



WE PRESENT

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Art

Chiamonwu Joy My art tells a story of typical Igbo culture before westernization

Chiamonwu Joy's astonishing artworks could easily be mistaken for photographs. It's only when you see her works in progress – the paper-white outline of an unfinished arm, or the Nigerian artist's hand adding a finishing touch – that you realise the optical illusion.

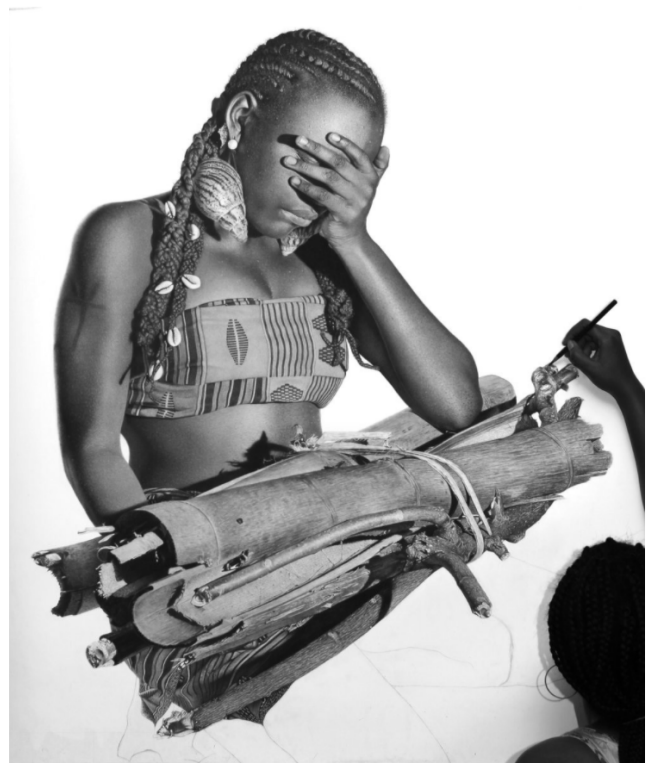


While a picture takes a fraction of a second to appear in digital form, a drawing can take Chiamonwu from three weeks to two months to complete, depending on its size and subject. Daily realities dissolve when she picks up her pencils to draw. "It's like time doesn't matter," she says.

Chiamonwu first discovered hyperrealism on Instagram and immediately fell for the style. She practised drawing this way by following online tutorials and it's taken her four years to get to this level, but she's determined to improve even further.

There's one downside to drawing hyper realistically though; training your eye to notice such meticulous detail means you also see the minute mistakes that others wouldn't. It's become a habitual part of her process to scan her works for areas that could be improved upon. "I'm the first and biggest critic of my artworks," she says.

Faded



The people in Chiamonwu's pieces are mostly family members and a few friends who she considers her muses. She styles, stages and then photographs them to create the reference material from which she draws. "I decide who and what to draw next depending on how physically, emotionally, spiritually and psychologically attracted I am to the subject or object," she says.

Using graphite or charcoal, Chiamonwu begins at the top of the page working her way down – incrementally adding light and shade to replicate the luminous skin you get when using a flash camera. Every hair and fibre is eventually revealed in crisp detail.

“I learnt to be more patient,
to be cautious but also to
take risks for what I believe
in.”

Chiamonwu was born and grew up in Maiduguri in the northern part of Nigeria and now lives in Awka in the south east of the country. Her incredible skill aside, at its heart, her work is about documentation and preservation of her Igbo culture. Her drawings feature a woman wearing cowrie shells woven into her braids; two hands hold up an offering of kola nuts; a boy wears painted markings under his eyes.

“Everything they’re wearing is a symbol of my culture,” she says. “The attire, the hair-do’s, the accessories and all. They all represent the Igbo culture and traditions and what we value.” Some of the rituals she recreates are dying practices. “I have read lots of historical books about my culture,” Chiamonwu says.

“My art tells a story of typical Igbo culture before westernization and globalization.” It’s become her mission to immortalize these customs that will surpass even her own lifetime.

Onyinye



As much as her work is art, the painstaking practice is also discipline. “What I like about this genre is the patience and dedication that comes with the skill,” she says. Her training has revealed qualities in herself she didn’t know she possessed.

“I learnt to be more patient, to be cautious but also to take risks for what I believe in. It has shown me how limitless we humans can be when it comes to nurturing or harnessing our passions and our skills.”

Words by Alix-Rose Cowie

Omenala (Tradition)



Ollie-Anya (Hope)



Deeper Than This





ARCTIC PAPER

INTERVIEW WITH CHIAMONWU JOY

CHIAMONWU JOY'S HYPER-REALISTIC ARTWORK CELEBRATES NIGERIAN CULTURE

Nigeria 29 Mar, 2019. Photos by Chiamonwu Joy Art



Every one of Chiamonwu Joy's artworks tells a story. With her hyper-realistic charcoal drawings, she portrays the early history and culture of her homeland Nigeria and the Igbo people. Her art is so similar to real life that most people think they are looking at photographs.

Chiamonwu's creative process rarely changes. She makes both small and large drawings and everything starts with her picking out people to portray. She dresses the models herself, and explains the story she wants to tell. She brings the customs and the accessories together - the shells, cowries and beads - to create the perfect outfit for the story. When she starts working with the charcoal it can take up to six weeks to finish each piece.

- I have always been fascinated and proud of the rich culture and traditions that the Igbo people in Nigeria have. Due to technology and the advance of westernization, the rich traditions, culture and ethical values of the Igbo people are slowly dying out. So, I made it my duty to preserve them the only way I know how - through my drawings, says Chiamonwu Joy.



"I really love hyperrealism since I feel that people

can connect to my artwork in any way they want"



Nigeria is widely known for being the most artistic country in Africa. It certainly has the highest number of artists, galleries, exhibition events and art exposure. Hyperrealism is a popular genre in Nigeria, and Chiamonwu is one of its most well-known proponents.

– We have so many hyperrealism artists and artists that work in different genres. I really love hyperrealism since I feel that people can connect to my artwork in any way they want, both historically, culturally, emotionally, spiritually and even psychologically, says Chiamonwu Joy.

Self-taught artist

Chiamonwu has been an artist for the past five years. She first started by drawing cartoons, but soon realized she wasn't very good at it. However, her passion for making art was too strong to let go – so she practiced and later advanced to drawing life-like drawings which later developed to Hyperrealism. She found talented hyperrealism artists on Instagram, and started following their processes and techniques.

– To learn more about the genre, I saw many tutorials which really intrigued me. I began to practice and today I would say that I'm very good at it, and I'm completely self-taught. If you are fascinated and dedicated you can come a long way towards pursuing, building and developing a talent, says Chiamonwu Joy.

Since then, Chiamonwu has had a handful commercial assignments, such as being part of an exhibition called "Insanity" in Lagos in 2016. She has also been interviewed by TV stations, newspapers and magazines all around the world after her artwork went viral on Twitter about a year ago.



Her artworks going abroad

Chiamonwu says that the hardest part of working with graphite powder and charcoal pencils on paper is that you need to have the ability to control the spread of the graphite and the charcoal. Paper is also a fragile medium to work with, compared to tougher materials like canvas or metal.

– You need to handle the piece with extra care when drawing on it. I have now come to a place in my work where I have mastered the art of using charcoal, but it's definitely a long learning process, says Chiamonwu Joy.

Chiamonwu's artwork is starting to be recognized all over the world - and soon they will be shipped of to Nashville, Tennessee, as a part of a group exhibition.

