

# TRANSCENDENTAL SIGNIFIED

N E E C N O N S O



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# Nec Nonso

Nec Nonso (b, 1990 in Aguleri, Anambra state) is a visual artist working across photography, performance and augmented reality. His practice spans from the documentary to the deliberately posed, capturing textures of everyday life and rites of passage as well as their nuances in communities across Nigeria. Driven by a goal to catalyse critical conversations, Nonso aims to evoke emotions while inviting audiences to excavate memories and experiences as they encounter his work.

In October 2018, Nec Nonso founded Aguleri stories - an online-based media platform that focuses on telling the inside stories of Aguleri; an Igbo community of south-eastern Nigeria, notorious for its boundary wars with neighbours. In 2019, he also emerged as the winner of Best Portfolio, LagosPhoto Festival, and was awarded a one-year residency programme with African Artists' Foundation, Lagos. Selected group exhibitions include; *Young Contemporaries 2022*, Rele Gallery Lagos, *Good things come in threes*, Rele Gallery Los Angeles, *A pot of hot soup*, Brunei Gallery/SOAS, London, *4000 daily*, Kunsthaus göttingen, Germany and *Wa na wari*, Wa na wari Art space, USA. He lives and works in Lagos.

# Gallery Statement

An integral quality of organic history is one of continuity, an ability to reproduce evolving systems of being. The present is conceived as an unfolding product of the past, simultaneously experienced and archived in forms as event and memory. An observation of the now is thus foregrounded against a landscape of afterlives and replication. This rootedness of the present in ideas of descendancy forms a core aspect of Nec Nonso's debut solo exhibition *Transcendental Signified*. The body is considered across time and worlds, drawing connections between the spectral and corporeal. Writer Zoë Hopkins describes living as 'an experience of encountering, remembering, and listening to the dead'. In this exhibition, Nonso blurs the lines between the living and the dead, presenting bodies in a non-linear performance of continuity.

Building on his earlier series 'What Was Dead Was Never Dead' Nonso presents work spanning still images, augmented reality, installation, sound and performance. Set against rural, vegetative scenes, images of multiple often translucent bodies – mostly of the artist – are arranged uniformly around a central subject, as if posed for a camera. This visual duplication positions the artist's body as a site for unraveling notions of memory, lineage and reincarnation, as well as rituals of life, death and the afterworld. Combining his body with portraits of individuals met during his research travels, Nonso assumes an ancestral and otherworldly state, initiating a dialogue with family histories as well as sites of memory and remembrance. Vestiges of the past layered onto the fabric of the present

In *Transcendental Signified*, the built space becomes a witness to the passing of time, its continued existence serving to contain the stories of impermanent bodies. A space that holds presence and memory. These buildings and landscapes also serve as scenes for duality, one situated between planes of existence. From the concrete to the ethereal. Mining personal experiences and research across places and perspectives, Nonso narrates intimate family stories and histories, imagining the present body as an embodiment of all that has come before. An ode to departure and continuance.





Babajide, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





Babatunde (II), 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





Evil forest, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





First burial, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





Grandmother, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





Household, 1/1 Giclee print on matt canvas, 48 x 72in, 2022





Igbo rising, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 32 x 48in, 2022





Ijere, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 32 x 48in, 2022





Ogbada, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





Ogbanje, 1/1 Giclee print on matt canvas, 48 x 72, 2022





Ojo (II), 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





Onochie, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 32 x 48in, 2022





Second burial, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





The house of a strong man (I), 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022





The undead, the ancestors and the gods, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 32 x 48in, 2022





The world of the unreincarnated, 1/1 Giclee print on matt canvas, 48 x 72in, 2022





Underworld, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 32 x 48in, 2022





Yejide, 1/1 Giclee print on archival paper, 24 x 36in, 2022



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