Chapter Seven

Revealing Six Decades of Zaria Art School Treasures

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Jacob Jari
Professor of Fine Art
Faculty of Environmental Design

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Acknowledgements

Many people have been responsible for my academic growth. They have supported me out of love, not that I deserve it. I thank them. I must acknowledge those who have directly helped towards the presentation of this lecture. I am grateful to the Vice Chancellor and the University Organized Lectures Committee for the opportunity. I thank the University Librarian for granting permission to photograph some of the works discussed. I also thank my colleagues in the Department of Fine Arts and the Faculty of Environmental Design for providing information on some aspects of the lecture.

Introduction

2014 marks 59 years of the existence of the Department of Fine Arts in Zaria; first in the Nigeria College of Arts, Science and Technology and subsequently in 1962, as one of the few founding departments of the Ahmadu Bello University. Since the 1960s, writers like Beier (1960) had begun to refer to the department as the Zaria Art School because of the influence it continued to exert on art practice in the country. Mount (1973), Fosu (1986) and Oloidi (1998), to sample a few authors, have maintained the reference to the department as an art school. In 1990, the National Council for Arts and Culture recognized the status of the department as a school of art by featuring the works of staff and students of the department in an exhibition the council titled, *Zaria Art School*. This is followed by a voluminous publication by the National Gallery of Art in 2009 entitled, *Zaria Art School*. Location does not determine a school of art. It is determined by the expression of artists who share a common style, opinion or idea. It is therefore, possible to have the same school of art in different art institutions. It has been insinuated by Okeke (1995) and Ogbechie (2002) for instance, that the Zaria School of Art is practiced in art departments located in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the University of Benin, Benin and the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife. The ideas of the Zaria Art School were exported and entrenched by early graduates who included, Uche Okeke, Irene Wangboje and J.R.O. Ojo.

Despite this monumental achievement, a few people including academics from other disciplines far younger in establishment than the Department of Fine Arts in Ahmadu Bello University have difficulty in evaluating the worth of the Zaria Art School. Several incidents point to this fact, one of the most bizarre of which occurred in 2006 when the dean of a faculty declared at a meeting that until that day, he did not know that Fine Arts was offered at tertiary level! At most lectures, which I have delivered on the demeaning status of art in Nigerian Society, I have always traced its roots to tradition. I have occasionally referred to Schwerdtfeger (2007) where it is reported that the initial respect given to an artist eventually and ironically turns to a fatal disdain. He reports that the title, *gwani*, is the highest honour Hausa society, not its rulers, can

give to an artist with exceptional skills. He claims that in the past 200 years only six builders had been bestowed that title. One of them was *Baban Gwani* Muhammadu Mukhaila Dugura who was killed around 1852 for building one of the most magnificent edifices of all time in Zaria, the great Zaria City mosque.

I have also referred to the strange conferment of the hero status on Okonkwo, rather than his father, Unoka, in Chinua Achebe's classical book, *Things Fall Apart*. The book opens with the comparison of Okonkwo to his father, Unoka, one of the greatest musicians in the land who by inference was an artist. Okonkwo is described as a violent man, emotionless, wealthy farmer and a title-holder while his father is described as a debtor, weakling and a fiddler. I have read this book several times and to this day, I am unable to understand why Unoka is so contemptuously described other than the fact that he was an artist. Let us examine the manner in which he is presented in the book.

We meet him right at the beginning of the story when we are told that Okonkwo had no patience with him because he was an unsuccessful man. He is described as lazy and a spendthrift, two contestable descriptions since, when we read the story further, we would establish that he could play music for several days on end, hardly a feat for a lazy man. The reason why he was a debtor was because although people liked his music a lot, he was not commensurately compensated for it. The other reason why he was a debtor was because he was very generous. Unoka liked nature; he liked a tranquil landscape with children playing and birds flying. He hated wars and could not stand the sight of blood. His son Okonkwo, on the other hand, loved fighting wars at which he had already killed several enemies, using the skull of one of them to take his palm wine. How could such a peaceful, creative, generous but underpaid man as Unoka be detested and preference given to a stone-cold killer whose preoccupation was to spread sadness everywhere he went as Okonkwo?

The introduction of Okoye, Unoka's friend as a direct opposite to him although they were both musicians only serves to illustrate rather, that as an artist, one needed to take another job to be successful in traditional Nigerian society. Okoye played the *ogene* but he was also a wealthy farmer who had three wives, two titles and a lot of food. To this day, many Nigerian artists have had to take

other jobs such as teaching in order to stay alive, and presently, art and artists in Nigeria sometimes suffer debasing branding as Unoka did. Reference to only recent accounts would suffice. Soyinka (2006) reports that in 2006, a group, the United Congress of Mbaise Christians, destroyed over 100 shrines with all artifacts contained in them. In 2007, a public sculpture in the city centre in Jos was destroyed purportedly under the orders of the governor, Jonah Jang. In the same year, it was reported that Governor Sylvia Timipire of Bayelsa State proscribed the teaching of art in public schools in the state.

Testimonial

These forms of iconoclasm have shaped my artistic expression over the years. I find that I have a strong affiliation to rejects; things found to have no use and are discarded. I see myself in them, knowing that they and I suffer the same fate as we are misunderstood by society. I imbibe Conceptual Art as a mode of expression, a post modernist approach which puts premium on idea over medium and technique.

The first discarded material I employed was cornstalk, in 1988. Most farmers discard cornstalk in farms after harvest. It is sometimes fetched and used as fuel for cooking or for feeding animals. It could also be used as fence to houses or for roofing but largely, it is abandoned after harvest and sometimes burnt on the farm in preparation for the next farming season. I find great joy revisiting the farms to conduct what I term a second harvest, fetching the cornstalk for my work. I bring it to the studio, peel and slice it into different shapes of interest. I lay my support, which is usually a board, on the floor and use water to splash on it, which creates a pattern. I mark out this pattern and allow the board to dry after which I splash another cup of water to create an overlapping pattern over the first one. This act of splashing is symbolic of chaos caused by the rejection earlier referred to. I work out my design, deciding and marking out which colours to use for each part of the patterns created on board. I then colour my pieces of cornstalk according to the chosen colours using diluted artists' oil colours. When they become dry, I stick them to the board following the dictates of the patterns and the design I worked out earlier. I usually use primary colours for the patterns and where there is an overlap, I

use the secondary colour, which results from the mixture of the two primary colours, which overlap each other. The coloured pieces of cornstalk represent the different people who are required to come together to salvage a chaotic situation created by the neglect of their relevance. Plate I shows one of the works I produced using cornstalk.

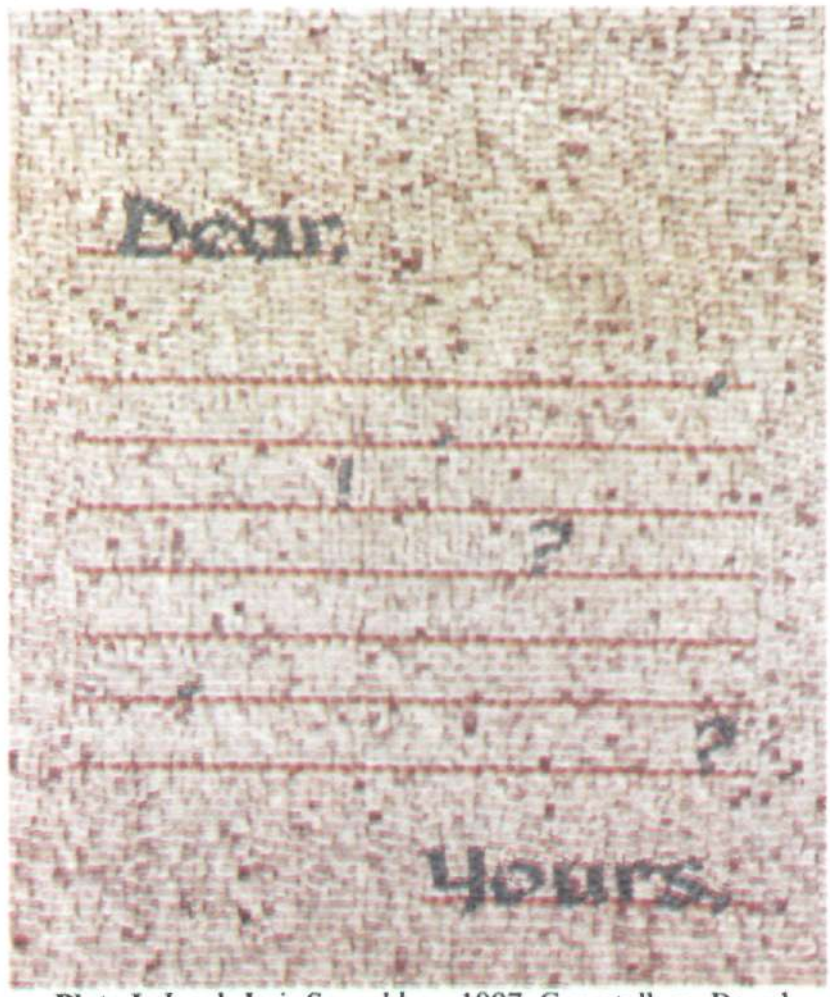


Plate I: Jacob Jari, *Speechless*, 1997, Cornstalk on Board, 3' x 2'

Apart from cornstalk, the other medium I use is the off-cut fabric discarded by tailors.

