



Arts & Culture

BE OPEN Art Gallery invites to talk: contemporary artists on their way to success

We have tuned in with online art gallery BE OPEN Art to talk to contemporary artists featured on its platforms about their ways to and within their art.

By [Hannah Smith](#)



BE OPEN Art was set up by **BE OPEN** think tank, a humanitarian initiative founded by international entrepreneur and philanthropist Elena Baturina, and it offers free display, support and promotion to emerging artists worldwide.

BE OPEN Art strives to select artists at earlier stages of their career, particularly those who emphasize social consciousness and search for aesthetical solutions for the wrongs of the contemporary world, such as inequality, lack of diversity, environmental issues, and

consumerism. In a way, the project sees its mission in looking for the new influencers in the art scene, and invites everyone to contribute to this process.

Every month BE OPEN's art committee select 20 new artists to feature in the gallery, inviting public to participate in online voting to name the Artist of the Month and the Artist of the Year, the latter receives a money prize from the think tank.

We start with the Artist of the Year 2020, Theophilus Tetteh, also known by his brush name **NiiOdai**. Theophilus is a contemporary artist from Ghana. He studied graphic design and painting at Marimus Art School, while experimenting with different media themes. In essence, his style comprises a unique combination of cubism, contemporary, and abstract expressionism.

Of his thorny yet purposeful way to becoming a full time artist, he says: "After experimenting and holding on to the job as a Graphic Designer, I followed my instincts and desires and diverted to painting. I built my confidence and knowledge through research, learning online and offering menial assistance at the studios of some renowned senior artists. My core mission was to serve them and learn through their little errands. This broadened my perspective, and made my desire a reality".

We asked for NiiOdai's opinion on the state of the creative education in his country, and as a direct stakeholder, he feels that there is still a long way to go: "In my country, I see a lot of limitations when it comes to creative education. Little attention and resources have been given to our industry. Schools that raised the artists that later received limelight including myself are no longer in operation."

The artist believes that creative institutions in Ghana need extra support, and that creative industry needs to be better advertised among the younger generation.

To the question about the topics of his art, and if there are any specific messages he wishes to get across with it, NiiOdai revealed that his art is mainly focused on the topic of Youth. "I tackle topics relating to love, self-confidence, self-acceptance, politics, and our way of living. I convey messages of inspiration that evoke emotions and natural virtues. These topics run through my art in the form of series and selections."

The artist does not see need of any boundaries or confines of time and place for art, yet he believes that art needs to be relatable to be seen and felt: "Since our audiences are people, there is a need for some communication. My arts personally relates to the reality on the ground. I want my viewers to find themselves in my creative work.

"They need to relate, that is what brings healing to their soul, hope when they are hopeless, and refreshment when they under stress."

Speaking of the importance of an artist’s representation online, Theophilus confirmed that the majority of his work sells online, with most of the transactions happening via the world’s probably most renowned online art seller – the Saatchi Gallery.

A piece of advice that the BE OPEN Art’s Artist of the Year generously shares with his fellow artists reveals specific rules an emerging artist needs to follow to improve their online representation:

“First, consistency. This is what gets the attention of the galleries and your followers.

Second, create a brand that serves your own creativity. There should be a difference between your starting point and your current point. There should be continuous growth and obvious maturing in your works. This encourages your viewers to stay with you, follow your online presence, and maintain expectations.

Third, explaining the subject of your work and adding descriptive notes help viewers to be psychologically engaged with your work

And fourth, provide prompt feedback to inquiries about your art, respect people’s time to make a successful sale. “

Theophilus Tetteh hopes to help promote emerging talents in his native Ghana, where he is a member of the Ghana Association of Visual Artists. Currently, there are 9 artists from Ghana or of Ghanian decent featured in BE OPEN Art Gallery.

Among them is **NanaOsei** (Victor Osei Mensah), a 25 year-old self-taught artist from Accra, who also sells his art online and sees social media platforms and online galleries as the best way to help emerging artists get to their feet and find their audiences.

Being featured in BE OPEN Art is an opportunity for such artists around the globe to be seen, and a space for connections to be built between them and their potential audience. As an online gallery, BE OPEN Art hopes to serve as an exciting and highly relevant space for dialogue between the new artists and collectors, who are now, amidst global humanitarian turmoil, are even more inspired to produce and collect socially meaningful art.



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