someone who has just started is to recognise that they are not the only artist in the world and to be open to being inspired by the works of other artists. I would encourage them to read other artists’ books, attend as many exhibits as possible, and stay open-minded.
Marvel’s ‘Black Panther: Wakanda Forever’ is scheduled for release in Nigeria on the 11th of November, and as part of their world tour, they held a premiere here in Lagos on the 6th of November. Filmhouse Cinemas, IMAX, Lekki played host to the event, which saw the likes of the director, Ryan Coogler and stars Letitia Wright, Lupita Nyong’o, Danai Gurira, Winston Duke, and Teyonah Parris, with some crew members in attendance.

The black carpet was awash with all sorts of fashion, with everyone in attendance putting their best fashion foot forward. From stars of the night Lupita Nyongo and Letitia Wright, who kept it clean and classy, to Tosin Ogunade and Denola Adepetun, who opted for vibrant and edgy, here are some of our favourite looks from the red carpet.

By Bukola Amoboye

Sunday, November 13, 2022 Vol. 22, No. 10048
HUSHPUPI SENTENCED TO 11 YEARS IN PRISON FOR FRAUD

Popular Nigerian internet fraudster Ramon Abass aka Hushpuppi, who flaunted a lavish lifestyle of private jets and luxury cars, has been sentenced to 11 years in prison over charges related to a multimillion-dollar scam that targeted companies in the United States and overseas.

He pleaded guilty in April last year to conspiracy to engage in money laundering. In addition to the prison sentence, United States District Judge Otis D. Wright II ordered him to pay $1.7 million in restitution to two fraud victims.

TIWA AND ASAKE RELEASE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED SINGLE “LOADED”.

Nigerian superstars Tiwa Savage and Asake have released their highly anticipated single “Loaded”. The already viral track features an infectious amapiano beat and catchy lyrics in Yoruba.

FEMI OTEDOLA SPENDS 60TH BIRTHDAY ONBOARD WORLD’S FIRST SUPERYACHT.

Nigerian billionaire Femi Otedola recently celebrated his 60th birthday on a private luxury motor yacht “Christina O”, worth over N2.2bn. Otedola, who turned 60 on Friday, November 4, rented the yacht to celebrate with his family and friends.

The superyacht is one of the biggest yachts in the world, belonging to billionaire Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. Otedola reportedly rented to sail for three weeks on the Mediterranean Sea with family and friends alongside crew members on board.

The weekly rental cost of the yacht, according to Charter World, is €620,000 (Forty Million Naira).

KERIN IN ADVANCED TALKS TO ACQUIRE TOM FORD.

French luxury conglomerate Kering is in advanced talks to acquire Tom Ford. The tailoring staple is being sought-after by the luxury giant that also owns Gucci, Saint Laurent and Balenciaga. Kering is said to be up against beauty company Estée Lauder for the privately owned luxury menswear and beauty brand. However, Kering appears to be the frontrunner. Should Tom Ford be sold to Kering, it would be a full-circle moment for the founder and designer. Ford worked at Gucci in the 1990s and was a crucial player in the brand’s transformation.

REMA ‘COLLAPSES’ ON STAGE DURING UK CONCERT.

Nigerian singer Divine Ikubor, aka Rema, scared his fans after he passed out on stage during his recent concert at the O2 Briton. In a viral video, Rema was seen performing during his “Rave and Rose” world tour, where he sold out a two-day concert at the 4,971-capacity O2 Briton Academy Arena. He was joined on stage by heavyweights like Skepta, Santi and Teni, but then he decided to pull a prank on his fans by pretending to faint on stage. However, the singer returned a few seconds later, jumping back on stage to perform his hit song, “Woman”. A video of people rushing to the stage to carry him away has surfaced online.

Fifty Cent to Produ ce Series on Hushpuppi.

American rapper and Movie producer Curtis James Jackson III, American rapper and producer popularly known as 50 Cents, has announced plans to release a movie series based on recently convicted Nigerian internet fraudster Ramon Abass Best known as Hushpuppi.

Sharing pictures of the convict, 50 Cent made it known via his Instagram account that he was working on a movie project based on Hushpuppi’s story. “For my scammers, I gotta do this one. Hushpuppi series coming soon!”

50 CENT TO PRODUCE SERIES ON HUSHPUPI.

BURBERRY LAUNCHES CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN STARRING BURNA BOY AND SHAKIRA.

International luxury fashion brand Burberry has launched its festive campaign with the debut of The Night Before campaign. The Night Before describes as “a celebration of the excitement and anticipation of festive preparations”.

It stars Shakira and Burna Boy, each of them making their Burberry campaign debut. The company says each of the film’s stars “embodies their own interpretation of the exhilaration of the night before”.