The fabric we give the tailors to sew for us is usually carefully selected from the market to agree with our aesthetic taste

and disposition. It becomes symbolic of us. We therefore, necessarily leave pieces of us behind with the tailors after we have collected our clothes since they usually cut off the unwanted parts of the fabric in order to shape our clothes to fit us. These off-cuts are eventually discarded by the tailors and often burnt. Again, like in the case of the discarded cornstalk, I visit the tailors to perform a second harvest of collecting the pieces of discarded fabric to create my work. These pieces of fabric, like me, have been rejected by society. This rejection is dramatized in the perforation exercise, which I perform with red-hot metal rods on my support, this time, canvas. The usefulness of the rejected off-cuts of fabric is seen in their coming together to seal the perforations and the transformation of the canvas into an aesthetically pleasing whole.



Plate II: Jacob Jari, *The Hunt*, 2012, Mixed Media on Canvas, 88.9 x 119.4cm

Plate II shows *The Hunt*, a work I created with the discarded pieces of off-cut fabric. Usually, in this type of work, I try to create three dimensions on a plain surface. The image of the perforated canvas is one dimension, the image of the canvas with the stuck pieces of fabric is another dimension and the visible silhouetted

forms I embellished on the support is the third dimension. The technique reechoes the function of glass. When we look into glass, we see the specks of particles, which have settled on it, we see our reflection and we see objects on the other side of the glass. Looking into glass for me is metaphorical. The holier-than-thou in society ought to see themselves reflected when they look into it. When we refer to people as degenerates, we ought to see that we live in the same glass house and we should not throw stones.

A third medium, which I use in my expression, is discarded printed news magazine. A current and topical magazine in the course of time becomes stale and is abandoned by the reader. When it is discarded it identifies with me, an artist, who is misunderstood by society. I pick it up and strip the pages to create tiny capsules, which I use to create my work. I usually stick the capsules unto a board. When stuck to the board, they appear to come alive like tiny crawling insects on the support. My objective with this type of work is to create tension on the support. A viewer would therefore, see that there is a main current which the capsules try to follow. Not all of them succeed in flowing with this main current and so there is a seeming struggle to be sucked into it. Plate III illustrates this. I titled the work, *Eclipse*, a short version of the full title, *Eclipse on a Refugee Camp*. Representational figures may not be visible but the tension felt by refugees is palpable. The other symbolic importance of the paper capsule is that the horrible news it contained is now concealed in the wrap and all that is now visible is its colour.

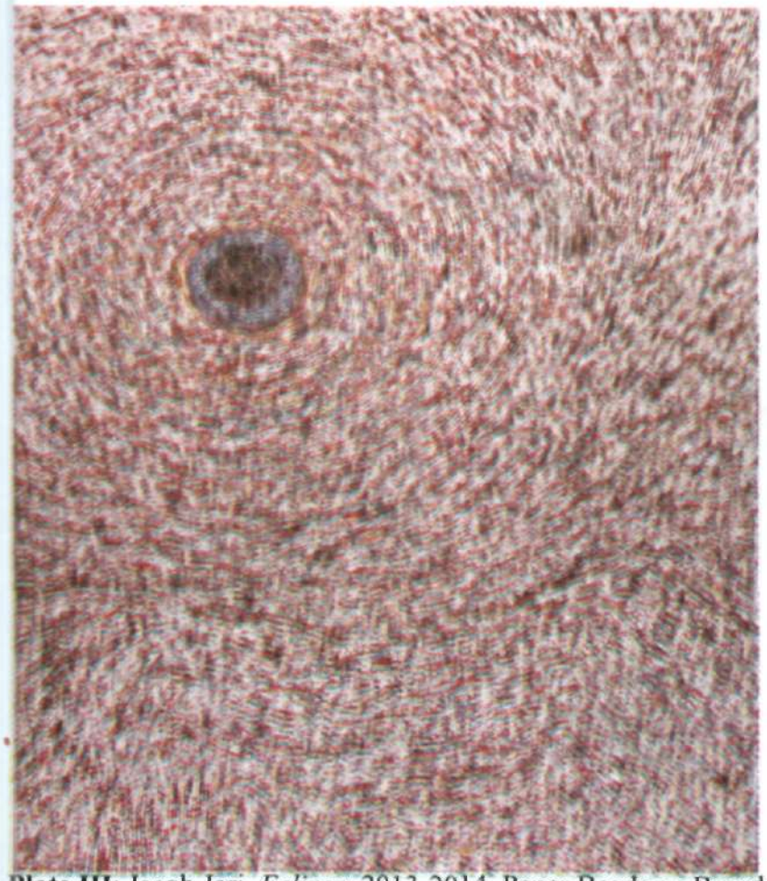


Plate III: Jacob Jari, *Eclipse*, 2013-2014, Paper Beads on Board, 111.8 x 78cm

Another medium I use to express myself is straw. The straw also has to be discarded before use. I pick it up from the streets and slice it like cornstalk into different desired shapes. It is already coloured so I do not need to re-dye it. The pieces however, pose more challenge in sticking to the board than cornstalk because unlike cornstalk, they are hollowed and have slim round edges, which make them difficult to be glued to the support. My choice of straw to represent my feelings about Brighton, a town in England, captured in Plate IV, is informed by my experience in it. While I lived there, it was considered to be the capital of Gay people. There

were several festivities and parties held almost every weekend and so straw was a permanent feature on the streets. The overall colour of the work is impressionistically pink, the colour, I was informed by residents, represents Gay.



Plate IV: Jacob Jari, Detail of *Brighton*, 2007, 2.5' x 3'

My dedication to employ painting to symbolically uplift the discarded into positions of prominence is further illustrated in Plate V. I recall that when I was a child, my uncle bought a new pair of nylon shorts. He returned with it from the market and in excitement

washed it immediately. When it was dry he set out to iron it using charcoal iron but he had made it too hot. As soon as he placed the iron on the pair of shorts, the shorts melted and almost completely disappeared. He was so distraught that for the whole day he would not speak to anyone. While attending the Aftershave International Artists Workshop in Pankshin in 2008, it occurred to me to explore how I could turn that sad experience into something uplifting. I bought charcoal iron and heated it to a high temperature. I used it to create motifs on white fabric, the result of which is seen in Plate V.



Plate V: Jacob Jari, *Untitled*, 2008, Charcoal Iron Impression on Fabric, 110 x 102cm

In my work with rejects, I have also used discarded plastic bottle tops. I obtained a compressed board and drilled holes through it, akin to my boring holes on canvas while working with off-cut

pieces of fabric. The drill bit I used to produce the holes on the board was slightly wider in circumference than that of a bottle top in order to hold the bottle top firmly without the use of any adhesive. The work is illustrated in Plate VI.

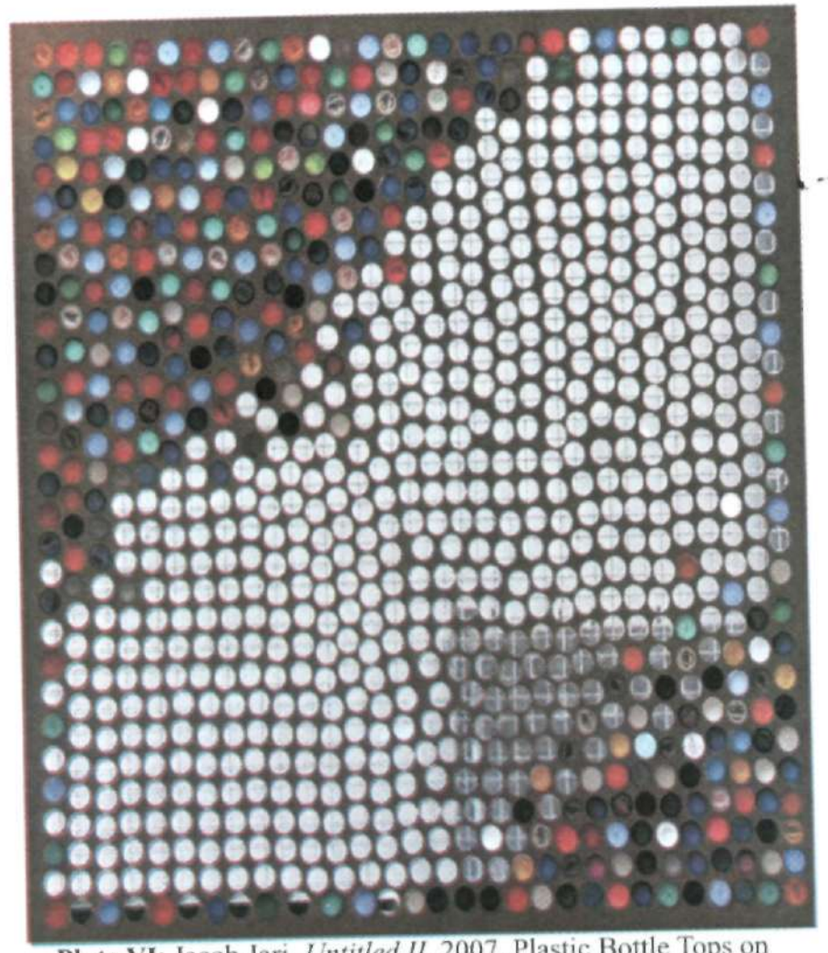


Plate VI: Jacob Jari, *Untitled II*, 2007, Plastic Bottle Tops on Board, 4' x 4'

