

LADOKE AKINTOLA
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA

ART
FROM ART
FOR ART

CONCEPTUALISING
EXISTENCE IN THE
SPACE OF THE VISUAL ARTS

Razaq Olatunde Rom Kalilu



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Professor of Art and Art History

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Ladoke Akintola University of Technology
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Ogbomosho, Nigeria

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Dedication

F. A. Kalilu
Sun re o!

Oko Irese omo woyira
K'e ma ba ra eru k'eru

...
Omo Olori ilu
Omo Olori aye
Omo Eerin l'Oyo-Ile

Introduction

This inaugural lecture has come inevitably late. The delay, since my promotion as professor fourteen years ago, was not deliberate on my part. It is partly due to this University's old practices of concluding professorial promotions later than their due dates. It is also partly due to the non-charting of inaugural lectures into series in this University. And when, beginning from 2004, the Committee of Deans and Provosts, which I led then, did the charting, my colleagues and I in the Committee were statute-barred from presenting the lectures on account of our being serving deans. The encumbrances I had from my active involvement in university administration and other pioneering assignments, which I had been privileged to be saddled with over these long years, had also largely contributed to the delay. The beauty of the privilege of professorial inaugural lectures, nonetheless, is that they are normally not time-bound as their realisations are affected by several factors; one, one may be ready but the opportunity may not come to one's faculty or department; two, the opportunity may come when one is not available. In spite of the fact that I am the only professor that is statutorily available to take the turn of my Faculty, I almost lost the current opportunity, but my argument that I did not elect to be Dean at this moment sufficed to secure the ticket for me. I, therefore, thank the Acting Vice-Chancellor for his understanding in this regard.

Nonetheless, having the opportunity today to deliver the lecture is a lot of relief from the burden of the academic debt, derived from the load of pressure attracted by inaugural lectures in the course of human development. The Yoruba proverb; "*Eti to ba gbo alo, o ye ko gbo abo*", "those who know about the commencement of a project should be briefed about its end", captures the essence and the debt-nature of inaugural lectures. The professor is expected to brief the world about his/her engagement with the public space and resources placed at his disposal. Though, such briefing is not entirely compulsory, a Yoruba proverb, "*Oba n pe mi l'aafin n ko ni'be de, aroye re ki i tan ni'le boro*", "the sovereign summoned me to the palace but I will not comply, yet the consequences of the non-compliance will last a life time", offers an explanation in this context. In the same vein, it is crucial that assignments such as inaugural lectures are better fulfilled.

The context of inaugural lectures provides the professor a once-in-a-life-time opportunity in any one of two lanes: one, to reflect on his enterprise and address members of his university and the public on any topic of his choice in his

discipline; two, to make a treatise on any topic regarding his enterprise, his studies, his contributions to knowledge and the implied lesson(s) for the society therefrom. For this exercise, I shall walk through the corridors of these two lanes.

Vision, Time, Space and Praxical Knowledge

My involvement with the academia is not a happenstance. First, I was raised in a home where, initially, I did not know that children could receive education in different vocations than school-based spaces. Second, academic enterprise is a vision that I had held since I was in Primary One. My vision to become a professor was born the day I asked my father about the images on the almanac he hung on the wall of our sitting room. It was a promotional almanac of Varsity Cigarette given to highly prized buyers. At that time and until about a year after, when at my insistence he stopped smoking, my father was a habitual smoker of that cigarette, which was the most expensive brand at that time. Highly prized buyers of the cigarette were given promotional almanac of Varsity cigarette. The almanac displayed the picture of some grown-up men wearing fascinating uniforms. My father indicated that the men were students but I wondered why their uniforms were different from the ones I was familiar with. Upon further enquiry from him about who their teachers and headmaster were, he responded that they were professors, though he added other information which I have forgotten. I then wondered why I would not be a professor in order to be free, since father said nobody taught and gave the professors homework! This lecture is therefore the capping of the rites regarding the fulfilment of that long held vision.

Similarly, my artistic training did not start from the schools. My first close personal contact with art came about the time I conceived the vision for the academia when I discovered some fascinating smooth cursive pen handwritings and drawings of jacket-wearing figures in my father's standard school notebooks. I copied the drawings periodically. I had, also, in my pre-teen years watched cloth weaving practised by women on the broadloom and partook in cloth weaving on men's narrow loom both of which were practised in our lineage compound. Furthermore, for many years, I watched and assisted Kalilu Alao Fasisi, my grandfather, in his art of stitching and appliqué for garment construction and cloth embroidery, which he learnt in Yola area of Nigeria. He did not only introduce this art into Ogbomoso, but also, to a reasonable extent, some other parts of South-western Nigeria. Besides, cloth embroidery was an art which my father also practised as a pastime. I had the privilege of being with him during such practices.

Each time I showed some skills in any of the art forms, I was instantly told the possible origins of such innate skills in me. My reinforcement also stemmed from the fact that my paternal great grandmother's family is the Abogunde woodcarvers of Ogbomoso. My maternal great grandmother's family were blacksmiths, a craft hitherto also practised in my family lineage, and from which the lineage's name, *Alagbede Biayin*, was formed. Biayin was a son of the man traditionally said to have been invited by Ogunlola, the first Soun and the paramount traditional ruler of Ogbomoso, to introduce blacksmithing and wrought iron craft into the settlement.

In the secondary school, my creativity was noted in my first year and thenceforth the school placed me under the close guidance of the Fine Art and Physics teachers. With my design and construction of an electrical quiz and answer board in my first year, the contention for my interest between the two teachers became interesting because, ultimately, as the education policy then stipulated, I could not offer both Fine Art and Physics at the Ordinary School Certificate Level. The School provided me with almost all the needed art materials for practice and studies. Nonetheless, my natural flair was for Physics, which, sadly, I had to drop in the fourth year in order to irreparably checkmate my mother's nudging that I read Medicine and my father's gentle encouragement towards Electrical Engineering, both of which I considered less challenging. I excelled in Art, and I was at the forefront in all my art classes throughout my secondary through higher secondary school days. In fact, in my higher secondary school days, my name was synonymous with the Visual Arts to the extent that the three art teachers in the School were referred to as "Tisa Kalilu", Kalilu's teachers.

Nevertheless, I was not ready to pursue its study further. I wanted other challenges which I thought I could get by studying law, which interestingly my mother seriously discouraged, or perhaps philosophy because of the lure provided by the names of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. However, that dream was aborted as a result of the strategic intervention of Mistura, my eldest sister, and Engineer A.M.A. Adewuyi, her fiancé then (now her husband), who took me to Heinemann Publishing House, Ibadan, where a team of about five artists, having checked my portfolio, presented issues that convinced me to study Art at the tertiary level.

Apart from Visual Arts, my education at the tertiary levels introduced me to the socio-political history of the world, Yoruba language, sociology,

archaeology, anthropology, African jurisprudence and African law. These were unusual for Visual Arts students, but the eclectic natures of my university education greatly shaped and defined my artistic and scholastic practices.

This lecture is the second in the Faculty of Environmental Sciences and the first from the Department of Fine and Applied Arts. It is the first to be given, anywhere, by a professor of Art and Art History officially so designated. In this inaugural lecture, I discuss my engagement with the Visual Arts and give answers to certain disciplinary challenges and questions as suggested by recent discoveries, and praxical and theoretical advances in the light of some of my professional practices, praxeology and academic scholarship. Against this background, I indicate how art has been variously conceived and deployed in the cycle of life and in the spatialisation of human and non-human elements. Finally, I give an exposé of how man, and his co-traveller in the cosmic space are, in the design sense, art works and living components of bigger art objects, which they, especially man continually attempts to copy, refine and develop; in addition to how art is the resources, the process, and the reception of life. All these are examined in my attempt to show the Visual Arts as the basic stimulus that drives and refines the development of society within itself on the one hand, and on the other, as a *sine-qua-non* in the understanding of the cosmos, and of life and its purpose.

Exploration of Concepts of Art

Our discussion of art proceeds from its tangible to its non-tangible form. This is against the background that art is mostly recognised from its physical nature. Art is, however, a complex concept, and its highly complex nature is seen even in its controversial definition. This is because of the almost limitless possibilities of art, both in concept and in form, and even within the same spatial or temporal context. Davies (2008:12) who in 2008 attempted to define art conjunctively observes that individual art forms are in themselves difficult to define let alone the general category of art. He, therefore, concluded that conjoining definitions of individual art forms would not even map the extension of art in its general category. In fact, whether art can or should be defined, the usefulness of its definition is a matter for debate (Adajian, 2012). Indeed, in concept, form, and conception, art is diverse and diffuse across the globe.

In its physical forms, art can be temporal or spatial. The temporal arts such as music, poetry and performance are time-bound, and they actually exist

primarily only during the period of their performance. Spatial arts, in most cases, usually exist in fixed material forms; they are spatio-temporal and are usually referred to as the Visual Arts. The Visual Arts is a generic singular noun that refers to the composite discipline and field of study with diverse areas of specialisations.

In the academia, the Visual Arts is classified into two broad spectra of Fine and Applied Arts. The Fine Art (Painting, Draughtsmanship, Sculpture and Art History) deals with aspects of art made for pure aesthetic purposes, while the Applied Art (Textile Design, Graphic Design and Ceramics) is basically employed in utilitarian contexts. Draughtsmanship and Art History are basically compulsory, in moderate intensity, at the various stages in the training of the artists across all the areas of specialisation from the secondary to the tertiary levels.

The broad specialisations are further broken into other specialized areas based on the peculiarities of materials, techniques, technology, style, form and presentation mode, or a combination of these elements. The opportunity for the different strata of the specialisations, however, depends on whether the art school is a department, a faculty or a university. In Ladoko Akintola University of Technology, Fine and Applied Arts is a department. The Department provides training from the bachelor's to the doctoral degree. It also provides the mandatory training in the Fundamentals of Drawing, which the University requires of every bachelor's degree programme students for graduation.

Art and Scholasticism

Art is one of man's oldest engagements since the time he foraged for food and ever before he became an agriculturalist. Evidence for preference for the aesthetic dates back to about 100,000 years ago but recognisable art, which samples are available for study (plate 1), from Europe, Africa and Australia dates back to 40,000 years ago, precisely 38,000BC (Marceau, *et al*, eds., 1997: 16-21).

Africa had made some of the most outstanding contributions to the world artistic heritage: the rock arts of North and South Africa, between 9000 BC and 500 BC; the ancient Egyptian arts of 3000 BC; the Nok



Plate 1. Venus of Willendorf. c. 25,000-20,000 BC. H. 11.5cm. (de la Croix, 1980: 31).



Plate 3. Representation of Calabash. Bronze. Dia: 30.5cm. Igbo Ukwu. Credit: Thurstan Shaw. National Museum, Lagos. (ukpuru.blogspot.com, 2010).



Plate 5. Plaque: Multiple Figures. Cast copper alloy. Benin. H. 45.7cm., (Freyer, 1987; 50).

terracotta of Nigeria, between 500 BC and AD 300; Igbo Ukwu bronzes of Nigeria, between the ninth and the tenth century; the bronze, stone and terracotta sculptures of ancient Ile-Ife, between the twelfth and the sixteenth century; the terracotta sculptures of Owo of Nigeria in the fifteenth century; the bronze sculptures of the kingdom of Benin, between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century; and the stone sculptures of Esie of Nigeria. Others are the nineteenth century sculptures of the Senufo and the Baule of Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso, the Dogon and the Banama of Mali, the Nupe, the Igbo and the Yoruba of Nigeria, including the Fang of Gabon, the Kuba and Kongo of Zaire, as well as the Chokwe of Angola among others (plates 2-6).

Academic scholarship on art was pioneered by the Europeans and their arts were the first to be studied in this regard. The periods beginning from around 1820, however, marked water sheds in the study of the art of Africa and, consequently, the global artistic and art historical practices. Contacts of European explorers and missionaries with the continent and its arts had begun. Exploration of the arts of Africa with their socio-aesthetic and historical backgrounds began after 1825 (Gerbrands, 1990: 11-23). The arts of Africa were, however generally at variance with the canons of the European or Western art; the former largely tended towards abstraction while the latter tended towards naturalism (plate 7). The incongruence which the application of the European canons of artistic judgment consequently produced with regards to African art had far reaching effects on its appreciation and recognition.

The nineteenth century attempts towards a unified theory of the origin of art, based on Darwin's theory of evolution, gave rise to the degeneration theory introduced by Morel in 1857 and developed by Nordau and Lambroso in 1895, which implies that attempts to copy nature led to imperfect and less naturalistic forms. The theory became unpopular later in the nineteenth century but recent research has indeed confirmed that a certain proportion of creative persons have

psychopathological and degeneration tendencies (Gomy, 2007). The theory of evolution of art originally conceived by Gottfried Semper (1861-3) that ornament and simple designs preceded structural form was also propounded in the nineteenth century. This was stretched to imply that art started with less naturalistic tendencies and climaxed with classical forms of the high renaissance of the fifteenth century. The discovery of the prehistoric naturalistic Paleolithic art of Europe and those of Africa later weakened this theory.

The two theories, nonetheless, have far reaching implications for the arts of the non-European peoples across the globe, particularly of Africa, which abstract arts, upon being discovered in the nineteenth century, were regarded as unsuccessful and immature attempts at copying nature in the degeneration theory sense, and as the base of the artistic processes in the evolution theory sense. Thus African art was not accepted as art until the early twentieth century. In 1891 for example, 'a very learned article', as Leo Frobenius (1913: 1-2), a German ethnologist, describes it, published in a Berlin journal claimed that:

... Africa, in contemporary opinion, offers no historical enigma ... Therefore it is necessary, in examining the ... races to confine ourselves to the description of their crude ... and repulsive idols ... once for all ... renounce ... all those things which in other parts of our globe, remind us of a past ... 'Black Africa' is a continent which has no mystery, nor history.

Contrariwise however, W. H. Clarke (1972: xx) had earlier in mid-September of 1854 remarked that, against the background of what he was told, he was "... greatly ... disappointed ... how the poor Africans have been belied!", and having seen the culture and the arts of Yorubaland of West Africa for four years, he came to the conclusion that Yorubaland was more organized "... than is to be found among many hundreds of our boasted civilized towns" (Clarke, 1972: 235).

Leo Frobenius, later explored Africa. He marveled at the varieties and quality of art in Africa and remarked that

I have gone to the Atlantic again and again ... those vast traits of country which the Englishman Stanley, called ...

'darkest' again and again... But I failed to find it governed by the 'insensible fetish' ... in spite of the exalted light of the Church ... (Frobenius, 1913: xiv).

