# EXPLORING THE GUITAR FORM FOR THE PRODUCTION OF SCULPTURE

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis entitled **"Exploring the Guitar Form for the Production of Sculpture"** has been executed by me in the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The information derived for the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any institution.

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## CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled: **"Exploring the Guitar Form for the Production of Sculpture"** by **Bale, Ola- Olu Olawale**, meets with the regulations governing the award of **Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) in Sculpture of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria** and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God and my parents Professor and Mrs. James Olaniyi Bale, for their selfless support towards my academic pursuit.

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## ABSTRACT

*This research is focused on exploration of forms, deriving inspiration from the guitar for the production of sculpture. It attempts to translate the features of a guitar by exploring the curvilinear form of the guitar for the production of relief sculptures, using mild steel sheets, mild steel rods and found metal objects as the main materials for the execution of works. The study is divided into three groups namely; representational, stylized and distorted. This was achieved through the employment of an exploratory studio based methodology, which was conceived through observation of the acoustic guitar. A number of sculptors like Cantine Rennie, Pablo Picasso, Osamede Obazee, have produced sculptures using the guitar as an appendix to a composition. In the course of this research, it was discovered that several forms can emanate from the acoustic guitar shape when explored. A photographic representation and documentation of all materials from related literature and works executed in the course of this studio based research were all documented. A total of twenty sculptures were produced with one of the works enlarged and embellished on a building. The research also made recommendations for further study.*

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Understanding artistic expressions is like learning a new language as a useful tool in communication. The knowledge of art elements (line, form, shape, colour and texture) gives an individual an insight of the vocabulary of art. Bell in Owoade (2006), asserts that "Form is the essence of art." It has been used in various ways to explore ideas, and it appears that it was the earliest element employed to solve basic sculptural problems. According to Ocvrik et al. (2002), form refers to the total appearance, organisation or inventive arrangement of all the visual elements according to the principles that will develop unity in the artwork. Columbian Encyclopaedia (2007) contends that, the manifestation of form in sculpture can be traced as far back as the Venus Willendorf (approximately about 15,000 to 10,000 BC, or more or less to the same period as the cave paintings at Lascaux in France) ancient cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia, with the ancient traditions produced an enormous number of sculptural works, frequently monolithic, that had ritual and philosophical significance beyond aesthetic considerations. Also in the early Greek cultures, one of the greatest tasks of sculptors was creating statues of the gods in human form. In the ancient Meso- America, the Holmecs, Mayas, Toltecs and Aztecs of 2000 BC and 1519 AD respectively were known to have produced sculptural forms closely associated with religion. In the Eastern world, the Hindus, the Confucian, Shintos and the Buddhists have worked on sculptural forms for religious and other purposes.

The traditional African societies were also known to have produced sculptural forms based on supernatural concepts (Eyo, 1977; Opie, 1994 and Visona, et al, 2001). Nigeria is not left out of this development, the oldest sculptures found, the Nok culture dated about 500BC and

200AD respectively, the Igbo-Ukwu bronze dated 9th century, the Ife art and Benin bronze all indicate how forms can be manipulated for the creation of sculptures.

In the same vein, twentieth century art authenticated remarkable variety of forms, such that contemporary sculptors in their attempts to be inventive and creative in search of self-direction in their work have explored styles, varying from representational to abstract forms. Amongst some of the artists that have explored the aesthetic qualities of form are Alexander Calder (1898-1976), Jane Alexander (b.1959), Antony Gormley (b.1950), and Osamede Obazee (b.1965). Their sculptures are executed in a variety of media such as stone, bronze, wood and concrete for both interior and exterior habitats. They have also experimented with synthetic and industrial fibre, metal and industrial waste or mixed media (Hammacher, 1969; Danes, 1980 and Visona,et al,2001).

It is plausible to note that the guitar is one of the musical instruments parented by 'Chordophone' (any musical instrument which produces sound primarily by way of a vibrating string or strings stretched between two points). Microsoft Encarta Dictionary (2009), defines guitar as a "musical instrument with a long neck, a flat body shaped like a figure eight, and usually six strings that are plucked or strummed". The guitar is an ancient and noble instrument, whose history can be traced as far back as 4000 years. According to Kasha (1960), many theories have been advanced about the instrument's ancestry. It has often been claimed that the guitar is a development of the lute, or even of the ancient Greek Kithara (an instrument of the lyre family with seven strings and a wooden body usually with a flat base). However a study conducted by Michael Kasha in the 1960s proved this claim to be without merit. He showed that the lute is a result of a separate line of development, sharing common ancestry with the guitar, but having no influence on its evolution. The guitar has a collection that says more about the instrument. For example, there are several types of

guitar that exist like the acoustic guitar, classical guitar, steel guitar, twelve strings guitar, bass guitar, resonator guitar and electric guitar. Though, all the above mentioned types of guitar may be relevant to this research but the researcher chooses the acoustic guitar due to its feministic appearance that is imbued with a high degree of elegance. Again, the simplicity of the forms of the acoustic guitar also informs this choice.

Art historians like Rubin (1989) and Fry (1981) credit the *Guitar* series to the definitive transition from Analytical to Synthetic Cubism. This was evident in Rubin's exhibition catalogue of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) titled 'Picasso and Braque' in October, 1912. However, the guitars launched so much more after a careful examination of all the collages and constructions, it is clear that the *Guitar* series (which includes a few violins as well) crystallized Picasso's brand of Cubism. The series establishes a repertoire of signs that remained active in the artist's visual vocabulary through the *Parade* sketches and into the Cubo-Surrealist works of the 1920s. There appears to be no available records of when exactly the *Guitar* series began. The best way therefore to study the *Guitar* series is to notice two things: the wide variety of media and the repertoire of repeated shapes that mean different things within different contexts hence exploration of guitar forms to produce sculptures which is the focal point of the study. Thus this study hinges on the exposition of the numerous hidden forms inherent in a modern guitar to produce sculptures.

## 1.2 **Statement of the problem**

Over the years, guitar has been a source of inspiration for contemporary artists. However, the researcher observes that a lot of these artists explore the guitar as a component of their artistic compositions rather than an exploration of the acoustic guitar form; hence this poses a gap thus making this research imperative.

## 1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study was to create sculpture relief compositions derived from an acoustic guitar form. The specific objectives were to:

1. Explore the possibilities of producing relief sculptures from the guitar form,
2. Explore the possibilities of using curvilinear form of the acoustic guitar to produce relief sculptures,
3. To analyse sculpturally the guitar form to a conceptual stage.

## 1.4 Justification of the study

The researcher observes that few contemporary sculptors are known to have executed works using the guitar as a source of inspiration. Most of the works done by these sculptors rather show the guitar in its elementary state or as an appendix to a composition. This study however has explored beyond the elementary state of the guitar. The use of guitar form as a source of inspiration by other artists in the past justifies the inherent qualities in form viewed by the researcher.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to reawaken the need to look beyond the utilitarian features of the guitar as a musical instrument. It advocates the perception of other utensils or instruments to be viewed beyond their utility or utilitarian value with the view of extracting and adopting their aesthetic qualities for sculptural production. This study is also intended to encourage other sculptors in using other musical instruments to create sculptures.

## 1.6 **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The acoustic guitar has been singled out for this study knowing that there are about seven different known types of guitar. The acoustic guitar was chosen because of its simplicity and feminine appearance that is imbued with a high degree of elegance.

## 1.7 **Organization of the Work.**

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one deals with issues concerning introduction, chapter two looks into review of relevant literature and works, chapter three discusses methodology whereas chapter four analyses the works and catalogue of works produced in the course of the research, while chapter five deals with summary and conclusion.

# CHAPTER TWO

# REVIEW OF LITERATURES AND WORKS

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two segments. The first is an analysis of a guitar and the second is a review of related works.

The emphasis of this research is basically towards the exploration of acoustic guitar forms in producing sculptures. This chapter reviews existing works that shares semblance in appearance with the guitar. It also includes literature on the guitar. About ten works have been reviewed. This is coming from the background of the study idealising the numerous hidden forms in a modern guitar for the production of sculpture which is the area of focus for this research. This review is divided into two sub headings below:

(a) **An analysis of a guitar** and

(b) **Review of related works.**

## 2.1 Analysis of a Guitar

A guitar is a stringed musical instrument with a fretted fingerboard, typically incurved sides, and usually six or twelve strings played by musical artist. The large wooden part of the guitar is referred to as the body while the thin piece that is connected to the body is called the neck, the strings run from the bridge which is on the body of the guitar (near the hole in the body) and connects to the "tuning pegs or tuning heads" which are on the head of the guitar. The metal pieces that lie along the neck at seemingly random internals are the frets and the neck is sometimes referred to as the fret board. The six strings are pressed onto the fretboard by the player's left hand, which shortens the path of the string allowed to vibrate when plucked, which changes the pitch of the string.

In the words of Guy (2007), the earliest stringed instruments known to archaeologists are bowl harps and tanburs. Since prehistory, people have made bowl harps using tortoise shells and calabashes as resonators, with a bent stick for a neck and one or more gut or silk strings. The world's museums contain many of such "harps" from the ancient Sumerian, Babylonian, and Egyptian civilisations. Around 2500 - 2000 BC more advanced harps, such as the opulently carved 11-stringed instrument with gold decoration found in Queen Shub-Ad's tomb, started to appear.

Many theories have been advanced about the instrument's ancestry. It has often been claimed that the guitar is a development of the lute, or even of the ancient Greek kithara. Based on the research done by Michael Kasha in the 1960s, this claims seems to be without merit. He showed that the lute (any plucked stringed instrument with a neck and a deep round back) is a result of a separate line of development, sharing common ancestors with the guitar, but having had no influence on its evolution," Guy (2007). However, the guitar's immediate forefathers were a major influence on the development of the fretted lute from the fretless oud which the Moors brought with them to Spain. Guy (2007) continued that the guitar is considered a European-invented instrument that first appeared during the medieval period. The form of the modern classical guitar is credited to Spanish guitar maker Antonio Torres (circa 1850). Torres increased the size of the guitar body, altered its proportions, and invented the fan-like top bracing pattern. Antonio Torres' design greatly improved the volume, tone, and projection of the instrument, and has remained essentially unchanged.