My entire practice as a Painter for over 25 years has therefore, been consumed by the desire to address the public's uninformed perception of the artist. The groups and events I have been involved with have also been preoccupied with raising the

level of art appreciation in the Nigerian society. In 1992 for instance, along with Gani Odutokun, Jerry Buhari, Matt Ehizele and Tonie Okpe we launched the first contemporary art journal in Africa, *The Eye*. It was meant to provide much needed forum for the discussion of modern art in Africa and to assist academics whose progress in their various institutions was determined sadly by the number of journal papers they had published rather than by the number of exhibitions they had held. We received commendation from important institutions, which included the publishers of *Gallery* magazine in Zimbabwe and the publishers of *Leonardo* journal of art, science and technology in the United States of America. We also received commendation from well-respected artists within Nigeria who included Yusuf Grillo and Dele Jegede. The cost of production was borne by us with no help from funders whom we approached in vain to support us. Eventually, after several editions, we could not sustain the publication.

In 1998, together with Jerry Buhari, Tonie Okpe and Adele Garkida, we founded the *Aftershave International Artists Workshop* as an affiliate of the Triangle Arts Trust in London. The workshop was set up primarily to provide opportunities for middle-career artists in Nigeria to interact with their counterparts from other parts of the world in order to exchange skills and experiences. It is also meant to bring art practice to the doorsteps of the public for better appreciation since the public is usually invited to interact with the artists and the works created. The first workshop held in 1999 in the Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (MOTNA), Jos. 17 participants drawn from eight countries attended. The Plateau State Governor of the time, Joshua Dariye, was so excited about the prospects of the workshop that he donated a piece of land for its establishment. We ran the workshop until terrorism slowed us down.

I introduced a seminar series in 2004 entitled, *Art Mongering* in the Zaria Art School to create the avenue for art students to encounter the different modes of art creation. During *Art Mongering*, which lasts for an hour from 7-8pm every Wednesday except when students are on holiday or at examinations, works created at such workshops as the *Aftershave* or other works of unconventional nature are presented and discussed. Presenters at *Art Mongering* have included a Zaria branch Chairman of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, a Director General of the National

Gallery of Art, Abuja and several other academics from various disciplines. Presently, the Association of Fine Arts Students of the School runs the series.

My literary work is centred on contemporary issues of common concern to Nigerian artists. At this lecture, I have tried to create a montage of most of them, which address the Zaria Art School, and to present them as one unified and seamless story, which gradually exposes the treasures of the school. It has become urgent to uncover these treasures not only because of the misrepresentation of the worth of the artist in Nigerian society but also because of the recently emerging handwriting on the walls of establishment inspired by the catch phrase in vogue, *Internal Generated Revenue*. An exhaustive documentation of all the treasures cannot be accomplished in a lecture such as this. However, illustrative representations of the different kinds of treasures are listed and discussed. These include discussions on a living lecturer as treasure, a dead lecturer as treasure, and a living practice as treasure. The method employed in these discussions is a basic Art Historical method recommended by Feldman (1970) whereby the treasures are described, analyzed, interpreted and evaluated.

Abashiya Magaji Ahuwan As Treasure

Information on Professor Ahuwan or his work is scanty. This is why many publications on artists in this country, one of the most recent of which is Onyema (2010), omit his name. Yet, his ceramics have redefined the boundary between aesthetics and function, and have touched the lives of many around the world.

Ahuwan after obtaining the West African School Certificate from the Government Secondary School, Abuja in 1966, attended the Abingdon School, Berkshire in the United Kingdom and obtained the High School Certificate in 1968. In 1972 he completed a B.A. programme at the West Surrey College of Art and Design, Farnham also in the United Kingdom. He attended the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the University of North Texas, Denton both in the United States of America obtaining the M.Sc. (in 1976) and the PhD (in 1981) respectively. Ahuwan is not therefore, an alumnus of Ahmadu Bello University in the real sense but he has been teaching here for the past 42 years, a period long enough to make any academic an honorary alumnus.

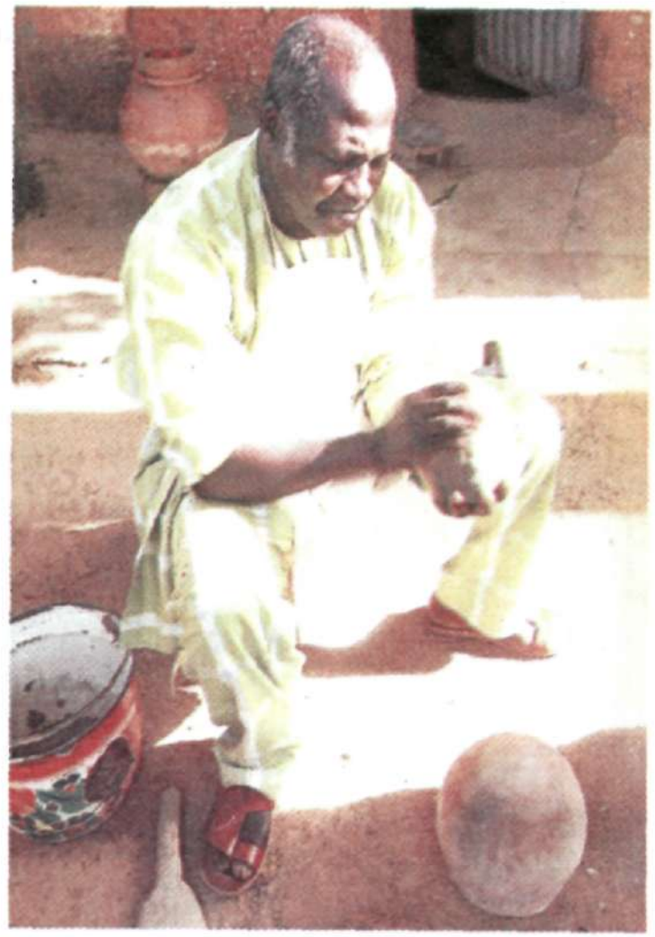


Plate VII: Professor Abashiya Magaji Ahuwan at his studio in Hunkuyi, 2007

Despite Ahuwan's training in modern Ceramics and his exposure to the best conventional materials and equipment, he locates his entire creative endeavour on 100% indigenous content. This is unusual in the Ceramic enterprise which other appellation, *China*, is derived from the overwhelming influence of Chinese pottery on global practice. He does not use the kick wheel nor glazes or modern kilns but produces his pieces through hand building techniques and he fires them in open fire using corn horst, cornstalks, cow dung,

firewood or sawdust. These are typical Nigerian pottery techniques, which he learnt as an apprentice under the great Hunkuyi potter, the late Mallam Mohammed Idi. Hunkuyi is located about ten kilometers away at the outskirts of Zaria. Ahuwan, until Idi's death, maintained his studio at Hunkuyi not only to stay in touch with his master but also because he discovered that the clay around the village was very good for his technique.



Plate VIII: Mallam Idi Mohammed

Ahuwan prepares the clay himself. He begins his work by piling it on an inverted pot and starts to beat gently until the clay takes the round shape of the inverted pot at which point he detaches the new form from the pot and continues to hand-build. His works are therefore, generally round although there may be additional protrusions which maintain unconventional shapes and which give an illusion of a fourth dimension. He also uses animal forms, especially that of the tortoise. The choice of shape is determined by his feeling either at the particular time of creation, as a reflection on a past experience or as a projection into the future. Whatever he creates maintains the qualities of terracotta because he believes that

he is able to find equilibrium between tradition and modernity by remaining down-to-earth natural. This is partly why in finishing his wares he does not glaze them but relies on the different nuances and sheen created through the oxidation, which takes place in open fire. Sometimes he embellishes them with geometric motifs while other times, he leaves them plain. Most of Ahuwan's recent works are purely aesthetic, to be contemplated for their beauty. The older ones are more utilitarian, which brings us to discussing how he profoundly affected the music industry.