So strong was Eurocentrism that, in spite of his findings, Frobenius went ahead to assign the production of the Ife bronzes to Atlantis, the lost Greek colony, on account of the apparent very high technical quality and classical naturalistic style of the bronzes but which he did not want to concede to Africans (Frobenius, 1913).

It is noteworthy that Western art was introduced single handedly into Africa by the self-trained Aina Onabolu in the late nineteenth century. Onabolu, a Nigerian, trained himself by copying illustrations from textbooks. By 1900 when Onabolu graduated from secondary school, he was comparable to some of the formally trained European artists. The European colonial administrators' disbelief that a self-trained African could be good in European art led to the public demonstration of his skills in Lagos in 1904 (Oloidi, 2011: 20). Onabolu later proceeded to England to study art. He was noted by his college to be the first known African to study art in England, where he later earned a Diploma in art in 1922 and officially introduced art into the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria in 1922 when he introduced it to the King's College, Lagos. Kenneth Murray, a European, later introduced it to Western and Eastern regions in 1927 (Oloidi, 2011: 20-22).

A semblance of recognition of African art came between 1905 and 1907 (Gerbrands, 1990: 23; ethnographica.com, 2013) when the European *avant-garde* artists who were struggling against their various art academies for freedom of artistic expression came in contact with African art objects. These professionals realised that African artists had realised and mastered the kind of freedom of artistic expressions the European artist required. This, consequently, changed the nature and form of artistic practices of Europe and, eventually, of the Western world. The *avant-garde* artists were inspired by African art, which led to the evolution, in Europe, of collage as an art form, and cubism as an art movement. While the European artists recognised the merits of African Art, the European scholars did not; as the arts were still then regarded as primitive or ethnographic materials. Africa, seen as less civilised, became the field from which human evolution can be explained, and the art objects provided ready-made ethnographical data for them in this regard. This is because art featured in

virtually all aspects of life in Africa. Consequently, the study of African art was pioneered by European ethnologists, anthropologists, archaeologists and other self-styled experts.

The years between 1934 and 1963 were more significant in about four different ways. First is Marcel Griaule's research that showed that sculptures among the Dogon in Mali were not purely for aesthetic purposes. Second is Kjesmeir's pioneering stylistic identification of the sculptures on their geographical location (Adepegba, 2002: 1). Third is that taking a cue from Kjesmeir, the study of African art, until recently, has been based on ethnic groupings. Fourth is the labeling of the arts as tribal arts. Fagg has even directly denied the arts of the college or academically-trained artists and argued that

African art is... a multiple of tribal arts – and what is not tribal is not African. Contemporary art, like skyscrapers is a part of extension of Europe in Africa. There is no Nigerian art; there is Yoruba art and Ibo art, Afo art and Hausa (Islamic) art.... (Fagg, 1963: 121-122).

This concept has brought segmentation into the study of African art as opposed to the internationalism of Western Art (Adepegba, 2002: 1). The segmentation has also chronologically disconnected African arts of the pre-nineteenth century from its successor, the post-nineteenth century arts. This also has further led to the scholarly tenacity of classification of African art objects as representations of gods and objects of worship. The immediate foregoing has far reaching implications for the study of African art and the academic training of artists and artistic praxis.

The late 1970s and early 1980s are also significant in the visual artistic practice in Nigeria. Different sets of the groups of the second generation of university-trained artists were being produced. The groups of the first generation were those produced in the Zaria Art School, Ahmadu Bello University, who consequently established the art schools of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Benin, and University of Ife. The struggle for Nigerian independence, the post-independence experience and the victory of the 'rebels' of the Zaria Art School in their insistence on Nigerian cultural identity in modern artistic representation had all brought in a strong orientation towards cultural identity in the training and practice of art in Nigeria, even though the curricula

were fashioned after the Western or Euro-American art.

The foregoing contexts of artistic development from the earliest known beginning, the study of the art over time, and the problems of methodology, identification and significance posed by or within these contexts were the main concerns in artistic practices and African art scholarship when I started my professional practice and research in 1984.

As at the time I joined Ladoko Akintola University of Technology in 1992, there were only sixteen doctoral degree holders in the various art departments across Nigerian universities; nine of us in Fine Art (Art History) and seven in Art Education. Out of the nine, three of us were Painters cum Art Historians. I am a polymath artist; I specialise in Painting, Form and Material Technology, Digital and Electronic Art, and Art History. I nonetheless practise all studio areas of the Visual Arts. I have also been involved in astronomical art.

When I expanded my vision towards becoming a professor of art and art history, I was immediately advised to stay clear of the impossibility. This is because studio practices in a number of specialisations are largely mutually exclusive; and methodology in their scholarship and that of art history are also not exactly the same. I must also demonstrate the quality, the depth and the extent of works of a professor of fine art, a professor of applied art and a professor of art history put together. I found both form and material technology as predominant common denominators for the divergent practices and scholarship. Becoming a professor of art and art history was therefore a great challenge. I consciously set my goal and surmounted the challenges 14 years ago.

My activities as an artist and academics covered three major areas. First is my professional practice-led research and research-led practice and scholarship as a studio artist. Second is my administration of pedagogical and institutional matters; and the third aspect is my academic research scholarship in Art History. I shall from this point situate my contributions to knowledge in these regards.

Praxis and Practice-led Research and Research-led Practice

My contributions in artistic practices are in four distinct and important categories: the teaching of art, the making of art, curating, and form and material technology. At the time I earned a degree in Fine Arts, Nigeria had economic crises and the country was coming from the background of the austerity measures, put in place to address economic wastage and problems of the earlier

periods. In addition to this, the global economic recession of 1982 and the collapse of the Nigerian economy late that year further brought several challenges to the practice of art (Kalilu, 2010 32-33). Importation of goods including art materials was drastically affected. My creativity tapped into these backgrounding events as professional resources and this consequently evoked certain critical artistic responses from me.

Over two decades, I had taught all the areas of specialisation in Fine and Applied Arts at the sub-degree, undergraduate and postgraduate levels. I also supervised numerous sub-degrees, together with graduate and post-graduate studio projects. I had also supervised and examined 52 two master degree and 12 doctoral degree theses both within and outside Ladoko Akintola University of Technology.



Plate 10. Kalilu, R. O. *Rom. Smoker*. Graphite on paper, 1984. H/L. 19.5 x 33cm.
Plate 11. Kalilu, R. O. *Rom. Quick Sketches*. Pen and ink on paper, 1984. H/L. 33 x 19.5 cm.

In painting, designing and drawing, I used both real materials and the computer. My works are in both private and public collections (plates 8-17). A good number of these designs are also in print (Kalilu, 1991w; Kalilu, 1994w; Kalilu, 1995w; Kalilu, 1999w; Kalilu, 2006w; Kalilu, 2012w). My collaboration, as a design consultant, with clothing and fashion design outfits, such as the Butterfly Creations, in Lagos, in the late 1980s, had resulted in numerous *Adire* (tie and dye) designs as well as novel fabrics combinations and fashion styles. Also, I have, since 1992 been the designer for the University, and had developed the then novel concepts of computer designed and hand crafted cards of the early 2000s. It is noteworthy that the current academic gowns of the University were designed by me in collaboration with M. O. Aro in 2000. I, assisted by O. M. Oyeyode, designed the staff and student identity cards of the University in 2003. Furthermore the new staff and student electronic smart identity card introduced in 2012 was entirely my concept and design. Moreover the new uniforms of the various categories of the security personnel of the University that was newly introduced in January 2013 were entirely my concepts and designs.

Beyond studio practice, not many artists or art historians, not working in museums and galleries, have had such responsibilities of curating art exhibitions as I have had. I had curated nine art exhibitions (Kalilu, *et al*, 2003z; Kalilu, 2005z; Kalilu, 2006z; Kalilu and Abokede, 2011z). Apart from bringing critical historical dimensions into curating, I have introduced book accompaniments to exhibitions of contemporary art forms (Kalilu and Ayodele, 2003; Kalilu,



Plate 16. Kalilu, R. O. Rom. Prof Shim Adesina's Family House, Igbajo. Pen and ink on paper, 1993.

Akintonde and Ayodele, 2006b). Normally books stemming from research on the themes of exhibitions may accompany exhibitions of museum objects of antiquity, but these have not been so concerning exhibition of contemporary art, especially in Nigeria. It is in appreciation of this novelty that Yusuf Grillo, one of the foremost Nigerian artists, painter and master, donated to me, in 2006, as an encouragement, a part of his library consisting 76 journal volumes.

For over two decades in Nigeria, the question of the responsibilities of artists and designers in academic positions has been variously posed, particularly by those who do not possess the higher academic degrees or those with the higher academic degrees but could not conduct academic research, to the effect that career mobility of artists in academic positions are to be entirely based on the production and display of creative works. It is interesting to note that, the protagonists of such arguments are themselves beneficiaries of the processes, the contents, and the products of academic research which they try to extinguish. Academic positions come with academic responsibilities, it is therefore inappropriate to assume or advocate shallow professional practices over academic responsibilities.

Conversely, within the last two decades and in a broader context across the globe, the issue of creative works in the university environment has also been a concern. At the heart of the matter is the problem of comprehending what constitutes research and how it should be published. A critical look at definitions of research, creative work and innovation shows that they are centered on knowledge which can take many different forms. Research output does not have to be textual, verbal or mathematical. In this regard, my view is that, art works can constitute valid research output. But such art works cannot be prosaic or

platitudinal repetitions or demonstrations of simple routine personal skills or views; the type as is currently being argued for in the Nigerian system. Art works can be carried out in conjunctions with academic research and vice-versa, in which case, creative works will generate and contain detectable research outputs which can then be documented and theorised upon by the maker and others. A process of critical reflection and contextualisation is nonetheless required in this regard. There are several shades to this process which Candy (2006), Haseman (2006), Bolt (2007: 29-34), and Smith and Dean (2009) have variously discussed.

The immediate foregoing implies that the making of art work can lead the maker into research insights which can be generalized, written up and published. It also implies that research insights can lead the maker of creative work to the making of art, in which case the theorization and documentation surrounding the insights are published. Contributions through these processes are usually at technical and technological levels and not just at simple thematic or personal stylistic level as erroneously presumed in the Nigerian argument. Invariably to be valid, such knowledge generated must be generalisable and transferable. Significantly it must be novel, not just to the artist or the viewer of the art, but it must be culturally original and new (Biggs, 2009: 66-68) and must be situated within a broader theoretical framework and a body of extant knowledge (Brown and Sorensen, 2009: 153-154). Discovering something new to oneself is simple learning, whereas academic research imposes on the researcher the obligations of contributions to or extension of the frontiers of the body of knowledge universally available to the society on a given issue or topic, and this is what is done in the academia in more advanced nations. Australia and other advanced systems also have been confronted with similar challenges in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, as a result of which artists in the university academic positions have responded by mutating into artist-researchers (Sullivan, 2009: 51-61). In such climes, the artist in academic position largely engages in critical research. This indeed, particularly with the current downward trend in the standard of education in Nigeria, no doubt requires a doctoral degree for one to be very effective. The various cries that artists in academic positions should not engage in critical research are inappropriate and retrogressive. Likewise, the argument that doctoral degree, meant to develop high level research and analytic skills, will not improve artistic skills is flawed. Also the call (Ugiomoh, 2012: 47-50) that artists in academic positions should not have the doctoral degree is ill-advised and misleading. After all when all the academic disciplines, including the

Visual Arts, began none started with doctoral degree until advancement in knowledge and practices got them to that level. Such degrees must nonetheless be strictly in the areas of the Visual Arts which, aside from Art History, also offer several studio-based research options. The import of this is that principles and theories of artistic practices must continue to be developed, and by the specialists, with those in the academic positions bearing the onerous responsibility. A look at the lives, practices and, where applicable, the writings of renowned artists such as Imhotep (c.2650 BC - 2600 BC) of ancient Egypt, Leonardo da Vinci (1452 - 1519), Michelangelo Buonaroti Simoni (1475 - 1564), Raffaello Sanzio of Urbino (1483 - 1520), Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto (1518 - 1594) of Venice, Michelangelo Caravaggio (1594 - 1610), Rembrandt van Rijn (1606 - 1669), Are Lagbayi of Ojowon (early to 16th century), Edouard Monet (1832 - 1886), Salvador Dali (1861 - 1954), Henri Matisse (1869 - 1954), and Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973), among others, will indicate the level of critical reasoning and research they had done to solve universal challenges at scientific, technical, technological and optical representational levels. Based on the quality, depth and extent of their contributions to knowledge in their own times, what is being required of those in the academic positions in the 21st century Nigeria would be a child's play to those artists.

For example, Paul Cézanne, French artist and painter, anticipated before the physicists of his time that, space and time, probably, were not so inviolate. Cézanne abandoned the known single point of view for multiple perspectives in his comprehension that space, time and light could never be isolated and rendered motionless. In 1905, Cézanne explained that:

The Louver [one of the world's largest museums in Paris] is the book in which we learn to read. We must not, however, be satisfied with retaining the beautiful formulas of our illustrious predecessors, let us go forth to study ... let us try to free our minds ... Time and reflection, moreover, modify little by little our vision, and at last comprehension comes to us (Sullivan, 2009: 42).

Cézanne's work led to cubism and laid the foundation of the transition from the nineteenth century conception of art to a new and radically different view of art,

and which greatly affected the direction of artistic practices and led to one of the most revolutionary eras of artistic enquiry of the twentieth century (Danchev, 2012). Leonardo da Vinci (n.da; n.db), the polymath, the fifteenth century Italian Renaissance artist and one of the greatest artists of all times had earlier remarked that "He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards a ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast." We should resituate the artist in the academic position as artist-researcher or researcher-artist. It is significant to note that due to the inherent reflective practice of art, the artist, perhaps better than others, should be better researchers. The artist in the academic position, in Nigeria, should build an impulse to look beyond the known and bring in new interpretative practices as I had done with the principles of seeing and representation in Draughtsmanship (Kalilu, 1999).