– I really look forward to what the future has in store for me. I see myself having a decent gallery representation and art consignment with reputable galleries – and also attending more art shows and fairs, says Chiamonwu Joy.



FACTS

Name: Chiamonwu Joy

Title: Hyper-realism Charcoal Artist

Favorite material: Charcoal and Strathmore Paper

Favorite tool: Graphite, Conté a Paris charcoal pencil, Tombow mono elastomer eraser, I headed eraser, cotton buds and blending stumps.

Web: chiamonwu.com

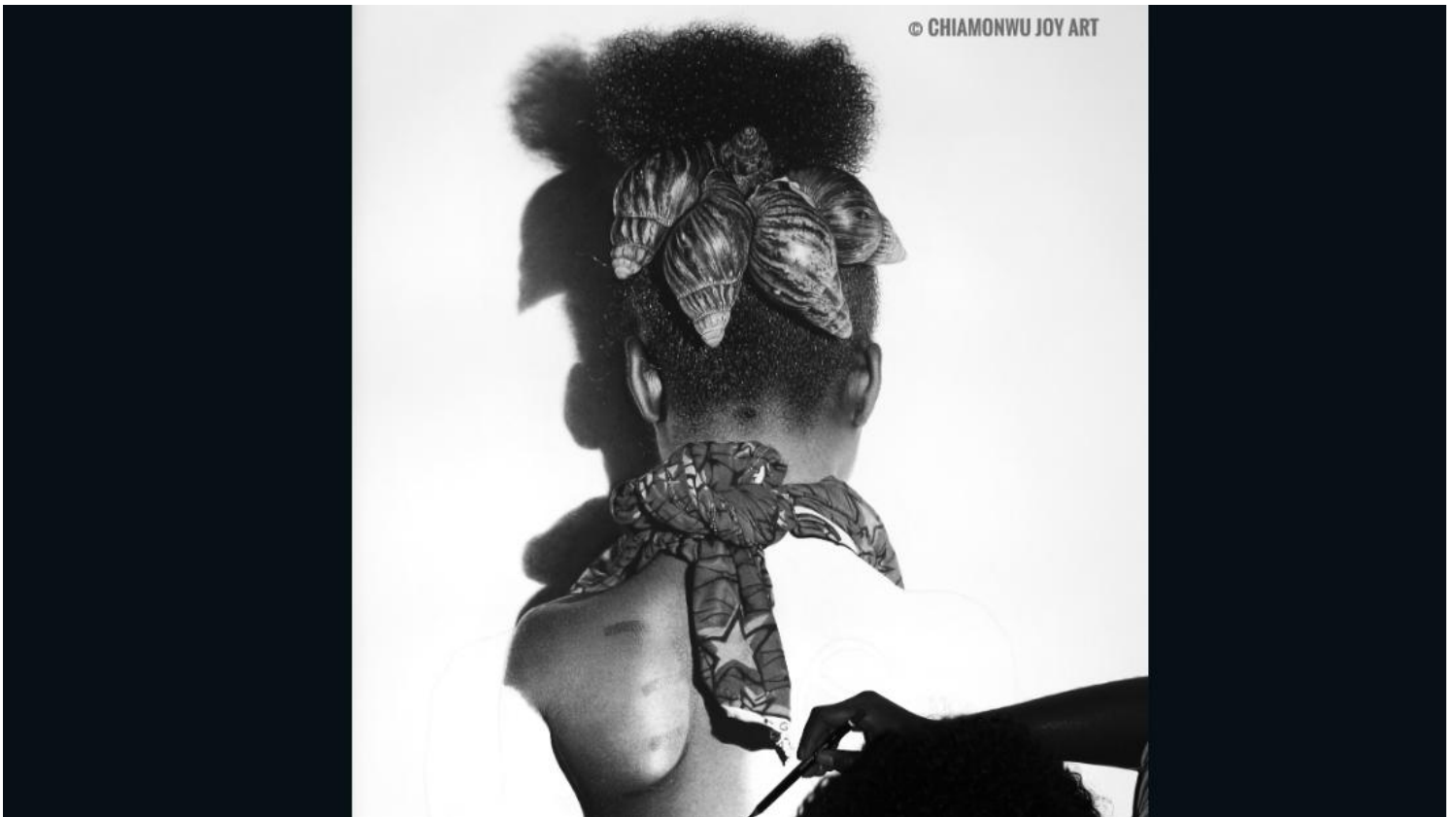
Inside Nigeria's hyperrealist art scene

By Munachim Amah and Meron Moges-Gerbi, CNN

Updated 6:19 AM ET, Fri April 6, 2018

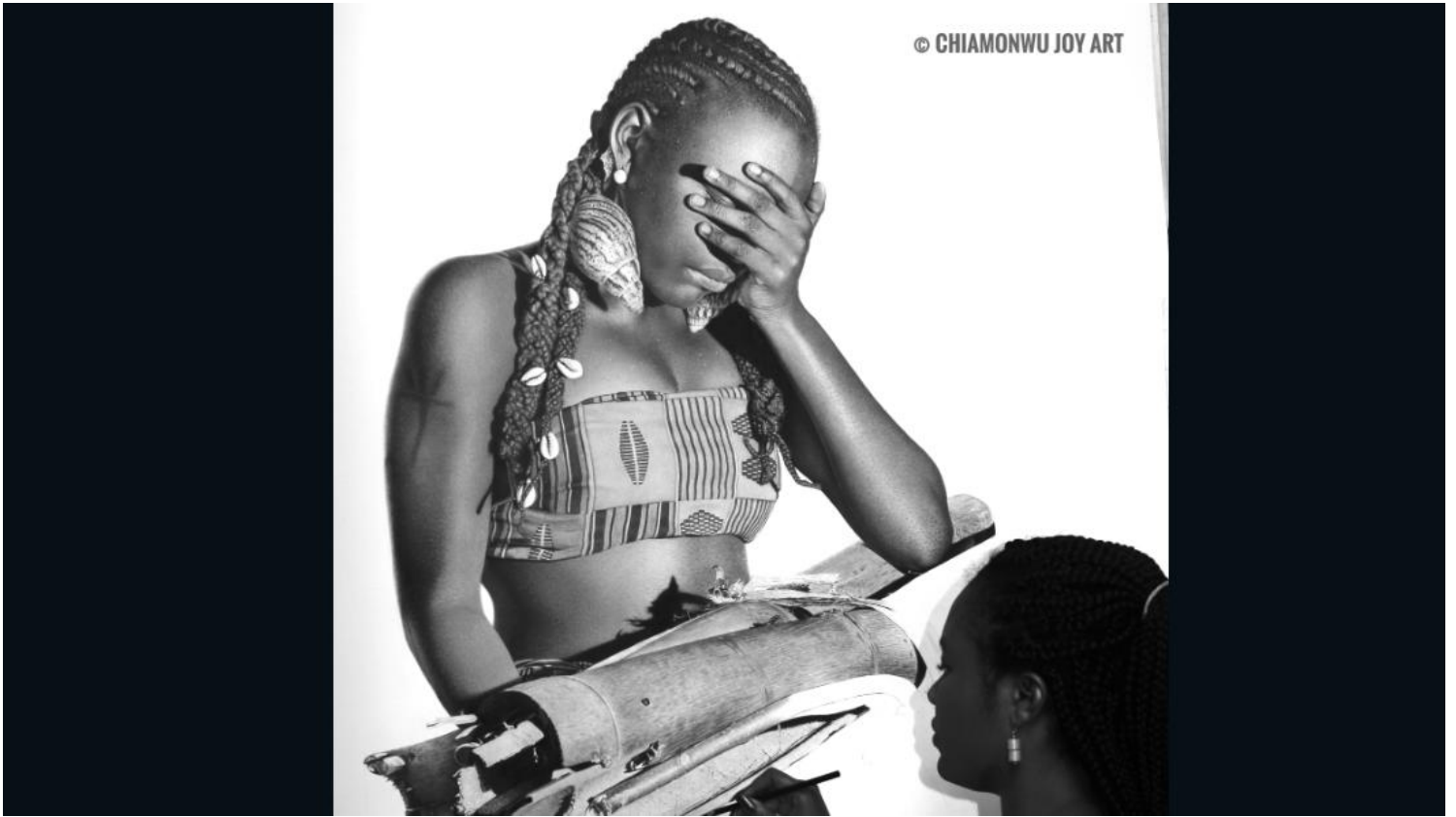
Chiamonwu Joy is another Nigerian hyperrealist artist. She is one of a few female artists in the scene.

