A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MUYIDEEN ADIO JAJI'S STUNTED SCULPTURES

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS OF ARTS (M.A) DEGREE IN ART HISTORY

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DECLARATION

I, Adewumi Kehinde Christopher, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled "A Contextual Analysis of Muyideen Adio Jaji's Stunted Sculptures" has been written by me, in the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. All quotations are indicated by quotation marks or indentation and sources of information are duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. This dissertation has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree or diploma in any university.

_____ _____

Adewumi Kehinde Christopher Date

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled "A Contextual Analysis of Muyideen Adio Jaji's Stunted Sculpture" by Adewumi Kehinde Christopher meets the regulations governing the award of Masters of Art History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God the creator of the Universe, my late father, Mr. J. A. Adewumi, who passed onto glory on the 7th of August, 2015; and my darling mother; Mrs. T. A. Adewumi.

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ABSTRACT

Muyideen Adio Jaji is a contemporary sculptor, who has been producing sculptures, both in naturalism and abstraction. He has also delved into the exploration of stunted figures. The problem of this research therefore, is to outline the context that locates his stunted sculptures. The research, thus aims at analysing the content of Jaji's stunted sculptures. The objectives are to: identify and categorise the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji, examine the media and style employed in the production of such sculptures and to discuss the ideological and philosophical basis for such sculptures. Having established painterly movements like Onaism and Araism from their exploration of the Yoruba aesthetics; in literature, there is need to document the contributions of Jaji, to stunted sculptures. The justification of the research lies in the foregoing; as well as, the research's capacity to tell the African story from an artistic point of view. The research is significant for bringing to fore, salient issues imbedded in Nigeria's various traditions and cultures. In analyzing the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji, Akpang's (2013) concept of Hybrid Aesthetics was adopted; outlining the cultural context that forms the basis for his artistic creations. By so doing, cogent elements in such cultures are discussed, consequently making this research a means for cultural understanding and appreciation. The findings made from the fieldwork and analysis, established that the artist's exploration of figures, resulted into the production of ten stunted figures, between 2008 and 2015. Adopting the partial abstraction approach, the sculptures were produced in two major materials; terracotta and fibreglass. As an artist that derives inspiration from the environment, the stunted figures he produced were majorly propelled by the symbolic artistic traits that are imbedded in the traditional Yoruba Aesthetics. The study concludes by recommending that Art Historians should research further, into various indigenous artistic.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Traditional African art was generally characterized by its relative functionality and aesthetics. Art was a functional and necessary part of everyday life for traditional Africans. Religion, government, education, work and entertainment were all inter-related components in traditional African societies. Whether tangible or intangible, all forms of artistic expressions were deeply woven into the very fabric of their socio-religious context; playing central roles, in establishing a cohesive community. Activities such as folktales and festivals, helped achieve this bound.

Igbaro (2010) in writing about art and religious development in Nigeria adduces that, "art permeates every strata of life, because it was then prestigious to be associated with art and art works, more also that, it was religiously expedient to do so." In pre-colonial Africa, the belief in the supernatural and the worship of ancestors, through rituals and festivals, were very significant phenomena on which Africans base most of their life happenings. Religion, just like art, was intimately tied to all life endeavours, which made a common identity between religion and art inevitable.

Art objects were employed as vehicles for spiritual communication in diverse ways. Some were created for use on altars and shrines. For instance, in the kingdom of Benin, cast brass commemorative heads, are placed on royal ancestral altars, where they serve as a point of contact with the king's royal ancestors, as well as, keeping the memories of their reign alive. Christa (2006) describes annual rite of renewal among the *Bwa,* as means to seek the continued goodwill of nature spirits. Personal misfortunes, such as illness, death, or barrenness, or community crises, including war or drought, are also causes to petition the spirits for guidance and assistance. Africans engaged in religious practices with a desire to engage the spiritual world in the interest of social stability and well-being. This is as a result of their belief that, all humanity's fortunes and misfortunes occurred as a function of the disposition of the supernatural god. Art did not just serve religious functions in pre-colonial African life, it also served several salient functions in the totality of the African existence; affirming one of its numerous definitions that reads - 'art is life'. Art also functioned in beautification; it functioned politically, economically, socially, culturally, educationally, and in several other spheres of life, including solving domestic challenges.

Certain visual elements, however, were incorporated into these African art forms. These visual elements were neither encompassed in the work as a fluke, nor as a result of the artist's limitation in the interpretation and representation of his visual perception; but were adopted to serve metaphorically symbolic functions. These visual elements, mostly in human figures, were enlarged, reduced or totally distorted from their natural form. For instance, the distortion of the head, navel, female breast or male reproductive organ, as seen in Nok art, *Akuaba* art, among others, does not signify incompetence on the part of the artists, but was deliberately done, for symbolic emphasis. For instance, in the traditional Yoruba sculptural representation, the head is

usually blown out of relative proportion, to the rest of the body to signify the supernatural importance placed on the head, as a symbol of an individual's identity and destiny, as well as serving as a metaphorical emblem of leadership.