Plate IX: Abashiya Magaji Ahuwan, *Flower*, 1989,Terracotta, 9" High

Ahuwan became fascinated by the *kim kim* in the early 1970s. The *kim kim*, also known as *udu*, is a percussion popular with many ethnic groups in Nigeria. With most Southern Kaduna groups from where Ahuwan hails, women play it. It is built like a pot with a long neck and two openings, a wide one at the top and a narrower one on the side. Different tones can be obtained by slapping an open palm on the top opening rhythmically while closing and opening the hole on the side with the other palm. Ahuwan's likeness for the *kim kim* can be seen in the number of variations which he created and magnificently decorated. In 1974, he was invited along with five others by the American government to undertake a three-month teaching tour of the country. One of the institutions he visited was the Haystack Mt. School of Craft, Deer Isle, Maine. It occurred to him to use the traditional techniques he learnt from Idi to teach the

students he met how to produce and play a *kim kim*. One of the students, Frank Giorgini, fully explored the potentials of the *kim kim* as a musical instrument. He presently owns a thriving factory which produces different sizes of the *kim kim* fitted with electronic microphones which are in hot demand by several musical groups around the world. In recognizing the impact of Ahuwan's oeuvre as aesthetic as well as utilitarian, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York acquired two of his works as part of its permanent African collection in 1989.



Plate X: Abashiya Magaji Ahuwan, *Kim Kim*, 1990, Terracotta, 12" High



Plate XI: Abashiya Magaji Ahuwan, *Submarine*, 2002, Terracotta, 9" High



Plate XII: *Kim Kim* by Frank Giorgini,
Professor Ahuwan's Student



Plate XIII: Frank Giorgini with sets of *Kim Kim* equipped with electronic microphones

Gani Odutokun As Treasure

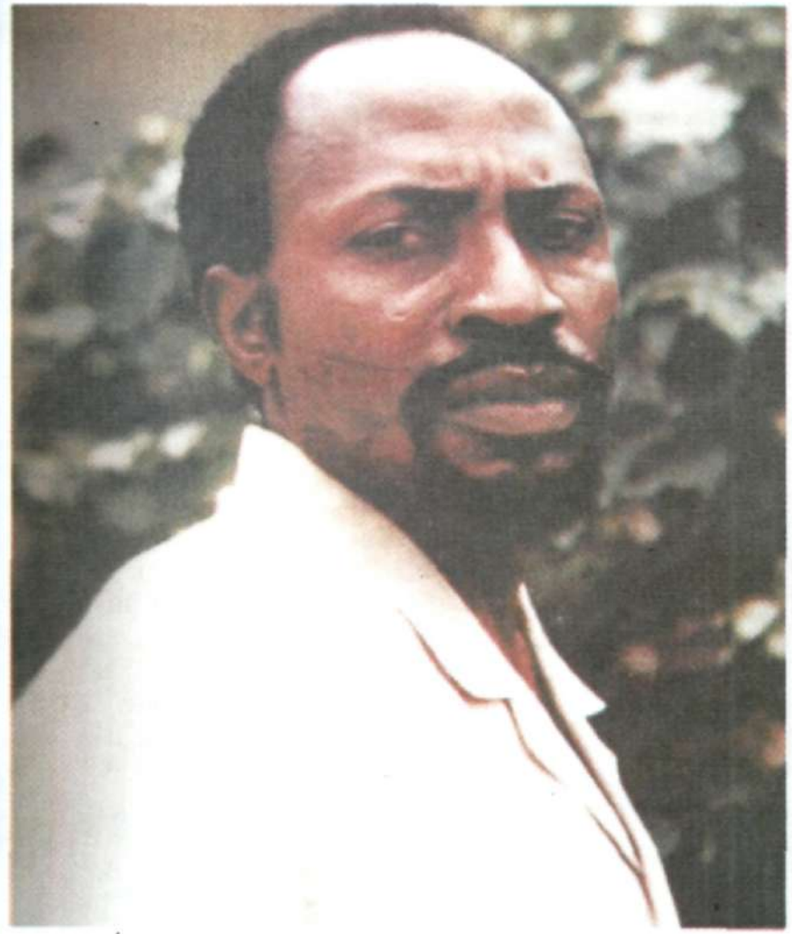


Plate XIV: Gani Odutokun

Gani Odutokun was one of the most influential artists of the Zaria Art School. This was partly evident in the events organized to celebrate his life shortly after his death on 15th February, 1995. The 1995 graduating students of the art school which he headed before he died wrote a moving tribute to him in their exhibition catalogue. At the first anniversary of his death in 1996, an exhibition of his works was organized at the Ahmadu Bello University Museum in

Samaru. In April of the same year the exhibition was moved to the British Council, Kaduna from where it was again moved to the Goethe Institute, Lagos in September. Two months later, in November, the Academic Staff Union of Universities, Zaria Branch, held a seminar in Zaria to mark the anniversary of his death. His alma-matter, the Department of Fine Arts, again held a memorial exhibition in October, 1998. In June, 1999, the first leg of the *Accident and Design* touring exhibition opened at the Alliance Francaise, Kaduna and was moved the same month to the Maison de France, Lagos. The final leg of the exhibition opened to a large and enthusiastic audience in January, 2000 at the Brunei Gallery, London. The organizers were proud of the fact that it was the first exhibition to hold in the gallery this millennium, something of an honour to Gani. It comprised his works and those of some of the younger artists he had influenced. It was one of the rare exhibitions held in London conceived, executed and almost exclusively funded by Africans resident in Africa. The exhibition was well received with favourable reviews appearing in the news at home and abroad. The *West African Magazine* issue number 4212 of February, 2000 for instance, dedicated four pages to its review. In the Spring copy of *Nka*, a journal of contemporary African art published in 2001, there was written a well illustrated article which was favourably disposed to the exhibition. The opening was attended by several highly placed personalities including the Commonwealth Secretary General of the time, Chief Emeka Anyaoku and the Nigerian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom at the time, Prince Bolasodun Adesumbo Ajibola. Sir Robert Loder, the initiator of *Africa'95*, a huge festival of African arts organized in England in 1995, was also at the opening and so were several notable academics, artists and connoisseurs.

The singular event, which however, marks Gani Odutokun as one of the greatest treasures of the Zaria Art School, is the thriving business of forging his works. By 2012, not less than four works were forged and sold. One of the most sensational stories on forgery in Nigeria is that around the forgery of the *Dialogue with Mona Lisa*

It is rare that any artist would like to invest precious time and resources to imitate a work by a less important and hardly-selling artist although it is not entirely impossible. A famous artist may copy a work by a less popular artist and render the work even much

better than the original but he or she would sign his or her name on it. This example is clearer when music is the genre of art under discussion. Some contemporary musicians are in the habit of remixing earlier tunes by other musicians. The difference between this type of copying to the type which *Dialogue with Mona Lisa* represents is that *Dialogue with Mona Lisa* was produced with the sole intention to present it as an original work of Gani in order to exchange for a lot of money, over N3million. This kind of forgery has historical precedents and perpetrators have included even very famous artists. Apart from presenting some of his good students' works as his, which was generally a standard practice and an accepted etiquette, Michelangelo is reported to have faked an antique, made it look ancient and sold it to an art dealer called Baldassare del Milanese.



Plate XV: Gani Odutokun, *The Butterfly that Wanted to Turn Yellow*, 1994, Oil on Canvas, 61x90cm

At the launching in Lagos in 2006 of the book, *Master of Masters-Yusuf Grillo: His Life and Works* published by the National Gallery of Art, this issue of forgery assumed prominence. It became apparent that almost all prominent artists in Nigeria have had their works forged at one point or another for financial gains. These artists include Grillo himself, Bruce Onobrakpeya and Kolade

Oshinowo, alumni of the Zaria Art School who are alive and whose techniques are relatively more difficult to imitate than others. It is easier to copy the work of a dead artist because a living artist may have the opportunity for refutation. Gani's works comparatively were therefore, more tempting to forge. By the time he died on 15th February 1995, his works were among the most sought after in the country. His technique of pouring liquid pigment on his support and his philosophy of accident and design, exemplified in Plate XV, were particularly well received by collectors and art connoisseurs. Moreover, he was fast becoming the epitome of the academic artist, having become the head of the premier art department in the country, the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the national vice president of the Society of Nigerian Artists.