Joy was born in Borno, the northern part of Nigeria where she lived until the age of sixteen, where the Boko Haram group is active.



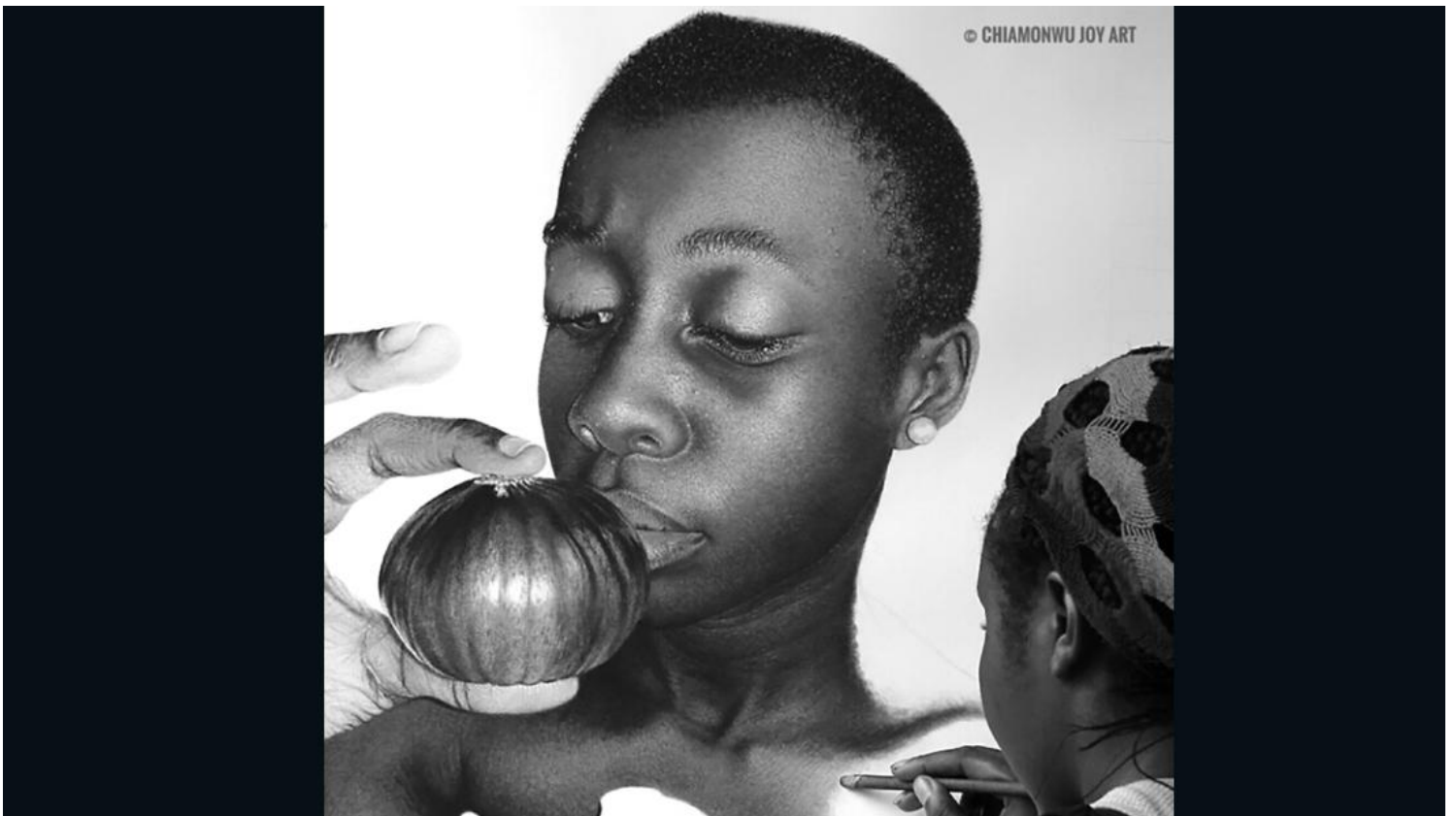
Chiamonwu Joy has over 30,000 followers on Instagram.

Joy did not go to school to study art but had the passion to develop her skills on her own. She was also the only student to sit for a Fine and Applied Art examination in West Africa.



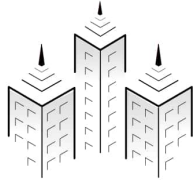
The artwork is hyperreal.

She told CNN, "I have always had a passion for art and creativity in general, when I was in primary school I drew on any surface I saw be it paper desk and even my clothes".



Her work was featured in TeenVogue.

Joy uses graphite and charcoal and paper just like Nwadiogbu. Her work gained international notoriety when it was profiled in [TeenVogue](#).



MY MODERN MET

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Nigerian Artist Captivates Twitter with Hyperrealistic Charcoal Drawings

By Sara Barnes on January 24, 2018



ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

[View Profile](#)



[View More on Instagram](#)



3,476 likes



Add a comment...



When you first look at a hyperrealistic drawing by Nigerian artist [Chiamonwu Joy](#), you'll find it hard to believe that it's a work of fine art and not just a photo. Her ongoing series of portraits have such a convincing three-dimensional quality that they appear to be captured with a camera—as if at any moment, her subjects could seemingly come to life and walk off the paper.

So, how does Joy create her hyperrealism drawing? She opts not for graphite, but rather a [charcoal pencil](#) instead. This utensil offers her the control of a conventional pencil with the ability to achieve rich black tones that give her work roundness and depth. With super dark shadows and bright highlights, the range of tones mimics a camera's flash to produce the illusion of reality.

Once you see Joy's work in progress, you'll have no doubt about her amazing artistic skills. The internet is blown away by her abilities, too. One of her [latest tweets](#) sharing her work has gone viral; it's earned over 83,000 retweets and more than 180,000 likes from people around the world praising her drawings.

Nigerian artist Chiamonwu Joy creates hyperrealistic drawings that look so real, you might think these people are going to walk off the page.



ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

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2,964 likes



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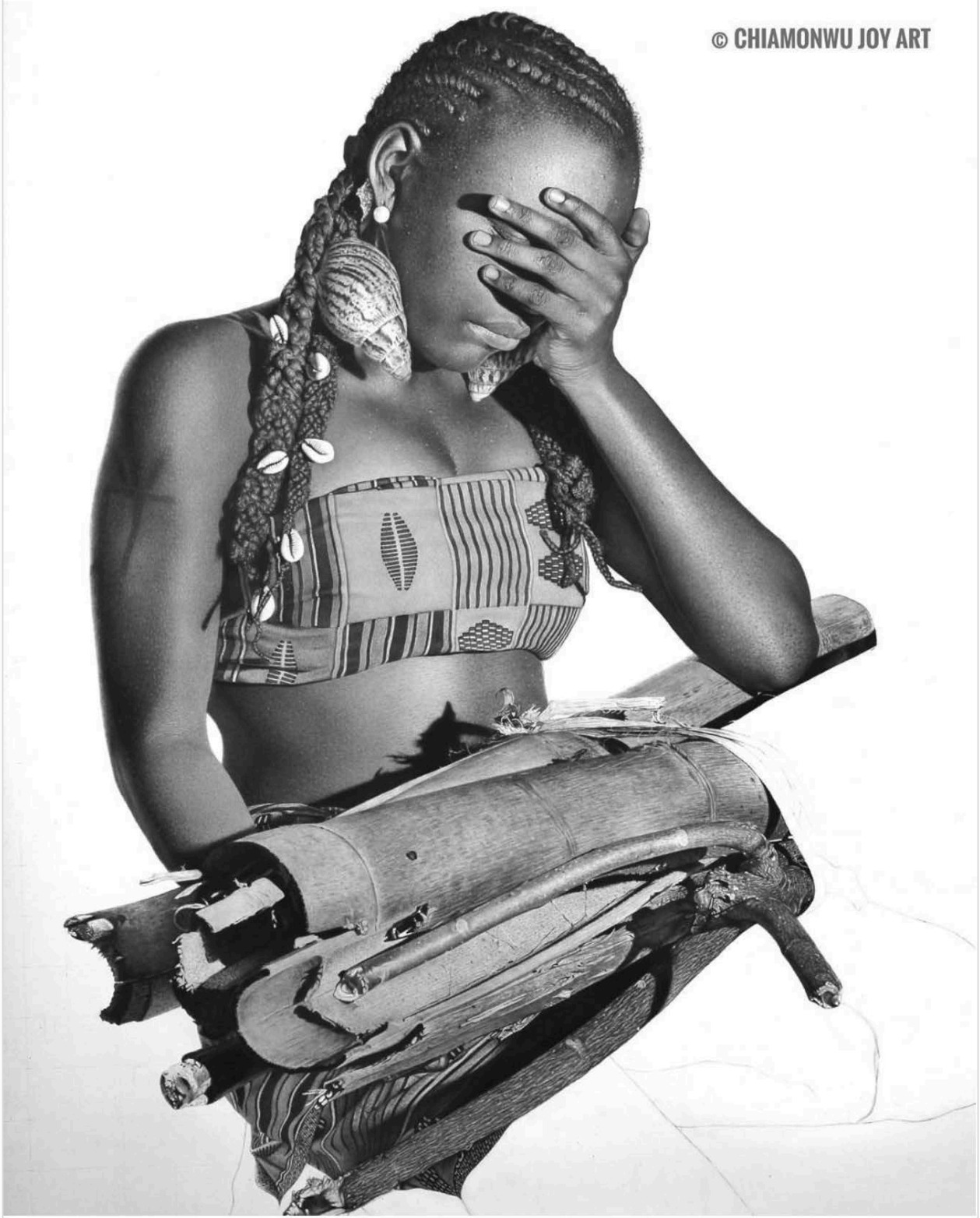




ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

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© CHIAMONWU JOY ART



[View More on Instagram](#)



5,329 likes





ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

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890 likes



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ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

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2,287 likes

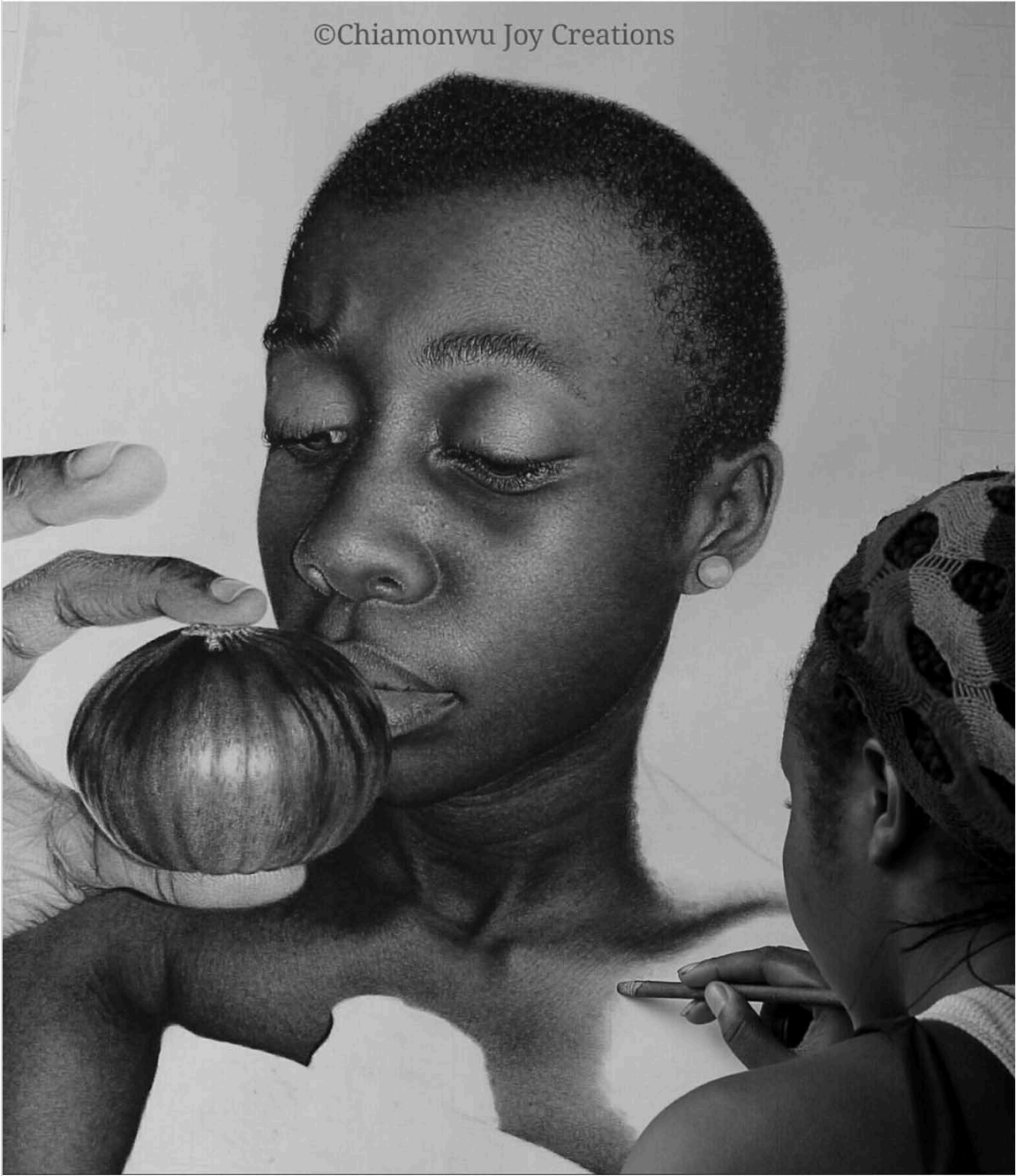
Add a comment...