At around the same time that torres started making his breakthrough fan-braced guitars in Spain, German immigrants to the USA –among them- had begun making guitar with X-braced tops which was preceded by the steel strings instruments that were invented in 1900.

Steel strings made for louder guitars; however, the increased tension that the steel strings created did not work with Antonio Torre' fan braced design. Guitar makers, such as Christian Fredrich Martin invented the X brace for the new steel stringed guitar.

Acoustic guitar (and similar instruments) with hollow bodies have been in use for over a thousand years. There are three main types of modern acoustic guitar: the classical_guitar (nylon-string guitar), the steel-string acoustic guitar, and the archtop_guitar. The tone of an acoustic guitar is produced by the vibration of the strings, which is amplified by the body of the guitar, which acts as a resonating chamber. The classical guitar is often played as a solo instrument using a comprehensive finger-picking technique. Gertz (2011), contends, "the modern electric guitar takes the Bauhaus dictum that forms a step further.

## 2.2 **Review of related works**

This review is directed towards sculptures with inherent structural semblance especially those with discernible forms of an acoustic guitar. The reviewed works below follow sequence of diverse media and rendition of realism and abstraction. Though, each artwork under review is dependent on the artist intuition and the materials of expression at his disposal. The various materials include mild steel sheets, aluminium cast, acrylic, cardboard, string, stone and installation.



**Figure I**

Artist: Rennie Cantine
Title: Got Moosic
Medium:¼"sheetsteel,anglebar,mapleandwood
Size: 8'high x 3½'wide x 3" deep
Year: not stated
Source: http://www.woodstockarts.com

**Figure I: "Got Moosic?"**

This is a sculpture executed with sheet steel, angle iron and maple wood by Rennie Cantine seemingly suggesting a juxtaposition of elements of a guitar. The top part of the sculpture appears to be a rendition of a segment of the figure eight found on an acoustic guitar represented in semi curves. The frontal side of this sculpture shares semblance with a composition portraying the guitar by the cubist artist Pablo Picasso executed in collages. The above work does not reveal itself immediately; rather it forces the viewer's imagination to unravel and fit the pieces of what appears to be like a puzzle hidden beneath the layers of the materials. Hence, the researcher adapted the compositional elements of balance, rhythm and movement which are intrinsic in the sculpture.



**Figure II**

Artist: Melissa Palmatier
Title: Lenora
Medium: plaster, wooden "Ibanez", bass neck, canvas, high tops, tulle, acrylic paint, newspaper, twine, wire
Size: 6' high x 2' wide x 1' deep
Year: not stated
Source: http://www.woodstockarts.com

**Figure II: " Lenora"**

"Lenora" (figure ii) rendered with plaster, wood, bass guitar neck and a canvas shoe that depicts an embodiment of the joy of music. Palmatier suggests that the title of this piece was inspired by the painter Lenora Carrington (a surrealist by association), whose imagery was based largely on the subconscious and the personal mythology. The upper part of this sculpture shows the handle and the neck of a bass guitar with its knobs which perhaps is suggestive of the head of this figurative sculpture. From the lower part of the sculpture it appears to be putting on a skirt, while the legs are almost rendered in a naturalistic approach.

On a careful look at this sculpture, it is somewhat a reminiscence of a dancing female figure supported by a metal rod that connects the upper part to the lower part. However the work is somewhat related to the researcher's systematic study of an acoustic guitar, besides the partial figurative rendition of the work the guitar features is not completely lost.



**Figure III:**

Artist: Pierre Riche
Title: Melting Strat
Medium: Aluminium
Size: 96" high x 54" wide by 18" deep
Year: not stated
Source: http://www.woodstockarts.com

**Figure III: "Melting Strat"**

Pierre Riche submits that the inspiration for the title of this piece was derived from the current world chaos which he referred to as political, economic, environmental and cultural melt down that is taking place in the world today. On the observation of this sculpture, it depicts a melting guitar which appears as a resonance of an enormous meltdown that gives it a major drip that forms the foot on which the piece stands. Apparently, the artist creates an impression of an unknown animal, the torso slants in a diagonal manner with a semblance of

an acoustic guitar. The appearance of this work can best be described only in terms of having a form related to that of the researcher but differs slightly in that this research is relief based.

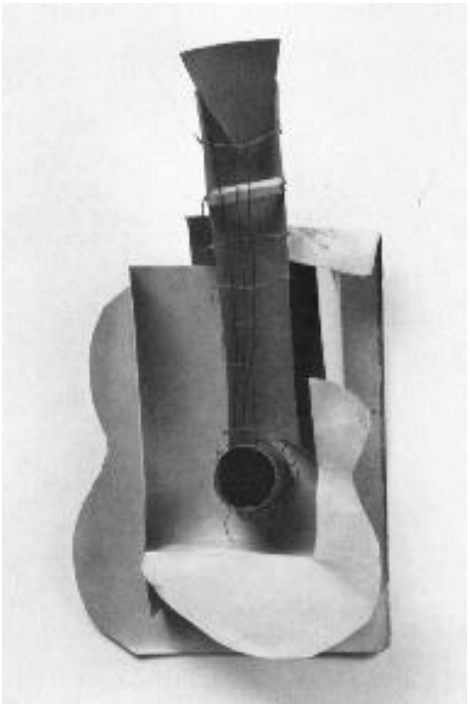


**Figure IV**

Artist: Pablo Picasso
Title: Guitar (maquette)
Medium: Cardboard and string
Size: 66 x 33.7 x 19.3 cm
Year: 1912
Source: *Picasso's Guitar, 1912: The Transition from Analytical to Synthetic Cubis*

**Figure IV: "Guitar"**

This work 'Guitar' was produced by Pablo Picasso in the year 1912. This art icon was at the period interested in analytical cubism. The breaking of the object into too many parts, the opening up of contours, and the excessive use of transparent facets leads to the disappearance of the object itself. The main difficulty of analytical cubism seems to have resulted from a dependence on the perceptual aspects of reality, by which the identification of the object essentially involved its visual characteristics, Markus (1996) states that when the eye was no longer able to locate familiar forms, it could not identify the object. Hence a new way to

represent the object was needed – one that would not depend on a reconstruction of its appearance. Those were the circumstances in which *Guitar* was created. Picasso was often known to solve pictorial problems by sculptural means. Since his main problem was the dissolution of the object's parts into the pictorial space, it is reasonable to suppose that he tried to solve it by examining the interrelationship among sections of the three-dimensional object in real space. That being the case, some aspects of the analytical concept should reveal themselves in the form of guitar as this was the reason for Picasso's search for a solution – as well as some clues to the synthetic concept, to which it would eventually lead. If both approaches appear together in *Guitar* one can assume that it represents a transitional stage, a first step in the changeover from analytical to synthetic cubism. Again, this work slightly deviates from what the researcher focuses on especially, its free standing nature.



**Figure V**

Artist: Barry Price
Title: Guitar Form
Medium: ¼ thick corten steel plate pour concrete base
Size: 89” high (+base) x 20” wide x 7” deep
Year: not stated
Source: : http://www.woodstockarts.com

**Figure V: "Guitar Form"**

Guitar Form, a work produced by Price, is as much a cultural icon as it is a musical instrument. It evokes imagery ranging from cubist paintings to pop phenomena. The sculpture seeks to test the limits of this legibility by reducing the form of the guitar to its essence. A vertical rectangular steel bar frame is enhanced by the curvature of the instrument's profile, leaving the overall form of the image to the mind's eye of the viewer. Nonetheless the researcher is inspired by the guitar form seen in the three dimensional sculptural composition.



**Figure VI**

Artist: Jeffrey Schiller & James Weber
Title: Muse in Strings
Medium: welded steel with bluestone base
Size: 96" high x 34" wide x32" deep
Year: not sated
Source: http://www.woodstockarts.com

**Figure VI: "Muse in strings"**

In the conception of this piece, the artists, Schiller and Weber (n.d) were "stirred by ancient matriarchal societies which considered the stringed instrument sacred to the Great Mother. It was felt that music encouraged cosmic awareness—that is, a sense of humanity's place in the universe. The above sculpture shows a female figure standing in a dancing mood pulling the strings with her hands raised above her tilted head and suspended on a spherical form that rather symbolises the lower part of a guitar composed with a 'geo-morphed' form. The presence of strings in the above reviewed work was adapted for this study.



**Figure VII**

Artist: Thomas Nyamaniso
Title: The Player
Medium: stone
Size: 30cm
Year: not stated
Source: http://www.africancraftsmarket.com

**Figure VII: "The Player"**

The sculpture entitled 'The Player' is an expressionist sculpture that feasibly reminds the beholder of an African sculpture, where the head is given prominence against other parts of the body. This stone sculpture has been handcrafted out of hard and heavy opal. The opal Originates from a town in Zimbabwe known as Bulawayo and carved by the Shona artists. This style of carving is also known as shona art. This African carving depicts a Shona man in abstract form, playing a guitar and facing his right side with the head representing the guitar. The sculpture is then smooth polished and set in the natural colour of the stone. Imaginably, the sculptor tries to render the work in such a way that less emphasis was paid on the guitar but rather a portrayal of guitar and the musician that is the central theme. Nevertheless, this proposed study varies from the above mentioned because the emphasis is on the musician and the rhythm he is creating and not the guitar as a subject of study.



**Figure VIII**

Artist: Onya Godwin
Title: Northern Rhythm
Medium: Welded Metal
Size: 60 x 20cm
Year: 2006
Source: Zaria art school, an exhibition catalogue

**Figure VIII: "Northern Rhythm"**

Onya's "Northern Rhythm" in figure viii is a welded metal sculpture of a musical instrument player that appears to be fondling with the strings of a 'Gurmi' (a musical instrument that bear the semblance of a guitar, commonly used in the northern part of Nigeria, it is made out of a calabash covered with hide and a long slim stick projecting from one side of the calabash with strings attached).The sculptural pieces which was rendered in scraps looks very dramatic with one leg raised, which in turn creates balance and rhythm. Nonetheless since gurmi is a

Nigerian traditional stringed musical instrument that shares few similarities with an acoustic guitar the researcher finds it thus useful for this work.