The *Dialogue with Mona Lisa*, probably the most iconic painting Gani ever created, was painted in 1991. In 1992, he took it along on his first and only trip to England. He was attending an exposition of his works by Leroy Coubargy who owned and managed the Savannah Art Gallery in London. Several postcards, which Gani brought home on his return, were made of the painting. He however, left the original work behind with Coubargy. The subsequent disappearance of this painting has become a mystery. While working towards the Accident and Design exhibition, which held in London in 2000, the curators wanted to include it as one of the exhibits. Coubargy at this time had already shut down the gallery and was reported to have left England for Ghana, leaving behind neither contact address nor number. John Picton, a Professor emeritus of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, confirmed that Coubargy left suddenly. Picton reported that he was informed of the intention (of the owners of the property where Savannah Gallery used to occupy) to auction what Coubargy left behind in the property. These included some personal effects and works, which by now were removed and kept outside at the mercy of the treacherous London weather. He feared that being a gouache, the *Dialogue with Mona Lisa*, if it was part of what was left in the rains, would have been destroyed because he attended the auction but it was not presented as one of the items for auction. It appears a few people have been interested in the painting. On 20th July 2010, Frederick Lamp, author of *Art of the Baga*, posted a

notice seeking information on its whereabouts on the net. Until May 2012, nobody had openly claimed to sight the painting anywhere since Gani left it with Coubargy in 1992.



Plate XVI: Two Images of the *Dialogue with Mona Lisa*, one of which is Forged

On page 45 of the 2012 Arthouse auction catalogue, the image of the *Dialogue with Mona Lisa* made a sudden appearance! Information about the painting on the same page revealed that the present owner acquired it from Gani's estate and would wish to sell it for N2.5million- N3million. Upon close scrutiny and comparison of the image in the catalogue to that on the postcards Gani brought home from England in 1992, however, it became obvious that the one in the catalogue was that of an imitation. The representative of

Gani's estate, his wife Elizabeth, denied any knowledge of the whereabouts of the painting after Gani took it to England in 1992. She was then prompted to visit the Arthouse in Lagos to clarify the authenticity of the painting and to ascertain who brought it for auctioning. She confirmed that the president of the Art Galleries Association of Nigeria brought it to the Arthouse. When she met him, he explained that he purchased the work from a certain artist for N120,000. This artist, who did not represent Gani's estate, could neither be located nor contacted. After purchasing the work, the president of the Art Galleries Association met the dean of the School of Art, Design and Printing, Yaba College of Technology Lagos, to authenticate it as an original work of Gani Odutokun. The dean obliged. He was to declare later that the painting he was supposed to authenticate was not presented to him. He however, set to work using the image of the same painting in a book entitled, *Understanding Art* by Lois Rathur. On an official letter-headed paper signed, stamped and dated 30th April 2012, under the subtitle, *Synoptic Aesthetic Scanning*, he authenticated that,

> The primary visual simulation of the above-named artwork by Professor Gani Odutokun, confirms that the artwork is an original product of the said artist. The tactile effects, both frontal and back reveal and correspond to the signed date of production. The colour scheme and modulation also reveal that of Prof Gani Odutokun. The Pictorial composition is original and it is of the said date signed on the work. Signature of the artist is that of Prof Gani Odutokun.

The questions that should then be asked include: how did the dean conduct an aesthetic scanning to arrive at such definite conclusions without the work? What are the implications of using an official position to authenticate a work that was not visible? The date of the letter should also be noted. By this date, the Arthouse had already tried severally to contact Gani's wife over the painting, which suggests that the letter the dean wrote was prompted by an anticipated challenge of authenticity. Very few people knew that the image of the original *Dialogue with Mona Lisa* was on postcards available to people who would pose this challenge. The president of

the Art Galleries Association, when confronted with the postcard image and after comparing it to the painting he brought for auction, eventually conceded that the latter was an imitation.

Retaining Works Of Graduating Students As Treasure

So far at this lecture, we have discussed a living artist, Abashiya Ahuwan as treasure and we have also discussed a dead artist, Gani Odutokun as treasure. We now discuss another treasure, a living practice, which is the reservation of the works of graduating students, a practice as old as the Zaria Art School. In the good old days in the art school, all art materials were supplied free. The reason for the cessation of supply in the late 1980s is yet to be established but many departments other than Fine Arts continue to enjoy supply of materials to their laboratories. When the materials were supplied free, the art students were encouraged to produce as many art works as their creative impulses led them. The department did not feel any restrain to retain any work it chose. In the 1960s, 70s and part of the 80s there was a strong collection of art works which had been built from retaining works of dynamic artists like, Clary Nelson Cole, Elis Erimona, Roland Abiodun, Christopher Adepegba, Kolade Osinowo, Edward Ejembi, Dele Jegede, Gani Odutokun, Richard Baye, to mention a few. Most of these works were kept within the department while a few were kept in other spaces within the University such as the Kashim Ibrahim Library, the sick bay, the Veterinary Hospital, and the gymnasium. Retained sculptures in the department were kept either in the sculpture garden or in the sculpture store while the paintings were kept in the painting store in the roof of the building. The practice of retaining works, despite the fact that students now buy all their materials, continues to this day.

It is obvious why some works of graduating students should be retained. Apart from their aesthetic appeal, they are retained most fundamentally because they are used as teaching aids to illustrate the various methods and techniques of art creation. Other students are also able to appreciate the standard already attained in the school. They should therefore aspire to equal or surpass it. Retained works are also useful during exhibitions. Since they are representative works of every student, a collection of them gives a panoramic insight into the school's expression. They have been known to

feature prominently in important exhibitions such as the one earlier referred to as organized by the National Council for Arts and Culture in 1990 entitled *Zaria Art School* under the Evolution in Nigerian Art Series. Occasionally the department or the University finds the need to give someone a befitting present. Retained works are sometimes presented. Retained works especially sculptures have given character to the overall ambiance of the department. Perhaps the Sculpture Garden is the only one of its type. It has attracted all kinds of people from far and near for all kinds of reasons. It is one of the sites for instance where friends of girls from neighbouring villages who are about to marry take her for sightseeing.

Conditions of Retained Works

Many believe that works of art are as secure as the architectural structure in which they are housed. It should be noted of course that the security of a structure includes the nature of those to whom the structure is accessible! In the Sculpture Garden for instance, where anybody could do anything to the sculptures, including helping the artist to change a few anatomical details, priceless works have seen all kinds of abuses. There are of course also those that the weather is helping to reform. However, the sculptures, which have been kept in the store, the ones which have escaped the interest of those to whom the store is accessible, still maintain their forms.

Paintings on the other hand have not been this lucky. A very strong collection of them was gathered over a period of about thirty years and kept in a tiny space in the roof of the departmental building. This space became too small to contain more but before any alternative space would be found, the building itself began a process of disintegration starting from the roof. It began leaking rain profusely unto the paintings so they had to be moved down to one of the sculpture studios. All this happened around the mid 1980s. It was also about the same time that funds to run universities dwindled and so students were not supplied materials free anymore. Catastrophe stroke! One by one students went into the sculpture studio where these paintings were kept and stole them out not to sell but to re-prim and paint on their support! Imagine a fresh student re-priming Dele Jegede's painting in order to use its support!

The final blow that saw to the complete removal of the paintings was the sudden market for them. Finance houses suddenly sprung up overnight and made instant millionaires out of some middle class Nigerians. These Nigerians in order to look real were imitating their peers elsewhere in Europe, reading about their exploits in auction houses like Christies and Sotheby. Art works, particularly of well-established artists, became very marketable. This time it was not only students who stole the reserved paintings. Other people who had access to where they were kept also stole some. They were then sold to collectors. The collection of paintings now in the department comprises mostly recent works. Any old work would have been brought back from where it used to hang outside the department. A random selection of reserved works strewn around the University is assessed and their conditions are revealed below.

***Charging Bull* by Gani Odotokun**

The exhibition, *Accident and Design: Gani Odutokun and His Influence* was to open in another week in London and there was the need to bring along as many people as possible to the opening. One of the people the curators spoke to, acknowledged that Gani's name was familiar because his mother owned one of his paintings! He went ahead to describe the painting. He was shown an illustration in the catalogue and the curators were surprised that it turned out to be the image of the work his mother now owned. Naturally, they asked him how she acquired it. He said a certain artist, who trained in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria gave her as a present. The second surprise was that the curators knew this artist.