Joy uses charcoal pencils to produce her portraits. Here's a look at her process:

 **ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu**
45.5K followers [View Profile](#)


©Chiamonwu Joy Creations



[View More on Instagram](#)

997 likes

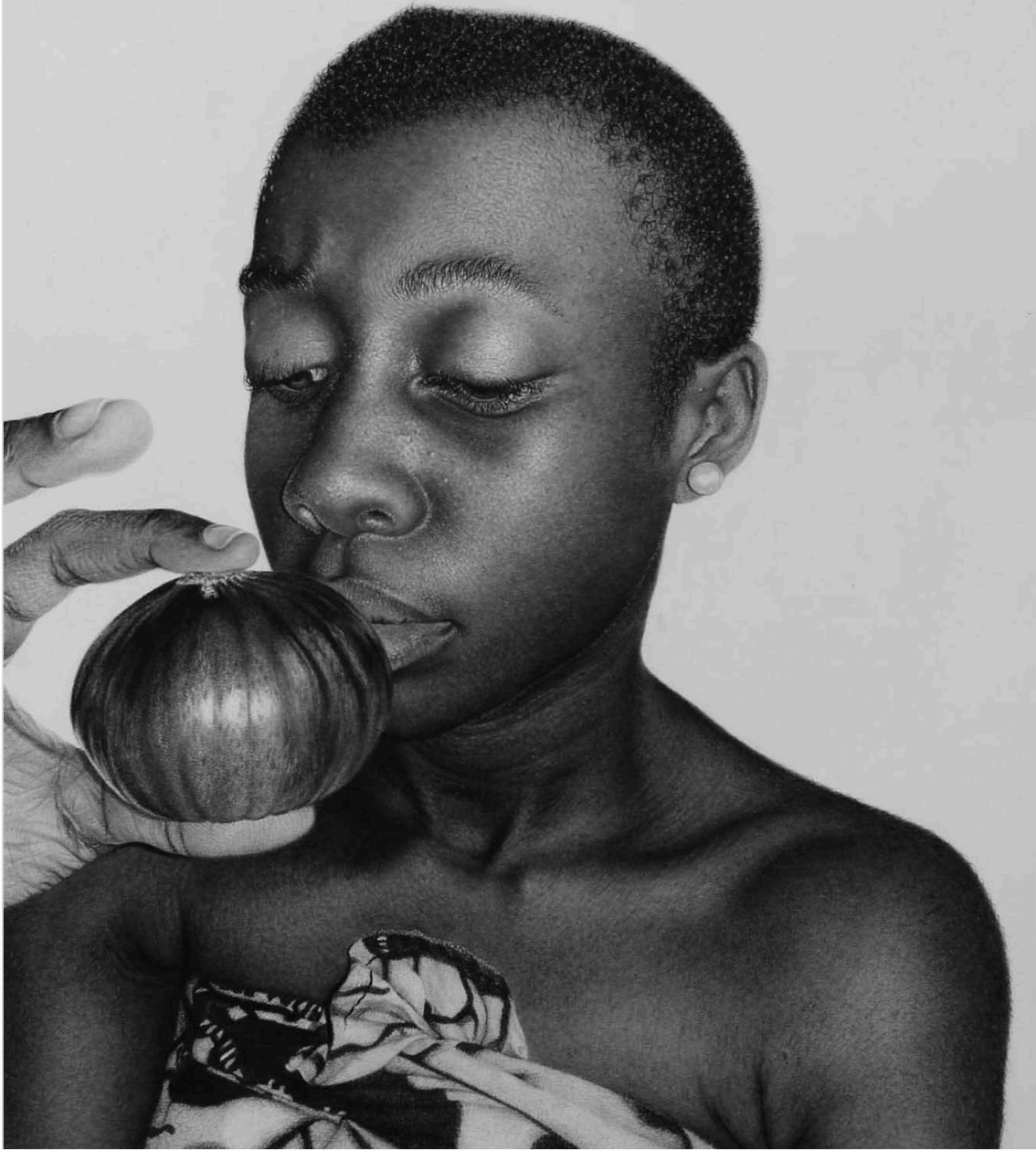
Add a comment... 



ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

[View Profile](#)

© CHIAMONWU JOY CREATIONS



[View More on Instagram](#)



1,303 likes



Add a comment...



The artist recently gained a great deal of attention on Twitter for her incredible charcoal pencil drawings.



People on Twitter couldn't believe the talent this young woman possessed and needed her to know how in awe they were.



Lamar
@lamar_ralph



Replying to @ChiamonwuJoy and @ChiamonwuJoyArt

This is the best art I've seen all my life...

2:37 AM · Jan 18, 2018



377 10 Copy link to Tweet



BOG
@BOBOBOG



Replying to @ChiamonwuJoy @ChiamonwuJoyArt and @Naijabiggz

Brilliant! Your gift will take you before kings..🙏

6:37 AM · Jan 18, 2018



45 2 Copy link to Tweet

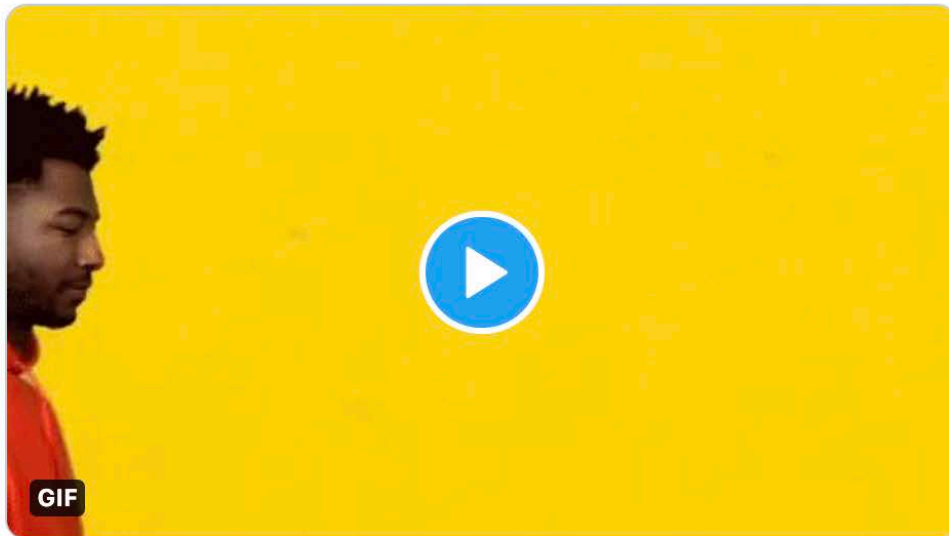


Hodan
@hyfreelance



Replying to @ChiamonwuJoy @ChiamonwuJoyArt and @knox_o

Wait what those are not photos??!! Wow sis you are soooooo incredibly talented and skilled !!!