**Figure X**

Artist: Osamede Obazee
Title: The Guitarist
Medium: Welded Metal
Size: 22" High
Year: 2008
Source: : http://www.osamedeobazee.com

**Figure X: "The Guitarist"**

Osamede's "The Guitarist" is a welded metal sculpture of a rock star guitarist that appears to be lost in an ecstasy of the rhythm produced by his guitar. The legs of the player are positioned in such a way that one would feel the illusion of the dexterity he applies in striking the strings. This further helps to create balance for the player. On a closer observation of the welded sculpture, one would notice that the guitar that is being played is an electric guitar and the shape is slightly different from the acoustic guitar which is the basis for this research.

## Conclusion

In the above reviewed works, Cantine's 'Got moosic', Picasso's "Guitar (Maquette)" and Price's "Guitar Form" served as a major influence for this study in terms of inspiration. Works like Schuller and Webe's "Muse in Strings", Riches's "Melting Strat and Obazee's "the guitarist"are works that showed great agility in the employment of the dramatic qualities of forms. Palmatier's "Lenora", Onya's "Northern Rhythm" and Nyamaniso's "The Player" are the sculptures that were majorly inspired by the guitar as a musical instrument. From the literature gathered, it appears that the curvilinear forms derived from the acoustic guitar to produce relief sculptures has not been delved into, though it is interesting to note that different contemporary sculptors and emerging artist have explored with the same basic appearance of form exploration towards different purposes. This research, therefore, seeks for possibilities through the studio experience to explore the guitar form for the production of sculpture. This would include representational, stylised and distorted forms in a relief rendition.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.0 Introduction

This chapter contains information on the methods used in data collection, techniques, processes and materials employed in the production of works. The study employed an exploratory studio based methodology, which was conceived basically through observation of the acoustic guitar and subsequently sketches were made forming a mental image of the intended sculpture evolving from the representational, stylized and distorted.

## 3.1 SOURCES OF DATA / MATERIALS

Major sources of data for this study were collected from studying and observing the guitar, photographs, magazines, encyclopaedia, review of previous works and internet sources.

## 3.2 Data Collection

The process in which data was collected for this study was through primary and secondary sources.

**Primary data**: This method was by direct study of the guitar form. This gave the researcher a view of the guitar form which was captured in several sketches done with graphite, lead and ink on paper. The photographs of the guitar taken in the course of the study were used as reference materials.

**Secondary Data**: an analysis of related literature and study of works of sculptors that had worked in the same line of research.

## Reference Materials



**Figure XI:** A Catalogue of different types of guitar

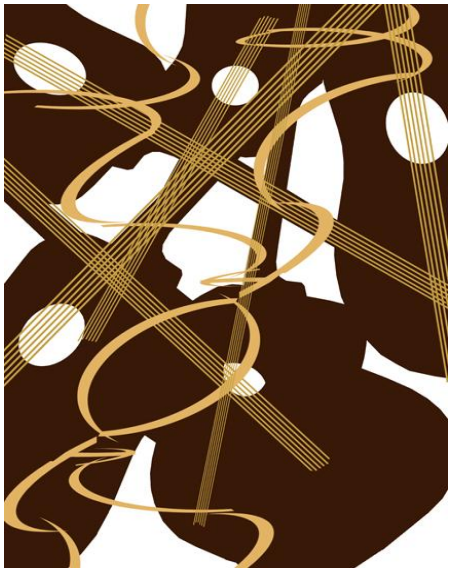


**Figure XII:** A linear juxtaposition of the guitar



**Figure XIII:** A Catalogue of different types of acoustic guitar



**Figure XIV:** An Acoustic guitar

## 3.3 **Sketches from Reference Material**

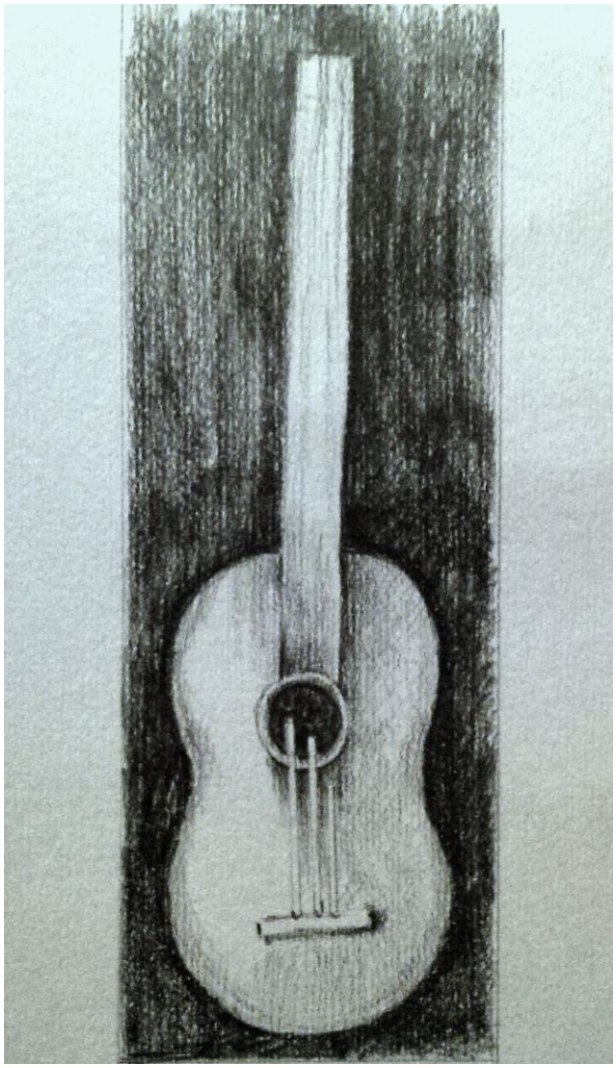


Plate: I
Title: 3 Strings
Date: 2011
Medium: Graphite on Paper
Size: 10x20cm

The above composition in plate i is a drawing of the guitar in it representational form, with some of the external features like the strings, neck, and the fretboard are represented and also devoid of some other parts which had been discussed earlier in the study.

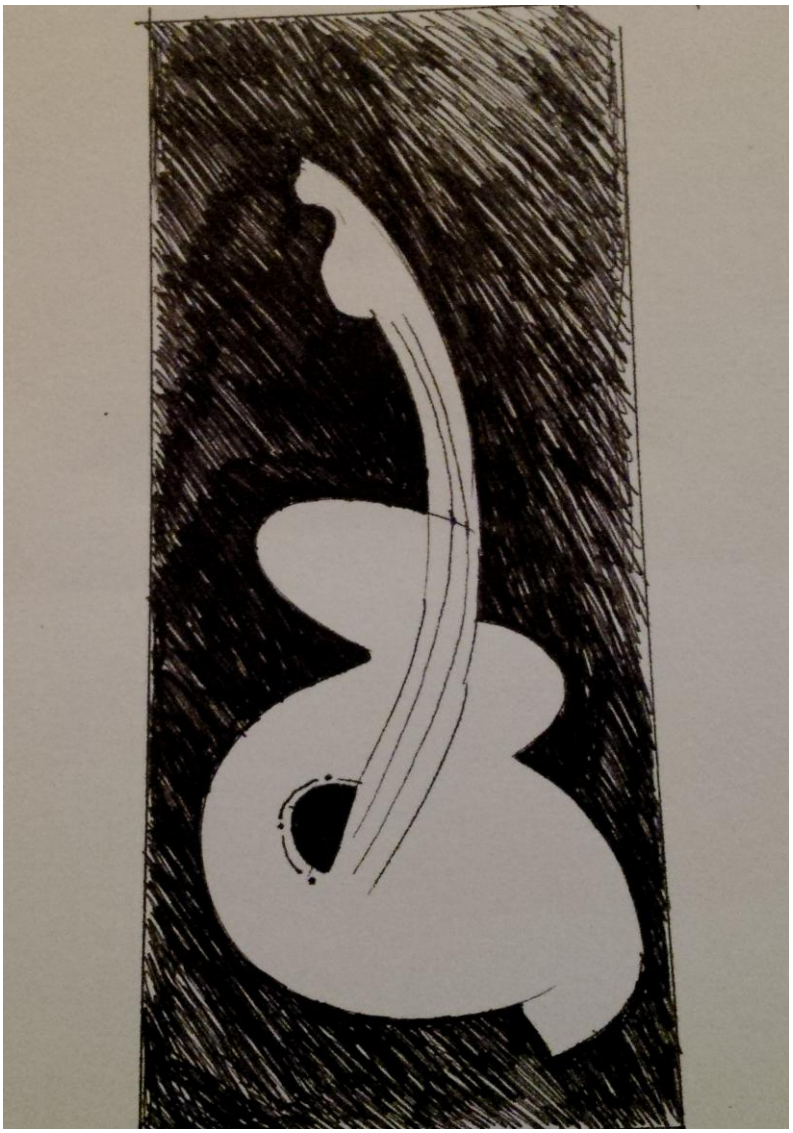


Plate: II
Title: Curved
Date: 2011
Medium: Pen on Paper
Size: 12x17cm

The above composition in plate ii is a rendition of guitar still in it representational state but gradually losing it shape from the conventional guitar into some curvilinear form. Some of the features of the guitar can still be seen

