

**ARS ELECTRONICA 2020: Kennii Ekundayo Presents**  
**“Pandemic-Pandemonium!” in the Austria-based Media & Digital Arts**  
**Festival**

*Press Release: August 19, 2020 LINZ, AUSTRIA & LAGOS, NIGERIA*

Lagos-based Curator, Kennii Ekundayo will be joining 119 **other international partners** to participate in this year’s 41st edition of **Ars Electronica Festival**. Her curatorial outfit, **Galeri ODUMIJE** will be presenting a media art exhibition titled **“Pandemic-Pandemonium!”** –accessible on the web platforms of the festival.

**“Pandemic-Pandemonium!”** is a two-part presentation centred on the collective response of Africans living in Africa to some of the prevalent issues that threaten humankind – racial discrimination, violence against women and the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst one part makes a statement on the resilience of the human spirit in the face of the deadly coronavirus, the other focuses on the **valorisation** of the melanin-rich skin amidst the fatal hostility that accompanies it.

It features submissions from four Nigerian artistes in varying media that include poetry, photography and video art. The artistes are Bernard Kalu, Ikenna Ogbenta, Efe Paul Azino and Tobi ‘Tej’ Tejumola, all of whom are represented in the festival by **Galeri ODUMIJE**.

**““Pandemic-Pandemonium!”** is aimed at delineating some of the events that have besieged us even through these confusing times. These would include our adaptability to the pandemic crisis, the war waged against the abuse of women, and the black stance on racial prejudice”, says Ekundayo in her video curatorial statement.

The exhibition is hinged on the theme of Humanity, one of the issues touched upon in this year’s festival edition. **It will come alive upon the opening of Ars Electronica 2020 from September 9 to 13; and will be made available even after.**

**ABOUT KENNII EKUNDAYO**

Kehinde “Kennii” Ekundayo is an independent art curator based in Lagos, Nigeria. Specific about modern and contemporary African art, she has curated exhibitions around the country. Her professional practice began in March 2017

with a group exhibition of amateur photographers, and has grown to curating key projects involving the likes of revered legendary artist, Bruce Onobrakpeya and Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka, in various media ranging from drawings and paintings, to film and photographs, to texts and installations amongst other art forms.

She is affiliated with the Committee for Relevant Art (CORA), a Nigerian **not-for-profit** platform for artists, art critics and aficionados, and culture advocates as the Communications Officer. She is also a part of the organizing team of the Lagos Book & Art Festival, LABAF, a yearly prime literacy and youth empowerment project **that is now in its 22nd edition.**

Ekundayo is head curator at Galeri ODUMIJE, an outfit she recently established and which operates out of Lagos, Nigeria.

## **ABOUT THE FEATURED/REPRESENTED ARTISTS**

**Ikenna Ogbenta (NG)** grew up in Enugu State, Nigeria. He was first introduced to photography at age 5 and has continued ever since, motivated by both society and the people. His major focus is on photography that represents the dynamics of religion, culture and fashion in Nigeria. He lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria.

**Efe Paul Azino (NG)** is one of Nigeria's leading performance artists and poets. In 2015, he co-founded West Africa's first international poetry festival, the Lagos International Poetry Festival, which he currently directs. He is also the director of poetry at the annual Lagos Book and Art Festival. In 2017 he was named as one of the most powerful people in the Nigerian art and culture space by Ynaija. He published his first collection of poetry in 2015 titled *For Broken Men Who Cross Often*, under Farafina Books. He has appeared at the Berlin Poetry Festival, Johannesburg Arts Alive Festival, Spier International Poetry Festival Cape Town, Taipei Poetry Festival and the Ake Book and Arts Festival amongst others. His poems have been translated into Afrikaans, French, German and Mandarin. He is an Osiwa Poetry Residency Fellow, 2019 Moniack Mhor Poet in Residence, and his second poetry collection, *The Tragedy of Falling with Laughter Stuck in Your Throat*, is due out soon.

**Tobi Tej (NG)** is a photographer and producer based in Lagos, Nigeria whose work is inspired by the passion to explore life and preserve moments.

**Bernard Kalu (NG)** is a documentary photographer based in Lagos, Nigeria, with a passion for humans and the stories they tell simply by existing. His work aims to explore life and humanity, and raising awareness about environmental and social issues in his home country, Nigeria.

## **ABOUT ARS ELECTRONICA**

The Ars Electronica **Festival is centered on the latest** in art, technology, and science and is held by Ars Electronica, a media art research institute based in Linz, Austria. First held in 1979, the festival has since become one of the largest and most important media art events in the world.

### *Ars Electronica 2020: In Kepler's Gardens*

*A global journey mapping the 'new' world*

*A journey in which it is not we who set out to travel, but our ideas and projects, which span a global network in which we gather to discuss what needs to be done.*

*Touchpoints: Autonomy, Democracy, Ecology, Technology, Humanity, Uncertainty*

Following last year's brilliant 40th anniversary festival, which brought more artists, exhibitors and international experts to Linz than ever before, this year Ars Electronica is going on a journey, or rather the festival itself is becoming a journey—a journey through “Kepler's Gardens.” A journey through the networked biotopes and ecosystems in which people all over the world are working to develop and shape our future, and these days that means, above all, working to save our future.

This year, Ars Electronica is not only taking place in Linz, but in 120 “Kepler's Gardens” around the globe. For the first time, the festival is putting itself to the test as a digital travel agency that brings visitors from all over the world to “gardens where art, technology and society intersect,” which are as fascinating as they are inspiring. Destinations are in abundance; there are “Ars Electronica Gardens” in Barcelona (Institut Ramon Llull, Hangar, UOC—ISEA Barcelona, NewArtFoundation—BEEP Collection, OFFF Barcelona, Espronceda), in Brussels (BOZAR), in Tokyo (Japan Media Arts Festival), in Boston (MIT Media Lab), in Buenos Aires (National University of Tres de Febrero, Muntref Centro de Arte y Ciencia), in Seoul (K'ARTS Korea National University of Arts), in Basel (HeK Haus der elektronischen Künste), in Athens (Onassis Stegi), in Silicon Valley (Open Austria), in Johannesburg (Fakugesi

Festival), in Los Angeles (UCLA), in Auckland (University of Auckland), in Vilnius (Vilnius Academy of Arts) and in Amsterdam (Waag). At all these locations between September 9 and 13, artists, scientists, developers, entrepreneurs and activists will be addressing the question of how the “new” world should look after—or with?—Corona.

So “Kepler’s Gardens” is not only the name of the new festival venue in Linz, which will move from Postcity to the Kepler’s Gardens on JKU’s well-equipped campus, transforming its beautiful and extensive parks into an extraordinary festival site.

“Kepler’s Gardens” is also the metaphor for the festival's organizing principle in a global lockdown: a festival that will not dive into the network and disappear there, but will emerge from the network and manifest itself in many places around the world, distributed and networked.

Ars Electronica Festival 2020  
September 9-13, 2020  
Linz, Austria & Lagos, Nigeria  
<https://ars.electronica.art/>  
#arselectronica2020

For further information, please contact Kennii Ekundayo, curator of **“Pandemic-Pandemonium!”** at [kehinde701@gmail.com](mailto:kehinde701@gmail.com)

PRESS IMAGES: Attached in mail