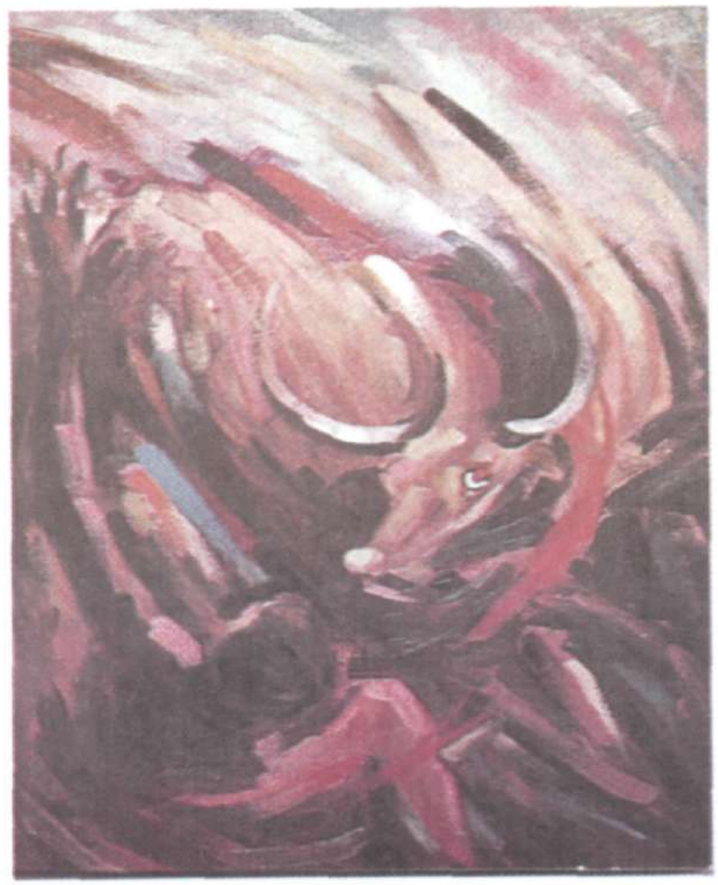


Plate XVII: Gani Odutokun, *Charging Bull*, 1975, Oil on Board

The painting in question is called *Charging Bull*. Nobody in the department could remember the last time it was seen but many remembered that it carried an *R* written in chalk on the top right corner. The image of the painting reproduced in Plate XVII bears testimony to this *R*. It represents the word, *Retained* or *Reserved*. So, how did Gani's retained work end up as a present from one of his students?



Plate XVIII: Joe Musa, *Alice,* 1987, Pastel, 26"x30"

***Alice* by Joe Musa**

Alice, shown in Plate XVIII, is a pastel drawing created by Joe Musa, the erstwhile Director General of the National Gallery of Art, when he was a student in the Zaria Art School. Alice, the model who posed for the drawing, rose to the position of head model before her retirement but she rarely smiled while posing giving the

impression as if she did not like her job. Joe Musa's drawing, a realistic work, shows Alice wearing one of those her moody looks. The work hung in one of the offices in the Department of Fine Arts since it was retained in 1987, the year Joe Musa graduated with a First Class. It was taken on loan for the *Zaria at 50* exhibition held in Abuja in 2007. Since then, it has not been returned.

***Market Place* by Clary Nelson Cole**



Plate XIX: Clary Nelson Cole, *Market Place*, 1969, Oil on Board, 76cm x 92cm

The records show that Clary Nelson Cole graduated from the Zaria Art School in 1967 although his painting, *Market Place* shown in Plate XIX indicates that it was painted in 1969. It is likely that he might have had dealings with the School after graduation and before he left for the University of Illinois, U.S.A. for further studies. This was not unusual, as a few works by teachers who were not alumni of the Zaria Art School could and did find their way into the School's collection. Cole stayed in the U.S.A. for a few years teaching in the same university and winning many awards for his work. He was featured by the Miller Brewing Company and became one of very few African artists to be exhibited by the Museum of Modern Art,

New York. He returned to Nigeria and taught at the University of Benin rising to become a Professor. It is a mark of his relevance that although he died in 1990, a year when the Internet was relatively new in Nigeria, many websites continue to display his works. *Market Place* is one of the oldest surviving paintings in the Zaria Art School Collection. It was one of the paintings salvaged from the store in the roof of the School's building when it leaked. It now hangs in one of the offices but it has begun to flake and the nails, which hold the support to the back frame, are creating wide holes on the support. The figures in the painting show a busy market scenery akin to any market scene in Zaria. The uniqueness of the work is however, resident in the stylized forms reminiscent of Honore Daumier's, which were linked to the oppressed in society. Such rendition of figures was peculiar to Nelson Cole in the Zaria Art School.

***God Save Me and my Small Child* by H.I.C.A. Yebusika**

The highest number of the Zaria Art School's paintings of the 1970s is found in the Kashim Ibrahim Library. One of the most imposing paintings in the Library is Yebusika's 1977 painting entitled, *God Save me and my Small Child* shown in Plate XX. It is imposing both in terms of its size as well as subject matter. It measures almost six by four feet and shows a mythical eagle attempting to pick up a child who has docked under his parent. The claws of the eagle are sunk into the parent's back indicating that the eagle at this point is prepared to snatch up the parent. This painting has been hanging on the same spot on the first floor for 37 years. It is easily accessible to library users moving to the right wing of the library. It has therefore suffered abuses. There are now horrible scribbles and writings on the surface of the painting such as, *No Vernacular*, *Kolo*, and *DTF* as illustrated in Plates XXI, XXII and XXIII.



Plate XX: H.I.C.A. Yebusika, *God Save me and my Small Child*, 1977, 66"x42", Oil on Board



Plate XXI: Detail of *God Save me and my Small Child*



Plate XXII: Detail of *God Save me and my Small Child*



Plate XXIII: Detail of *God Save me and my Small Child*

***Nigerian Townscape* by Gani Odutokun**



Plate XXIV: Gani Odutokun, *Nigerian Townscape*, 1975, Oil on Board, 37"x48"

One of the retained works of Gani Odutokun, *Nigerian Townscape* shown in Plate XXIV, can be viewed at the top floor of the Kashim Ibrahim Library. It shows an earlier technique employed by Gani. He uses wide and expressive brush strokes to portray typical features of a township street. Rooftops, cars and story

buildings are suggested. The painting looks smudgy from more than 39 years of settled layers of dust.

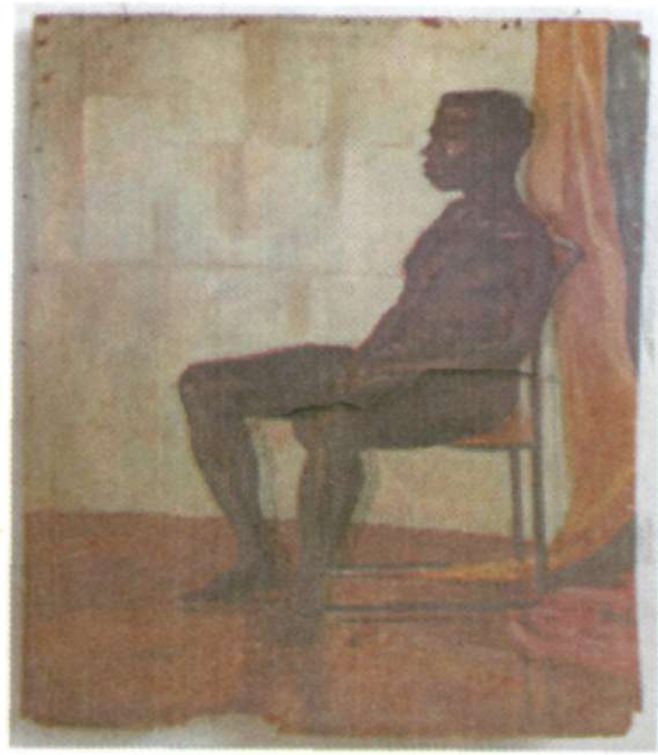


Plate XXV: Kolade Oshinowo, *Johnson*, 1972, Oil on Board, 101cm x 75cm

***Johnson* by Kolade Oshinowo**

Johnson is a life study of a model of the same name by Kolade Oshinowo, a Zaria Art School graduate of 1972. Oshinowo is one of the most illustrious alumni of the School and one of the most sought after by collectors. He became a colossus at the Yaba College of Technology having taught there for almost four decades and becoming a Deputy Rector for two years. Oshinowo is also an erstwhile President of the Society of Nigerian Artists. The painting, which shows a seated figure (see Plate XXV), is one of the very few surviving life studies from the 1970s. It is unfortunately, in a terrible state as it is cracked at the edges as well as the centre.



Plate XXVI: Detail of *Johnson*

***The Gate* by Barbara House**



Plate XXVII: Barbara House, *The Gate*, 1978, Acrylic on Board, 76cm x 122cm

The Gate, (shown in Plate XXVII), was painted in 1978 by one of the last British teachers to leave the Zaria Art School.

Barbara House's interest in painting ordinary people living ordinary lives was well established. *The* Gate, most likely studied from life, shows traffic at the Zaria City Gate. The objects and figures are captured in their most characteristic postures. This painting confirms Barbara's great understanding of the anatomy of the different species represented. With an economy of lines and a simplistic representation, she captures the essence of the species. The work hangs in one of the offices in the department. It has begun to flake in a few places.



Plate XXVIII: Wale Ajayi, *Green Revolution*, 1990, Oil on Canvas, 76cm x 122cm

***Green Revolution* by Wale Ajayi**

Plate XXVIII shows a painting, *Green Revolution*, created by Wale Ajayi in 1990. It portrays eight portraits of heads of State beginning from Alhaji Tafawa Balewa and ending with General Ibrahim Babangida. Of the eight heads of State, only two are civilians; the others are military generals wearing their uniforms, hence the title, *Green Revolution*. The work is a reflection of the influence of the military on Nigeria's politics. It is displayed in the office of the head of the Department of Fine Arts.