6:34 AM · Jan 18, 2018

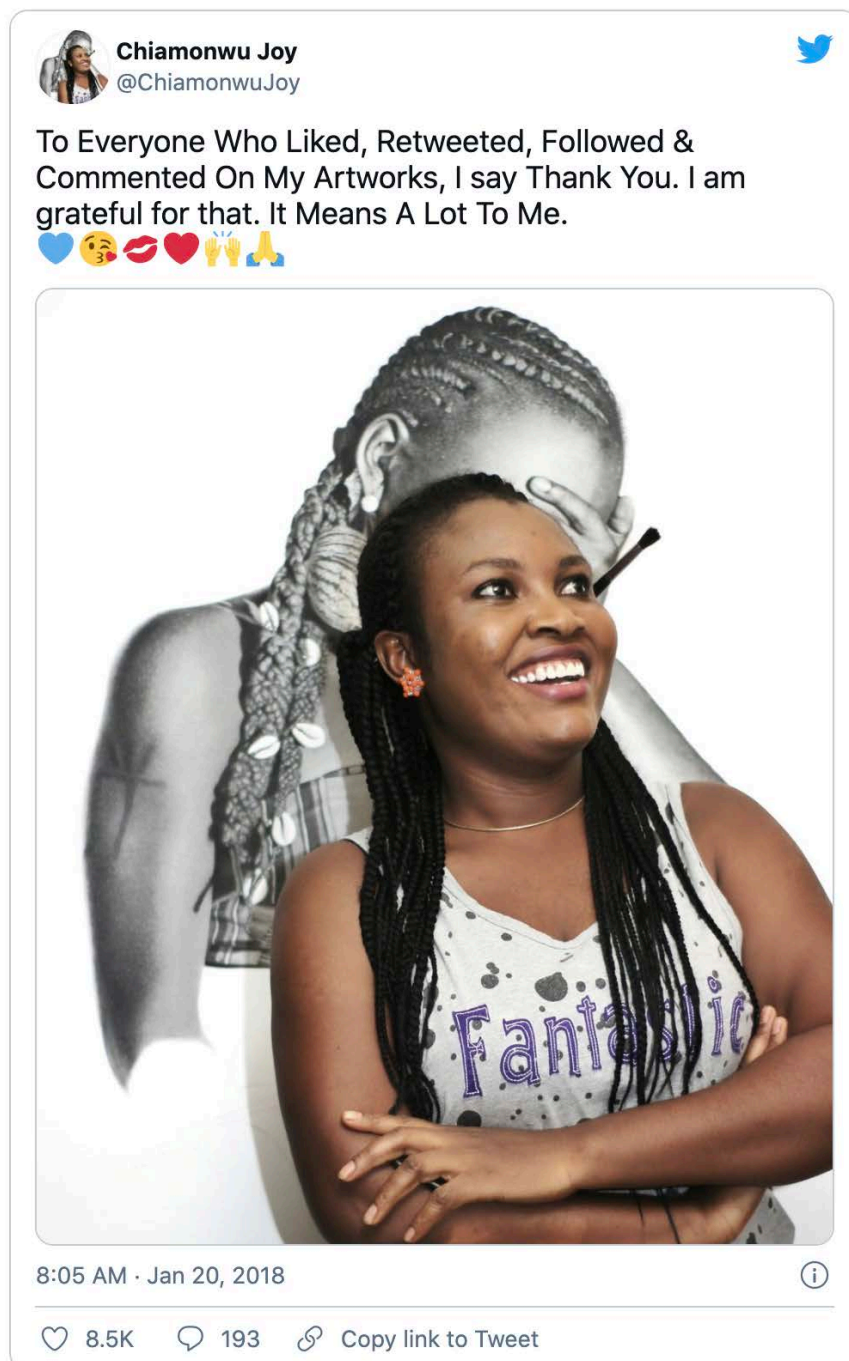


846 3 Copy link to Tweet

It's refreshing to meet an excellent, brilliant lady artist. Keep up the good work sis! 💪

– Jovita Akahome (@HijoLuz) January 18, 2018

Joy then took the time out to thank the thousands of people who helped make her work go viral.



[Art Attack] Hyperrealistic artist Chiamonwu Joy dazzles with her pencil and charcoal artworks

Farida Dawkins | Contributor **ART ATTACK** | January 19, 2018 at 01:09 pm



Ifeyinwa Joy Chiamonwu at an exhibition of hyperealistic art in Nigeria -- Photo: Kuma Nation

Chiamonwu Ifeyinwa Joy is a charcoal and graphite artist straight out of Nigeria. Her artwork is a delight to the eye because of its realism; you would think you were staring at the image of an actual human being or object. Joy uses her Igbo culture and the traditions present in the culture to inspire her artwork.



ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

View Profile



[View More on Instagram](#)



2,964 likes

ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu

On this day, being the 1st of December, Chiamonwu Joy was born.

Happy Birthday to Me

🥳🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷 #GratefulToGodForTheGiftOfLifeAndHealthyBody

#ljayng

[view all 220 comments](#)

Add a comment...



In an industry dominated by males, Joy is making her own mark by presenting rituals such as the kola nut offering, the displaying of a hand fan, and coronations in a lifelike and beautiful way.

Take a look at her work and decide for yourself:



ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

View Profile



[View More on Instagram](#)



3,476 likes

ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu

Happy New Year Wonderful People ❤️

Title: 'Faded'

The second from my OLD TESTAMENT Series.

Progress update: Stage 9

Graphite and Charcoal on Strathmore paper.

Kindly turn on your post notification to follow the progress journey of this artwork. Thanks.

#Art
#Hyperrealism
#Drawing
#OldTestamentSeries
#ChiamonwuJoyArt
#beautifulbizarre
@therealswizzz
@theshaderoom

view all 168 comments

Add a comment...





[View More on Instagram](#)



2,287 likes

[ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu](#)

Adding up the finishing touches before calling it a finished artwork.

Title: 'GONE ARE THOSE DAYS I'

Progress update: Stage 22

Graphite and Charcoal on Strathmore paper.

Kindly turn on your post notification to follow the progress journey of this artwork and many more.
Thanks ❤️

Comment, Like and Share.

#art
#femaleartist
#drawing
#hyperrealism
#worldofpencils
#art_secret
#sharingart
#worldofartists
#arts_help
#artoftheday
#artsy
#duende_arts_help
#art_supernova
#ijaying

[view all 159 comments](#)

Add a comment...





Chiamonwu Joy
@ChiamonwuJoy



Title: "GONE ARE THOSE DAYS I"

Stage 10

Graphite and Charcoal on paper

Follow me on Instagram @chiamonwu_joy_art



2:13 PM · Sep 30, 2017



♡ 56 💬 1 🔗 Copy link to Tweet



Chiamonwu Joy

@ChiamonwuJoy



I am Chiamonwu Joy. A Nigerian Female Hyperrealistic Graphite and Charcoal Artist.

[#drawingwhileblack](#)

IG handle: [chiamonwu_joy_creations](#)



4:01 AM · Sep 22, 2017



8.7K



139



Copy link to Tweet

One Facebook user remarked, "If your drawing skills could be compared to the age of your Soul, you'd be an Elder".

We couldn't agree more.