Be that as it may, the technical dimension of my studio practice may be complex to discuss in a short lecture like this but the technological dimension is relevant here. Perhaps one of my greatest contributions in studio art is my practice-led research and research-led practice in Form and Material Technology with profound impacts on all aspects of the Visual Arts. Over the years, my studies and my collaborations with generations of my students and other specialists have led to numerous innovative designs and fabrications of art equipment. My researches had also led to the evolution of alternative materials. Space will not permit extensive discussion; only a small number of them will be mentioned: Insulated Electric Dewaxing Machine, Electrical Textile Design Wax Applicator, Dye Extracts from Timber Foliage, Paint Tincture from Seed, and Fixative from electronic packages. These materials and equipment are for Textile Art, Graphic and Communication Design, and Painting and Draughtsmanship. Four of such material technology breakthroughs are, however, noteworthy. This is not because they are more intrinsically significant than the others, but because their chronological significance illustrates my engagement with Form and Material Technology from the two extremes of the time spectrum of my artistic practices. They also demonstrate my deployment and usage of both organic and inorganic materials in the making of art. They are chosen also because they demonstrate how practice-led research and research-led practice have fed one another in a cyclical web, and as a demonstration of the context, orientation and relevance of creative work in and as academic research and *vice-versa*. Moreover, they demonstrate how art, beyond design, aesthetics and commoditization can further be deployed for technological, industrial,

economic and environmental development.

Solid waste disposal and management constitute very serious challenges, particularly in developing economies and less industrialised nations, especially in Nigeria where very large quantities of horticultural, domestic and industrial wastes deposited in landfills have constantly threatened health, urban planning, and drainage. These exacerbate incidences of flood, and the spread of diseases among numerous other problems. Horticultural wastes are biodegradable while a good number of industrial wastes such as polymer and ceramic products are not. The waste materials could be harnessed for development and consequently lessen the environmental and health hazard they constitute.

Right from 1983, I had concentrated on converting plastic wastes into tiny tiles for mosaic and multimedia painting. Chalk and charcoal wastes were also compounded as painting media which I have personally used since 1984.

My collaboration with Toyin Akinde and Grace Ogwu, ceramists, respectively of Ladoké Akintola University of Technology and Delta State University, led to the analysis, conversion and usage of horticultural waste as glazes for ceramic products. Glazes are *sine qua non* as finishes in ceramic wares production. Ash glazes derived from wood has been universally used since about 6,000 years ago. Against the backgrounds of hampered development of the Nigerian ceramic industry due to the over-dependence on imported glazes, we studied and explored the possibilities of the use of fruit peelings for ash glazes. This study is novel in methodology; it is laboratory cum studio analyses and application of the ash glazes we derived from fruit peelings. Proceeding from our hypotheses that since fruits and their peelings are parts of plants, they should therefore have the nature and chemistry of plants and consequently be suitable for making ash glazes like those derived from wood, and since their ashes are meltable, they should be able to glaze. Using the peelings of orange, sugarcane, pineapple and plantain as samples, we converted fruit peelings to ashes, did spectrophotometric analyses of the compounds and determined the concentration of silicon, sodium, potassium, lithium and aluminium in each sample, which assisted in the prediction of the behavioural patterns of each of the ashes. The ashes were, consequently, applied on dried ceramic wares and fired at cone nine (1280°C). The results were matte, transparent and opaque glazes with colours ranging between white, orange and pinkish ochre.

Our study on fruit peelings has opened the vista for the possibilities of production of ash glazes from a non-wood source and without the possibilities of

depleting the forest or degrading the environment. It also offers technical possibilities for local production of the glazes. These results are significant for Nigeria, where desert encroachment and forest degradation is on the rise, and where, particularly in the south western part of the country, disposal of solid agricultural waste is a fundamental problem. It is also significant for the twin benefits of dynamic development of ceramic industry and economic development it offers the country. These positions are also true and applicable as models to other contexts similar to that of Nigeria either partially or entirely (Kalilu, Akinde and Ogwu, 2012b).

In metal design and jewellery production, the metal or jewellery smith employs polishing compounds for finishing and preservation operations. Metal art objects and artefacts are also periodically serviced to keep them in good condition. Nigeria and other non-industrialised economies have often depended on the use of several imported materials for such servicing. My work with Emeriewen Kingsley, a metal designer in the University of Benin, resulted in the invention and production of metal art and antiquity servicing agents in three grades. Our experiment, a chemo-material technology study, explores the possibilities of recycling irreparable porcelain wastes and determined its suitability as a major component of polishing and buffing agents using appropriate binder. Hitherto, servicing agents are of two grades of coarse and fine respectively for polishing and buffing. Our study and work on the porcelain achieved the production of servicing agents with grit sizes of 60mm, 80mm and 100mm code-named Coarse, Fine and Superfine, whereby our Fine (80mm) servicing agent achieved both polishing and buffing qualities in just one compound. Significantly, this feat has shown that metal servicing agents can be produced locally and has also raised the classification of metal servicing agents by the quality of their grits beyond the hitherto known two categories. Furthermore, the significance of this study lies in the fact that producing the polishing and buffing agents locally will certainly prevent the capital flight invariably associated with the importation of polishing and buffing compounds. The result of the study has recently been published in Australia in one of the high profile journals of Ceramics (Kalilu and Emeriewen, 2012), and the invention is already registered with and is under consideration for patenting by the Patent Office in Nigeria.

These professional studio practices and praxeology of over two and a half decades have cumulatively earned me the Gold Medal in All Africa Painting

Contest in 1978-79, an invitation to the Elected Membership of the New York Academy of Sciences in 1995 in recognition of my works in, and support for, science and technology, Merit Prize in the International Postage Design Contest in 1997, the Outstanding People of the 20th Century Outstanding Achievement Medal for contributions in Fine Art and Art History in 2000, the first ever Form and Material Technology Icon Award by the National Gallery of Art of Nigeria and Yaba College of Technology in 2009, and lately an invitation to the membership of the American Chemical Society in 2010, among several other international recognitions and prizes in different areas of specialisations in the Visual Arts.

Pedagogical and Institutional Matters

My efforts in attending to the disciplinary and developmental challenges, and my attempts at situating artists as researchers, have not been limited to my praxeology. I had evolved curricula in the Visual Arts at the bachelor's degree and postgraduate levels with safeguards and mechanisms to resolve emerging challenges.

The Bachelor of Technology degree programme I set up for Ladoko Akintola University of Technology is peculiar. It is the first technology oriented full Fine and Applied Arts programme of its kind in Nigeria; with its peculiar and novel Form and Material Technology, and Computer Art components. Significantly, the programme has more studio practice and theoretical modules than any of the other art programmes in the country. It also ensures that students are prepared equally for skills in both studio practices and academic research. It is also within this programme that the university-required course, "Fundamentals of Drawing" develops the creativity and visual literacy of the entire students of the University in the various bachelor's degree programmes. The innovation and creative ingenuity of the generations of the students of the University is, in part, directly attributable to this training.

The postgraduate programmes, I established, are innovative and dynamic; these are postgraduate diploma, and master and doctoral degrees in Art History, Fine Art, and Applied Art. The Fine Art and Applied Art academic postgraduate programmes, running up to the doctor of philosophy degree level, approved and commenced in this University in 1995, are the first in Nigeria and for their curricula the first of their kinds in the country. More specifically some of the specialisations they offer are novel: Ceramics and Glass, Textiles and

Clothing, Communication Design, Environmental and Industrial Sculpture, Drawing, Digital and Electronic Art and especially Form and Material Technology, which I personally evolved as a specialisation in Fine Art. The Form and Material Technology is, in its own case, so far not available on any art programme anywhere. The viability and demands for these programmes are indicated by the very large number of students' registration of up to 588 students on the bachelor's degree programme and a total of 77 students on the postgraduate programmes. It is noteworthy that most of these postgraduate students are members of senior academic staff elsewhere or art administrators or military and paramilitary officers who have joined my train of resituating the artist as artist-researcher and or researcher-artist. Nonetheless, the large number of students who register, particularly at the postgraduate level, are unprecedented and very large for an art school. It is also noteworthy that in art, students flock towards identified and identifiable master. I certainly cannot handle this alone. This calls for capacity empowerment of the upcoming academics and an immediate expansion of the academic staff profile of the Department.

Meanwhile, I have been privileged, in this regard, to produce the first doctoral degree in Environmental and Industrial Sculpture in Nigeria. It has also been my privilege to produce the first known African deaf and dumb art historian and with this, the vista for critical art historical attention to the arts of the physically challenged, at least in Nigeria, has been opened. The first ever doctor of philosophy degree in Form and Material Technology may be produced this year. Also, and beyond the classroom, I have been most privileged to establish, in this university, with some of my colleagues, the very first academic journal, *Ela* (Kalilu, *et al*, 1997u-2008u), published, since 1997, by the Critical Sphere, a non-institution-owned academic group based in the University.

My knowledge and skills have also been deployed in several forms in the direct development of the Visual Arts or Creative Arts programmes, particularly for examinations or quality assurance in all the other nineteen university art schools in Nigeria, except two; Yola, and Maiduguri. For the two exceptions, I have only been able to offer indirect inputs. Based on my experiences from all these engagements, it is necessary to advise that researches by academics in art departments be relevant to pedagogical and theoretical issues in the discipline.

Beyond the Visual Arts, for eight years, I chaired the National Universities Commission's quality assurance teams for all the Environmental

Sciences programmes in nearly all the universities in the eastern, southern and western parts of Nigeria and a few numbers of the universities outside these regions. My experience in all these exercises has equally reinforced my belief in the very good quality of the cognate curricula we operate in this University.

I have been able to easily conceptualise and contribute to development in all these assignments as a result of my background in Painting, which equips the artists with the ability and skills for creative imagination, visualisation, reflection and refraction; to lucidly see issues for what they are, and to also conceptualise and model the imagery of events before they occur. Painting also requires of the artist a sincerity of purpose, to be true to his resources and his situation. The foresight and perspectives which I deployed for critical university assignments, particularly in planning, strategy and institutional administration, up to my deputy vice-chancellorship inheres in being consistent as an artist.

African Art, Art Historical Complexities and Extension of End of Art History

Combining active studio practice with art history scholarship is a bit difficult and not in any way common. Even where art historians also have studio qualifications the majority had elected to concentrate on one of the two lines towards professorship. In the field of Art History, I specialised in African Art. I observed early in my career that the focus on regional studies or on one particular art form, as the majority of the scholars in the field had done, has been a limiting factor in the attempts at general art history of Africa. This is because issues do cut across art forms and regions. I, therefore, chose to work on concepts. I started looking at forms and styles, provenance, and significance of the art, which allowed me not only to make scholarly gestures across art forms and regions but to also generate theories and construct models usable in understanding contexts similar to my studies. This approach was also chosen in order to move beyond the stereotypification of descriptive isolated contextual studies that were common in African art scholarship. My field research concentrations have been the West African sub-region. My contributions in this regard are in the areas of methodology, historiography, theory generation, model construction, neology and extension of the end of Art History.

The question of the significance of African Art was until very recently a major and persistent problematic, particularly the notions that the African art objects were representations of gods as well as objects of worship and these

negatively affected the evaluation of the artistic merits of the art. A number of scholarly explorations (Fagg and Plass, 1964: 134; Frobenius, 1913: 196; Carroll, 1966; Adepegba, 1983: 18) that attempted to repudiate this notion did not bring a scholarly end to the notions probably because they were based on the study of objects of antiquity. Against this background, I looked at art forms used in contemporary religious contexts, studying the forms, colours, technology, provenance and significance of Egungun, a relatively pan-Yoruba and Nupe tradition and art, over a period of eight years.

Egungun is a Yoruba word used in five different contexts. Originally, the word referred to the religious practices of ancestral veneration as well as the particular masquerade type associated with the commemoration and veneration of the collective spirits of the ancestors. It is the same word by which the festival in which ancestors are venerated is referred. The word is also used imprecisely to refer to all types of Yoruba masquerades (Egungun, Aladoko, Gelede, Eyo, etc), and in a generic sense, to all manners of costumed figures.

Egungun is a composite art in motion resulting from the expertise of different types of artists; cloth weavers, sculptors, costume makers, leather workers and decorators. In principle and practice, it is a means by which the people, through art, express triumph over death on the one hand, and by which the pre-twenty first century Yoruba society on the other hand encouraged meaningful living by immortalising dead elderly people who lived well, contributed meaningfully to the society and died well. This artistic tradition is instructive to the contemporary Nigeria society which celebrates wealth, even of doubtful sources, at the expense of good moral value and public spiritedness. Nonetheless, in the costuming, colours, particularly sharp and advancing ones, are used for heuristic advantages to identify the masquerades and distinguish them from the crowd (Kalilu, 1984).

Various types of sculptures such as wooden head masks, wands, staffs, statuettes, decorated whips, decorated metal swords, brass and iron bells among others are used. The sculptures are anthropomorphic and zoomorphic in figural and non-figural forms, depicting portraits of the owners of the costumes and animals associated with their lineages (Kalilu, 1986). Costumes, usually hand-woven cloths, damask, velvet and several other materials, are of various forms. A critical analysis of the technology and the techniques of production and the styles of the various visual forms that composed the costumes are certainly reflective of clear artistic consciousness. The costume is therefore not the most important

object in ancestral veneration since owning a costume is not mandatory for either the devotees or the priests of Egungun. In significance, therefore, masquerading is an art to enhance the religious practice of ancestral veneration. The sculpture and the art forms associated with the religion are neither representations of any god nor objects of worship (Kalilu, 1986: 69; Kalilu, 1991a).

Aside from Egungun, Osanyin, a Yoruba religion and divination system, is also rich in visual artistic and decorated objects. Osanyin is the Yoruba deity of medicine and pharmacognosy. It is closely associated with the Ifa divination system and somehow associated with Egungun religion. Up to 1995, the scholarly account of its art form was only in respect of its staff (Thompson, 1975). After five



Plate 19. Osanyin Staff.
Wrought iron, Yoruba.
Photograph by Kalilu, R.
O. Rom, 1988.

years of research into the phenomenon, I was able to determine the art objects associated with Osanyin: wrought iron staff surmounted by at least one or up to sixteen representations of birds symbolic of the power of the witches (plate 19), wooden or clay figurines and statuettes, carved wooden staff, beaded embroidered gourd, and costumes. I classified the costumes into three basic types based on their visual styles. The costumes are similar to those of Egungun. One of the two traditions must have influenced the other. The room where Egungun costumes are kept or

where sacrifices may be made to Egungun is referred to as Ile-Sayin (the home of Osanyin). Morphological and functional analyses of the artistic forms used in Osanyin indicate that they are not prerequisites for the efficacy of Osanyin as a religion or divination system or as pharmacy. The creative efforts put into the costumes, the rich ornamentation of the costumes and the other art objects as well as their decorative functions corroborate my earlier claims that Yoruba art, even when used in religious contexts, is art by designation and destination (Kalilu, 1993). Our other studies on a rare sculpture genre also confirmed this position (Kalilu and



Plate 20.
Egungun, Ago costume
type. Yoruba, Ogbomoso.
Photograph
by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1986
(Kalilu, 1986: 83).