***The Bar* by Roland Abiodun**

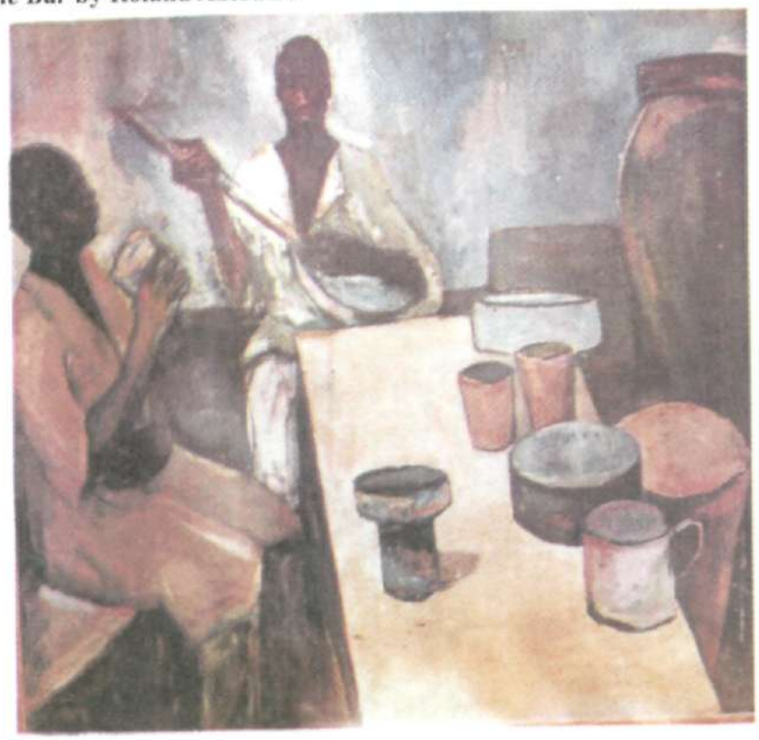


Plate XXIX: Roland Abiodun, *The Bar*, 1965, Oil on Board, 4'x5'

The work by Roland Abiodun, the first graduate to earn a First Class in the Art School, is shown in Plate XXIX. Roland graduated in 1965. This painting has always been kept in the Painting Section of the department but it recently disappeared. Information on it is contained in early exhibition catalogues of the School.

***21st Century Farmer* by Vitalis Abaver Ajir**



Plate XXX: Vitalis Abaver Ajir, *21st Century Farmer*, 2013, Fibre Glass, 107cm High

Vitalis Abaver Ajir, a graduate of 2014, produced the Sculpture shown in Plate XXX in 2013. He graduated this year,

2014. The work renders, in very good anatomical proportions, a farmer carrying a sack and fiddling with his mobile phone. It illustrates that the present graduates of the Zaria Art School continue to produce highly skillful works worthy of reservation.

It should be noted that the works, which have been discussed so far, are not by any means the only works in the Zaria Art School collection. There are hundreds if not thousands of works stashed in different places in the University. They have been selected for discussion only for the purpose of illustrating the variety in available documentation on them as well as their state of preservation. Information on some works and artists are more available than others and some works are more preserved than others. The consequences of the absence of detailed documentation of the works and the poor state of preservation will be discussed shortly. The works shown in Plate XXXI, XXXII, XXXIII and XXXIV are a few of many works that fall under the category of poor documentation. The little, which is known about them, was passed by oral tradition from one generation of students to another. The artists signed none of the works although older staff of the department may correctly identify them. Ellis Erimona, a First Class graduate of 1976, for instance, purportedly created the work shown in Plate XXXI. It was displayed for several years in the Sculpture Garden before it was moved to the space beside the Theatre AB of the Faculty of Environmental Design. It lost many of its parts and was restored but it has begun to lose them again partly because of abuses from passers-by. The charcoal portrait of an Arab shown in Plate XXXII is attributed to Tyrone Geter, an African-American teacher who left the Zaria Art School in the late 1980s. The title and year of production of the work is not known. One of the best sculpture portraits ever produced in the School is shown in Plate XXXIII. It is a representational study of a model known as Hauwa. It has been attributed to Jide Emordi, a graduate of 1989. The composition of a drummer and a dancer is shown in Plate XXXIV. The artist, Obi Chinedu, wrote his name and the year of production at the base of the work. It was produced in 1990, the same year in which the artist graduated. The title of the work, however, is unknown. It has attracted interest from several units of the University including the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, which adapted a motif

from its image as the department's logo. The sculpture is conspicuously displayed in front of the departmental building of the Zaria Art School.



Plate XXXI: Ellis Erimona, Title Unknown, 1976, Cement, 8'High



Plate XXXII: Tyrone Geter, Title Unknown, Year of Production Unknown, Charcoal, 64cm x 44cm



Plate XXXIII: Jide Emordi, *Hauwa*, 1989, Cement, 40cm High



Plate XXXIV: Obi Chinedu, Title Unknown, 1990, Cement, Life Size

How Retained Works And Their Artists Became Treasures

The intrinsic value of a work does not necessarily turn the work into a treasure neither does a First Class art graduate necessarily become a hot-selling artist. A work may score very high in the employment of the appropriate elements and principles of design but remain unsold or undesirable. It may be in a highly recommended medium or size and still not impress a collector. Both work and artist require propaganda and connoisseurship to attract some value. A simple classroom experiment was conducted by me some years ago to prove this phenomenon. I brought out four of my old drawings and showed students. Since they were not signed, the students did not know the artist. I tagged them, A, B, C, and D. I told the students that A was produced by me; Gani Odutokun produced B; Bruce Onobrakpeya produced C while Jimoh Akolo produced D. The students believed me since they were conversant with the tradition of retaining works of graduating students in the Zaria Art School, where this experiment was conducted. I then asked them how much they were willing to pay for each drawing. It was interesting to note that while drawings B, C, and D attracted substantial amounts, nothing significant was offered for A. Yet, in reality, I created all the drawings. I asked the students what informed their decision to award such prices and they simply explained that the other artists were more established than I. It goes to prove that the price of a work is hardly determined by the quality of the work but by the reputation of the artist.

To further illustrate this point, the performance of the works of two classmates, Jimo Akolo and Demas Nwoko, 1961 graduates of the Zaria Art School at a recent auction is compared. Both of them had helped to found the Zaria Art Society in the 1950s. Akolo's fallout with the society shortly after its founding is a matter for another lecture but suffice it to state that both artists grew in stature, each producing and exhibiting at home and abroad. Since Akolo lived and worked much of his life in Zaria, I was more conversant with his work ethics. He constantly painted at home although for many years he was a member of the Ahmadu Bello University administration as well as a Professor. A great draughtsman, Akolo won many prizes both in drawing and painting. Indeed, it was rumoured that he was probably the best painter of his graduating class which included Demas Nwoko, Uche Okeke and Bruce Onobrakpeya. In 2012 Akolo's painting, *Untitled*, was auctioned by Arthouse in Lagos for N700,000. Compare that to the amount, N7,000,000, at which Nwoko's work, *Praise Singer*, was auctioned the same year by the same Arthouse. By the way, both artists are alive. So, what parameters were used?



Plate XXXV: Demas Nwoko, *Praise Singer*, 1961, Oil on Board, 36" x 48"

Something about the history of the artist contributes to the reception of his or her work. In 1995, in a paper entitled, *The Signature on a Work of Art*, I argued that in order to have an objective assessment of a piece of work, its creator should be hidden from the audience because failure to identify the artist, the audience is forced to appreciate the work based on the aesthetic criteria available to it. When the artist is initially identified however, the tendency is to excuse any flaws if the artist was reputable and to see many of them if the artist was not that reputable. I presented this paper at a conference attended by many artists including Chika Okeke-Agulu who, I remember, argued that it was necessary for the audience to identify the artist in order to make the appreciation of the artist's work complete. According to him, when an artist displays his work, the artist was also on display. By this logic therefore, the price of a work is influenced by the reputation of the artist. To further illustrate this point, I had cited in the same paper, earlier mentioned, the case of an artist in the Philippines described by Domingo Alconaba, once an art teacher at the Zaria Art School. Alconaba stated that this artist was so immensely popular that there was a very long queue for his works to the extent that collectors

could not wait for him to create paintings. They were content to buy primed and signed supports by him.