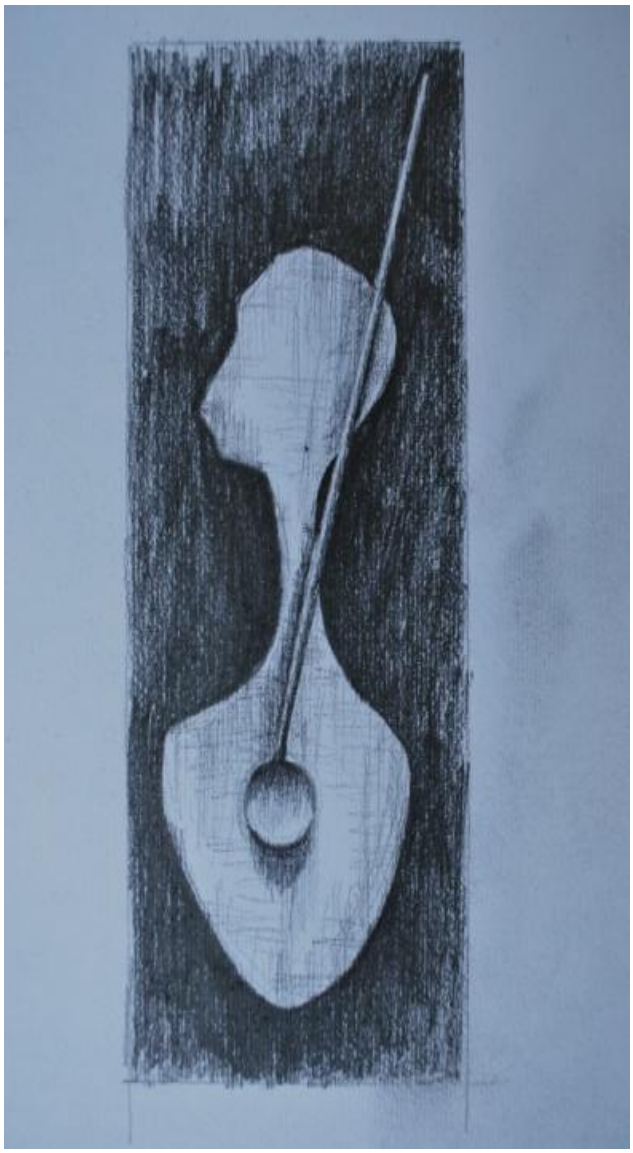


Plate: III
Title: Choir Master
Date: 2011
Medium: Graphite on Paper
Size: 10x15cm

