



SNITE
Museum of ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Gina Costa
gcosta@nd.edu (574) 631-4720

University of NOTRE DAME

Yinka Shonibare and the Notre Dame Forum 2021

September 18 through December 11, 2021

Snite Museum of Art

Notre Dame, IN: Timed to coincide with the University of Notre Dame Forum 2021–22, “Care for Our Common Home: Just Transition to a Sustainable Future,” the Museum is honored to announce the acquisition and premier presentation of *Earth Kid, 2020*, a major sculpture by Yinka Shonibare. There is little doubt that the Nigerian-British Shonibare CBE is among the most compelling international figures in Contemporary art. His work is exhibited and eagerly collected around; in his artistic practice, Shonibare engages a myriad of timely issues ranging from cultural identity, colonialism and post-colonial cultures, race, and disabilities.

In *Earth Kid*, the artist explores the themes of climate change, fragile global environments, and the role of youth in attempting to save the planet. Shonibare’s repertoire, especially recent examples, is in great sympathy with the 2021 Notre Dame Forum and Pope Francis’s 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. In the encyclical, the Holy Father states, “We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.”

Since the early 2000s, Shonibare has developed an iconic body of work that addresses compelling social and political issues. In all his work, the use of the brightly pattern Dutch batik cloth, known as Ankara fabric, signals the complex relationships of Europe and Nigeria (and Africa at large), colonialism, and post-colonial culture. As a sculptor, most of Shonibare’s figures remain headless in order to emphasize the universal over the individual. In *Earth Kid* he has chosen to use a globe, manipulated to underscore the international dimensions of global culture. In the work, the Earth is singed to symbolize the crisis of global drought.

Although Shonibare has addressed the pressing theme of climate change and the fragilities of the environment in the past, *Earth Kid* is a youthful figure rather than an

adult. In doing so, the artist emphasizes the role of youth across the world to combat global excess, geographic and cultural inequalities, and climate change. The significance of the focus on youth in a university setting cannot be understated as their work, present and future, is inextricably linked to the health of our planet.

Through Forum 2021–22, the University of Notre Dame seeks to highlight a transition to a cleaner future where the burdens of change are equitably borne and not simply sloughed off to the poor and powerless. “The question is not whether to transition to a cleaner, more sustainable future, but how and how quickly,” Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., president of Notre Dame, has said. “As a university community whose work is the education of the next generation who will inherit these challenges, and as one with a Catholic mission calling us to seek justice and serve the common good around the globe, we turn to these urgent and complex questions.” In the context of a Museum display, masters like Shonibare visually distill such questions for visitors of every age and experience to consider.



Image caption:

Yinka Shonibare, CBE, RA (British-Nigerian, b. 1962)

Earth Kid (Boy), 2020

Fiberglass mannequin, Dutch wax printed cotton textile, globe, brass, steel baseplate, netted bag and found objects

Walter R. Beardsley Endowment for Contemporary Art

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MEDIA CONTACT: If you would like high-resolution images or in-depth information, please contact Gina Costa, Marketing and Public Relations Program Manager, (574) 631–4720, gcosta@nd.edu

About The Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame

Considered one of the finest university art museums in America, the Snite Museum has a permanent collection containing over 30,000 works representing many cultures and periods of world art history. Exceptional holdings include the Jack and Alfrieda Feddersen Collection of Rembrandt Etchings, the Noah L. and Muriel S. Butkin Collection

of 19th-Century French Art, the John D. Reilly Collection of Old Master and 19th-Century Drawings, the Janos Scholz Collection of 19th-Century European Photographs, the Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh Jr., Collection of Meštrović Sculpture and Drawings, the George Rickey Sculpture Archive, and the Virginia A. Marten Collection of 18th-Century Decorative Arts. Other collection strengths include Olmec and Mesoamerican art, 20th-century art, and Native American art.

Sculpture is displayed in the Mary Loretto and Terrence J. Dillon Courtyard and The Charles B. Hayes Family Sculpture Park.

Snite Museum of Art
The University of Notre Dame
100 Moose Krause Circle
Notre Dame, IN 46556
Phone: (574) 631-5466
Fax: (574) 631-8501
sniteart@nd.edu
sniteartmuseum.nd.edu

Hours:
Tuesday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Thursday evening until 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Noon–5:00 p.m.
Closed Sunday, Monday, and major
holidays.

Admission is free

Directions: nd.edu/visitors/directions