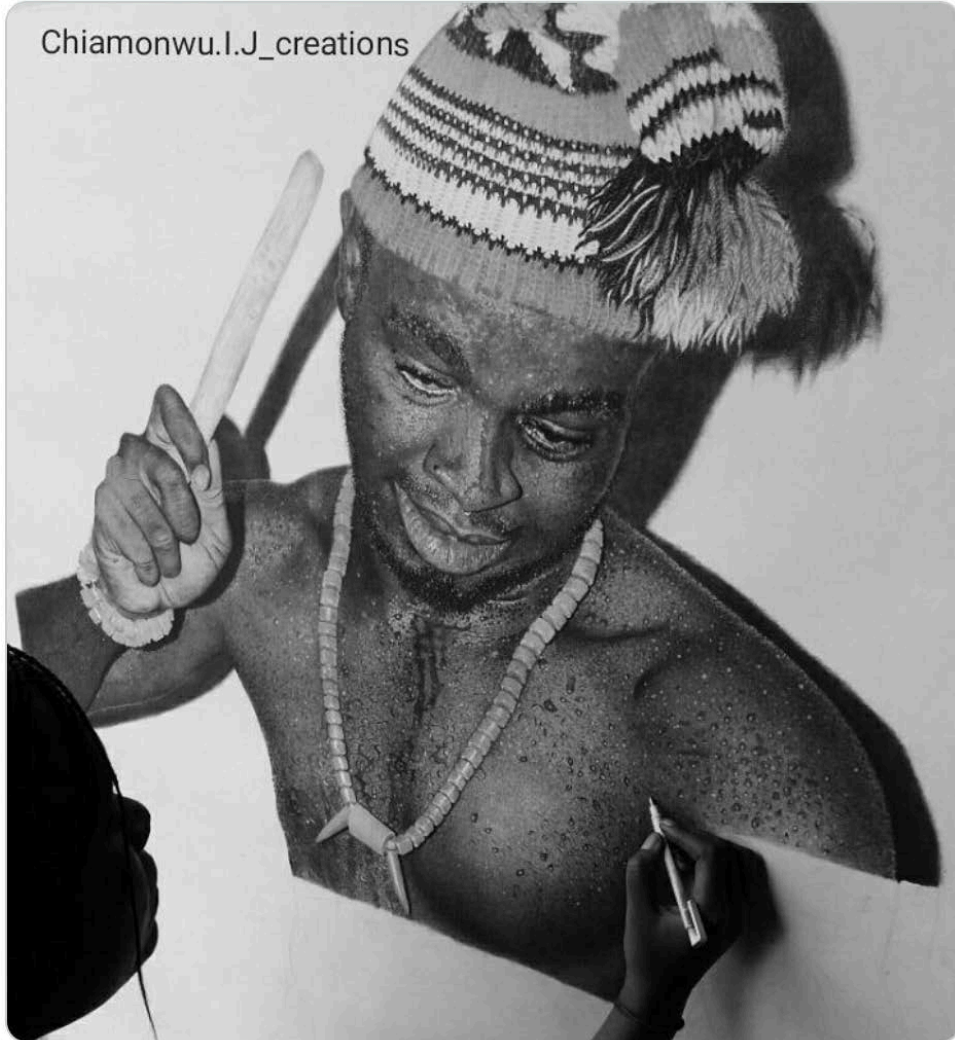


Chiamonwu Joy
@ChiamonwuJoy



I have love for what I do.. This is my call

Chiamonwu.I.J_creations



8:35 PM · May 8, 2017



♡ 120 💬 3 🔗 Copy link to Tweet

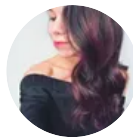


IMAGE: COURTESY CHIAMONWU JOY

Lifestyle

Nigerian Artist Chiamonwu Joy's Charcoal Drawings Go Viral

Social media is in awe.



BY **DE ELIZABETH**

JANUARY 21, 2018

The internet loves a good **optical illusion**, and the latest mind-blowing images are from Nigerian artist Chiamonwu Joy, whose **charcoal drawings** have caused jaws to drop all around the world.

Joy, who is known on Twitter as **@ChiamonwuJoyArt**, has shared several examples of her artwork on social media, much to the awe of her followers. Her portraits have earned countless likes and retweets — as well as compliments galore — due to the realistic nature of the drawings. If you look quickly, they honestly seem like photographs, but they aren't. According to **one of her tweets**, the images are made with charcoal pencils on paper.

As for Joy's followers, they've been left stunned time and again. "I am baffled and intimidated at how good these are," one person **wrote**, adding: "Who do I have to sell my soul to in order to get this good?" Another Twitter user **replied** to say: "Wait are you trying to tell me the girl in the second picture is not standing beside you? " And one of Joy's fans even went so far as **to say** that her drawings are more precise than photographs themselves.

Joy also has an **Instagram page** that's filled with her hyper-realistic drawings, along with tons more adoring comments from her fans. It's definitely clear that Joy has left an impression on the internet — and plenty of double-takes at that. Take a look for yourself, and you'll be sure to feel endlessly inspired.



Chiamonwu Joy
@ChiamonwuJoy



My name is Chiamonwu Joy, A Nigerian Female Hyper-realistic Charcoal Artist. I draw with charcoal pencils on paper. These are all drawings.



5:54 PM · Jan 17, 2018



167.2K 3.3K Copy link to Tweet



Chiamonwu Joy
@ChiamonwuJoy



I am Chiamonwu Joy. A Nigerian Female Hyperrealistic Graphite and Charcoal Artist.
[#drawingwhileblack](#)

IG handle: [chiamonwu_joy_creations](#)



4:01 AM · Sep 22, 2017



8.7K 139 Copy link to Tweet



ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

[View Profile](#)

©Chiamonwu Joy Creations



[View More on Instagram](#)



783 likes

ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu

This is a section of the commission I have been working on for a client. (though commission work completed)

I really enjoyed the challenges and new things I experienced while working on this artwork.

I will be posting more progress stages of my "deeper than this" artwork, which has been on hold, soon. Do have a lovely day. 😊❤️❤️

[view all 16 comments](#)

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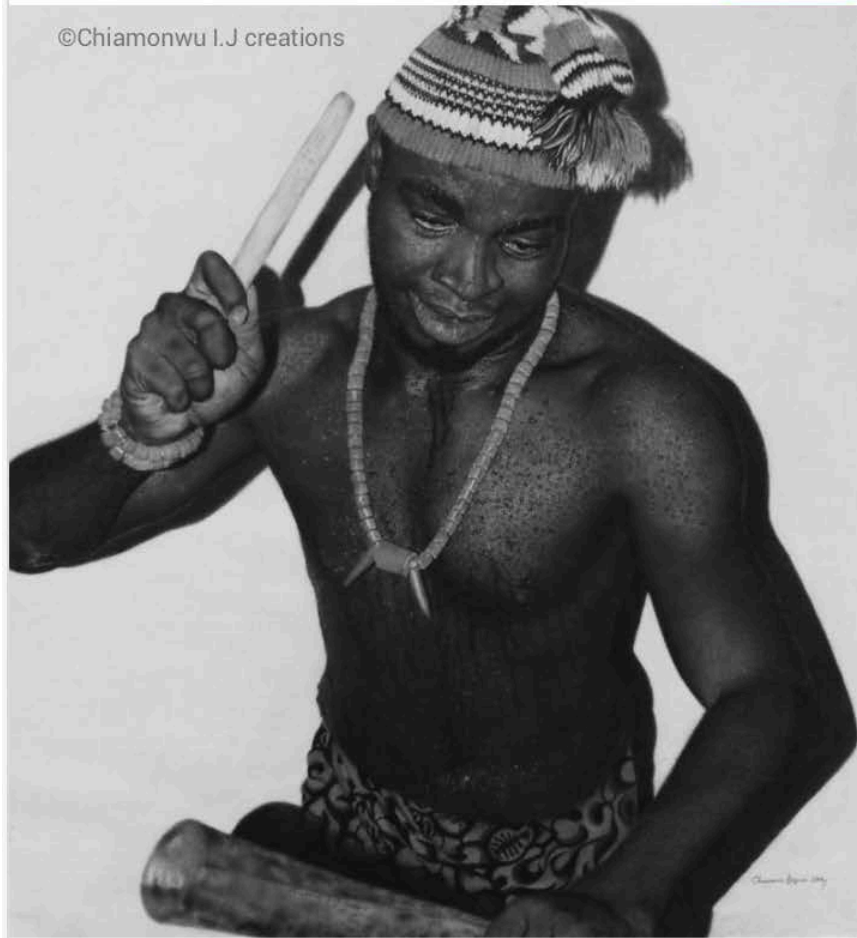




ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

[View Profile](#)

©Chiamonwu I.J creations



[View More on Instagram](#)



1,110 likes

ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu

Title - Omenala (Tradition)

Size - 48 x 42 inches

Medium - Graphites and charcoal on Fabriano Academia paper.