Oyeyode, 2006: 457).

Nonetheless, the question of the origin of Egungun has been a difficult scholarly issue. Scholarship on the origin of the phenomenon has therefore not concerned itself much with the issue of origin. Three different origins have been put forward. Samuel Johnson (1921: 160) and Ojo (nd.: 8-9) recorded traditions that linked the origin of Egungun to Nupeland. Walsh (1948), Morton-Williams (1954), Adedeji (1969, vii-20) and Adepegba (1984) have all suggested Ile-Ife as the origin. Based on oral tradition, Babayemi (1980) linked the origin to Nupeland and Old Oyo. Only Adepegba's claim has been associated with the visual forms of the artistic practice. The others' claims were based on oral traditions. Nonetheless, the variety of the visual forms of Egungun is large and could be confusing. Consequently, previous attempts by scholars on the costume taxonomy were confusing because they were based on the consideration of the functions of the masquerades or the consideration of Egungun with other masquerade types or a combination of the functions with the visual forms of the costumes and lastly on the consideration of individual Egungun names with generic and typological names (Drawal, 1978; Drawal and Drawal, 1978; Houlberg, 1978; Schiltz, 1978; Nunley, 1981; Wolff, 1982; Aremu, 1987; Adeye, 1990). Rather than simplify the issue, these attempts have compounded the scholarly problems on the question of origin of Egungun.

I carried out a typological identification of Egungun based on the visual forms or the fashion of their costumes. This is so far the most comprehensive costumes taxonomy of the art. Nine major costume types were identified, each with its attendant several sub-types. Eight of the nine costume types are anthropomorphic (*Ago, Oniwo, Alate, Eleru, Layewu, Orebe and Egbe*) while the ninth one (*Iyekiyé*) is zoomorphic (plates 20-21). Through this classification, I was able to determine the relative chronology of the costume types and distinguish the Egungun, in terms of its significance and visual forms, from other masquerade types of the Yoruba and those of their neighbours. The *Ago* is the oldest of the costume types. Its sack-like form is reminiscent of a shroud. This is evidently the original name of Egungun costumes. All traditions that discuss Egungun costume before the last three decades of the eighteenth century including the Ifa divination corpus of *Okanran Meji, Owonrin Meji* and *Oworinse* referred to it as *Ago*. It is the only costume type by which lineage forefathers are represented. Furthermore, during the final burial rites of the individual male parent, the costume type that is involved is invariably *Ago*.

Other masquerade types such as Oluzare, Aladoko, Gelede, Eyo and Alakoro are not representations of ancestral spirits; they are also significantly different in forms from Egungun. The Ile-Ife origin of Egungun cannot be substantiated. Nadel's works on the Nupe reveal that among the many masquerade traditions in Nupeland, only the *Ndako gboya* is indigenous, while their other types of masquerades are associated with the Gbedegi, the Nupe-ised Yoruba. The Nupe origin of the art is also therefore not supported by the Nupe culture and history. My research (Kalilu, 1993) has narrowed down the origin of Egungun to Old Oyo, the most northerly of the Yoruba kingdoms and the neighbours of the Nupe to the Southwest. Egungun was introduced to other Yoruba groups as part of Old Oyo influences over them, and as one of the consequences attendant to the collapse of the kingdom in the nineteenth century when the Oyo group migrated southwards to other parts of Yoruba land. The Oyo group introduced it to Ile-Ife (through the Modakeke), Ijesa, Ekiti and Ijebu lands, and Lagos through Egbado. In these non-Oyo-Yoruba communities the masquerade type associated with ancestral veneration is regarded as *Egungun Oyo*, the masquerade of the Oyo-Yoruba (Kalilu 1993: 65). The diffused nature of masquerading traditions in concept and form, across the west, the middle belt and the eastern parts of Nigeria, particularly among the Igala, the Jukun, the Idoma and the Igbo, is an evidence of established pre-twentieth century artistic links across ethnic and political boundaries. My findings also support Armstrong's linguistic evidence of glottochronology that the Igala separated from the Yoruba about 2,000 years ago (Armstrong, 1964) or at least that the two ethnic groups shared cultural traits.

In another study, I have cursorily considered some masquerading traditions of Africa, particularly Alekwu Afia among the Idoma; Mama among the Nupe; Oluzare, Epa, Gelede and Eyo among the Yoruba; Ekine among the Kalabari of Nigeria; and the masquerades of the Poro and the Sande societies of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. And based on pictorial representations of masquerades in the rock arts of Africa, I associated the date of the mid-six millennium BC (5450-3000BC) with masquerading practices in Africa (Kalilu, 1995: 13-17, 26-32), which implies that masquerading in some forms had been practised in Africa for about 7000 years.

Attempts at a lineal art history of Nigeria showed stylistic and chronological gaps between the Nok and the arts traditions of antiquity of the Nigerian peoples on the one hand, and between Nok, Ile-Ife and the contemporary arts of Yorubaland on the other. Moreover, Yoruba art has always

been viewed as having its origin in Ile-Ife, the supposed cradle of Yoruba life. The naturalistic arts of Ile-Ife in bronze, stone and sculpture ended in the sixteenth century without any trace of the artists or their production centres. Willett (1959: 180-181) likened the terracotta arts of Nok and Ile-Ife to that of Old Oyo which he considered as the gap in between the two traditions. Eight years later, Willett eventually proposed Ile-Ife as the root of the contemporary arts of West Africa (Willett, 1967: 30-35). Contrariwise, Lawal (1970: 158) and Thompson (1967: CHI/3, 5) have considered Old Oyo as the successor to the artistic culture of the ancient Ile-Ife.

Both Ile-Ife and Old Oyo were Yoruba kingdoms. The Yoruba constitute one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa south of the Sahara. They occupy the southwestern Nigeria and parts of the republics of Benin and Togo. They have been described as the producers of the largest arts in Africa (Fagg, 1968) and one of the most prolific producers of art in Africa (Bascom, 1973). The early history of the Yoruba is uncertain, but by the fifteenth century, many kingdoms have emerged. Of all these Yoruba kingdoms, Old Oyo, the most northerly of Yoruba kingdoms, attained the greatest political, military and economic renown. Its location in the savannah, especially that of Oyo-Ile, the Old Oyo metropolis, its capital put it at a vantage position for commerce and cavalry, which were the basic sources of its greatness. The kingdom, headed by *Alaafin*, its traditional ruler, controlled the trades of western Sudan to the north and the trades of the coast to the south (Smith, 1969: 51; Morton-Williams, 1968: 40). The kingdom was far superior to others in size, military strength and grandeur. It was the scourge of its neighbours (Norris 1989: 11) and a mere mention of its name was enough to create panic in the circumjacent territories (Akinjogbin, 1967: 8). At its height, it controlled a large empire that extended from the southern bank of the middle of the Niger to the coast as far as parts of the present day republics of Benin and Togo (Clapperton, 1829: 174).

With its size and wealth, Old Oyo could not but be a factor in Yoruba and indeed West African art. Consequently, Old Oyo is the key to the understanding of the arts of West Africa. But prior to my works, of all the Nigerian arts of antiquities, the arts of Old Oyo was the least studied although scholarship on its socio-political history is very rich. I have given reasons for the initial omission and the later lukewarm attitude to its scholarship. These were the results of about six major factors among others. The capital city of the kingdom moved to about seven different sites, out of which only the last two were yet identified and only

one of which had been archaeologically examined. There was also the early tendency to take the site of Oyo-Ile, the capital city of the kingdom as the entire kingdom. Oyo-Ile itself had been denuded of her art works in various ways. The treasures were both deliberately and inadvertently destroyed in several fire incidences particularly between 1774 and early 1830s. There were also several incidents of looting of the metal arts and treasures of the capital city and their eventual destruction to make cannon balls by the Fulani jihadists from Ilorin in the early part of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, and more devastating was the abandonment of the capital city in 1836 when the inhabitants dispersed and left with some of their valuables to places where they took refuge in fortified towns; notably Kisi, Igboho, Iseyin, Iwo, Ede, Modakeke, Ibadan and Ogbomosho. The treasures left behind were also looted by some vassal kings. The tropical humid climate and termites also did not spare wood sculptures left behind in the abandoned capital. The archaeology of the Oyo-Ile has also not been of much impact in this regard. Consequently, significant numbers of art objects therefore have not been found in the ruined sites of the capital and in the important parts of the kingdom (Kalilu, 1992b). All these posed serious challenges to meaningful scholarship on the arts of the kingdom. In certain terms, the artists as well as the users of the arts have all dispersed and the art forms and objects to be studied were not directly available.

Conventional art historical methodology consequently could effectively resolve the challenges posed by Old Oyo. I reversed the art historical order. I started from the unknown to the known. I also developed a peculiar multi-layer approach that successively combined concentric circular movements with centripetal and centrifugal movements respectively around, towards and from the subject of study, the arts of Old Oyo kingdom, in a direct field research that spanned five years. Extant Old Oyo towns, art objects and artistic practices associated with Oyo-Ile, as well as the kingdom and the empire both within and



Plate 22. Head. Terracotta, Oyo-Ile. (Willett, 1959: 181)

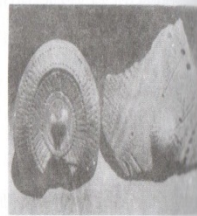


Plate 23. Fragments of a pot and lid. Clay. Oyo-Ile. (Clarke, 1939: 109)



Plate 24. Amulet associated with Old Oyo. Bronze. (Meyerowitz, 1941).



Plate 25. Sketches of three wooden carved posts found on the palace mound at Oyo-Ile. (Clarke, 1938: 248).

outside Nigeria were identified, studied and compared with those of Borgurawa, the Nupecizi, the Hausawa and other West African groups that Old Oyo governed or with whom it shared boundaries or interacted. The extant centres of Old Oyo and Old Oyo derived centres were identified. With this peculiar approach, the entire range of the arts of the

kingdom was determined as follows: pottery, woodcarving, blacksmithing, brass casting, silver smithing, terracotta sculpture, bead making, beadwork, cloth embroidery, cloth dyeing, leatherwork, gourd carving, mural painting, body decoration, architecture, Egungun masquerading and masque dramaturgy (Kalilu, 1992b). There are lots of evidence of a good number of similarities in motifs and styles between Old Oyo, Borgu, Nupeland and Hausaland that are indicative of artistic interactions across political and geographical boundaries. A foremost America-based African Art Historian observes that this peculiar approach

... demonstrates a firm grasp of research methodologies in 'Art History'... and "has contributed to our understanding of the interplay of socio-economic, political and cultural factors which influenced the arts in Old-Oyo, and the extent to which these have demolished the existing theory which seeks to establish Old-Oyo as the stylistic chain that links Nok and Ife (Jegede, 1992).

Morphologically, Old Oyo presented both figural and non-figural art forms. Stylistically, it also presented ornate, naturalistic and non-naturalistic tendencies (plates 22-26) (Kalilu, 1992a: 124-178). But its naturalism is unlike the classical naturalism of Ile-Ife. Furthermore, the age of Oyo-Ile, the last capital city of the kingdom predated the date associated with the kingdom. Also, visual evidence did not support a direct migration from Ile-Ife to Oyo-Ile. Some of the



Plate 27. Steatite Head. Steatite stone, Esie. (Fagg and Plass, 1964: 24).



Plate 28. A man from the Borgurawa town of Nikki wearing facial markings similar to the one of the Esie stone heads. Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1990.

arts and their forms developed outside Ile-Ife, which were adopted from the autochthons when the capital city moved there. Gourd carving, leatherwork, Egungun, masque-dramaturgy, and body decoration with scarification (not facial markings) developed among the Oyo-Yoruba. The high artistic merit of the eighth century pottery from Oyo-Ile, the last capital city of the kingdom, is an indication of the existence of art traditions at the site of the metropolis prior to the supposed fourteenth century arrival of the Oyo royalty (and their group). Oyo-Ile was located within a broad belt of terracotta producing area across the middle belt of Nigeria, where the latest date from Nok is AD 200 but chronological evidence is not yet available to suggest Old Oyo as a stop gap between Nok and Ile-Ife and from both, Old Oyo is also stylistically different (Kalilu, 1992a; 179-182).

Similarly, the theory of contemporary Yoruba art styles having their roots in Ile-Ife is also not supported by visual evidence. Evidence indicate that the majority of contemporary Yoruba art forms and styles resulted from Old Oyo attraction (Kalilu, 1992a; Kalilu, 1999c).

Found within the territory of Old Oyo empire is a large collection of steatite stone sculptures. The sculptures, the largest single stone collection in Africa, are found in the Igbomina town of Esie in the present Kwara State of Nigeria. The origin of the sculptures has been variously assigned to Yorubaland. The images, however, bear facial markings and other cultural elements that are not known with the contemporary Yoruba society. I found on a Borgurawa, in Nikki in Republic of Benin, a facial marking, similar to the one on one of the Esie images (plates 27-28). Our search for the makers of the sculptures may need to consider the possibilities of a Borguruwa link.

Functionally, art featured in all aspects of life of Old Oyo. Art was deployed in the cosimulation of the human space within and around the kingdom and the empire. Specifically, art objects featured as decorations, emblems and devices in architectural, clothing, personal adornments, religious, political, ideological, martial, spiritual, magical, educational, historiographical,

commemorative and utilitarian contexts among numerous other functions. The all-pervading significance of the art in the kingdom is not too peculiar and is common in and with the majority of the human societies (Kalilu, 1992a; Kalilu, 1993; Kalilu, 1996a; Kalilu, 1997-1998).

The Old Oyo kingdom's capital was an emporium and a melting pot for divergent artistic skills and styles even from non-Yoruba groups. Through trade and warfare, the kingdom influenced the arts of its neighbours to the north. With its religious and political dominance, especially between the sixteenth century and the nineteenth century, the kingdom also influenced the arts of its western neighbors as far as the present day Republic of Togo. Interestingly, the decline of its political power in West Africa also affected the artistic life of Freetown and Sierra Leone where the Oyo citizens sold into slavery had introduced the Gelede masquerade tradition (Kalilu, 1992a: 181-182). Oyo-Ile and, indeed, the Old Oyo kingdom were springs that watered the sheds of art in West Africa.

