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"Soulgazers" Portraits of Unknown Women

By Godfrey Okorodus

About the Artist

Godfrey was born on the 27th of January 1970 in Lagos, Nigeria. He attended the university of Benin, Edo state Nigeria from 1988-1992 where he graduated with a Second class upper in Graphic Arts from the Fine and Applied Arts department. After a brief stint as an illustrator and cartoonist with the Guardian newspapers in Lagos, he went into full studio practice from 1994-2000 at curio studio in Lagos. He relocated to Belgium and opened his studio/gallery at the Gallery Labalaba in Antwerp, Belgium in 2002.

In 1998, he was asked to participate in a group exhibition campaigning against female genital mutilation (FGM), and since then he has devoted his art and life to campaigning against human rights violations, especially FGM and injustice against women and girls.

He has organised several art workshops with mostly male artists in Benin Republic, Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, and Senegal and has exhibited the artworks campaigning against FGM of his and other artists in several countries worldwide and thrice in the UN in Geneva.

Godfrey works with several NGOs campaigning against FGM; foremost amongst them is FORWARD Germany and Global Alliance against FGM in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2016, The Global Women Peace organisation in Washington D.C. made him their first male awardee for his humanitarian works against FGM. He has produced several book covers on FGM for the publication UNCUT voices in Frankfurt, Germany. He lives and practices in Antwerp, Belgium.

About the Paintings

Each painting is 60/80 cm each acrylic, mixed medium on playing cards on board. I produced these series of over 50 paintings between 2010 and 2012 to highlight the plight women face in war and conflict situations caused by men.

The materials used in the paintings are symbolic of the facets that make up a woman's life, and because only the women known in history are celebrated with portraits whilst countless others go unknown, these are a homage to the unknown women. The eyes are meant to gaze into our collective souls.

The series was first exhibited in the main hall of the UN building in Geneva, Switzerland and declared open by the then Director General Mr. Tokoyev. The series has also been exhibited in several venues in Geneva, The GIZ in Frankfurt, Germany, Antwerp, Brussels, Cotonou, and the Institute of Medicine in New York.