DAVIDO POSTPONES A.W.A.Y. FESTIVAL.

Superstar Afrobeats singer Davido’s upcoming ‘Are We Africans Yet (A.W.A.Y)’ Atlanta festival has been postponed till November 2023 following the death of his son, Nenzy Adedeji.

The “A.W.A.Y” festival was scheduled to hold on November 18, 2022, at the 20,000-capacity State Farm Arena in Atlanta, Georgia. AwayFest, via its official Instagram page, wrote, “We have made the difficult but necessary decision to postpone A.W.A.Y. Festival until Saturday, November 18, 2023. To all ticket buyers, your tickets will be honoured for the 2023 date. We understand that you must be disappointed, but we promise to come back with a bigger and better show.”

PRESIDENT BUHARI MEETS KING CHARLES AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

President Muhammadu Buhari recently met with King Charles III at Buckingham Palace in London. The meeting is the first with the British monarch since he ascended the throne after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. President Buhari is currently in London on medical vacation.

JUDGE ORDERS REMAND OF EFCC BOSS ABDURASHEED BAWA AT KUJE CORRECTIONAL CENTER.

Justice Chizoba Oji of a High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Maitama has ordered the remand of the Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Abdurasheed Bawa, at the Kuje Correctional Center, Abuja, for disobeying an earlier order of the court directed at the Commission. The court stated that the EFCC’s Boss “should be committed to prison at Kuje Correctional Centre for his disobedience, and consequent disobedience of the said order of court made on November 21, 2018, until he purges himself of the contempt”.

The court had earlier directed the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Abuja, to return to the applicant his Range Rover (Supercharge) and the sum of N40, 000,000.00 (Forty Million Naira)
WHAT DO OFF-SITE SHOWS MEAN FOR LAGOS FASHION WEEK?

By Bernard Dayo

On a Sunday afternoon on the first-floor building of Boyo's Oniru Blinds, in a narrow room prepped for the Lagos Space Programme, guests browsed curiously at the lineup of leather footwear on display. At one end, five models wearing LSP stood frozen against a backdrop as though ready to take a family portrait. Potplant plants around, with dizzying whiffs from scented candles. In the background, Stevie Wonder's Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants put a meditative spell on the entire room.

LSP's creative director, Adeju Thompson, had collaborated with Nigerian artigianal footwear brand Shem Parare and revealed his love for gardening, hence the pattern of foliage leaves on a model's adire skirt. At this off-site location under Lagos Fashion Week, Thompson's ideas for this collection (Project 7/Post-Adire) wasn't just the tailoring of the garments, motifs, or the products and concepts he created how he wanted people to interact with the pattern of foliage leaves on a model's adire skirt. At this off-site location under Lagos Fashion Week, Thompson's ideas for this collection (Project 7/Post-Adire) wasn't just the tailoring of the garments, motifs, or the products and concepts he created how he wanted people to interact with the pattern of foliage leaves on a model's adire skirt. At this off-site location under Lagos Fashion Week, Thompson's ideas for this collection (Project 7/Post-Adire) wasn't just the tailoring of the garments, motifs, or the products and concepts he created how he wanted people to interact with the pattern of foliage leaves on a model's adire skirt. At this off-site location under Lagos Fashion Week, Thompson's ideas for this collection (Project 7/Post-Adire) wasn't just the tailoring of the garments, motifs, or the products and concepts he created. A premier destination for influ- it means to engage with fashion on the continent. A premier destination for influence, stylists, photographers, models, designers and global visitors to Lagos, LFW has charted several success stories while strengthening the bond within local creative communities.

With the introduction of off-site shows, is this goodbye to the famed Balmain tent at the Federal Palace Hotel? Certainly not. Just like the contemporary history of New York Fashion Week won't complete with its Bryant Park era, the Balmain tents have been foundational to Fashion Week in Lagos. In addition, this main site has been the venue for a growing clan of new designers for a decade, remaining a less expensive way for them to organize their showcases while having access to models, makeup and hair stylists under one roof.

What off-site venues show is that LFW as a platform is evolving. It's largely indicative of the growth, independence, and experience that certain designers have attained and are now putting to the test. For other brands whose approach is “slow fashion,” or have desisted from the busy fashion calendar, off-site shows are ideal for them — case in point, Lagos Space Programme. Furthermore, off-site shows bring a certain quality and attraction to LFW. By decentralizing its presentation format, guests attending LFW can experience the bombardment of a physical runway at the main tents and intimate gatherings off-site locations.

Mostly, Lagos Fashion Week is headed in the right direction.