Two issues that have remained largely inadequately posed in the historical reconstruction of African Art are the roles that art played in the imperial policies of African kingdoms and the significance of such roles. These are the issues I addressed in 'Art and Imperialism in Yorubaland c.1570-1836'. The commerce, wealth and strength of the Old Oyo imperial armed forces helped in the extension of the space of the empire. But the government of Old Oyo deliberately combined artistic dominance with the other factors to consolidate the imperial gains in a centripetal and centrifugal interflow of arts across the empire. In the centripetal arrangement, good arts and artists across the empire were patronised by the imperial royalty and were given royal recognition from the imperial capital through conferment of hereditary Oyo chieftaincy titles peculiar to their arts. Vassal kings were also made to compete in building houses decorated with choice art forms and art objects peculiar to their respective provinces. The vassal heads visited the imperial capital, at least thrice a year, for important festivals and other occasions which they undertook in order to exhibit their wealth and cultural uniqueness and curry the favour of the *Alaafin*. In the centripetal arrangement, art objects were used as paraphernalia of office, gifts, religious emblems and commodities traded to the coast and to the north through the Trans Saharan trade routes. Vassal heads were invested, among other things, with silver armlets, ornamented robes, and sculptures made in the imperial capital. These arrangements actively extended the provenance of the arts in the kingdom and artistic practices in the empire. Whichever way, the citizens of the

empire invariably looked towards the capital. This affected the visual artistic expression of the powers of the imperial court and was an ideal propaganda that portrayed the Oyo and their royalty in some superior light and constantly relegated the ego of the vassal provinces and states by constantly and subtly suggesting some sense of their own inferiority *vis-à-vis* the Oyo. This has serious socio-psychological and economic implications for, and is instructive to, some once-colonised African countries, especially Nigeria, where the contemporary political and economic arrangements heedlessly encourage dependence on foreign or the former colonial masters' material cultures (Kalilu, 1996a).

West Africa presents a lot of art historical complexities. One of such complexities is the collection of eleven bronze and copper sculptures discovered in Nupeland in the early part of the twentieth century. The Nupeland is in the middle belt of Nigeria. The Nupe are the northwestern neighbours of Old Oyo kingdom. The discoveries of ten of the sculptures have perplexed scholars since around 1934 when the sculptures have been receiving critical scholarly attention (Walker, 1934; Palmer, 1936; Nadel, 1942; Eccles, 1962; Thompson, 1970; Lawal, 1973; Fraser, 1975). This is because of the technical richness of the sculptures *vis-a-vis* the poverty of their places of discovery (Nadel, 1942: 25a). Brass casting is extant in Bida and Kacha but the technical and technological standards of the contemporary Nupe brass casting do not match the quality of the sculptures. The sculptures are also neither in a single style nor in directly related styles. This situation has made the determination of their origin controversial.



Plate 29. Esah Etsu Saba. Bronze. Niger State Museum. Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1990.

Scholars generally refer to the bronzes as Nupe Bronzes or more popularly as the Tsoede Bronzes because traditional accounts claimed that Tsoede, the legendary founder of the Nupe kingdom, brought the sculptures from Idah, his paternal ancestral home (Herman-Hodge, 1922; Walker 1934; Palmer 1936, Nadel, 1942: 73-74; Kalilu, 1992a: 158). But authoritative Nupe traditions have denied the Idah origin of the sculptures, and intensive researches have failed to confirm their Idah origin. I have provided iconographic and stylistic evidence to suggest the Old Oyo origin of these sculptures (Kalilu, 1992b: 158-162).

The eleventh sculpture in this corpus was neither studied nor published until I discovered it in the Niger State Museum in 1992 (Kalilu, 1992b: 161-162). The stool is morphologically and stylistically related to

the other ten sculptures (plate 29). The stool has not been forensically dated. It is however known as *Esah Etsu Saba*, the stool of Etsu Saba, and is traditionally associated with Etsu Saba who ruled Nupeland between 1591 and 1600. It therefore cannot have been made later than 1600. Based on my iconographic, iconological and stylistic analyses *vis-à-vis* similar objects from Nupeland, Yorubaland and Benin, I grouped the stool with the other ten sculptures of antiquity which were discovered in Nupeland and assigned a relative date of between 14th and 17th centuries to the stool; and with a conclusion that the stool was most likely a commodity to Nupeland. The association of the stool with Tsoede's successor implies that the sculptures did not all get to Nupeland at the same time (Kalilu, 1994a: 148). This reinforces my earlier position of the non-Nupe origin of the other ten sculptures. In 1996, with further reflections and more evidence suggesting an almost indubitable non-Nupe origin of the bronzes, I proposed a discontinuation of the use of the terms Tsoede or Nupe bronzes and showed that the bronzes are better treated under Yoruba art to which they are variously related (Kalilu, 1996b).

Contemporary leatherwork of ornate significance (plate 30) and gourd carving in Yorubaland are largely practised in Oyo-related areas (Kalilu, 1991b; 1991c). But similarities in motifs and technology in the leatherwork and gourd carving of the Yoruba with the leatherwork and cloth embroidery of the Hausa in the north are evident results of cultural contacts. The interlace motif which is common to the arts, the leatherwork and cloth embroidery of the Hausa is traceable to Ancient Sumeria of about 3000 B.C. and adopted through North Africa (Kalilu, 1991b: 109). The two art traditions are savannah phenomena and I have shown through the analysis of the material and the technology of the arts that access to materials was a factor in the origin of the two arts (Kalilu, 1991b: 111; Kalilu, 1991c).

Prior to the introduction of modern industrial products, gourds, the fruits of *lagenaria siceraria*, were the household containers and were customarily generally ornamented by the Fulani, the Hausa, the Nupe, the Tiv and the Yoruba. Today, gourd decoration among the Yoruba survives as tourist art. I have been able to map the geography of gourd carving in Yorubaland and



Plate 31. Carved gourd decorated with elephant motif Oyo Town. Dia. 44.3cm. Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1988.

determine the origins of the practices in Oyo, Ogbomosho, Ede, Iwo, Osogbo, Ibadan and Ilorin (Kalilu, 1991c). I have also determined the various stylistic connections and divergences of the various centres (Kalilu, 1994b).

Art History of Africa has been overlooking the importance of the history of motifs. The repertoire of motifs of each art form is very large and their histories were becoming unknown even to the majority of the extant artists. I have studied the histories of the motifs in the contemporary practice of gourd carving, leatherwork and woodcarving. For the first time, the entire range of the motifs in gourd carving is identified. The entire range was also for the first time, categorised into different types namely: geometric, texts, anthropomorphic, anthropo-zoomorphic, manmade objects, zoomorphic, skeumorphic and floral (plate 31). I classified the motifs into three developmental and chronological periods of pre-1836, post 1836 to 1960, and 1960 to the 1980s (Kalilu, 1997-1998). This is the first and, so far, the only dating of the motifs in Yoruba gourd carving. The motifs are lion, leopard, elephants, boa constrictor, peacock, crown, royal staff, horse-tail, royal whisk, and the foliage of *markhannia tomentosa*, the *Akoko* leaf, all of which are invariably associated with kingship in Yorubaland. The animals are each regarded as kings in their various typo-ecology and zoogeographical contexts. The motifs allude to the ecological realities of Yoruba homeland; they have been raised as constant reminders of the dignity and the effectiveness of the authority of kingship over their subjects. Their development attests to the participation of Yoruba artists and the use of their works in the process of education, social stratification and political mobilisation of the Yoruba society. This singular findings demolished the theory that historical deductions on the Yoruba through their art, especially those in wood, is limited by their lack of representation of vegetation (Carroll, 1973: 168). Vegetation is represented not in landscape form but by the implications of the representations of the motifs that are partly derived from ecological contemplation which when carefully deciphered could be of immense importance to Yoruba historiography.

Jans Vansina (1984), a socio-political historian, rightly observes that themes and motifs in art are products of historical process and change, and are, therefore, useful for historical reconstruction. But all along, stereotypicalisations of approaches have left art more as anthropological or historical artefacts rather than as a means of historical reconstruction. The language of art is not easily readable to non-specialists so the historians of eras and contexts without written records in Africa used the interpretations offered by art historians. Apart from their art

historical significance, my scholarship had shown the need to and relevance of deploying art history in Africa for historical reconstruction. In 1991, I used my study of the motifs and the technology of production to trace the origin of gourd carving among the Yoruba, and, consequently, used that to trace the possible location of the first domicile of the Oyo rulers to Oko-Irese, the oldest of the five extant Oko settlements in Yorubaland (Kalilu, 1991c).

One of the most noticeable influences of Islam in the Visual Arts of the Yoruba and the most dramatic of their attempts to portray Islam reflects in the theme of the bearded figure with leather sandals. The theme is carved on a variety of door panels and house posts. The figure wears a long narrow dress, the turban and a pair of sandals. The figure carries a big leather wallet with a long strap on its shoulder, a slate in one hand and a rosary in the other hand. The figure presents the image of the Muslim as disciplined, pure and learned, and a long distance traveler-bearer of a foreign religion in their early contacts with the Yoruba since around the fourteenth century. Another variant of this theme depicts the figure holding a spear in one hand instead of the rosary, thus portraying the nineteenth century participation of the Fulani jihadists who spoke in martial language in the spread of their ideology and Islam, and who harried many northern Yoruba settlements. The theme is an embodiment of a paradox of two extremes in the experience of the Yoruba. The Yoruba culture is iconic and Islam is iconoclastic. The representation of Islamic influence, therefore, further indicates that African images are not objects of worship. It also reflects the fact that Yoruba artists see their products not only as a means of national identity but also as a means of identification with foreign contacts, and as a means of keeping records and mirror of life and its immediate preoccupation (Kalilu, 1997a; Kalilu, 1999b).

Many pre-nineteenth century Yoruba kingdoms were warlike, and they engaged in military activities for several reasons, inclusive peace keeping. I studied the expression of martial power, and the history deducible therefrom. I identified the themes of the procession of warriors and cavalry represented in wood carvings, especially on house posts and door panels as imagery of martial power that developed or gained currency in the eighteenth century as visual historical records of the exploits of the Old Oyo kingdom which introduced into and used cavalry in Yorubaland (Kalilu 1995b).

Recent findings indicate that not all the entire art typologies of the Yoruba have been studied. One of such typologies is the very rare *Ipon Alawe*, a corpus of carved wooden ladles embellished with images found in Ejigbo, in

Osun State, Nigeria. The ladles are used in symbolic and utilitarian contexts in the priesthood of Ogiyan, the titular divinity of Ejigbo by Alawe, the surrogate priest of Ogiyan. There are only thirteen extant objects that constitute the entire corpus. One member of the sculptures was first published in a catalogue of sculptures in 1960 (MHAA, 1960) and another one was used as a cover illustration in 1977 (OSMILG, 1973) but no scholarly attention was given to the sculptures until 2000 (Oyeyode, 2000). In our studies entitled "Themes and History in a Rare Yoruba Artistic Form", Oyeyode and I conducted the first and, so far, the only formal, thematic, stylistic, iconographic and iconological analyses, and determined the typology and provenance of the corpus. We grouped the sculptures into chronological periods; and through extrapolation, we also determined the chronological period into three: the early period, between 1740 and 1900; the middle period, between 1900 and 1946; and the late period, between 1946 and 2005. We observed that the ladles encapsulate the physical, spiritual and professional characteristics and histories of the various priests that commissioned and used the ladles (Kalilu and Oyeyode, 2004a).

Nonetheless, Tunde Lawuyi's (1994: 46-49) observations of 1994 that the art historian of Africa had not taken up the challenge of using art for historical reconstruction and the art for historical had not taken up chance to lead in this regard, is still true up till date. But the art historian needs to be grounded in socio-political history to be able to take up the challenge effectively. A current challenge of the art historian is to move discourse beyond stereotypification and case studies to a theoretical level of appreciating the commentaries that arts in Africa across the entire spectra of time make about life.

Librarianship in Africa has also not helped matters. Africa, up till the nineteenth century, was largely non-literate but rich in material culture and visual records. We examined the librarianship which has confined and portrayed African cultures within the frontiers of literary documentation, leaving the pre-literate eras unrepresented. We have observed the lack of acquisition of non-literature materials, the artistic works, and the relevant technology to do so but which are imperative if librarianship in Africa is to be relevant in developmental agenda (Kalilu and Adio, 1998).

Some of the problems created by the concept of tribalism is that the arts of Africa has not only been presented as ahistorical but it also implies an inorganic and static nature for the arts, the only exception being the court art of the Edo kingdom of Benin because of its own apparent organic stylistic and thematic

nature (Fagg, 1963; Dark, 1973). The majority of the writings have portrayed the arts as if they came into being *ex nihilo*, existed only ahistorically, and as if they did not raise issues or pose questions when they were created. This is partly a consequence of the anthropological approach in the study of the arts. The anthropological approach emphasizes the cultural and extra-aesthetic functions of the arts. It is this approach that has dominated discourse for about nine decades but it is not only deficient in the appreciation of forms and the historical dimensions of the arts but also unsuitable for the study of the new art produced mostly by the academically-trained artists who emerged several decades after the arts of Africa were discovered. The dominance of anthropological approach is partly as a result of the relative young age of the African Art specialisation in Art History, which also has implications for the paucity of the number of art historians that focus on Africa; the first doctorate in African Art History having been completed by Roy Sieber only in 1957 (Blier, 1990; Kalilu, 1994c). Sieber trained the crop of three pioneer doctorate degree holder Nigerians: Babatunde Lawal, Cornelius Oyeleke Adepegba and Cyril Chike Aniakor in the 1970s. Lawal and Aniakor established or shaped the Art History components of the Fine Art programmes in University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Adepegba established the Art History School of the University of Ibadan. Lawal, and particularly, Adepegba significantly shaped art historical discourse in Africa. I have been privileged to be trained by these two scholars, especially, the late Adepegba, my master and doctoral degrees supervisor and the first and so far the only professor of African Art in Nigeria.

Nonetheless, the study of African art has never been the exclusive preserve of any particular discipline. Arising from this divergent disciplinary approaches are the problems of conflicting theories (Kalilu, 1994c: 20) and methodologies. Until 1988, scholarship neither directly nor in any concerted manner acknowledged these crises; even then the identification of the problems was not crystallised. In 1994, I called attention to seven identifiable problems, concerning which I raised four fundamental questions. There were consequently the complex, intricate and cumulative questions over the period of about two centuries: whether the classification of African art into fine and decorative arts is conceptually and contextually appropriate; whether forms and styles in indigenous art forms should be reckoned with in the studies of contemporary African art; how the twentieth century African *avant-garde* artists should be seen; and whether there is a possibility of a cumulative history of African art.