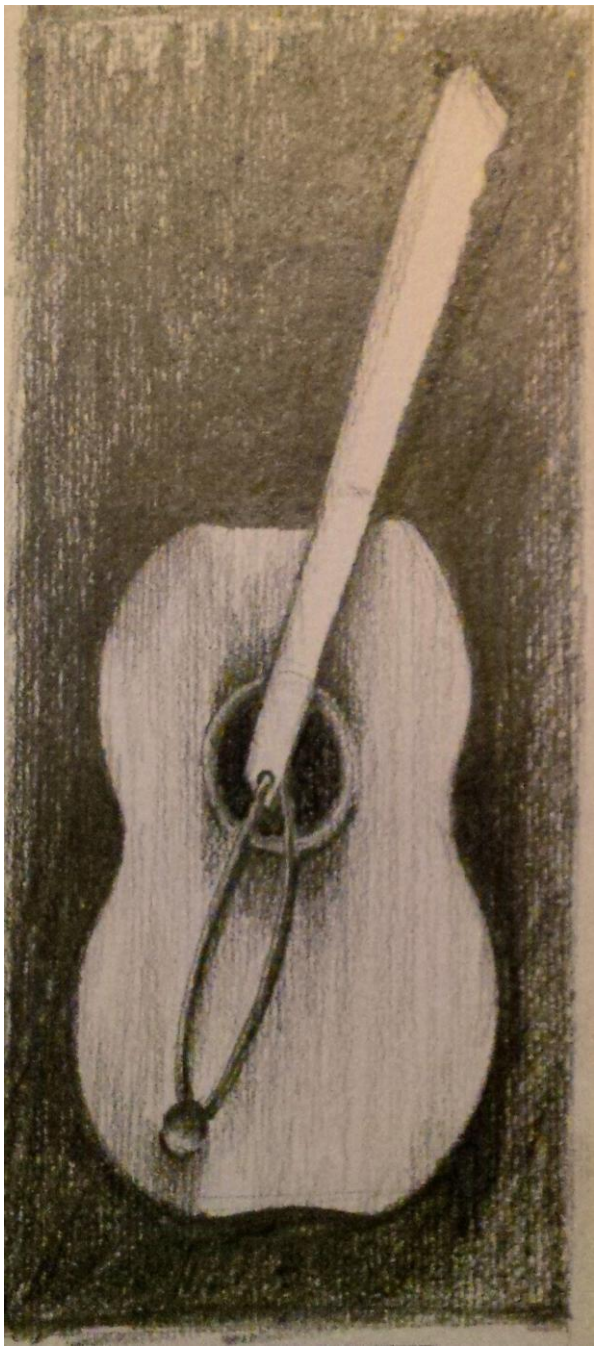


Plate: IV
Title: Jinta
Date: 2011
Medium: Graphite on Paper
Size: 15x22cm

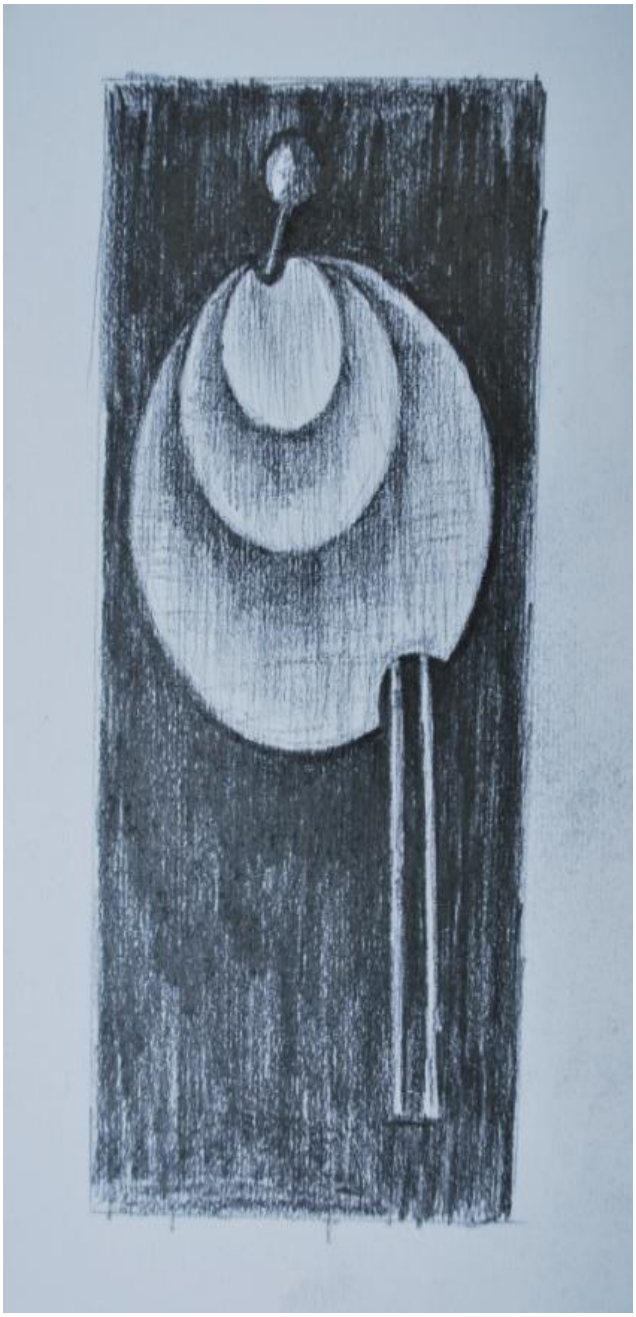


Plate: V
Title: Oba Benin
Date: 2011
Medium: Graphite on Paper
Size: 17x23cm

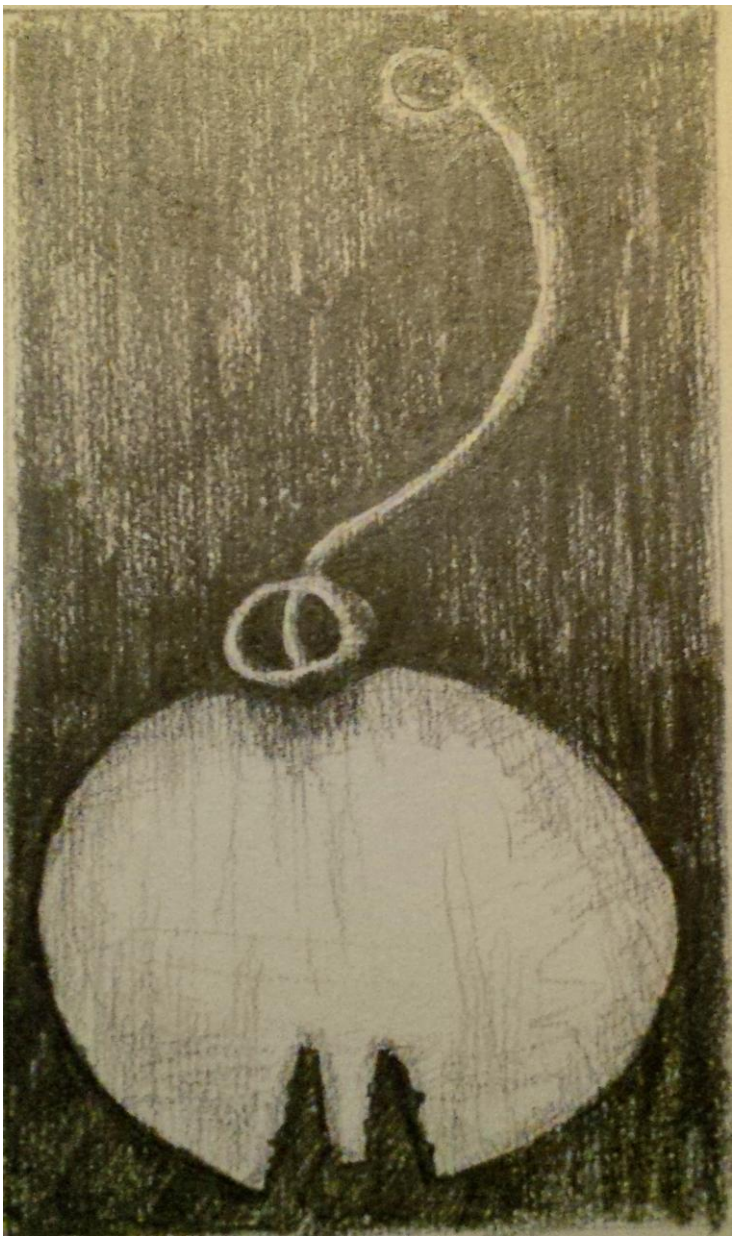


Plate: VI
Title: Ochi Agha
Date: 2011
Medium: Graphite on Paper
Size: 14x20cm

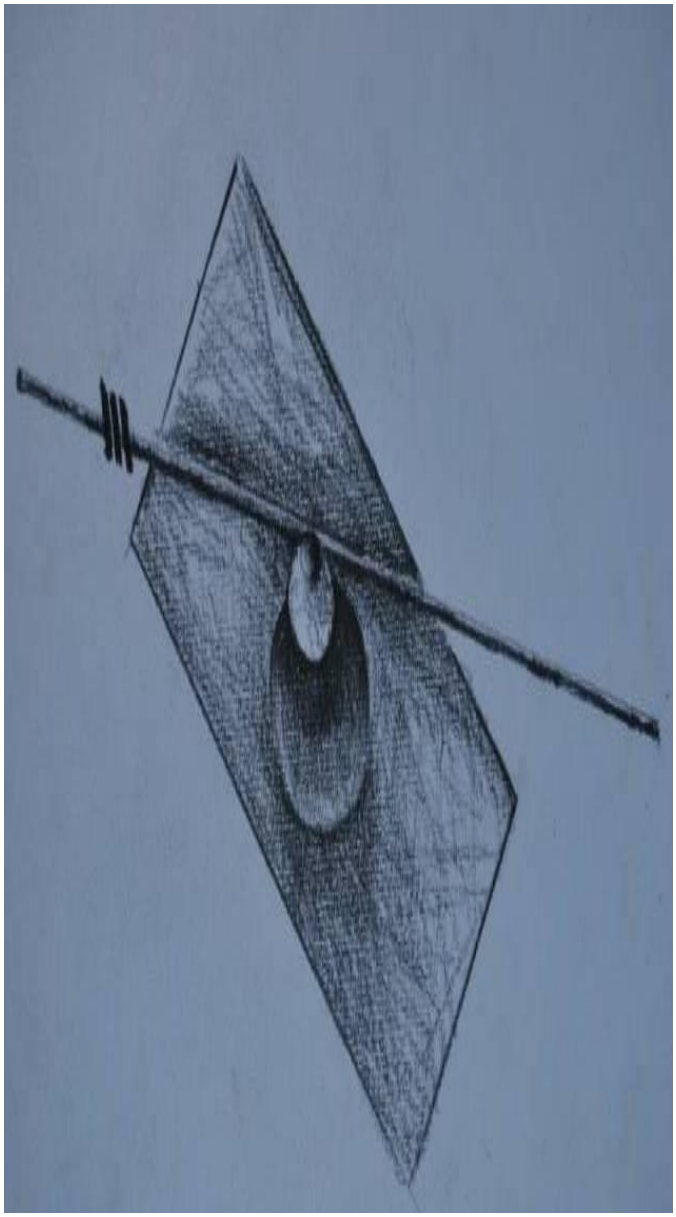


Plate: VII
Title: Dan Fulani
Date: 2011
Medium: Graphite on Paper
Size: 10x12cm



Plate: VIII
Title: Elegance
Date: 2011
Medium: Lead on Paper
Size: 10x12cm

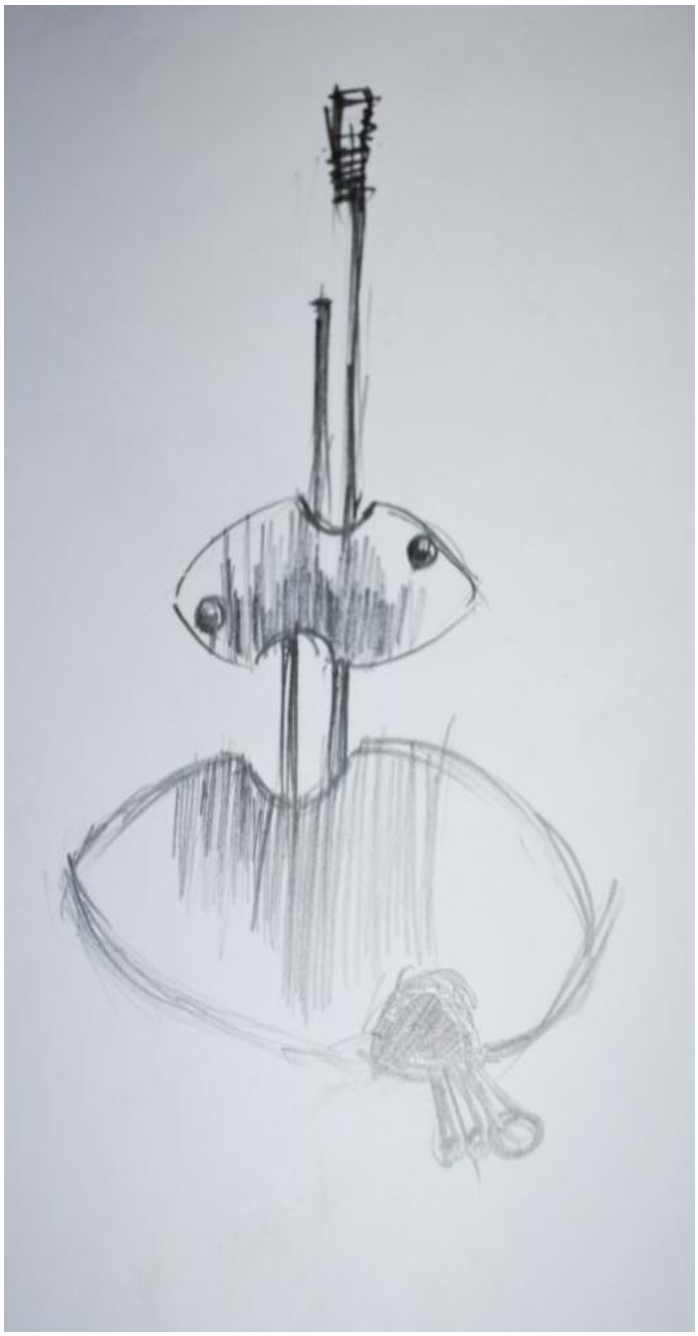


Plate: IX
Title: Endowed
Date: 2011
Medium: Lead on Paper
Size: 15x25cm

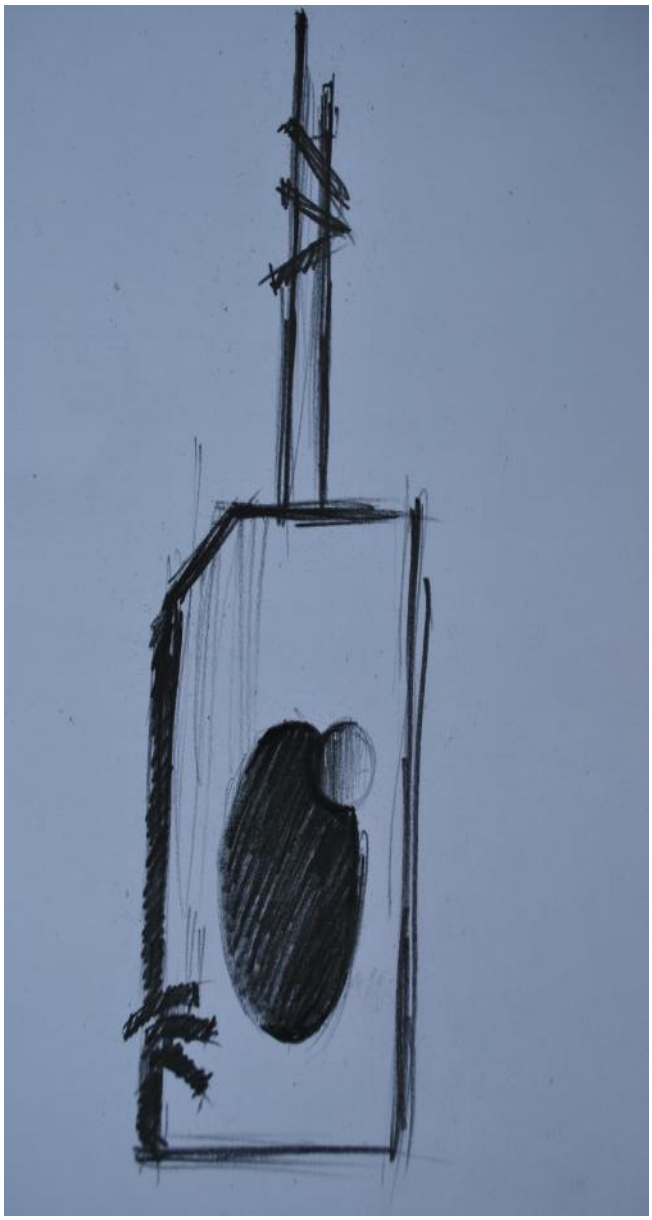


Plate: X
Title: The Player
Date: 2012
Medium: Lead on Paper
Size: 13x 18cm



Plate: XI
Title: The Player II
Date: 2012
Medium: Pen on Paper
Size: 12x15cm

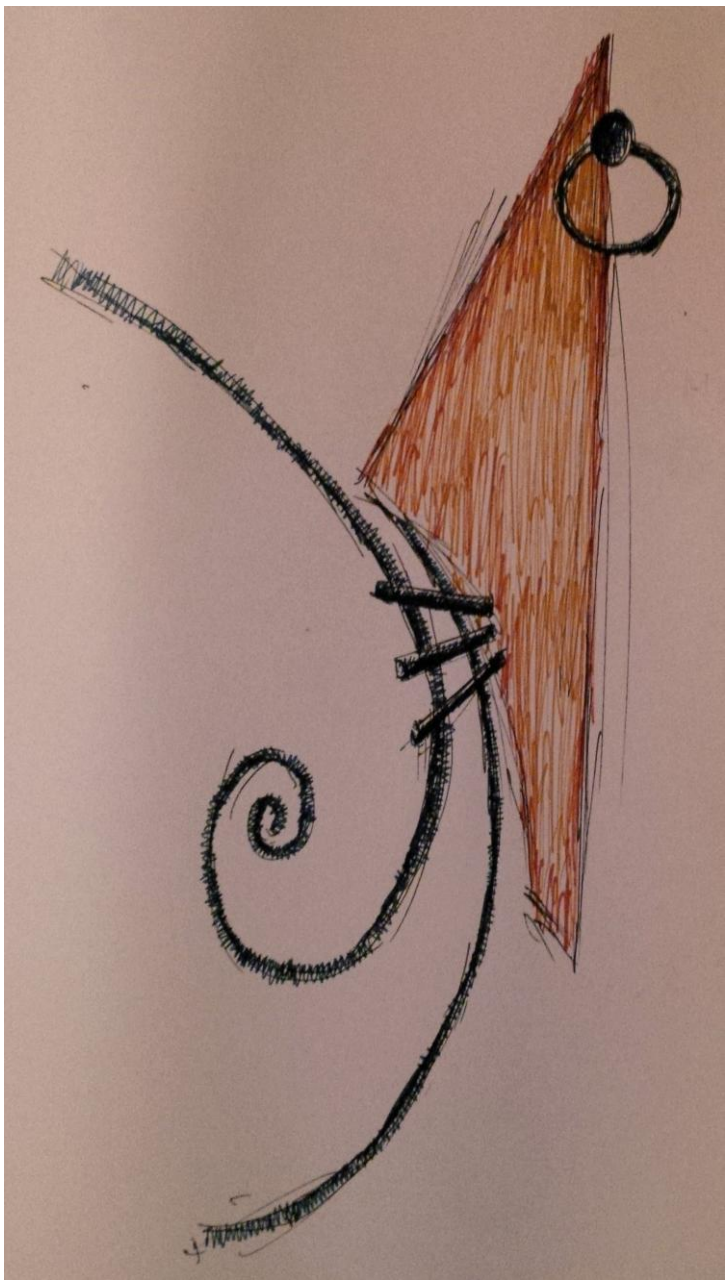