I am going to give a brief historical description and importance of three main objects that are of great significance in this artwork.

First, I will start with the Cap; popularly known as the OKPU-AGU among the Igbo people of Nigeria, West Africa. The okpu-agu is made with woollen threads, and its colour is mainly of the colour red, white and black . It is mostly worn by elderly men or men of chieftaincy titles. The Okpu-agu is worn on special traditional occasions like coronations, new yam festivals, marriage ceremonies, title takings etc.

Secondly, The neck and hand beads or coral beads. Popularly called AKA in Igbo dialect. The colour of these beads are mostly white, red, and of the orange colour. They are worn on the right hand and on the neck, by men and women, on special occasions like the fertility dances, festivals, marriage ceremonies, title takings, masquerade dances, coronations, and during traditional religious activities. However, the Aka symbolizes royalty, wealth, honour and indigenous identity. Although the Igbo people wear these beads, only a person born of royal blood is allowed to wear the white bead (AKA). Thirdly, The metal gong. Commonly called OGENE by the Igbo speaking tribe. The Ogene instrument is historically made by the Igbo people of Nigeria which is the most important metal instrument of the people. It is made by specialist blacksmiths. The instrument is flattish, conical shape and is hollow inside. The sound of the Ogene when struck with a wooden stick, comes from the vibration of its iron body. Ogene is not only used as a musical instrument during traditional ceremonies, but also as a means of communication, to pass out messages to the people or to call for village gatherings in different Igbo communities. Furthermore, Ogene is used in summoning up spirits. During the traditional wrestling matches that takes place in these communities , the ogene is used in raising up spirits of the wrestlers to show their manly strength.

This artwork is on sale now. If interested, email me on efynwaaa@gmail.com .

[view all 48 comments](#)

Add a comment...





ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

View Profile



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1,346 likes

ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu

Title of work - Ollile anya (Hope) 2016.

Size - 46 x 38 inches

The message behind this artwork of mine is based on AGE GRADE.

An Age-grade is a form of social organization based on age, within a series of such categories, through which individuals pass over the course of their lives.. In tribal societies, especially in Africa, entry into an age grade - generally gender separated - is often marked by an initiation rite, which may be the crowning of a long and complex preparation. After a period of some years, during which they perform certain common activities, alone or under the supervision of senior guidance, members may be initiated either collectively or individually into a more senior age grade. This progress is often accompanied by the revelation of secret knowledge. In most cultures, age grade system are the preserve of men, and it is the older men who control a society's secret knowledge, collectively or restricted to a council of elders or specific positions such as medicine men and diviners, entrusted with the preparation of initiates.

References:

Bernard, B (1985). Age Class System: Social Institution and Politics Based on Age. Cambridge University Press.

Shepherd, J.R. (1995). Marriage and Mandatory Abortion among the 17th century Siriya. American Anthropological Association.

The white pendant object that hung on the belly of the boy (my artwork), held in place with a black rope, is called a COWRY; plural, COWRIES.

The cowry is a shell of sea snails, which overall are often shaped more or less like an egg, except that they are rather flat on the underside.

Many people through out history, especially Africans, have found (and still find) the white, very rounded, shiny, porcelain like shells of cowries very pleasing to look at and to handle. The shells have historically been used as Currency as well as being used in past and present, very extensively in the making of jeweleries and other decorative and ceremonial purposes especially in ritual divinations, in several parts of the world especially among Africans.

view all 58 comments

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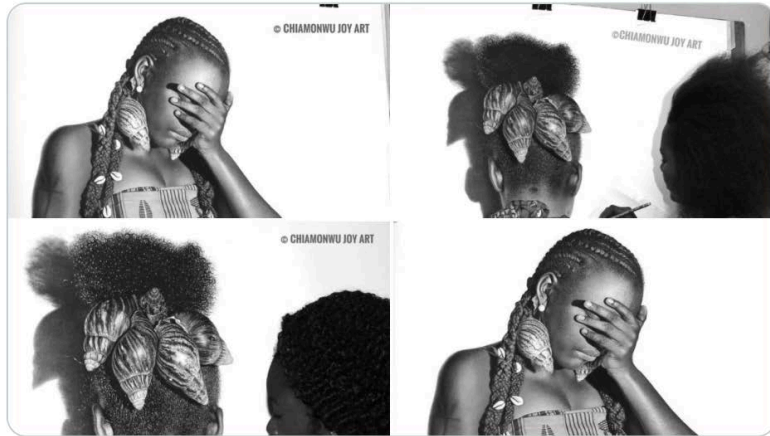




Chiamonwu Joy @ChiamonwuJoy · Jan 17, 2018



My name is Chiamonwu Joy, A Nigerian Female Hyper-realistic Charcoal Artist. I draw with charcoal pencils on paper. These are all drawings.



Malty Meatia
@maltymeatia

As someone who's just finished attempting a photo-realistic portrait using charcoal (partially), I am baffled and intimidated at how good these are. Who do I have to sell my soul to in order to get this good?

7:39 PM · Jan 18, 2018



♥ 1.8K 💬 27 🔗 Copy link to Tweet



Chiamonwu Joy @ChiamonwuJoy · Jan 17, 2018



My name is Chiamonwu Joy, A Nigerian Female Hyper-realistic Charcoal Artist. I draw with charcoal pencils on paper. These are all drawings.



Adultish
@mide_bams

Wait are you trying to tell me the girl in the second picture is not standing beside you? 🤔❤️

5:00 AM · Jan 18, 2018



♥ 1K 💬 9 🔗 Copy link to Tweet

BY DAMOLA DUROSOMO

Jan. 18, 2018 06:26PM EST

NIGERIA



5 Nigerian Hyper-Realist Artists You Should Know

Here are 5 Nigerian hyper-realist artists whose work leaves us astonished.

It takes a special, perhaps, preternatural gift to be able to produce works of art that look so real they make viewers second-guess their eyesight.

Several African artists are amongst this talented bunch of hyper-realist artists, whose craftsmanship and stringent attention to detail produce some of the most utterly mind-blowing works that we've had the pleasure of seeing.

For these artists, the tedious process is just as meaningful as the outcome.

Blow, check out 5 African hyper-realists whose work leaves us quite astonished. For more, revisit our list of [10 Nigerian hyper-realists whose work will trick your eyes](#).



ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu
45.5K followers

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5,330 likes

ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu

Title: 'Faded'

The second from my OLD TESTAMENT Series.

Progress update: Stage 10

Graphite and Charcoal on Strathmore paper.

Kindly turn on your post notification to follow the progress journey of this artwork.
Thanks.

#Art
#Hyperrealism
#OldTestamentSeries
#ContemporaryArt
#worldofpencils
#art_whisper
#duende_arts_help
#art_insanely
#art_dailydose
#pencilsacademy
#drawing_expression
#arts_promoter
#tacart
#art_toinspire
#worldofartists
#ljaying
@worldofpencils
@worldofartists

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45.5K followers

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© CHIAMONWU JOY ART



[View More on Instagram](#)



2,255 likes

ifeyinwa_joy_chiamonwu

Title: 'Gone Are Those Days I'

46 x 42 inches (height x width)

The first from my Old TESTAMENT series.

Graphite and Charcoal pencils on Strathmore paper.

#worldofpencils
#worldofartists
#OldTestamentSeries
#Art
#Hyperrealism
#Artsy
#artoftheday
#ljaying

[view all 154 comments](#)

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