‘Elesin Oba’ is the latest Nigerian movie released on Netflix that has got a lot of people talking. The movie, which was produced by EbonyLife and distributed by Netflix, premiered as the first Yoruba movie at the Toronto Film Festival on the 9th of September. It was then released to Nigerian Cinemas on the 28th of October and Netflix on the 4th of November. Sadly, the movie's director, renowned filmmaker and author Biyi Bandele died in August 2022, shortly before the movie’s premiere.

‘Elesin Oba’, which means “The King’s Horseman,” is a screen adaptation of Wole Soyinka’s play, “Death and the King’s Horseman”. Based on actual events that took place in the Oyo empire while under colonial rule and during the thick of the Second World War, the plot follows the story of a King’s Horseman who failed in his duty to die and be buried alongside the late king, as was the custom. His failure to perform this duty, which could lead to dire consequences for the town, was caused by his weakened resolve to perform his duty because of his inescapable desires for sexual pleasures and the interference of the colonial masters, especially the D.O (District Officer).

Bearing some resemblance to Kunle Afolayan’s ‘Anikulapo’, with reference to setting (place), cultural displays and narration, ‘Elesin Oba’ showcases the rich culture of the then Oyo empire in its set design, costumes, language, etc. The use of musical narration to drive the plot and the use of language were likewise quite impressive.

The movie saw some stellar acting from the likes of Shaffy Bello as Iy Aloja, Omowunmi Dada, amongst others. Thy actors include Joke Silva, Taiwo Ajai-Lycett, Deyemi Okanlawon as Olunde, Jenny Stead as the D.O (District Officer).

From the culturally rich ‘Anikulapo’ to this masterpiece by the late Biyi Bandele, there’s no stopping Nollywood right now, and we are definitively here for more indigenous movies!

‘Elesin Oba’, Biyi Bandele also managed to provoke certain rethinkings about colonialism and the white man’s claim of supremacy over Africans. While we agree that there were a few lapses and difficult to interpret and wasn’t simple enough for people who have not read the original play. Argument being that the screen adaptation was absolutely brilliant.

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While Lagos might be one of the busiest cities in Nigeria, plagued with unending hours of traffic due to overpopulation, small roads, and plenty of cars, it is still home to some of the best hotels in Nigeria. Here, the hotel scene is awash with spectacular creative and architectural delights, offering the best of Lagos hospitality. From a choice of one that is smack in the city centre to a more peaceful retreat in a serene and calm atmosphere, here are the best hotels to stay in Lagos.

THE ART HOTEL
The Art Hotel Oniru is Lagos’s one-of-a-kind art-inspired hotel. The exterior structure boasts industrial-style geometric steel and glass, while its interiors are an explosion of colour, pattern, and art. The hotel’s art portfolio is wide enough for any art connoisseur to be envious of, so it’s fast becoming a tourist destination for lovers of African art.

Eko Signature
Located in the swanky area of Victoria Island, the Eko Signature is a luxury extension of Eko Hotels and Suites. The interior reflects the very best of comfort and design, and every room is a masterpiece bestowed with comfort and style and has both views of the Atlantic Ocean and the city of Lagos. The hotel has been ranked one of the best in Nigeria.

The George
It’s hard not to be impressed when you walk into the George Hotel in Lagos’s heart of urban Ikoyi. You won’t find a grand lobby or anything close to that, but the hotel is sleek with modern décor, state-of-the-art amenities, and superb service, making it ideal for business and family travellers who seek the best in luxury when away from home.

The Wheat Baker Hotel
This elegant 65-room hotel is tucked away on a residential street in the lighter neighbourhood of Ikoyi in Lagos. From the outside, The Wheat Baker Hotel looks like a beautiful private home, but when you step in, you enter a world of cozy, serene luxury. It won’t be easy to find a hotel as exquisite and spacious in such a brilliant location, but Wheat Baker has it all.

Federal Palace Hotel
The Federal Palace Hotel is a vintage 5-star hotel that has been around for years. Recently renovated, the hotel has a city and Atlantic view that allows guests to choose which they prefer. The hotel has a casino, pool, and many more activities to keep you entertained.

Legend Hotel Lagos Airport
Ideal for travellers who don’t want to be far from the airport, the Legend Hotel by Hilton is an ultra-modern hotel that offers unrivalled proximity to the Lagos international airport, as well as an exclusive immigration and customs desk for private jet passengers. Its location near the airport is undoubtedly part of the appeal, but with its stellar staff, amenities, and accommodations, the Legend Hotel is second to none in the City of Lagos.

Lagos Continental Hotel
Arguably the tallest hotel in West Africa, the Lagos continental hotel is grand and regal. Its prime location in the heart of Victoria Island is one of the major reasons it gets our votes. The rooms are spacious and well-fit with superior comfort and style, big enough to fit three adults. The rooftop pool and bar offer an Instagram-worthy view of the city.
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