I illustrated the answers to those questions with my studies of Yoruba gourd carving taken to be presumptuous of the art forms of African cultures where wood and metal sculptures have not been the major means of visual artistic expression and of art forms in less enduring materials, which history has been difficult to keep and track because of the ephemeral nature of the arts. Through critical analyses of motifs, techniques and styles, I extended the earlier charted repertoire of motifs to include those introduced as late as 1993. The technology and the technique of gourd decoration as well as the identification of the principles of styles of the various centres of practice and the individual carvers were done. The carvers continually expand their vistas, bringing new and modern elements into the practice. Motifs and forms in indigenous art have and continue to influence the art works of the various *avant-garde* and academically-trained artists. The developments of the motifs were relatively dated to three broad periods: pre-1836; 1836 to 1960; and 1960 to 1993. The technology was also relatively dated into two levels of development. This was the first time such dates would be associated with such arts. The sample reconstruction of the history of an art of ephemeral nature, which records have been very difficult to track, shows that technology, techniques, motifs, themes and styles are not fossilised. It also demonstrates that it is possible to have various categories of the indigenous and the *avant-garde* artists or academically-trained artists in one historical continuum. The attainment of this feat consequently, points to the possibilities of a history of African art; if art history in Africa pays more attention to historical development (Kalilu, 1994c).

The persistence of the problem of ahistoricity nonetheless implies that a structured general history of African art itself remains to be attempted. But, as Adepegba (1994: 5) had observed in 1994, reconstructing the history of the arts is yet unattractive and efforts to do so appear not to be forthcoming. Whereas the absence of an ordered general African art history nonetheless has serious implications beyond Africa, particularly for the spread of the study of African art on art history programmes the world over, and for the proper inclusion of African art in the scholarship on world art.

I explained the reasons for the persistence of this problem (Kalilu, 1994c, Kalilu, 2007), the central ones being the problems of the sources of data, which impose great difficulties on their usage, the absence of written records about the arts, the ephemeral nature of most of the material used for the arts, the large size of the continent and the divergent and diffused artistic perspectives,

geological problems, and diversity both in the typology and provenance of the arts, which are also largely not apparently descriptive or directly illustrative of events. The art, therefore, poses a difficult task to comprehend (Kalilu, 1994c: 11 - 12), and subtle significance of the arts is lost to the non-African scholars. But as Pemberton III (1990: 142) observes, the African scholar could contribute "... a sense of wholeness" in the study of the arts. A justification for insiders' commitment is consequently the thrust of my conclusions in my review of the scholarship on African art up to 1994 (Kalilu, 1994d). One rare exception to the inadequate understanding of the arts by non-African scholars is Kevin Carroll, a Catholic missionary, whose scholarship on African art I reviewed against the writings of some of his other non-African peers from 1772 through 1992. Carroll's contributions to African art scholarship are profound and provided some of the finest and most penetrating studies on African art. But for Carroll to be able to achieve these, he lived among the peoples of Africa and studied their arts, in his missionary activities, for more than fifty years; yet, in spite of his insight, insists that interpretations of the art can only be carried out adequately by African scholars (Kalilu, 1995a) who understands the different local languages of the producers and users of the arts.

Carroll's (1973) observation is correct but this has not always been the case. A good numbers of African scholars have not demonstrated the skills to study African art beyond the mere descriptive level, and have not demonstrated engagements with the analytical and the interpretative levels. In addition, African art objects could be multi-functional. The same art object that serves as decoration may be deployed for magical, judicial or warfare purposes as is the case of Egungun masquerades. This is the reason that classifying the objects by function rather than by their forms has been problematic. It is also the reason that a single line approach in art history, even in any discipline, in the study of African art is ultimately deficient. I largely combined visual data with linguistic data, oral histories and oral traditions, particularly the Ifa divination corpus in the case of the Yoruba art, and proverbs and indigenous taxonomies in respect of the arts of all the peoples that I had studied. Beyond this, I peculiarly subsumed and deployed multi-disciplinary perspectives in my art historical methodologies and scholarship. My understanding and the ease of decipherment of the arts were certainly aided by these facts and my understanding of the language and subtle linguistic gestures. It is instructive that young persons are brought up to understand and master their native languages for them to be able to function and

make effective impacts in whatever their chosen enterprise is.

Be that as it may, the problems of ahistoricity and inadequate understanding of subtle aesthetic nuances did not only affect the study of portable or personal art objects, up to around the mid-1990s; architecture was also ahistorically presented. I had called attention to this noticeable and important scholarly shortcoming and its correction as agenda for future research in my review of scholarship on Nigerian architecture (Kalilu, 1996c).

Architecture is about organization of space, which in Nigerian peoples' thought defines identity and identification achieved through birth, ancestral origin, residence or socio-economic and spiritual factors. The house, which encloses space for shelter, confirms this identity and relevance. My extensive research, on the architecture of Nigerian peoples, reveals that the concept of the house is based on two paradoxically opposed but related and interactive realms: the transcendence and the physical, against which their forms are to be understood.

In almost all the cases, the same word used to indicate the house also qualifies family unit and heaven. As a concept, the house helps the people to contemplate, dramatize and act upon the principles of life in an intriguing conception that equates life with the marketplace and house with the transcendence and the cosmos and by its implication with origin, rest, order, stability and security.

Conceived as art, the house is to be made more beautiful than any other object, which may be applied for its own beautification. The landscape of the Nigerian house is multiplex. The forms of the house are diffused, not just along ethnic line, but, more along socio-cultural and ecological lines, which respectively dictated availability of materials and shaped their forms. I identified the forms of the house and classified their metamorphosis into three broad phases: the pre-European contact up to the 1920s; the 1920s up to the 1970s; and the 1970s up to 1997. The majority of the houses in the northern part of the country are round or oval (plate 32) while those in the southern part are usually rectangular in plan. The rectangular plan is not as diffuse in the north. The round and oval-plans are also not diffuse in the south. Apart from the ecological factors the diffuse nature of the house forms indicate possible artistic and other forms of interactions among the various people. For example, the Tangale, the Waja, the Tera, the Bolewa, the Longuda and the Kaltungo are said to be culturally and ancestrally related. Some similarities in their house structures identify them with

one another and somehow confirm their traditions of origin. Similarly the Yoruba and the Edo are traditionally and artistically related, hence the similarities in the plans of their houses. Edo influences spilled over the western Igbo division, resulting in the adoption of Igbo building in the Benin house design.

These traditional house forms have been largely superseded by the Brazilian (plate 16), the English apartment and the international architectural forms designed by academically-trained architects. There is also the phenomenon of burglar proofing in the following forms: wrought-iron design on doors and windows; high rising fences; massive-metal gates; broken bottles and barbed wire on top of fences; sealed up balconies and verandas, done beautifully with some ingenuity. These latest developments are not only more of urban phenomena but are also very much associated with the southern part of the country than elsewhere. The interesting thing is that excepting a few metropolitan cities of the north, their occurrence thins out from the south towards the north. This occurrence follows the distribution of violent crime rate. Ironically, the imposing and seemingly impenetrable architectural structures have made crime more violent (Kalilu, 1997b).

Most art traditions come in epochs; they flourished and eventually perished but a good number of them survived till the present. The art traditions of the Yoruba are among the oldest continuous traditions in sub-Sahara with a number of adjustments. As a foreground to future challenges of modern African art historical scholarship, our studies showed the fluxes resulting from a shift in internal values and foreign influences which had affected the forms, styles, technology, functions and patronage of the arts and to which the artists (plates 33-34) have been providing artistic responses as a demonstration of their creativity and artistic resilience (Kalilu, 1995c).

In 1824, Captain High Clapperton and Richard Lander visited Africa and observed that Yoruba buildings were richly ornamented and also observed that a certain shrine at Oyo-Ile was the "... most fancifully ornamented of any of a similar kind in the interior of Africa" (Lander, 1830: 199). Ornamentation in architecture is well articulated in the folk architecture that was developed further through the Afro-Brazilian building convention and actually practised into the twentieth century.

My review of scholarship on Yoruba architecture from 1830 up to 2006 shows scholastic reticence on ornamentation in Yoruba folk architecture (plate 16). But unregulated modernism and westernisation has grossly affected the folk

architecture which is fast disappearing. Extant examples of folk architecture are old and may not last too long, and their elements are not actively being adopted or transformed into modern architecture. The masons, the craftsmen and the artists who produced the architecture have also largely disappeared due to old age, lack of commensurate income for their skills and the lack of opportunity to divert their skills for ornamentation of new architecture ventures which the contemporary builders and architects have not provided. The problem is compounded by the get-rich-quick syndrome that has turned almost every able-bodied youth into a commuter motorcyclist or daily paid labourer. This has consequently put virtually all apprentices and craftsmen out of practice. I did not only call attention to the dangers that this trend portends for the nation but also predicted six years ago, that in about five years, to that time, Nigeria would be depending on importation of architectural finishes such as doors and similar accessories, and that if transportation system in the country improves Nigeria would be left with a multitude of unskilled and unemployed youths which may eventually increase the crime rate in the country (Kalilu, 2006). The five years I estimated lapsed in 2011. The correctness of my scholarly observations and predictions is noticeable in contemporary Nigerian experience.

In the 21st century artistic landscape, artists working in indigenously art forms coexist alongside the academically-trained artists. Our study of ceramic art and technology traced it across time and space; beginning from the known early examples dating back to 9000 years ago and with the oldest known example from Nigeria and the Southwestern Nigeria dating back to 5000 years. Ceramic art, traditionally, is largely pottery but retaining its original characteristics has incorporated some modern elements in terms of forms and designs. Ceramic art in the hands of academically-trained artists has explored diverse technologies and themes. The art in the hands of the academically-trained artists has transcended simple clayware to glass wares. The academically-trained artists have also moved the art from its predominant utilitarianism to the one which is primarily aesthetics-focused. This is largely because of industrialisation, urbanisation, the advent of polymer products, advancement in technology and the introduction of aluminum pots which have all created shifts in values and paradigm of materials, forms, functions and patronage. Serious threat to continuity of traditional pottery is nonetheless posed by Western education and its attendant impacts on time and interest of young people (Kalilu, Akintonde and Ayodele, 2006b).

Among the artistic practices in the 21st century Africa, the textile art of

Adire of the Yoruba remains, perhaps, the most decorative. Areo and I (Kalilu and Areo, 2011) did an *exposé* of the history, the development, the design orientation and the semiotics of *Adire*. Against the background of various imprecise definitions of the art, we looked at the etymology of the word *Adire*, which in concept is descriptive of the process of the cloth dyeing and its product; respectively as art and artistic objects. Our study on *Adire* argues, against the theories of accidental discovery, hitherto held in scholarship, in favour of a calculated Yoruba origin of the art. We explored the technology, the techniques and the products of *Adire*, over a period of 112 years, and identified the trends of their development on a decade's basis. The art, now practised by traditional and academically-trained artists of both genders, was originally peculiar to women, who practiced it on hereditary basis.

The accepted repertoire of motifs for *Adire* runs into hundreds. We classify the designs and motifs into five: geometric, figural, skewmorphic patterns, letters, and celestiomorphic. The geometric motifs are dots, shapes and lines of various forms. The figural motifs are of two sub-types; zoomorphic and floral. The zoomorphic motifs are of eight sub-groups: avian, reptilian and mammalian species, arthropods, annelids, mollusca, pisces, and amphibians. The avian species represented are about twelve. They are: *Opeere* (brown-eared bulbul), *Agbufon* (crowned crane), *Adaba* (red-eyed dove), *Pepeye* (duck), *Asadi* (black kite, *milvus migrans*), *Etu* (guinea fowl), *Adie* (fowl), *Okin* (Indian peafowl, *pavo cristatus*), *Odidere* (African grey parrot), *Tolotolo* (turkey), *Igun* (Hooded vulture, *neocyrtus monachus*), and *Ogongo* (ostrich). The reptilian species in their own cases are about seven types: *Alangba* (lizard), *Akika* (pangolin), *Ejo* (snake), *Alabahun* (tortoise), *Oni* (Nile crocodile, *crocodylus niloticus*), *Eja* (fish), *Omoole* (wall gecko), and *Oga* (chamelion). Three mammalian species; *Adon*, (bat), *Okere* (squirrel), and *Eerin* (elephant) are identifiable. The arthropods are about two. They are *Okun* (millipede), and *Akeeke* (scorpion). Only one annelid, *Ekolo* (earthworm) is identifiable. Similarly, *Igbin*, (African giant snail, *archachatina marginata*) is the only one represented in the mollusca sub-group. The pisces is the *Tilapia* in its own case. Only one amphibian motif, *Opolo* (toad) is used.

The floral motifs are foliage of cassava and *markhamia tomentosa*. Other flora motifs are petals, banana, plantain, cocoa pod, cotton seed, fig tree, and guinea corn plant. The skewmorphic motifs are large; ranging from utensils to other objects: mirror, knife, horse tail, wrist watch, Arabic writing slate,

matches, bucket, sewing machine's pedal, Mapo hall pillars, tobacco pipe, road junction, scissors, house compound, ladle, sugar cubes, Ifa divination tray, Gangan talking drum, gourd rattle, straw hat, tyre, egg tray, ear ring, whips, umbrella, waist beads, and football. The letters are the alphabets of Yoruba language. The motifs based on celestial and galactic bodies are the moon and the stars.

Aside from naming each motif, Adire has an interesting onomasticon by which collection of already named motifs are arranged into groups, and each group is understood and named as one entity. We identified six of such group names: *Ibadan dun*, "Ibadan is sweet or pleasant"; *Olokun*, the sea goddess; *Sunbebe*, "lift up the waist beads"; *Eyeye*, "all birds gathered here"; *Ile-Iyalode*, "Iyalode's compound"; and *Onikoomu*, "the-one-with-comb". *Adire* is significant, as process and objects of communication; as a visual language, mirroring and expressing objects and issues that exist in the Yoruba ecosphere and beyond (plate 35).

