

## **Colourful works at 2018 World Art Day**

**By Ruth Byoma**

**For the second consecutive year, National Gallery of Art (NGA) successfully held an exhibition celebrating the World Art Day (WAD). The event which held at the International Institute for Creative Development (IICD), Abuja on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2018 had the theme: “The Merge – Fluidity of Thoughts.”**

**The exhibition was quite colourful with vibrant colours splashed everywhere. Most of the works displayed were paintings of different forms with some mixed media and interesting photography. There was a mix of artists from within the NGA and outside of the organisation. It is also noteworthy that many of the art works were by members of the Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FAAN) with the president of the association with some pieces on display herself!**

**One of the works titled, “Family” a painting executed through the medium of acrylic on canvass by Stella-Cornel Aghamba is an abstract painting of a family of three merged together, which fitted so perfectly with the theme. The artist explained that the painting is to show the unity of the family, stressing that a strong society is built on the foundation of united families. Though she is an illustrator and also into realism, she said she specifically chose abstract so that she could create a fusion between the three family members to underscore the importance of unity.**

**Another work, “Safe Landing” was a photograph by T.Taiwo, who is into nature, wildlife and landscape photography. He explained that God has given him a third eye to see what others do not see. His black and white photograph showed people by a riverbank engaging in different activities. The artist succinctly captured how joyful and united the people were at the Okomu river, in Ovia East local government area, Edo state. Taiwo who was clearly proud to be part of the exhibition had another work on display titled “Pathway.”**

**The exhibition also had paintings of Mr President, Muhammadu Buhari by NGA’s National Visual Art Competition winner, Oswald Uruakpa and the late beloved Madiba , Nelson Mandela by NGA’s own Godwin Okoi.**

**The newly elected president of FAAN, Mrs Chinze Ojobo, who was the special guest of the occasion stressed the fact that art and culture is not luxury but a serious undertaking with corresponding economic benefits. Citing examples of the recent rise in value of African art, she stated that Nigerian artists and the NGA need to work together so that they can turn art into good money making venture. She said that the Nigerian female artists are currently doing so well that they now have a chance to play in the global art market. She had a few art works on display in the form of mixed media including: “Together We Stand” and “He That Dwelleth in the...”**

**The chairman of the occasion, Alhaji Salim Malami, who is the chairman, Solid Minerals Development Trust Fund, and an avid art lover, was glad that the NGA was marking the world art day. He said that as far as art is concerned, Nigeria has come into the world map adding that the recent record sale of Ben Enwonwu’s ‘Tutu’ is only the beginning of what to come. He advised that the World Art Day celebration needs to be bigger so that it can touch all the people that love art.**

**In his remark, the Director General of the NGA, Mr Abdullahi Muku, who was represented by the Director, Special Duties, Ms. Biola Awotedu, said he was proud to see the WAD grow in Nigeria and a few African countries adding that NGA by this event “is encouraging the whole world to make art, talk about art, enjoy art and support art.” He stated that art has a lot to offer Nigeria considering that some of our works like Ife bronze head dates back to 500Bc and are named amongst world heritage pieces. Muku said NGA will continually promote awareness and benefits of creativity thus, opening up new economic frontiers.**

**The Curator of the event, Mr Adamu Ibrahim, Director of Curatorial Services and also an exhibitor at the event, stated that NGA has plans to make the WAD celebration even bigger and more inclusive next year.**

**The exhibition was open for four days and was held in partnership with the IICD.**