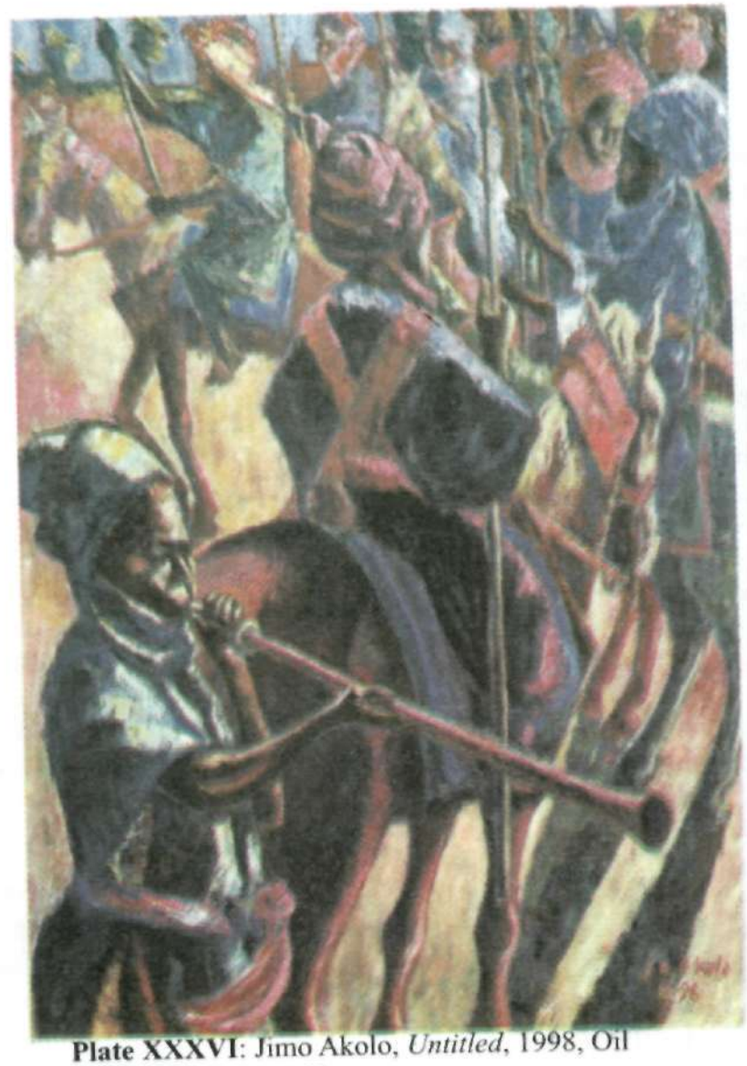


Plate XXXVI: Jimo Akolo, *Untitled*, 1998, Oil on Canvas, 48" x 36"

The more the artist's reputation soars, the more value his or her works attract. For instance, in a comprehensive list of Gani Odutokun's works drawn by Arts and Objects, his agent in 1995, the

most expensive gouache cost N35,000. In today's art market, the same work would cost higher than N3,000,000 as demonstrated in the attempted sale of the forged *Dialogue with Mona Lisa*. An oil painting by the same artist, the *Nigerian Townscape* in the Kashim Ibrahim Library, for instance, would certainly cost far higher than N3,000,000. Several factors are responsible for the soaring of an artist's reputation. If we went back to our comparison of Akolo and Nwoko, we would find that Nwoko became more popular than Akolo as a result of his continuous membership of the Zaria Art Society. A lot of truths and myths have been written about this society to the extent that it has become indispensable in the discourse on modern Nigerian or indeed African art. Nwoko had also edited and published a popular art magazine for many years, the *New Culture* magazine in which his works and those of some of his contemporaries were published. Nwoko also became a successful architect for his use of vernacular architecture and was commissioned by several institutions, organizations, and private clients. He continued to be active for many years in the Society of Nigerian Artists. He therefore, remained constantly in the art news unlike Akolo who although was very active and successful as a Professor in Ahmadu Bello University, was not that visible.

Apart from creating unique and innovative works, visibility is an important ingredient towards adding value to both producer and product. Propaganda from the artist and his agents or patrons is constantly required. This is illustrated in our story on Professor Ahuwan. Until his trip to the United States of America in 1974 and the subsequent propaganda of his work there by a student he met, Frank Giorgini, he remained relatively unknown in his country, Nigeria. It was not the National Gallery of Art, Abuja which acquired his works but the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Despite the fact that Professor Ahuwan for a long time had not been prolific in production because of his engagement with University administration in different capacities, when he eventually exhibited his wares in Kaduna in 1996, a town relatively virgin in terms of art sales, all his exhibits sold out! If only the Zaria Art School had a few of his works in its collection! If only one of his Nigerian students were as innovative as Frank Giorgini, there would have been at least one flourishing factory creating employment and wealth in the country.

The art market in Nigeria has continued to flourish. Apart from the traditional private galleries, which sell artists' works, there have been introduced auction houses, which have been recording tremendous successes in sales. One of such auction houses is the Arthouse. It has sold works by many established and up coming artists a substantial percentage of which graduated from the Zaria Art School. The works by artists like Bruce Onobrakpeya, Kolade Oshinowo, and Yusuf Grillo have maintained record figures at these auctions and they will continue to appreciate because of the propaganda the auction house makes on them. The School's collection continues to benefit from such propaganda since it comprises works of the same artists managed by the auction house. If for instance, the auction house sold a work by Onobrakpeya for N5,000,000, any work by him in the School's collection would fetch similar amount. Indeed, early works by artists are even known to sell for higher prices than recent ones.



Plate XXXVII: The Old SBS Library, One of the First Buildings to be Allocated as Gallery

Conclusion

Given that we now know how valuable the works we have retained from students have become, there should be some effort to spotlessly preserve them. There is no better place to provide for

them than a befitting gallery. This is not a new Eureka. Many heads of the Zaria Art School have tried in the past to establish this gallery. The real chance came during General Mamman Kontagora's tenure as Sole Administrator in 1998, when Professor Jerry Buhari was head of the School. The building, which presently houses CISCO, shown in Plate XXXVII was suggested but before the Art School could take it over, it was reallocated. It took several more years before Professor Shehu Abdullahi as Vice Chancellor in 2006, directed the late Professor Yakubu Nasidi then his deputy, to assist in identifying another building as gallery. Many buildings were recommended including the present School of Postgraduate Studies but the one, which appeared more vulnerable, was the former Community Bank building shown in Plate XXXVIII.



Plate XXXVIII: Former Community Bank Building

The decision however, to turn the building into a meat shop finally won although to this day, it is uncertain what is sold in it. The Art School had become desperate at that time and was willing to take any structure as a starting point for the gallery. In its desperation, it continued to hackle the administration until the Vice Chancellor, agreed to allocate the entire complex, which used to be the mechanical workshop near the Estate Department to the Art

School. The main structure shown in Plate XXXIX was identified as the gallery. This too in 2013, was reallocated.



Plate XXXIX: Most Recent Structure Identified as Gallery

Many exemplary university galleries exist elsewhere such as the Brunei Gallery at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and the gallery at the Makerere University, Kampala. Apart from preserving works, they provide much needed cataloguing. They complement art teaching by providing facilities and opportunities to improve curatorial skills. They host exhibitions of works from other parts of the world thereby providing opportunities to view different techniques in art making. They also hold workshops, residencies, lectures and symposia where established artists from different parts of the world are brought to demonstrate their skills to up-coming artists. Apart from their role as teaching, learning and research facilities, they propagandize the works and artists in their collection.

In this lecture, I presented the origins of the name, Zaria Art School, ascribing the earliest such reference to the Department of Fine Arts of our University to Beier (1960). I referred to the seeming disregard for art in our University as a hangover from tradition

illustrating this with the circumstance around the death of *Baban Gwani* Muhammadu Mukhaila Dugura and the unfortunate celebration of Okonkwo as hero rather than his father, Unoka, in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. I testified that the indifference to art has shaped my practice of conceptually projecting discarded objects to aesthetic prominence. I illustrated how Ahuwan, Gani and the reservation of art works became treasures, which our University is yet to recognize. I observed however, that the retained works are in constant danger of abuse and suggested that a university gallery be established for them.

Throughout the lecture, I have felt uneasy emphasizing the monetary worth of works over other intrinsic values. Hughes (1991), in addressing the issue of art and money, first looks at two extreme cases as presented by William Blake and Samuel Johnson. "Where any view of money exists", wrote Blake, "art cannot be carried out." On the other extreme, Johnson was just as categorical. "No man but a blockhead", he said, "ever wrote, except for money." Hughes, who appears to argue on the side of Johnson, cites the example of how artists like Tiziano Vecelli, Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Nicholas Poussin became good artists through patronage and how Pablo Picasso "was a millionaire at forty and that didn't harm him." The circumstances of the lecture have made siding with Johnson inevitable. Nevertheless, I would proffer that in the course of time some artists become cultural icons. Their works become priceless cultural artifacts. Their abodes therefore, become highly attractive cultural destinations. For instance, France has gained other benefits from visitors coming to the Louvre to view the *Mona Lisa* than what it would generate if it were sold. If ever there were a qualified location for a *Louvre* in Nigeria, it would certainly be the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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