The problem of appropriate paradigm and critical apparatus in the study of contemporary African art is significant. The group on the receiving end of the effects of this problem, simultaneously finds it difficult to establish a space in artistic landscape of Africa and its art historical scholarship, appears to be the academically-trained artists. This is because they work with modernist techniques and draw upon ideas, images, materials and skills from universal repertoires that go beyond national boundaries. And this has made a number of Africanist scholars such as William Fagg to reject their art as unAfrican. The hegemonic view that to be modern is to be Western is not correct and also not consistent with African conceptions and practices of art as my various studies have shown. Nonetheless, while theoretical reflections reposition the art, the Western hegemony is challenged and vitiated by the persistence of African artists working in a modernist mode across all spectra of the arts. The artists' modernist trend is in point, of fact grounded in African aesthetic sensibilities, which encourage dynamism as expressed in the Yoruba conception of culture, *asa*, that is, selective choices. The artists, therefore, have been creating their visions of Africanness in relatively new formats (plate 36). But the contemporary art of both the traditional artists and, particularly, the academically-trained artists did not just appear from nowhere as they are erroneously taken to be. In reality, after the platform and the materials of the Western art were introduced, it has built, through a process of *bricolage*, upon the already existing structures of African art,

the same on which the older genres of art were also made. It is this structural sense of form, style, technique and technology and its dynamism and not a state of stasis that should be recognised as Africanness (Kalilu, 2004c; Kalilu, 2008a).

The artistic landscape is not only about the abled-body but also there are a few number of artists that are disabled. The relevance of the handicapped visual artist in the Nigerian democracy constitutes a challenge. I explored the idea of art as a conceptual challenge to disability. The rehabilitation of the handicapped would be better achieved through art, which as vocation develops profound imagination and predisposes the artist to looking at problems of life (to reshape his own reality), and provides means of self-expression as a solution to the problem of difficulty in partaking in full activities, a serious challenge posed by disability; and which as evocative form is generative and transformative also for the audiences; with the handicapped artist, being detached occupy vantage positions to assess and represent the complex processes of life to guide the nation which would in turn benefit from the challenge posed by art to the challenges inherent in disability (Kalilu, 2004b).

Studies of themes, icons and motifs in African art could be tasking. This is due to the largeness and the dynamic nature of the repertoires of motifs in the various arts. As a result of this, I engaged in neology and invented vocabularies; an immediate example being "celestiomorphic", invented to describe the represented images of cosmic bodies.

The end goal of Art History is the history of the arts. I transcended this end, transforming it to a means and consequently extended the end of Art History. Lessons derivable from artistic practices as well as art historical values are relevant to and usable and useful in non-artistic, contemporary, sociological, and developmental contexts. I, therefore, had used it as means of addressing diverse socio-political and technological issues in manners in which art history was never employed.

The sociological issues of cultism and its attendant violence on the Nigerian campus were addressed from the perspectives of Art and History, taking the origin of the campus cultism from its noble beginning to the hydra headed phenomenon it had become and its consequences on the society. Valuable lessons from various masquerading traditions of African societies and the manners such societies dealt with issues of wanton violence were also drawn. It is noteworthy that this book (Kalilu, 1995) is the first ever published on this phenomenon. In another book, I contextualized within the conceptual frameworks of the

architecture of the spider and the architectures of the Kamberi, the Yoruba and the Edo, the issue of cultism in its temporal and spiritual dimensions across the various levels of the Nigerian educational institutions and showed its possible echo effects across the West Africa sub-region (Kalilu, 1996).

Beyond cultism, I used the study of architecture, colour and fashion with landuse in Ladoko Akintola University of Technology to interpret the sociology and uniqueness of the University (Kalilu, 2003). Similarly, the special triadic status which art enjoys and which makes it rotate around the humanistic, scientific and engineering perspectives and the factors that make the borders of art to accommodate all spheres of human inventions and be the backbone of the industrial revolution since the 1940s have also been of scholarly interest to us

(Kalilu and Ayodele, 2005).



Plate 37. Igbonugu, P. *Begger*. Print. (*The Nucleus*, 1981: 72).

Education and economy are interrelated as the two draw inspiration and nourishment from one another. The relationship between vocational education and economic development is an issue which has not been studied from the Visual Arts perspective. Also there has not been a broad art historical analysis of economic themes in modern Nigerian art. I carried out a study on the artistic perceptions and representation of the Nigerian economy and the roles that vocational education could play in socio-economic development as well as Visual Arts' praxical responses to economic challenges. I used the corpuses of art work exhibited during the World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) of 1977, the 301 art works in the collection of the National Gallery of Arts from 1960 up to 1981, and about 500 other art works by artists in Nigeria to 2007. The visual arts materials from 1960 to 2007 were studied *vis-a-vis* several statistical economic indices on Nigeria from 1950 to 2004.

My anatomical and content analyses of the Nigerian visual artistic landscape revealed gradual shifts in thematic, iconographic and iconological conceptions of Nigeria from a buoyant and vibrant society up to the late 1970s to an impoverished one that, beginning from 1982, was continually becoming less affluent and going through difficult times (plate 37). My findings indicate that the artists and the art objects in these instances are respectively the eyes and the

periscope of the society, the entrepreneurs and the commodities; the socio-political and economic assets of the society; the activists and the instrument of change (Kalilu, 2010a); they are also the drivers and the vehicle of technology.

The Visual Arts, from the Paleolithic period to the modern time, is replete with records of transport, the conveyance and the management of the process of achieving this, through the human-powered means, through the mechanical to the high technology and industrially designed transport facilities. Using visual artistic, documentary and statistical evidence, the history and the development of transport as well as its modal possibilities in Nigeria were studied. It was observed that inadequate infrastructure inadequacy, ineffective integration and dysfunctional nature of the five modes used in Nigeria put undue pressure on road transport and consequently the high rates of road traffic accidents in the country (Kalilu, 2008b; Kalilu, 2008c). Road Traffic injuries and death remain important public health, safety and economic problems in Africa from where a significant number of countries with the highest global index of road traffic accidents and traffic deaths have come. One of the most dramatic and satiric representations of this global tragedy is the human sculpture by Emma Hack, an Australian artist, who had used seventeen people to create an astonishing body art sculpture of a crashed car and against the background which the occurrence and trends of road traffic accidents in Africa, particularly the Nigeria examples were examined. It was observed that environmental issue, which hitherto has not been given very high priority in road safety matters, is a very significant factor and imperative in improving road safety strategies in Africa (Kalilu, 2013).

Apart from the man-made arts, objects of artistic merit by non-humans have been of interest to me. Aremu and I studied the stylistic possibilities in termitaria (plate 38) (Kalilu and Aremu, 1988). I also studied the "architecture" of the spider.

Conclusions: Making the Visible Legible

At this point, based on the general concepts of art, the conceptions of art of the people that I have studied, my studio practices and praxis, and emerging new trends in global artistic practices, I would like to summarise my ideas about art, raise the stake of responsibilities of the discipline, and set some future agenda for artistic practices and art historical scholasticism towards a new conception of art.

In the discourse of development and aesthetics during the last two centuries, the questions of the essence of and the relationship between technology and art have played central roles. Both technology and art have had powerful impacts on the conditions of life in human and non-human societies, but the questions of the seemingly erroneous mutual exclusiveness of technology and art, the questions of the essence of technology and art in societal development are significant and outstanding.

Technology, the practical application of knowledge in any particular area, refers to a collection of techniques, a current state of knowledge on how to combine resources to solve problems, which include technical methods, skills, processes, tools, raw materials, etc. Technology is not peculiar to humans, and could be material and non-material in nature. Similarly, art as creativity is also both material and non-material. A permanent divide between technology and art as hitherto done in scholarship cannot be maintained in the practice of both technology and art. The common denominator between the two is *techné* (craft), technique, which aims to some extent, at creativity. Technology cannot come without imagination and creativity. Art, in its sense as creativity, is, therefore, tacitly and partly the foundation of technology. Art may not be manifested without technology, which may also double as components of art pieces such as collage, appliqué, installation art, interactive art, kinetic art among other art forms. Technology itself may be art such as web design, beads and beadwork. Art invariably gives form and designs, identity and identification to technological products, provides aesthetic sensibility that drives tastes and fashion and consequently drives the economy. Both technology and art are activities that form and change culture and society and are the pillars of material, industrial and socio-economic development. Art is nonetheless the foundation and also the cap of development. This position is simply illustrative in the expressions: state-of-the-art technology which refers to the high technology available to humanity in any field while the state-of-the-art refers to the highest attainment available to humanity.

The factors of under-development have negatively affected technology and art in some very significant ways. There are the poor qualities of technological and artistic manifestation, lack of or poor aesthetic sensitivity and the inability to tap economic, political and social gains that technology and art can offer. A good number of socio-political and economic steps, particularly the introduction of honest and efficient system, mobilisation of savings, investment

in physical capital goods, technology transfer and restructuring of the education system, have been suggested as remedy to the problems in developing societies. Technocriticism and technorealism rightly advocate that it is not desirable to use technologies that require parts or skills imported from elsewhere. The cultural and artistic past of Nigerian people up to the period of the British colonial incursion indicate relatively well developed and sound technological and artistic backgrounds. To achieve this greatness in contemporary Nigeria, the country's educational policy must give more regard to creativity, which is quickly achievable through education in the Visual Arts, and which should be made compulsory up to the Senior Secondary School level. Creative art is already a compulsory subject up to the junior secondary school in Nigeria. What Nigeria needs to turn its fortune around is evolution of technology that will meet international standards and demands on the one hand, and, on the other hand, vocationalise its economy in order to transform it from its current consumer nature. This, nonetheless, requires the training of men who would be creative, vocational and entrepreneurial; scientists who will reason like the artists; engineers who are imaginative; medical practitioners whose aesthetic sensitivity are high; politicians who are visionary; administrators who are aesthetically sensitive; security personnel who can visualise problems before they occur: men whose perception, appreciation and aesthetic sensibility, expectation and output will be in the state-of-the-art at various levels and disciplines (Kalilu, 2009).

Globally, art, in conception and practice, has never remained the same since the Euro-American contacts with African arts. The dynamic formal and stylistic qualities of African arts based on the Africans' conceptions of art as life, for life and in the cycle of life triggered revolutionary artistic ideas in the West. Consequently, the world of art has become metaphorically expanding like our universe: ever expanding. New artistic practices continually emerge, breaking common traditional conceptions of art.

From Plato's (1997) *mimetic* theory of art as representational, to Kant's (Guyer, translation, Section 44) theory of art as representation that is purposive has emerged two broad definitional paths of functional and conventionalist (institutional and historical) definitions. The definitions, in this regard, would nonetheless exclude several new artistic cultures, except the definitions are modified with Weitz Open Concept argument whereby a concept is open and can be extended to incorporate imaginable cases. In this regard, conventionalists' historical definitions in their several varieties, which "... hold that what

characterized artwork is standing in some specified art-historical relation to some specified earlier artworks..." (Adajian, 2012), appear to be a little useful. One of such definitions is by Stecker and it states that "... an item is an artworks at time t where t is not earlier than the time at which the item is made, if and only if it is in one of the central art forms at t and is made with the intention of fulfilling a function art has at t or it is an artifact that achieves excellence in achieving such a function" (Adajian, 2012). This definition appears to require characterisation of art such as art functions and artistic contexts, but does not provide the information needed.

The definition, therefore, may exclude, in the *reductio* sense, alien or autonomous art of any kind, either terrestrial or extraterrestrial that is casually isolated from the current sense of art, particularly the Western tradition. It also excludes classification of future entities and, consequently, any concepts about them as art. But on the other hand, and more correctly, the definition also comes with a sense of supra-historical concept of art, so there could be some entities not correctly identified in historical narratives but which in point of fact stand in relation to established art works, that is, they are artworks that were or are not understood or classified as such. This would give us the opportunity to, where necessary, reclassify or absorb into our conception of art such entities previously unclassified in as much as our t is not earlier than the coming into existence of such entities. This is because art is not and cannot be strictly a kind of thing but a concept regarding a variety of morphologically distinct things (Preziosi, 1989: 29). Goodman (1978: 66) has observed that the problematic issue is failing to recognise that an item may function as a work of art at some points and not at some other times. So, strictly speaking, the valid issue is not what is art? But *when* is art!

About twelve broad purposes of art in two categories of non-motivated and motivated functions are discernible. At the first stage of non-motivated level, Art is neither an action nor an object but a basic instinct for harmony, balance and rhythm. At the second stage, it is the activation of the special intelligence latent in certain creatures with which, when developed, they refine their environment. This special intelligence is not peculiar to human kind as it is also found in certain other animals. Nonetheless, in some other senses, art provides the experience of the mysterious; it is a means to experience oneself in relation to the universe; Albert Einstein (1954) had observed that the "... most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can not pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as

good as dead: his eyes are closed". It is a means of expressing the imagination in terms of forms, symbols and ideas that are more malleable than speech.

Motivation-wise, art is a means of communication, entertainment, therapy, social inquiry or subversion, propaganda or commercialism, and a fitness indicator as superior execution of art works has been found to attract mates. Art, in its simplest form, is the special ability to appreciate the aesthetic quality of the environment, to skilfully refine the environment and to transform common-place objects and materials into objects of higher value.

Over the last fifty years, different new kinds of art have emerged. One of such art is Land art, Earthwork or Environmental art, a movement and art type that evolved in the late 1968 through artists' protests against artificiality and commercialisation of art and their attempts to blur the line between art, the community and nature (plate 39). Land art is invariably monumental, non-transportable, site-specific sculptural projects created in nature and executed far away from civilization. The sculptures are not placed in the landscape, rather the landscape is the means of their creation (Tufnell, 2006; New Mexico, 2009).

Apart from tattooing, body art, especially body painting, was widely practised among the West African peoples that I studied (plates 40-41) (Kalilu, 1992a). It was practised also by the ancient native cultures of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific (AAO, 2000; Reid, 2012; VACC, n.d). From the 1930s, through the 1960s, body painting and anthropometries became popular in Euro-American societies. It is also common in modern military contexts for soldiers to paint exposed parts of their bodies for camouflage. Fine Art body art, as it is referred to, which emerged in the early 1990s in form of hand art, face painting, and body painting transforming the nude, especially the female body into amazing art, has become popular and professionally practised across the globe. Body art also attempts to blur the distinction between the human body and the socio-natural environment. By 2012, an artist had started making sculptures with painted living people (Frank, 2012; Lynch, 2012). Body art, in this instance, is not made of extraneous materials; the human body is both the primary material and the platform of display (plates 42-46).

Similarly, originating at the end of the twentieth century is Symbiotic Art or BioArt, as it is named in 1997, where artists employ technologies and practices from the medical and life sciences and work with live tissues, living organisms, bacteria and life processes (plate 47), including cloning by which the artists draw attention to the grotesque and the beautiful details of nature that we

might ordinarily gloss over in an effort to transform relationships among science, medicine, corporate interests, and the public (Mitchell, 2010).

