

Currently resides between London, Abuja and Dubai

Professional Summary

Chidi Nwaubani is an acclaimed artist, featured at the 2023 Venice Biennale, and the founder of LOOTY, a collective focused on the digital repatriation of stolen cultural artifacts. Through what he terms "digital heists," he uses AR and 3D scanning to challenge colonial narratives and democratize access to heritage. His work explores the power of technology to resurrect histories and foster new models of community-based creation.

Education / Training

2009 Bachelor of Arts (BA) Honors in Graphic Information Design University of Westminster

Selected Group Exhibitions

London Design Biennale, London, 2025

Mesh Festival, Basel, Switzerland, 2024

ART DUBAI, Dubai, UAE, 2024

NFT PARIS, Paris, France, 2024

SOMETHING ART SPACE, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 2024

LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA - THE LABORATORY OF THE FUTURE - MNEMONIC, Venice, Italy, 2024

AFTERIMAGE VOL. 3 | VIRTUAL PRESENTATION, The University of Columbia, USA, 2024

KRYPTOMANIA, THE ZEPPELIN MUSEUM, Friedrichshafen, Germany, 2023

CARRIE MAE WEEMS CONVENING, Brown University Arts Institute, USA, 2023

1-54 CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART FAIR, London, UK, Somerset House, 2023

TURBINE FESTIVAL, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2023

MILELE MUSEUM, Kigali, Rwanda, Goethe Institut, 2023

NON-FUNGIBLE CASTLE, Prague, Czech Republic, 2022

MAISON DU LUMINAIRXE, Lagos, Nigeria G.A.S Foundation, 2022

Talks & Workshop

RCA, London, United Kingdom, 2024

Battle for the Museums: Fighting Back Against Cultural Colonialism, London, United Kingdom, 2024

Communicating the Arts, The Louvre, Paris, France, 2024

CULTURES OF RESTITUTION, The University of Chicago, USA, 2024

Rwandan Enthographic Museum, Kigali, Rwanda, Goethe Institut, 2024

MUSEUM OF WEST AFRICAN ARTS , Edo state, Nigeria, 2024

NBO Litfest, Nairobi, Kenya, 2024

Press & Publications

Isabel Hufschmidt: Museums & Social Issues, A Journal of Reflective Discourse, 2024

Greg Lindsay: The Augmented City: Seeing Through Disruption. 2024

Kateryna Reshetniak: Biennale Architektury. 2023

Amah-Rose Abrams: Meet Looty, a New Project That Infiltrates Museums, Makes NFTs From Stolen Objects, and Sells Them to Fund Young African Artists: Artnet, 2022.

Dan Hicks: How NFTs and 3D Printing Are Changing Restitution. Frieze. 2020

Boodle Hatfield, Art Law & More: New NFTs of looted African art released. 2019

Forbes By AFPRELAXNEWS: Can NFTs help reclaim Africa's looted cultural heritage? 2022

Collections Natural Science .be : Meet Looty, a New Project That Infiltrates Museums, Makes NFTs From Stolen Objects, and Sells Them to Fund Young African Artists.2024

The New Yorker by Chantel Tattoli : A High-Tech Heist at the British. 2023

Art Newspaper by Aimee Dawson: Can location-specific digital technologies help to resolve debates on restitution?.2024

Noemamag: The Artists Digitally Liberating Colonial Plunder.2024

The Guardian by Alex Durie: 'Can you steal back something that's already stolen?': how radical art duo Looty repatriated the Rosetta Stone. 2024

BBC News: Nigeria's Looty seeks to reclaim African art in digital form.2022

The New York Times online & print:A 'Digital Heist' Recaptures the Rosetta Stone.2023

ARTnews By Shanti Escalante-De Mattei :This NFT Project Offers 'Digital Restitution' for Looted African Art. 2022

Jing Daily Culture by Min Chen: With Looty, The Case For Digital Repatriation Gains A New Ally: NFTs

CNN : 'Looty': How a dog stolen from China sparked a British luxury craze.2023

Reuters Reporting by Angela Ukomadu and Estelle Shirbon, editing by Ed Osmond : 'Looty' project launches digital art heists to reclaim African artifacts. 2022

Futurism Art Plundered From Africa Stolen Back, Sold as NFTs. 2022

MuseumNext: Museums and NFTs: what's the opportunity, who's doing it best and why question marks remain

Outland by Samuel Reilly : Meaningful Returns. 2022

Chidi Nwaubani is a Nigerian-british London-based multidisciplinary artist and designer. His work operates at the dynamic intersection of cultural heritage, social activism, and technological innovation. He is the founder of LOOTY, a collaborative art collective that challenges conventional art paradigms through conceptually-driven projects of cultural restitution. Through LOOTY, Nwaubani ignites critical conversations about history and ownership while empowering artists and democratising access to cultural heritage.

Nwaubani's practice is intrinsically linked to the decoloniality movement, offering a sharp critique of historical injustices and the Eurocentric focus of established art canons. His art seeks to evoke complex feelings of indignation, hope, and solidarity, aiming to restore a sense of dignity through conceptually-driven and technologically innovative mediums. His work embodies a decolonial aesthetic by creating options that liberate the senses beyond the purely visual, challenging traditional forms of expression.

At the heart of Nwaubani's practice is the concept of the "digital heist." This act of artistic intervention involves using tools like LiDAR scanning to create detailed 3D models of artifacts—such as the Benin Bronzes and the Rosetta Stone—held within Western museum collections. These digital surrogates are not merely replicas; they become the foundational material for a range of works, including immersive experiences, archival projects, and critical artworks that challenge the limitations of physical restitution. Nwaubani argues that the meaning of these stolen objects has been irrevocably altered by their institutional confinement, necessitating new forms of engagement and reclamation.

Nwaubani's practice deliberately extends beyond the digital realm, encompassing sculpture, performance, and large-scale installation. His installation "Mnemonic," featured at the Venice Biennale, exemplifies this multidisciplinary approach. The work used physical modular crates, inspired by Nigerian recycling practices, to sculpturally represent the profound absence of looted artefacts, while employing augmented reality to project a vision of their reimaged presence. This fusion of the physical and virtual reflects a powerful desire to use the past to build the future.

Ultimately, Nwaubani's vision is rooted in an "Africa first" mentality, drawing inspiration from pan-African ideals to foster a more equitable art world. By navigating complex legal and ethical questions of ownership and copyright, his work functions as a mechanism for social action, challenging the inherent hypocrisy of colonial systems. He invites viewers to reconsider the role of museums and the potential for new frameworks—artistic and technological—to restore and reshape cultural narratives for future generations.