

IWALEWAHAUS

Press release

Stand: 22-09-15

Iwalewahaus mourns the passing of Ijeoma Loren Uche-Okeke

Ijeoma Loren Uche-Okeke

*18.11.72 (Orlu, Imo, Nigeria) - 01.09.2022 (Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa)



Photos by Peter Fabian & Mohamed Elhennawi

**We have been looking for words, but there are none.
We are coming to terms with having to do the unexpected:
Mourning Ijeoma Loren Uche-Okeke.
And celebrating her life, her joy, her vision.**

Bayreuth. The team of Iwalewahaus - students, staff, friends, all of us - mourns the loss of the indomitable Ijeoma Uche-Okeke who passed on, on September 1st, 2022, in Johannesburg.

We have had the pleasure and honour to work so closely with her, with Salma Uche-Okeke and with the whole family of Uche Okeke, and with co-curator Nantume Violet, when we curated and opened the show "We will now go to Kpaaza" together in April 2022. It was pure joy to work with Ijeoma: The everyday explorations of yet another aspect of her father's - and mother's - work, the trust that the family and contemporaries of Uche Okeke had and have in us, and the big visions and dreams that we will make sure to realise in the months and years to come.

Ijeoma, how can a woman from the future pass on?, we keep asking ourselves.

We miss you, your ideas, your strength and ambition - and your infectious laughter that we loved hearing in the *haus* we share/d. We still hear it, and we will make sure that there is joy in your honour. We remember your hard work - and the moment you were the first on the dancefloor, when the vernissage speeches were over, and we celebrated our shared work. There are so many things left undone, and we will continue working in your spirit - together with everyone you inspired and supported.

Iwalewahaus Universität Bayreuth Wölfelstrasse 2 95444 Bayreuth
Tel. 0921 55 4500 presse-iwalewa@uni-bayreuth.de
www.iwalewahaus.uni-bayreuth.de

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Of all the images we have from our time together, we chose three, because they speak volumes about your practice and commitment - one with that infectious laughter we mentioned and hear; the other one with family, speaking of your commitment to your family's legacy; and a third one, deep in discussion with friend and co-curator Nantume Violet, in our curators' talk before the opening of the show.

Rest in power, beautiful Ijeoma, you courageous soul!

Our thoughts are with your family in Nimo, with your family in South Africa, and all over the world. Remember, dear community, and support our case:

<https://www.forevermissed.com/ijeoma-uche-okeke/about>

Text: Katharina Fink
Iwalewaha
Universität Bayreuth
Wölfelstraße 2
95444 Bayreuth
0921-55-4505

www.iwalewaha.us.uni-bayreuth.de

Iwalewaha is part of the University of Bayreuth and is dedicated to contemporary artworks of visual and popular art from Africa, the African diaspora, Asia and the Pacific region. The Iwalewaha collection includes over 12,000 works of art. It is the largest collection of contemporary African art in Europe. Exhibitions, lectures, films, conferences, parties, artist talks, artist residencies and workshops take place on 2,300m² (office space as well as exhibition and archive space).

Literally translated, Iwalewa means "character is beauty". Iwalewa is a Yoruba proverb spoken by one of the three major cultural groups in southwestern Nigeria.