

PRESS RELEASE

»Chasing Butterflies in Harmattan«
(12 April – 25 May 2024)

Sakhile&Me presents new fibre sculptures by Nnenna Okore in her second solo exhibition with the gallery.

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Frankfurt am Main – *Chasing Butterflies in Harmattan* opens at Sakhile&Me on April 12th with works by Nnenna Okore. The title harkens to the improbability in chasing butterflies in Harmattan because it is a dry dust storm season particular to the West African region, where the seasons are marked by wet and dry periods. Harmattan is a time when most plants and animals diminish or die due to the extreme density of dust particles in the air, dryness, and windy conditions. "Chasing Butterflies in Harmattan" is, therefore, an unusual juxtaposition of events because butterflies do not tend to flourish in such harsh conditions.

Chasing Butterflies in Harmattan aims to capture the sense of abnormality linked to climate change and global warming that has brought negative impacts to different biosystems around the world. For instance, some bird species have changed their nesting schedules, and others that depend on warm or cold temperatures have become extinct or switched their patterns of survival due to the unprecedented heat waves and flooding.

By spotlighting butterflies, especially, a species both delicate and vital for the health of ecosystems and threatened by extreme climate conditions, viewers are gently called to cherish the treasures the planet has to offer. The metaphor of butterflies in Harmattan epitomizes our very fragile but beautiful planet. And to think of butterflies in the dry season is to think of a damaged earth.

About the artist

Nnenna Okore was born in Australia in 1975 to parents from Ututu, Nigeria. At age four, she moved back to Nigeria with her parents who began working at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka. Okore graduated from Primary and Secondary School in Nigeria before moving to Swaziland where her father took on a position for the United Nations and where Okore attended Waterford Kamhlaba United World College. She enrolled in the Fine and Applied Arts undergraduate program at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka in 1995 and graduated as Valedictorian of her class in 1999. In 2002, she began her graduate studies in Fine Arts at the University of Iowa, obtaining her Master of Arts degree in 2004 and her Master of Fine Arts degree in 2005. Upon graduation, Okore became an Assistant Professor at North Park University in Chicago. She was promoted to Associate Professor in 2011 and full time Professor and Chair of the Fine Art Department at North Park University in 2015. Okore was artist-in-residence at the Santa Fe Art Institute in 2004; at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2007; and at Skidmore College in 2011. In 2023 Okore attained her PhD in Fine Art from Monash University (Australia).

»Chasing Butterflies in Harmattan«

by Nnenna Okore

Chasing butterflies,
gracefully and beautifully
dancing around in space
in mesmerizing glow and elegance.

Some call it
poise and transience.

Metamorphosis
from eggs. Caterpillars. Chrysalis.

Fully grown,
a short life cycle they possess
with very few demands,
just the basics:
sunlight, greenery, and nectar.

Yet we play chase
in Harmattan