Plate: XII
Title: Embrace
Date: 2012
Medium: Ink on Paper
Size:12x10cm

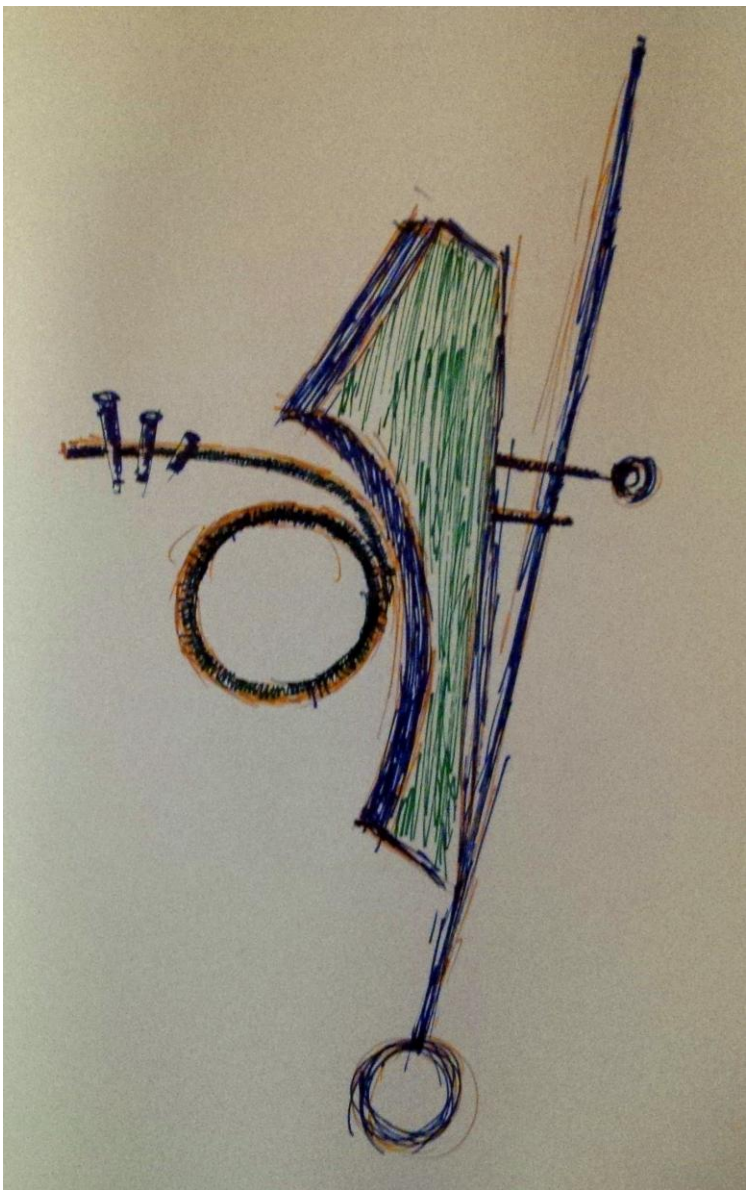


Plate: XIII
Title: Hidden
Date: 2012
Medium: Ink on Paper
Size: 11x13cm

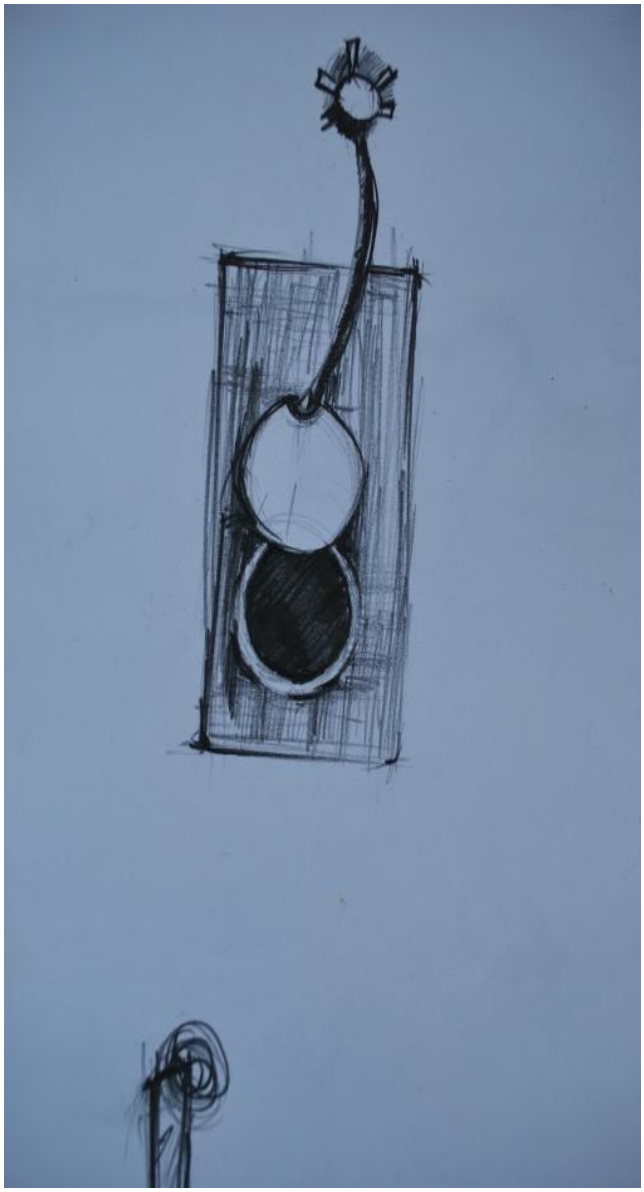


Plate: XIV
Title: Olori
Date: 2012
Medium: Lead on Paper
Size: 10x13

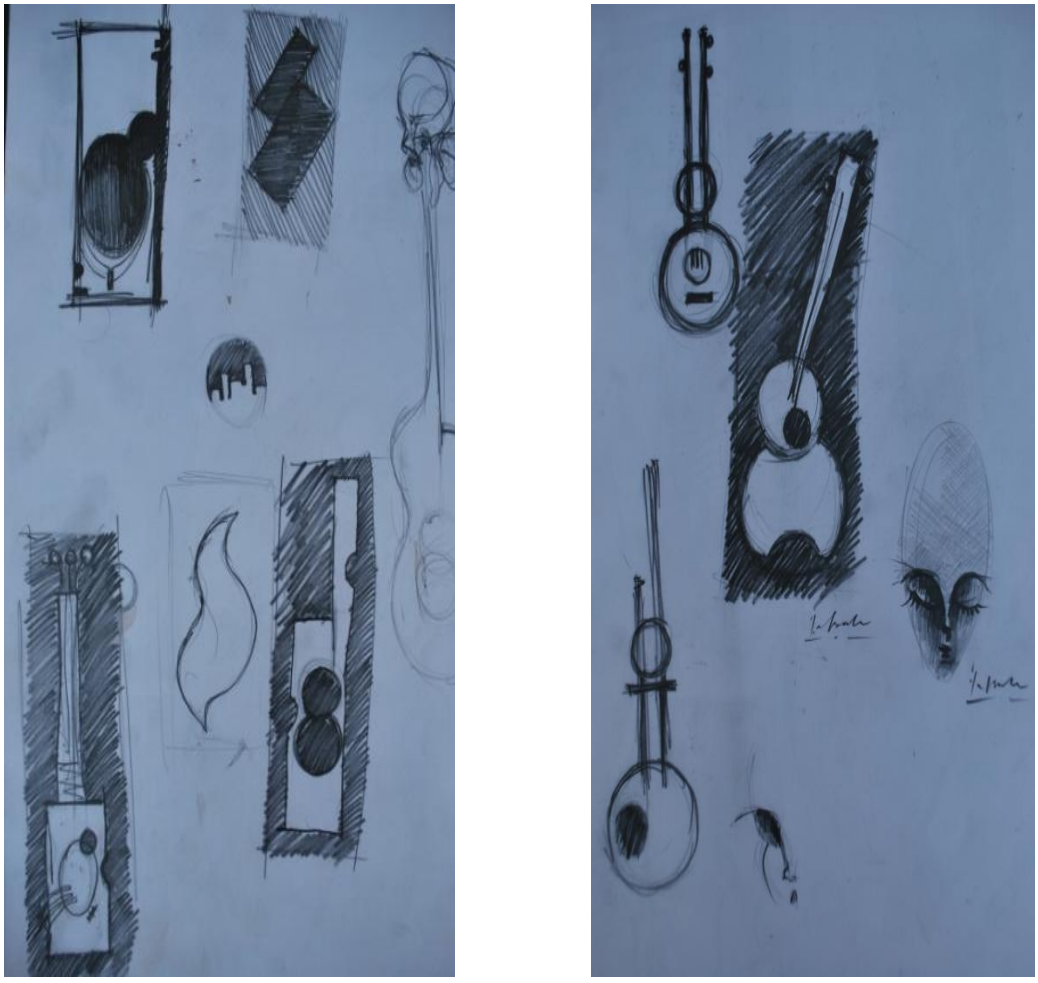


Plate: XV
Title: Experimental Sketches
Date: 2012
Medium: Lead on Paper
Size: 16x28cm

## 3.4 PILOT STUDY

At the preliminary phase of this research, of a evaluation on variety of materials was carried out and attempts were made in producing sculptures with them, in line with the guitar form. The materials that were explored were calabash, copper wire, sticks and wooden slate, but it was observed that the mild steel sheets, steel rods, found metal object and wood will be a more practicable medium as it is suitable for the study.