These visual elements imbedded in the art of the traditional Africans, formed the bed rock for the artistic explorations of some western artists, who encountered some African art pieces. Murrell (2008) opines that, "during the early 1900s, the aesthetics of traditional African sculpture, became a powerful influence among European artists who, formed an avant-garde in the development of modern art." He further explains that, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and their School of Paris friends, blended the highly stylized treatment of the human figure in African sculptures, with painting styles derived from the post-impressionist works of Cezanne and Gauguin. Their encounter with these art forms, gave rise to modern art movements such as Fauvism, cubism, and abstract expressionism.

In the same vein, the adoption of some of these stylistic traits is evident in the works of some contemporary African artists like Ben Enwonwu (1921-1994). '*Anyanwu'*, (produced in 1955), is one of his most prominent works, Enwonwu fused some traditional African stylistic traits, like scarifications, body adornments, partial abstraction and exaggeration of forms, among others; into his works. Vincent Kofi Akwete (1923-1974), from Ghana, also tapped into the annals of traditional African art, in embellishing his artistic ideas. Taking wood as his favourite medium of expression, the thematic essence of most of Kofi's works were influenced by traditional concepts. Banjoko (2000) holds that, "necks and facial details were rendered in the manner of Akan Akuaba figures. Works like '*Awakening Africa*', '*Birth of Ghana*', and '*Crucifix*' are good examples."

Also, a form of artistic patriotism, by means of the adoption of the traditional African artistic values, was identified amongst the first set of art graduates, from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. From an account by Ubani (2014), the 'Natural Synthesis', as the concept of the 'Zaria Rebels' was tagged (as Uche Okeke and his group were called), was based on the fusion between the traditional and modern forms; a transformation of traditional art forms, using new media and techniques. Many of these artists sought original forms from their basic background and origin, with which they used modern materials and techniques to explore. Nnadozie (2008), based on his own knowledge of the natural synthesis wrote:

> …they formed an art society and urged their members to embark on a revolution of the traditional art forms of their individual culture with a view to synthesizing this rich heritage, with the relatively new manifestation of modern art in Nigeria. Their ultimate goal was to achieve identity in their cultural existence…In practicing this philosophy, Onobrakpeya based on his Urhobo people's folktales, Yusuf Grillo's paintings began to reflect the elegant geometrical or the mathematical forms of the yoruba carvings. Demas took his interest back to the Nok civilization, while Uche Okeke, aware of a viable extremely eloquent form of artistic expression practiced among the Igbo of South East Nigeria, from antiquity, turned to this traditional art form for inspiration.

It was this form of artistic experimentations that gave rise to several other art groups like the Aka Group, and the Eye Society, among others. It also inspired other artistic movements like *Ulism*, *Onaism*, and much later, *Araism*, just to mention a few.

Onaism, just like the natural synthesis, is a movement that thrives based on the cultural idioms and motifs of the Yoruba. Adepegba (2008) asserts that, "the founders, Moyo Okediji, Kunle Filani, Tola Wewe, Bolaji Campbell and Tunde Nasiru, made conscious and deliberate effort to project and develop the Yoruba understanding and concept of art and aesthetics in contemporary Nigeria." Irivwieri (2010) opines that *Ona*, is a Yoruba word, which means 'art'. Irivwieri further explains that its relative connotations could refer to decoration, pattern, ornament, embellishment, design, composition, form, plant and motif, which are the basic elements in art production. In the same vein, *Araism* based on Mufu Onifade's visual creation, came up, as

another exponent of the Yoruba tradition. Consequently, and as is usual with other movements, some scholars have expressed different opinions on the *Araism* movement. For example Adepegba (2008) asserts that, "the spirit of *Onaism* has influenced those who came in contact with it and has also inspired Mufu Onifade to midwife another technique called *Ara*. *Araism*, a movement that came out of *Ara* is a post-*Onaism* movement and shares a lot of similarities with it."

Several other contemporary artists have tapped into diverse cultures, producing impressive art pieces, as products of their cultural romance. Artists like Gani Odutokun (1946-1995), who was known for interrogating his environment, especially the northern landscape through his visual forms; Kolade Oshinowo, who engages his Yoruba culture through the use of different unconventional materials like textiles; and Matthew Ehizele, a sculptor who specializes in welded metal sculptures in elucidating his environmental and cultural impressions; just to mention a few. Thus, Muyideen Adio Jaji, a Zaria Art School sculptor, who has been producing a series of dwarfish or stunted sculptures since 2008, is one of such artists. According to Jaji, the stunted nature of these sculptures is as a result of his encounter with a dwarf, named Olawale Ajiyan. In an interview, he says:

> I had a contact with a dwarf named Olawale Ajiyan. He came in search of admission into the department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 2008. I got interested in his physical form, so I started studying him. In the process, I realized that initially, we were thinking of elegance in tall and elongated figures; however, with Wale's short figures, one can still see God's perfection in such forms. Coupled with my study of the African sculptures, which exaggerates the heads of their figures alongside stunted limbs and arms; I felt the urge to explore such forms.

