

## VALERIE ETITINWO

Nigerian-Swiss artist Valerie Etitinwo creates abstract figurative paintings which celebrate the beauty of ugliness and awkwardness. Raised with dichotomous cultures, Etitinwo found art as a coping mechanism to interpret the world around her. At home, she was surrounded by Nigerian culture that was celebrated through food and music. However, the moment she left her house, it was a different purely Swiss world. This put her in a desperate position to fit into both societies, but through her art and self exploration she created her own path of self expression with artworks that deconstruct Nigerian stereotypes.



Etitinwo's artworks transcend each of her surrounding cultures to create work that is universally relatable through the celebration of imperfections. She creates her work with the conviction to push her creativity and expression to a level of intriguing "ugliness." With each artwork she fights the temptation of "cuteness" to go beyond what is expected.

"I like creating art that catches the eyes not because of how pretty it is but because of how imperfect it looks. I'm really not a perfectionist. I'm quite the opposite. I'm an "imperfectionist". I like how disorganized some of my pieces are. I like using bold colors and awkward shapes to represent humans. I would say my favorite artistic movement is cubism. But my artwork is definitely not

cubism. I just have an appreciation for it's absurd shapes, especially in portraits. I like painting faces like masks. "

As a very introverted person, Etitinwo likes observing people more that actually talking to them. Because she has been around Nigerian "aunties" her entire life, they nearly instantly became the subjects of her artwork. Etitinwo's work revolves around their actions and mannerisms as she often didn't quite understand them growing up. She works to create artworks that deconstruct Nigerian culture and stereotypes.

" I'm old enough to understand them [stereotypes] but also young enough to question them."

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Etitinwo's artworks have been featured on major TV shows such as "Insecure" on HBO and have been collected worldwide.



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