Calabash, which was one of the initial media explored, was found not being malleable in realizing the desired acoustic guitar forms because of its of resemblance to the body of the guitar . In addition, calabash is delicate in handling and breaks at any serious impact. It was also observed that when exposed to water and other climatic conditions it begins to wear out. Sticks on the other hand was supposed to be used to form a composition with the calabash to produce the guitar form but the researcher observed that though the slim structure is a great reference to guitar trunks, more time was spent trying to combine the two materials because of the difficulty in binding process.

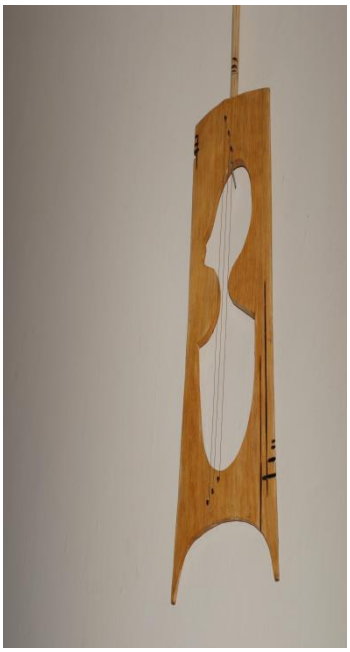


**Plate XVI:** 60x26cm, Wood and string steel rod



**Plate XVII:** 69x26cm, Calabash, Mild

## 3.5 TOOLS AND MATERIALS

The following were employed extensively for this studio exploration:

Jigsaw, Drilling Machine, Sledge Hammer, Clamp, Vice, Arc Welding Machine, Electrode, Welding Goggles, Tape rule, Hand Gloves, Marker, Meter rule, Air Compressor, Nose Mask, Pliers, Angle Grinder,

**(i) Jigsaw**

Jigsaw is used for cutting metal sheets during the studio experiment.

**(ii) Angle Grinder**

This is used for both cutting and grinding of metal steel.

**(iii)Arc Welding Machine**

This electrically powered tool has a tongue clip that is used in gripping the electrode that is used in binding two steels together.

**(iv)Measuring Tape**

This tool is meant for determining sizes of materials used.

**Hack Saw**

This tool is used to cut mild steel rods.

**(v) Pliers**

This tool is used for holding two items together.

**(vi)Air Compressor**

The air compressor is used to transfer paints on the work.

**Sledge Hammer**

This tool was used in beating the mild steel sheet to a plate like shape.

**(vii) Marker**

This tool is used to make sketches of a desired form intend to work with before it is been cut out with the jigsaw.

**(viii) Vice**

This is used to clamp steel rod to enable the researcher to cut the steel rod to precision.

**(ix) Power drill**

Power drill is used in boring hole into the metal sheet for either aesthetic or for easy cutting with the jigsaw.

**(x) Materials:**

These are the materials that made the studio research achievable:

Mild steel rod, Flat steel bar, found metal object, Nitrocellulose thinner, Matt black paint, Automobile paint, Polyester, Abrasive Paper, mild steel Sheets, mild steel rods, Scraps, Auto Paint, Matt black paint, Polyester, Nitrocellulose thinner, Brush.

**Procedure**

The method used was the direct and constructional approach. This involves carrying out experimental drawings of the guitar. Representational drawings involving stylization and distortions of various acoustic guitars forms were made. This was followed by cutting and beating of metal sheet into desired shapes and welding of steel metals rods together with the sheet metals and found metal objects to create the sculptural compositions.

The procedures employed in the studio work for this study is grouped into these three stages;

### 3.6 Stage I: Representational and Formulation of Concept

This first stage involves the production of several drawings of the acoustic guitars sourced from images gathered from the various sources which include acoustic guitar shape, photographs from magazines and internet web site. The researcher then employed a process of breaking down the acoustic guitar forms into a conceptualized manner to produce

sculptures. The sculptures produced at this stage have a near resemblance to the acoustic guitar.

STEP 1: The sketches were transferred to the mild steel sheets before cutting them to the desired shapes using jigsaw machine.

STEP 2: The mild steel sheets that were cut were assembled into a welded sculptural composition with the mild steel rod and found metal object machine.

### 3.7 Stage II: Exploration and Production of Sculptures

Stylization and distortion of two dimensional sketches into three- dimensional sculptures was achieved by beating some of the mild steel sheets, example of such are seen plates xxiii, xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, into desired shape and bending of the mild steel rods into circular and spiral forms this is also seen in plates xx, xxi, xxii, xxv, xxix, xxx, xxxii, xxxiii. This was practicable by a proper study of the sketches previously made and translated onto the mild steel rod and mild steel sheets respectively.

Some steps were employed to achieve this as thus;

STEP 1: **Beating**

The researcher beat the mild steel sheet that had been cut-out earlier into plate-like shape with hammer to create depth and gradation when attached to the composition.

STEP 2: **Composition**

Mild steel sheet that had been beaten to concave or convex shape is been assembled with the mild steel rod, found metal object and mild steel sheet to form a composition. This was achieved through arc welding.

STEP 3: **Assessment of the Composition**

After the welded composition the researcher inspects the sculptures to ascertain that it is rigid and well joined.

**Stage Three: Finishing**

The following steps were considered while finishing.

**Step 1: Filling and Buffing**

The researcher fills unwanted holes made by the excessive heat from the electrodes with polyester while welding and allows it to set, after which it is sanded with sandpaper to remove the rust and dirt particles on the surface of the metal sheet.

**Step 2: Spraying the work**

The researcher sprays the work with a primer using compressor and spray gun to prevent oxidation from acting on it since the sculptures may be placed and outdoor.

**Step 3: Highlighting the work**

After spraying, the works were highlighted with a lighter patina for clearer visibility of the forms.

## 3.8 Conclusion

The research method used for this study is the exploratory studio based methodology. This execution of this study was achieved through observation of guitar form which led to production of drawings that were used. Data was collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary source of data collection involved the study of the guitar shape. While secondary source of data collection consisted of related literature and works of contemporary sculptors that had worked in the same line of this research.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# ANALYSIS OF WORKS

## 4.0 Introduction

A total number of twenty works were produced for exhibition but fifteen where carefully selected for documentation. The choice of these works was based on their relationship with the logic of the study. The acoustic guitar, a stringed musical instrument, served as a source of inspiration for this research, thus the sculptures produced were categorised into three major groups as listed below.

- **Representational**
- **Stylized**
- **Distorted**

**Representational:**

This first stage stands as the practical studio work for this research. Several drawings of acoustic guitars were made from all of the images gathered from the various sources (acoustic guitar shape, photographs from magazines and internet web sites) since, according to Horton (1995), most natural history fields rely on drawing for identification purpose as it gives more precise information because it involves selection.

**Stylized:**

The researcher attempted to change slightly the acoustic guitar form from representational to semi abstraction by breaking down of shapes into interplay of curvilinear forms.

**Distorted:**

Several attempts were made to incorporate some conceptual ideas into the already stylized sculptural pieces by distorting their form. The result is a partial loss of identity for the forms.

## CATALOGUE OF WORKS PRODUCED FOR THIS RESEARCH.

### 4.1 **Group One: Representational**

Five works were produced in this category. The sculptures in this group are representational, they share semblance with the acoustic guitar features.



Plate XVIII
Title: 3 Strings,
Medium: Mild steel sheet and mild steel rod,
Size: 80x35cm,
Year: 2012

**"Three strings"**

The composition titled "Three Strings" was the first work in representational stage of the acoustic guitar. The researcher only chose to represent the acoustic guitar in its elementary state. This was done by fixing the major parts which include the strings and the external

features of the acoustic guitar and excluding other details that had been earlier discussed in the course of this research. The purple strings placed on a mild steel rod were arranged in such a way that will create both rhythm and contrast so that the strings would not be lost in the sculptural composition.



Plate XIX
Title: Pendulum II,
Medium: Mild steel rod, mild steel sheet and found metal object,
Size: 80x33cm,
Year: 2012

**“Pendulum”**

The artwork titled pendulum in plate xxiii, the researcher uses curvilinear lines to carry out its execution. A look at the work gives a reminiscence of a vintage clock that

swings its pendulum from side to side as the seconds tick. However in order to break the monotony of the lines, the artist decided to cut short the second border line which was to serve as the acoustic guitar neck thereby creating a sense of rhythm and also introduced the convex mild steel with a matt black finish to create a strong contrast.



Plate XX
Title: Guitar,
Medium: mild steel rod and found metal object,
Size: 60 x 24cm,
Year: 2013

**"Guitar"**

"Guitar" in plate xx shares semblance with "pendulum ii" in plate xix above but devoid of visible mass. The researcher decided to use mild steel rods and a ball bearing because of the malleability of the material and the curvilinear formation of the work. This was achieved

through overlapping circles formed from mild steel rod that appeared in the shape of figure '8' with a spiral line cutting across to break the symmetry. The sculpture was given a matt paint superficial finish.