In view of this, it may seem difficult to know what art is and what art is not in our universe. This is the problem encountered in scholasticism when African art was first discovered. But certainly, not every object is art. In determining this, five elements remain constant in this regard: maker/artist, process of production, object, processes of reception, and user/viewer. Significantly, therefore, art captures entities intentionally endowed with significant aesthetic qualities by their makers. Those entities so understood as art have complicated history in that new forms, as such standards of taste and understanding of aesthetic properties to classify them as art, continually evolve and are consciously and continually developed. For example, natural entities such as sunsets, flowers, landscape, seascape and the human form are routinely described in some cultures as having aesthetic properties. The Yoruba saying *Omode yi dara, o da bi eere, agba yi dara o da bi eere*, "this child is exquisite like a sculpted image and the adult is as exquisite as a sculpture", is a good example in this regard.

In 1904, Haeckel (1904), a German Biologist, realised that each biological form had aesthetics and artistic value and consequently did the artistic interpretations of biological forms he studied in a book. Likewise, Leonardo da Vinci (n.d.a) observed that "The human foot is a masterpiece of engineering and work of art". The Yoruba understood this concept of nature as art very well as it is expressed in their common prayer to expectant mothers hence, *Ki orisa ya ona ire ko ni*, "may the arch divinity make us a well fashioned child". Similar understanding is also expressed in the Yoruba name, *Orisasona*, meaning the arch divinity has fashioned an art. Orisa refers to Obatala, the arch divinity in Yoruba cosmology, whose responsibilities include spiritually fashioning of the human bodies in clay before they are born. On the physical plane, the human form and other creatures, in strict design sense, are indeed masterpieces of art. Similarly, on the macro level, the components of our world, the earth and indeed the multi-universe, the galaxies, etc. are measured and creatively fashioned. Physics agreed that so long as the universe has a beginning, it had a creator (Hawking, 1988: 140-141) and a design purpose behind it (Braun, 1972).

Though molecular biology shows that biological processes are governed and determined by the laws of physics and chemistry, it has not been able to determine why. "Why is there something rather than nothing? And why do

we exist? Hawking and Mlodinow (2012: 10), two foremost twentieth century theoretical physicists, had postulated. Classical and quantum physics, for over 3000 years, through various theories, and lately through the M-theory, have fairly advanced the understanding and explanation of how the universe behaves, but have not, and may never be able to explain why. The quantum uncertainty, quarks, strings and extra dimensions and the net result of M-theory that allows for 10^{500} universes and laws, compounded the scientists' attempts at providing answers to the questions of what is the universe and the essence of its existence in the physicists' attempts at knowing the mind of God.

Numerous creation myths and different scriptures have attempted to explain the reason(s) for the existence of the universe, as created by God for His pleasure. The answers to these questions should be sought in the visual appraisal of the earth and indeed the universe. Part of the hindrances to the appreciation of the earth as an art work is the fact that the observers are part of the system or objects being examined. The observers are like the bacteria or the living organism in a typical bioart piece: art from art; art within art.

In all of these, the hallmark of the artist's responsibility is the skillful organisation of colour, shape, form, texture, size and space to create balance, harmony and unity of expression according to certain order and proportion which makes every part fits perfectly into the whole. These are the same elements and the principles of design in nature, from which the creativity and design principles of the mortals derived. The principles of design in nature are all-pervasive to the extent that a careless disruption of them brings distortions in visual forms, chaos or even death. The laws of our world are God's creativity, his artistic exploit, and the perfection of the worlds based on order and proportion that created harmony and balance. This is indeed art from which all other arts stemmed.

A new consciousness, Earth as art, now appreciates the components of Earth as art. The vanguard of this is the National Space Agency of the United States of America, which in recent times has used Earth-observing satellites and has made imagery of the Earth that presents the planet from a relatively new and artistic perspective. Also in 1981, a small group of international artists, the astronomical artists, emerged (plates 48-49). Collaborating with the Planetary Society and the Soviet Cosmic Group, the artists, started a different genre of art form, that is inspired by the astronomical sciences and the exploration of space, that renders the aesthetic beauty of the heavens (IAAA, 2013). These perspectives are not traditionally new to the majority of the African peoples,

particularly the Yoruba, whose deployment of art is for every phase in the cycle of life, and, whose conception of art objects includes the universe and across which they draw their themes, icons and motifs. For instance, celestial bodies, the moon and the stars are symbolically represented as motifs on the Yoruba tie-and-dyed cloth, *adire*.

Yoruba cosmology explains that God's creation was art by intention and destination. Each thing was created uniquely but is also copy-able as the Visual Arts does to nature. Scholarship has confirmed the reliability of Ifa divination literature as a historical source. The verse of Ejiogbe, the first corpus of the literature, in a dialogic perspective, is self-explanatory on this.

Ifa ni o di ogbonda	1
Mo ni o di ogbonfon	
Won ni eye wo ni n da t' Olodumare si rere	
Won ni eye Agbe ni	
Won ni ki e wi fun Agbe ko fi 'ye ti e s'aro	5
Ifa ni o di ogbonda	
Mo ni o di ogbonfon	
Won ni eye wo ni n da t' Olodumare si rere	
Won ni eye Aluko ni	
Won ni ki Aluko fi iye ti e s'osun	10
Ifa ni o di ogbonda	
Mo ni o di ogbonfon	
Won ni eye wo ni n da t' Olodumare si rere	
Won ni eye Odidere ni	
Won ni eye Odidere o fi iye ti e si epo pupa	15
Ifa ni o di ogbonda	
Mo ni o di ogbonfon	
Won ni eye wo ni n da t' Olodumare si rere	
Won ni eye Lekeleke ni	
Won ni ki Lekeleke fi iye ti e si efun yeruyeru	20
Ifa ni o di ogbonda	
Mo ni o di ogbonfon	
Won ni eye wo ni n da t' Olodumare si rere	
Won ni Akuko oyongoloto ni	
Won ni ki Akuko oyongoloto maa d'ade yanranyanran	25

Ifa ni o di ogbonda	
Mo ni o di ogbonfon	
Won ni eye wo ni n da t' Olodumare si rere	
Won ni Agbufon oyongoloto ni	
Won ni ki oun ma dade ori yetuyetu	30
Won ni k'eye k'eye ko ma ke magbo mon	
Opeere nikan lo ke magbo	
Won ni ki won ge ni' di ofiiri jape jape	
Awon lo se 'fa fun Orunmila	
Ifa n fi omi oju se rahun aje suurusu	35
Ebo ni won ni ko se	
O si gbe 'bo n be oru 'bo	
Nje bi okan ya a gb'ona wa,	
Atare atesa nwa mi bo wa o suurusu	
...	40
Ifa says it is primal and inimitable	1
I say it becomes imitable	
It was inquired, which of the birds wishes to distinctively portray God's Creativity	
They said it is Agbe, <i>lamprotonis chalybaeus</i> , the Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling	
It was then decreed that Agbe be directed to dip its plumage in (indigo) dye.	5
Ifa says it is primal and inimitable	
I say it becomes imitable	
It was inquired, which of the birds wishes to distinctively portray God's Creativity	
They said it is Aluko, <i>merops nubicus</i> , the Carmine Bee-eater	
Aluko was directed to put its own plumage in the camwood paste.	10
Ifa says it is primal and inimitable	
I say it becomes imitable	
It was inquired, which of the birds wishes to distinctively portray God's Creativity	
They said it is Odidere, <i>psittacus erithacus</i> ,	

the African Grey Parrot
 They said Odidere should put its tail feathers in the
 (crimson-coloured) palm oil. 15
 Ifa says it is primal and inimitable
 I say it becomes imitable
 It was inquired, which of the birds wishes to distinctively
 portray God's Creativity
 They said it is Lেকেকে, *ardeola ibis*, the Cow Egret
 Lেকেকে was asked to dip its own plumage in the
 immaculate and powdery white chalk. 20
 Ifa says it is primal and inimitable
 I say it becomes imitable
 It was inquired, which of the birds wishes to distinctively
 portray God's Creativity
 They said it is Akuko *Oyongoloto*, the big and majestically
 gaited Cock
 Akuko *Oyongoloto* was granted the privilege of
 donning the glittering red crown. 25
 Ifa says it is primal and inimitable
 I say it becomes imitable
 It was inquired, which of the birds wishes to distinctively
 portray God's Creativity
 They said it is the big Agbufon, *balearica pavonina*,
 the big Black Crowned Crane
 Agbufon *Oyongoloto* was permitted to wear fluffy
 variegated crown. 30
 It was thereafter forbidden of any other [bird(s)]
 to authoritatively boom and appear distinctively,
 Only Opeere, *microscelis amawotis*, the Brown-eared
 Bulbul, chirped and attempted uniqueness
 And it was ordered that its tail be clipped very short
 These were the priests that divine for Orunmila
 When Ifa (Orunmila) was profusely weeping in desperate
 need of earnings 35
 He was advised to offer sacrifice
 He offered the prescribed sacrifice

And so whenever Okan, *combretm erythrophyllum*, the River
 Bushwillow emerges (sprouts) it comes in ornate patterns.
 Both good (novel) and uniqueness shall seek me profusely
 ... 40

It is noteworthy that except the bulbul, which is portrayed as a copycat,
 common place and inferior, the other five birds and the plant mentioned in the *Ifa*
 verse are indeed ornately unique and the birds are of very beautiful hues,
 profusely ornamented and of high quality glossy finishes or spotless and dazzling
 white colour as in the case of the Cow Egret. They are almost matchless in the
 Yoruba ecosystem. The River Bush willow is also intriguing and of interesting
 hues and shades. Its branches grow in an upright manner but at odd angles; its
 dense spreading crown, interesting fruit and attractive foliage makes it a popular
 ornamental shade tree [shrub].

Art history allows all classes and types of objects that have authors and
 those that do not have authors, which it rectifies by universal nominalisation that
 may not include proper name within a projected universal space-grid of
 appearances. Interestingly, Art History recognizes God as an artist and creation
 was his very first action. But Art History has not looked at the entire creation as a
 single entity. The future agenda for Art History, in its task of rendering the visible
 legible, is to consciously evolve a critique apparatus suitable for galactic
 appreciation and understanding of the macro design principles of the earth as a
 single art object. Carefully and visually appraised, the earth is, indeed, an object of
 aesthetics, a composite art work of stupendous and unimaginable beauty (plate
 50), a component of which is man; that also makes art and drives his existence
 through art.

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Plate 2
Seated Figure
Terracotta, Nok.
(nokculture.com, 2013).



Plate 4
Terracotta Head. Clay, 11th-12th Century.
Ile-Ife. H. 17.7cm. University Art Museum, Ile-Ife.
(Drewal, Pemberton III and Abiodun, 1989: 57).



Plate 6
Mother and Child
Wood, Senofo, Ivory
Coast and Burkina Faso.
(Roy, 1992: 24).

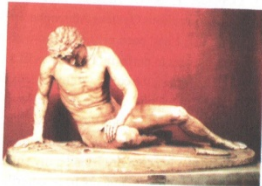


Plate 7
Epigonus. Dyeing Gaul. Roman copy
Credit: Capitoline Museum, Rome.
(Marceau, 1997: 74).



Plate 8.
Kalilu, R. O. Rom
Stamp Album
Cover Design
Goache on paper,
1980.
H: 20cm. x 30cm.

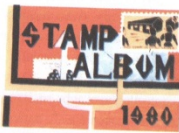


Plate 9
Kalilu, R. O. Rom. Poster Design
Goache on paper, 1983.



Plate 12
Kalilu, R. O. Rom
Equality of Races
Oil on board, 1985.



Plate 13
Kalilu, R. O. Rom
Genius at Work
Oil on board, 1985.



Plate 15. Kalilu, R. O. Rom
Sketch and colour
mathematics of Vaults of
Heaven. Water colour and
graphite on paper. 1986.



Plate 17. Kalilu, R. O. Rom
Footprints in the Sand of Time
Computer aided design. 2003.
Printed size, H/L. 29cm. x 42cm.



Plate 18. Kalilu, R. O. Rom
Patterns of Life
Computer aided design, 2005.
Printed size, H/L. 40 x 49cm.



Plate 21
Egungun, Orebe costume type
Yoruba, Ogbomosho.
Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom. 1986.



Plate 26. *Alakoro Mask*. Oyo-Ile. Brass. H. 30cm. Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1989.



Plate 30. Leather pouffe decorated with interlace motifs. Oyo town. L. 87cm. Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1989.



Plate 32. Rhumbu. Typical granary round house from northern Nigeria Todi, Gombe State. Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1997.



Plate 33. Lamidi Fakeye, Yoruba carver demonstrating his skills at the Black Art and Culture Center. Kalamazoo, USA, 2009 (Mah, 2010).



Plate 34. Lamidi Fakeye *Carved Pillar* Wood, 2009, (Mah, 2010).

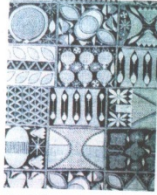


Plate 35. Adire cloth with "Ibadan dun" design.



Plate 36. Tola Wewe *Tribute to Motherhood*. Acrylic on canvas. H/L. 114 cm. x 119.3cm. (artadoo, 2011).



Plate 38. *A huge termitarium*. Bida, Niger State. Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1989.



Plate 39. Rodriguez-Gerada, J. *The Gala-la*. Sun stencil; Delta del Ebru, Spain 2010. Land Mass. 2.5 acres. (jorgerodriguezgerada.com, n.d).



Plate 40. *Yoruba woman with body tattoo*. Photograph by Kalilu, R. O. Rom, 1990.



Plate 41. *Body Painting*. Yoruba. (Drewal, Pemberton III and Abiodun, 1989: 33).



Plate 42. Daniele Guido. *Hand Art*. (Daniele, n.d).



Plate 43. *Painted body*. (brokersoft.com,n.d).



Plate 44. Painted female nude bodies. (Reid, 2012).



Plate 45
A body painting at work
(Reid, 2012).



Plate 46. Ross Philip
BioArt. (krugman.n.d).



Plate 47. Hack
Emma. *Body Crash*.
Painted body
sculpture.
(frank, 2012; Lynch,
2012).

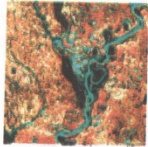


Plate 48. EarthArt view of
Missipi River. (National
Geographic, 2011).

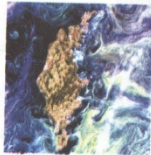


Plate 49. EarthArt view of
Gotland, Sweden. (National
Geographic, 2011).



Plate 50. EarthArt view of the
Earth. (National Geographic,
2011).

Errata

Page	Line	Error	Correction
10	21	could effectively	could not effectively
10	19	art for historical	art historian
10	10	infrastructure inadequacy, ineffective	infrastructure, ineffective

