

SLG

PRESS RELEASE

Lagos, Peckham, Repeat:

Pilgrimage to the Lakes

5 July – 29 October 2023

South London Gallery & Fire Station Galleries, Free Entry

In summer 2023, the South London Gallery (SLG) will present *Lagos, Peckham, Repeat: Pilgrimage to the Lakes*, a major group exhibition spanning both SLG sites on Peckham Road, London.

The SLG's local neighbourhood of Peckham is home to one of the largest Nigerian diaspora communities in the UK and is sometimes referred to as 'Little Lagos'. Lagos was a significant port during the trans-Atlantic slave trade until it was annexed by Britain in 1861, beginning the British colonial period. Today Lagos is one of the leading commercial and economic centres in Africa.

This landmark exhibition will explore themes that connect Lagos and Peckham in south east London. It will bring together works by over ten Nigerian and British Nigerian artists including Abdulrazaq Awofeso (b. 1978), Seyi Adelekun (b.1993), Chiizii (b.1995), Ndidi Dike (b.1960), Victor Ehikhamenor (b.1970), Onyeka Igwe (b.1986), Adeyemi Michael (b.1985), Christopher Obuh (b.1988), Karl Ohiri (b.1983), Emeka Ogboh (b.1977), Temitayo Ogunbiyi (b.1984), Temitayo Shonibare (b.1995), and Yinka Shonibare (b.1962). The exhibition is co-curated by Folakunle Oshun, founder and director of the Lagos Biennial, together with South London Gallery.

Lagos, Peckham, Repeat: Pilgrimage to the Lakes will focus on contemporary practice, featuring sculpture, installation, photography, and film. London has long been a destination for Nigerians moving abroad. Following Nigeria's independence in 1960 emigration between Britain and Nigeria steadily increased. Themes explored by the exhibiting artists include transnational exchange, a sense of place, and the contemporary metropolis.

Highlights include a newly commissioned large-scale installation by Ndidi Dike. The work will evoke the sights, sounds and smells of the Lagos marketplace and will engage with cultural, social, economic and political issues as they relate to the marketplace.

Emeka Ogboh will collaborate with a south London-based craft brewery to brew a bespoke Lagos-inspired beer for the exhibition, which will feature within the exhibition itself as well as being for sale. The exhibition will also feature a sound work by Ogboh.

Temitayo Ogunbiyi will install a new interactive play sculpture on the ground floor of the SLG's Fire Station. To create the lines for the sculpture, Ogunbiyi looked at the journey from Lagos to London, using map applications. Specifically, she references the path walking from Lagos to South London Gallery; the interpretation of the flight route between London and Lagos; and various paths between Heathrow Airport and South London Gallery. The lines are also inspired by plants that Ogunbiyi observes during her everyday life in Lagos.

Victor Ehikhamenor will create a new work from his *Rosaries* series. Created using plastic rosary beads this piece will explore the rituals and rites of passage that people emigrating may engage in.

Margot Heller, South London Gallery Director, said: “The SLG has for many years wanted to stage an exhibition that reflects on Peckham’s status as home to one of the UK’s largest Nigerian diaspora communities, and provides a platform for some of the most interesting Nigerian and British Nigerian artists working today. We are delighted to be working with Folakunle Oshun towards this exciting project, which will bring together many different strands of our artistic and education programmes, from newly commissioned works, artist residencies and performances, through to a film screening as part of our long-standing programme of contemporary African cinema, South by South.”

Folakunle Oshun, exhibition co-curator, said: “The exhibition explores the idea of ‘pilgrimage’ as a journey to fulfil a specific ritual or intention; in this case, a quest to find and make a new home—reducing the necessity for return—but equally initiating a cycle of sojourns.

In his 1993 publication The Black Atlantic, Paul Gilroy expounds on the theory of double consciousness, initially posited by W.E.B Dubois in The Souls of Black Folk (1903). Notions of place usually suggest defined geographies as monoliths that can be imagined as origins within contexts of identity and belonging. This migratory loop premised on slavery is anchored on the very basis for which Lagos – meaning Lakes – exists. Christened in the 18th century by the Portuguese after Lagos, a coastal city in the south of Portugal, the city originally known as Èkó had also historically been a West African trade Mecca for centuries, owing to its intricate waterways and access to the Atlantic.