Plate XXI
Title: plug and play,
Medium: mild steel and found metal object,
Size: 100 x14cm,
Year: 2013

**"Plug and Play"**

Plug and play in plate xxiv is an illusion of an acoustic guitar form that was made visually possible through lines and geometric shapes that were introduced in the composition. This was made possible by making the mild steel rods representing the guitar neck cut across the figure-8 like guitar body with a spiral illusion to create rhythm. The sculpture was left in its raw state to allow oxidation to take place on the mild steel rod. The resultant effect is therefore manifested with a rusty texture that was subsequently vanished with auto lacquer.



Plate XXII
Title: Dan Fulani,
Medium: mild steel sheet, mild steel rod and found metal object
Size: 65x18cm,
Year: 2012

**"Dan Fulani"**

The Fulani man's origin was for many years unknown (SIM in Owoade, 2006). Now they are established as cattle farmers throughout West Africa, in large plain areas of Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea by researchers of anthropology and other fields. The Fulani can also be found in central and eastern part of Africa. As the title goes "Dan Fulani" which is a Hausa word meaning a descendant of a Fulani race, commonly used in the northern part of Nigeria. This sculpture was created using a mild steel sheet which had been beaten into a concave and a convex shape, and a mild steel rod passing through to represent a Fulani man's staff on his shoulder with three pieces of square steel rod to represent fingers holding the

stick. However, these fingers serve as the strings of an acoustic guitar that has been broken down into analytical form by the researcher. The work was finished with yellow auto paint.

### 4.2 **Group Two: Stylized**

Works in this stage were executed bearing in mind a slight distortion from representational rendition and delving into the second group which is stylized. The researcher at this stage explored more into other forms derivable from the acoustic guitar.



Plate XXIII
Title: Olori,
Medium: Mild steel sheet, found metal object and mild steel rod,
Size: 65x20cm,
Year: 2011

**"Olori"**

An `Olori` is a Yoruba word for the queen. This sculpture is inspired by the western Nigerian palace setting where one would see the braided and beaded hair of the king's wife

and the beads adorned around her neck. The acoustic guitar is broken down into curves and geometric shapes with a juxtaposition of negative and positive space to create a compositional harmony. The textured finish of the sculpture is achieved by incising the metal sheet surface in a cross hatched pattern which had been earlier filled with polyester after which it was sprayed with matted black paint and finally given a bronze highlight to create a feel of solidity.



Plate XXIV
Title: Ochi Agha,
Medium: mild steel sheet and mild steel rod
Size: 75x24cm,
Year: 2011

**“Ochi Agha”**

Ochi Agha in plate xxviii is an Igbo word for “Warlord” is another sculpture in the distorted group that was produced with an inter-play of forms. Here, the researcher plays with coils from different sizes of mild steel rod. The coiled mild steel rod served as a connector for both the straight steel rod and the mild steel sheet which had been beaten into a semi concave and convex shape. An incision was made beneath the mild steel sheet to create an illusion of torn regalia. The work was given a black matted paint finish.



Plate XXV
Title: Endowed,
Medium: Mild steel sheet and Mild steel rod,
Size: 60x31cm,
Year: 2011

**“Endowed”**

This sculptural piece titled “Endowed” when looked at, the viewer would be compelled to see the acoustic guitar form been altered in a stylized manner. Here, the researcher tries to capture the form of a female torso thereby making the waist line very slim with a bead impression around it and making the hips very visible. The researcher beats the metal sheet into a plate like shape, running two mild steel round which doubles as the trunk and neck with a found metal object at the extreme edge of the steel rod to depict the head. The researcher gave the piece a rhythmic movement that creates an illusion of belly dance. However the artist created another negative space below the concave like shape beneath the metal sheet to create an illusion of feet and also to achieve balance from the space around the neck and waist line. The sculpture piece is given a matted finish to create visual calmness.



Plate XXVI
Title: The Player,
Medium: Mild steel sheet and Mild steel rod,
Size: 70x27cm,
Year: 2012

**“The Player”**

“The Player” in plate xxvi is inspired from Earl Klugh a prolific American jazz fusion guitarist and composer who marvels his audience by the way he strums his guitar during his stage concerts. The researcher attempts to create an optical image of a fellow playing the guitar using a square mild steel rod to create fingers from both hands. The fingers hold the acoustic guitar that has been stylised using an overlap of negative and positive space

to create the figure 8 in the box of an acoustic guitar. The researcher decides to give the art piece a matt finish.



Plate XXVII
Title: Choir Master
Medium: Mild steel sheet and mild steel rod
Size: 60x30cm,
Year: 2011

**"Choir Master"**

"Choir Master" in plate xxvii is a trainer and conductor of a choir. The work was inspired by an orchestra conductor, with the entire instrumentalists in action, playing to the instructions of the choir master. Mild steel sheet serves as the background which creates a silhouette effect of a human image with a cup like mild steel sheet that projects like a clenched fist creating an illusion of holding a swagger stick which the choir master uses to

conduct the choir. The artist chose the yellow ochre and blue colours because of their calm appearance to the eye.

### 4.3 **Group Three: Distorted (Abstraction)**

This third and final stage of the studio based research entailed transformation of works from representational to stylised and finally into distorted or abstracted guitar forms.



Plate XXVIII
Title: Stringed
Medium: mild steel rod and found metal object,
Size: 96x 15cm,
Year: 2013

**"Stringed"**

**"Stringed"** is a play of geometric forms with lines cutting across to depict strings in ascending and descending order. This was done to search for more viable aesthetic

possibilities of the acoustic guitar and this was achieved by the assemblage of mild steel rods forming a sculptural composition. The art piece was given a matt finish.



Plate XXIX
Title: Speak Out
Medium: Mild steel sheet and mild steel rod
Size: 79x14cm
Year: 2012

**“Speak out“**

Speak out in plate xxix was executed using a combination of mild steel sheet, mild steel rod and a found ball bearing.. The sculpture is inspired by the audibility and vibration one gets from a loudspeaker when a microphone that sends the wave is been spoken to. The

ring-like shape depicts the speaker cone while the three steel rods projecting from the right side of the sculpture creates an illusion for vibration. The work received a matt finish.



Plate XXX
Title: The Player II
Medium: Mild steel sheet, mild steel rod
Size: 75x 15cm
Year: 2012

**"The player II"**

The player II is another work that was executed in total abstraction, unlike "the player " in plate xxx at the stylized stage the researcher broke the acoustic guitar down into less

complicated and cubical form. Using the mild steel rod, mild steel sheet and found metal object , the linear arrangement on the triangular plane depicts the fingers of the player, while the linear form that runs from the circle at the bottom through the body, represents the neck of the guitar. A green auto finish was applied on the work.



Plate XXXI
Title: Hidden
Medium: Mild steel sheet, mild steel rod and found metal object
Size: 80x25cm
Year: 2012

**“Hidden”**

This is a complete abstraction of the acoustic guitar, and is inspired by a mask. It is an object normally worn on the face, typically for protection, disguise or entertainment. The sculpture which is rendered in metal sheet, mild steel rod and found metal object is given a twin finish of two matted colours black and purple. Considering the possibilities of an outdoor project an enlarged version of the hidden was reproduced and embellished on the entrance of the Senior Staff club of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.



Plate XXXII
Title: Untitled
Medium: Mild steel sheet, flat steel bar and mild steel rod
Size: 60cm
Year: 2013

**“Untitled”**

Untitled in plate xxxii is the last sculpture in the distorted stage. It was executed using mild steel sheet, mild steel bar and mild steel rod reducing the form into distorted geometric shapes that is reminiscent of sword in the art of Benin kingdom. The work was given a matt finish with tonal gradation to create an illusion of depth, contrast and solidity.



Plate XXXIII
Title: Hidden (Enlarged)
Medium: Mild steel sheet, Mild Steel rod, found metal object
Size: 18x6ft
Year: 2013

Hidden (enlarged) in plate xxxvi is the magnified version of xxxi it was rendered in mild steel sheet, mild steel rod and found metal object. During the execution process there was a slight alteration from “hidden” in plate xxxi, it was finished in fire red in contrast with the habitat it was embellished.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## 5.0 Findings, Summary/ Conclusion

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains findings it also draws a comprehensive ending and states its recommendation to researchers in related field of study. However the study was focused on exploring the guitar form for the production of sculpture while the specific objective was to study and explore the possibilities of producing relief sculpture derivatives from the guitar form.

## 5.1 Summary

This study explored form using the acoustic guitar for the production of sculpture in a sequential arrangement which hitherto filled a vacuum that had existed decades. In the course of this research, ten related works were reviewed and at the end of the study, a total of twenty works were produced, catalogued and documented. The sculptures produced are categorised into the representational, stylized and distorted. Some findings were made in the process of this study and are stated as follows;

## 5.2 Findings

The researcher discovered that several forms can emanate from the acoustic guitar shape when explored. This is seen in all the sculptural works executed in the course of this study. It was also observed that cubic nature of the works give it three dimensionality this is because some of the sculptures are rendered in slightly high relief, this is seen in plate xxx, xxxi, xxxii.

The acoustic guitar is known to posses feminine artistic features mostly in curvilinear manner and could even be more aesthetically pleasing when some level of abstraction and distortion are introduced, this is seen in plates xviii, xix, xx, xxi, xxiv, xxv. In the course of the study the researcher observed that other musical instruments can be explored for the production of sculpture with similar conceptual approach.

Finally, the researcher also discovered that creation of positive and negative spaces in sculpture eliminates rigidity, gives room for flexibility, depth and suggest movement this is seen in plate xxiii, xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii and xxx.

## 5.3 Conclusion

The researcher acknowledges that some contemporary and emerging artists in the past used various media to produce works based on the development of forms. These sculptors had at various times extracted and developed forms. However, it is obvious that form explored in these research were inspired by the researcher's personal interest and understanding of the geometric and curvilinear shapes derived from the guitar form for the production of sculptures. A photographic representation and documentation of all materials, from related literature and relief sculptures produced in the course of this studio based research were all catalogued in chapter two and four respectively.

In the course of the study plate xxxiv (hidden) was enlarged into a larger version of the works embellished on a building.

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