



YEMISI SHYLLON  
MUSEUM OF ART  
PAN-ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

# Artwork Information Sheet **36**

## LANRE TEJUOSO'S WOTA NA WOTA



Lanre Tejuoso, *Wota na Wota*, Mixed Media, 600 x 267cm, Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art, Pan-Atlantic University.

## INTRODUCTION

**A**rt is a way of life and a potent means of communication. The artist's role in society is to awaken, inspire and drive change. Lanre Tejuoso embodies this purpose through his art, focusing predominantly on the theme of rest. He explores this fundamental human need, utilizing materials found abundantly in our environment - materials often carelessly discarded as waste. Tejuoso ingeniously transforms this refuse into thought-provoking artwork that stimulates introspection and instigates transformative action. One remarkable example is "Wota na Wota," showcasing Tejuoso's instinctive use of waste materials. His artistic journey demonstrates a deep understanding of art's power to inspire change, urging us to reassess our perspectives and cultivate a sustainable, mindful existence.

## THE ARTIST

Born in 1974 in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Olanrewaju Tejuoso is the only child of Tayo Tejuoso, a veteran Journalist, and Niyilola Shosanya. Raised by his maternal grandmother Rafatu Aduke Abiose in Ijaye, Abeokuta, known for pottery making, Tejuoso was exposed to art from a young age. He learned valuable life lessons from his grandmother, who nurtured his creative talent by encouraging him to draw. Tejuoso attended Baptist Day School for primary education and Ebenezer Grammar School, Iberekodo, Abeokuta for secondary education. Later, he pursued Art Education at the Federal College of Education Osiele, Abeokuta, and furthered his studies in painting at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His strong Christian faith and a pivotal moment of self-reflection solidified his artistic direction (Lanre Tejuoso, personal communication, March 23, 2023).

Tejuoso found inspiration in using discarded materials as a wake-up call from God. He felt a calling to create environmental art, utilizing materials

found in his surroundings. Motivated by a deep desire to impact people and improve the state of the environment, he shifted from painting to exploring waste materials. Tejuoso's art focuses on themes of rest and love, aiming to provide rest to individuals and contribute to the well-being of society (Spaces, 2023).

An encounter in 2009, while riding with a friend in a taxi where he was confronted about the non-biodegradable nature of discarded plastic, further piqued Tejuoso's interest in the environment. He became acutely aware of the negative effects of climate change, pollution, and poor waste management on ecosystems, species, and human health. Through his art, he addresses these issues specific to Nigeria, analyzing the dangers they pose to society. For over fifteen years, Tejuoso has created captivating art pieces using recycled materials, employing sculpture, painting, performance, and conceptual art.

## WOTA NA WOTA

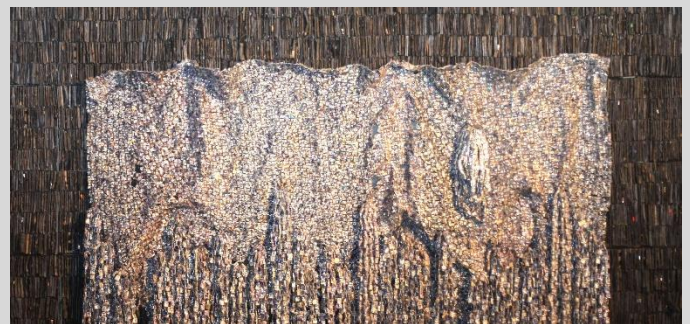


Fig 1.1 Lanre Tejuoso, *Wota na Wota (close up)*, Mixed Media, 600 x 267cm, ©Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art.

"Wota na Wota," a mixed media artwork created in 2019, is a powerful representation of Tejuoso's creative vision. The piece consists of wooden sticks arranged horizontally, forming a backdrop for a mat-

like structure made from discarded pure water sachets. Some sachets are strung together, resembling a chandelier. The wooden sticks are dipped in black dye to provide a contrasting background, while well-folded biscuit and drink wraps can be inserted by viewers into the spaces between the sticks. The lower part of the artwork resembles cascading waterfalls. Tejuoso emphasizes the importance of water in human life, symbolized by the use of sticks to represent people's dependence on water for survival.

## CONCLUSION

Lanre Tejuoso embodies the role of an artist as a voice for the people and a conscience for society. His artwork serves as a powerful reminder of the detrimental effects of chemicals and indiscriminate waste on the environment. Tejuoso's mission is to raise awareness about environmental waste through his art, urging viewers to think, visualize, and make better choices in caring for the environment. He demonstrates effective recycling by transforming waste materials into meaningful works of art. Through his creative endeavours, Tejuoso leaves an indelible mark as an artist dedicated to promoting environmental consciousness. In Tejuoso's words, "My art is to preach about issues of environmental waste in the society" (Personal communication, March 23, 2023).

## REFERENCES

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