In an attempt to capture this double consciousness, the plurality of place, and the rationale behind post-independence migration by Nigerian migrants, the exhibition Lagos, Peckham, Repeat: Pilgrimage to the Lakes will document the experiences of selected Nigerian artists whose practices have been shaped by their personal journeys.”

Residencies

The SLG will collaborate with GAS Foundation, Lagos resulting in UK-based artist Chiizii being hosted by GAS Foundation.

The SLG will also be hosting Lagos-based artist Christopher Obuh in the run-up to the exhibition.



Christopher Obuh’s residency is supported by the British Council.



Public Programme

The exhibition will be accompanied by a dynamic public programme celebrating Nigerian culture, including music, fashion and food. Kk Obi, a Stylist and Creative Director based between London and Lagos and co-founder of the magazine *Boy.Brother.Friend*, will curate a special event during the exhibition run.

The SLG will collaborate and highlight complementary programming related to *Lagos, Peckham, Repeat: Pilgrimage to the Lakes* taking place at select London institutions. Bold Tendencies, a not-for-profit organisation based in the rooftop spaces at Peckham Multi-Storey Car Park will stage an event with the author, poet and film-maker Caleb Femi taking place in July 2023. Further events will be announced in due course.

ENDS

For further press information, images and interviews please contact
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NOTES TO EDITORS

Address and Opening Hours

South London Gallery, Main Building
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South London Gallery, Fire Station
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The gallery is open Tuesday – Sunday.
www.southlondongallery.org

Social Media

Twitter: [@SLG_artupdates](https://twitter.com/SLG_artupdates)

Instagram: [@southlondongallery](https://www.instagram.com/southlondongallery)

Facebook: [South London Gallery](https://www.facebook.com/SouthLondonGallery)

TikTok: [southlondongallery](https://www.tiktok.com/@southlondongallery)

About Folakunle Oshun

Folakunle Oshun is an artist and curator currently based in Paris. Oshun earned a B.A. in Visual Art with a major in Sculpture from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, in (2007), and an M.A. in Art History in (2012). He was the first recipient of the Curator-in-Residence grant by the Potsdam City Council, Brandenburg, Germany, in (2017). He is the founder and director of the Lagos Biennial, a non-profit contemporary art platform that privileges adventurous approaches to artmaking, presentation, and critical discourse— aspiring to broach complex social and political problems, cultivate new publics, and establish fresh modes of engagement within the city, as well as throughout the country and internationally. Oshun was invited as guest curator at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2021) where he curated the group exhibition LOOK AT THIS. He also served as an advisor for the Africa Season (2020). His most recent solo exhibition “Museum of Hope” opened in 2021 at the Berliner Dom.

In (2021), Folakunle Oshun was invited as Guest Professor to the Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe to lead the seminar "Spatial Politics and Story Telling." He is currently a Doctoral candidate at the Heritage Laboratory, of Cergy University, École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris-Cergy, France, where he also lectures.

About Kk Obi

Kk Obi is a Nigerian Stylist and Creative Director based between London and Lagos. Having started his career in media and publishing he quickly saw an opportunity to uplift and champion new talents while unpacking diverse realities and urgent discourse within society and culture. This led him to create the biannual print publication and digital platform *Boy.Brother.Friend*. By examining diaspora identities from London to Lagos, the magazine reaches out an invitation to cross examine intersectionality, male identities and transnational cultures in the world today. Obi contributes to Beauty Papers, Dazed, The Face and Fantastic Man amongst other publications and works with brands including Burberry, Jawara Alleyne, Kenneth Ize and Tommy Hilfiger.

About the SLG

The South London Gallery (SLG) was founded in the 19th century by philanthropist William Rossiter to ‘bring art to the people of south London’. Today the gallery comprises its original

site at 65 Peckham Road; the Fire Station which opened to the public in 2018; Art Block, a space for local children and families on Sceaux Gardens Estate, and two permanent gardens.

The SLG has an international reputation for its contemporary art exhibitions by established, mid-career and younger artists and programme of film and performance events. Its highly regarded, free education programme includes a peer-led young people's forum; family workshops; artist-led projects and commissions on local housing estates; and a programme for looked after children.

Supported by

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South London Gallery Core Funders

