

## Ismail Odetola

Nigeria

### Biography

Photographer and artist from Lagos, Nigeria.

### The artwork: aesthetic positions

Ismail Odetola: "At a time when we are socially distancing ourselves, memories of our loved ones keep us alive because we know they are safe to see us again. The works were created to show a connection that is not visible but is present in all of us during the time of the coronavirus pandemic. The colors and props are meant to convey a sense of intimacy and distance at the same time. For these works, I gathered materials selected mainly from my parents' closet to dress up my sisters and brother.

The idea of life, the environment, human activities and their contradictions and how they are constantly changing from time to time fascinates me and inspires most of my works. I have always been excited about exploring new cultures, people and places. It is these intricacies that influence my storytelling and artistic creation. I love to dare with my camera to create something new from the original and experiment with different elements to give meaning to the complexity of reality. I approach my work with different styles to create something new that can spark a new conversation. My goal as an artist is to create something from existential and non-existential thoughts, from past, present and future reality, and from the authenticity of feelings."

### Artworks

*Mama Papa Africa*

Art paper, matte

2020

Size: 40x60 cm

Edition: 10 pieces

## *Alone Together*

Art paper, matte

2020

size: 40x60 cm

Edition: 10 pieces

## *Hustle*

Art paper, matte

2020

size: 40x60 cm

Edition: 10 pieces

## *Baggage*

Art paper, matte

2020

size: 40x60 cm

Edition: 10 pieces

## Work comment by kukutana

Strong colors, bright contrasts, glaring light: "Alone together". Ismail Odetola's photo stagings peel out decisive moments: two faceless people, women, are connected by their headscarves, knotted together. Against a deep purple, a turquoise and a scarlet: symbolism and signal - look, this is how it is, only together are we alone for better or worse. We are not allowed to touch each other, maybe still see each other, but at a distance - inhuman, after all we are social beings and only become human with others.

"Mama Papa Africa" shows a couple, a turning towards each other, a togetherness - but the viewer is excluded, the couple stands with their backs to her / him in the knee-high water and looks out to sea. Or is one taken along in the look, are the two representatives who look for us on the sea? Longing - towards a freedom? Sheltered by a bright purple parasol, waiting for the change, or knowing about the ebb and flow of the tide? Africa, the mother, the father offer a little hope - the Foot staging refers to the monument in Dakar "Monument de la Renaissance Africaine", the capital of Senegal, which shows a couple looking at the sea, but with a child. Here the child is missing - is it perhaps the child's gaze that we see here, on Mama Papa Africa?

On "Hustle": In the image is a man carrying of basket with both hands and facing a tattered but colorful wall. This image was conceptually created and inspired by scene of hustler who roam the market of Lagos in their baskets (Ismail Odetola).  
On "Baggage": As we all move through life, we collect things, create our stories and learn our lessons. These experiences become our baggage. But we all carry our baggage differently (Ismail Odetola).