

Tyna Adebowale

They Call You Mother; They Call Me Mama.

#thereisalwaysamother

06.09—18.10.2025

In the village, everyone's mother is ours. Mama takes care of all. Mama ensures everyone is safe and well, keeping our culture of care alive through her gentle strength.

We are delighted to present Tyna Adebowale's second solo exhibition in the gallery. *They Call You Mother; They Call Me Mama* focuses on the lived experiences of grandmothers who are raising their grandchildren. In Adebowale's community of the Uneme, many women eagerly anticipate this stage of life, viewing the nurturing of the next generation in their "grand lineage" as a vital and fulfilling part of their maternal journey.

These new series of works pay homage to the remarkable strength and resilience of traditional care structures, which are sustained primarily by women but increasingly threatened by capitalist ways of living. It honours women's unwavering commitment to caring for their community—regardless of children being of their own blood or not—and celebrates the cultural importance of nurturing the lineage.

The project celebrates the spirit of communal nurturing by documenting the complexities and joys of continued caregiving. At the same time, it gently argues that these often selfless women deserve more rest. Beyond honouring their strength, the work invites us to imagine and advocate for a culture that grant women the rest and recognition they have long earned. Rest should be seen as justice—an inherent right, not a reward—because patriarchy extracts endless labour from older women.

Adebowale's research on 'motherwomb' and motherhood draws inspiration from her great-aunt, Mama Nii Dezedo, a vital figure in the Uneme and neighbouring communities who, despite having no biological children, was a mother to all.

Alongside a series of new paintings, Tyna Adebowale presents two video works:

'*Ofofo*' (*#motherwomb*) (2021-2023) is titled following a term rooted in Yoruba culture, meaning "gossips". The decision, or lack thereof, to become a mother in any form holds significant importance within Nigerian and other African cultures. It reflects how the female body is often reduced to mere vessels for reproduction. In these societies, being a mother is frequently seen as a requirement to validate one's existence as a woman. In 'ofofo', the Motherwomb project aims to shed light on this perspective, not only within Nigerian culture but also from a global standpoint, examining the role of women's womb in society.

LEENKROST (2022-2025) highlights a different view of care and parenting. It sheds light on queer parenting and the diverse ways people contribute to nurturing and raising children, regardless of biological connection. The project envisions new and evolving forms of family structures, deeply rooted in intentionality, while challenging the larger traditional notions of what a family is or should be.

Furthermore, in the main space Adebowale presents *Untitled* (2025), a variable installation featuring a terracotta womb object and various forms of currency used as instruments of transaction. The work reflects on how economic empowerment manifests differently across genders, as when a woman gains financial power, oftentimes, she reinvests it in her community as an act of care and collective empowerment. By contrast, when a man is empowered, that energy may more readily serve to reinforce his ego.

Tyna Adebowale (1982, Nigeria) lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions include *Good Mom/Bad Mom*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht (2025); *Vrouwen van Amsterdam: een ode*, Amsterdam Museum (2025); *Africa Supernova*, (*The contemporary African painting collection of Carla and Pieter Schulting*), Kunsthal KAdE; *Refresh Amsterdam 2020-2021* (Amsterdam Museum); *The Future is Female*, CODA Museum, Appeldorn (2020); and *What if Women Rule The World?*, Garage Rotterdam (2019). Her work will be presented in the upcoming exhibition *Out: LGBTQ+ Artist Activists of Africa*, at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC. She is the second recipient of the Jacqueline Van Tongeren Fellowship For African Artists (2017-2018),

Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS

Singel 372
1016 AH, Amsterdam
info@edbprojects.com
www.edbprojects.com

3Package Deal Award (2019-2020) Recipient from the AFK grant, Amsterdam. She become a second-year artist in residency at BlackRock Senegal in 2021, and completed a two-year residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, between 2017 and 2018.