Even before there was a written history, dwarfs appeared in the artworks of many cultures. Images of dwarfs are among the oldest artifacts extant. They are depicted in ancient stone and clay funerary sculptures in Egypt, India, China, and the Mayan civilizations; they are highlighted in the legends and myths of every nation. In ancient Egypt, dwarfs were associated with *Bes* and

Ptah, gods of childbirth and creativity, which helped enhance their status. The Egyptian courts were unique, in that they offered roles to dwarfs as priests and courtiers, as well as, jewelers and keepers of linen and toilet objects. (Adelson, 2005)

In accordance with the foregoing, Jaji's ability to identify the stunted form of the dwarf he encountered, as an expression of God's perfection, is a relative departure from the relatively ill treatment of dwarfs, in some cultures, in times past. Lenz (2015) reports that, "in ancient Rome, owners of dwarfs would intentionally malnourish their slaves, so they would sell for a higher price. In ancient Greece, dwarfs were associated in a menacing and lurid way with the rituals of the Dyonisian cult; art from that period shows them as bald men". Also Adelson (2005), avers that "In the courts, from ancient Egypt through the 18th century, dwarfs were collected, indulged, sometimes abused, and sent by royalty as gifts. In all periods, they were assigned to wait upon or amuse others". Adelson further explains that Monarchs in all nations sent emissaries far and wide to gather dwarfs: Although some may have been free, it is likely that others were held in some degree of bondage. A combination of being highly prized, but the property of an owner, were among the defining characteristics of dwarfs' lives during the nearly 5000 years they are known to have been present in the courts of Africa, Asia, Europe, and Central America.

Elevating the status of dwarfs, Olawale served as a major trigger for the exploration of the stunted figures by Jaji; hence this research on him.

Background of the Study

Muyideen Adio Jaji was born in Lagos, on the 11th of October, 1955, by a Ghana based Nigerian business man, from Kwara State, called Alhaji Wahab Jaji. Jaji's father left him in Nigeria, with his uncle, who raised him during his primary school years. In those early years, Jaji started developing interest in sculpture. At the age of six, he had started creating forms and shapes from

clay. In June 1969, Jaji left Nigeria for Ghana, to join his parents, where he had his post primary education. He enrolled immediately, into the Presbyterian Boys Middle School, Aburi in Ghana for his secondary education between 1970 and 1975. His father, wanting him to become a medical doctor, made him to join the science class. On the other hand, his teachers, Mr. Isaac Apereku and Mr. Asare Tetteh, because of his excellent performance in art, encouraged him to pick up art, as a career; hence, his foray into art.

After completing his secondary education, he worked briefly with the Nigerian Ports Authority, Apapa Lagos. He went back to Ghana to complete his Advanced Levels, between 1976 and 1978. He enrolled into the University of Arts, Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana to study Fine Arts. Later, in 1979, he left Ghana for Nigeria, due to students' unrest that led to the closure of universities in Ghana, during the regime of Jerry Rawlings as President. On his return to Nigeria, in 1980, he was offered an opportunity to study Fine Arts, at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He specialized in Sculpture, graduating in 1983, with a Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts. Between the years 1983 and 1984, Jaji participated in the National Youth Service in the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, then immediately enrolled for a Master of Fine Arts degree and specialized in sculpture. Afterwards he took a lecturing appointment in 1988, with the Department of Fine and Applied Art College of Education Ilorin, Kwara State. He later left for Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho in 1992 and from there; he came to settle at the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1997, as a lecturer in Sculpture. Jaji bagged a doctorate degree (PhD) in Art Education, at the same institution, in 2014.

Jaji has proven to be a determined artist, who follows his heart, for the love of sculpture. Firstly, at his early age, he decided to continue his art lessons, despite his father's wish for him to

become a medical doctor. Among his colleagues, he stands out as the only Muslim sculptor, despite the fact that, his religion frowns at some aspects of it. When asked why he chose to make naturalistic sculptures, despite being a Muslim, Jaji replies by saying "it is only when you are doing them for worship, that it is wrong". Similarly, Broit (2013) comments that "…If you start your artistic career by listing all the things you cannot do, you reduce your creative freedom while you really need to expand it". Perhaps that has also guided Jaji's persistence in art practice.

Jaji exhibits his artistic prowess, in his frequent use of cement as his modeling medium, in the execution of several commissioned works, in both relief and sculptures in the round. Consequently, Jaji's commissioned works are mostly life sized or larger than life, made from cement. These include '*The Junior Air Man'*, commissioned for the Air Force Military School Jos, Plateau State, and '*Argungu Fisherman'* at the NTA roundabout Ilorin, Kwara State, all done in 1984. Others are '*Sango*', the statue of Kwame Kurmah of Ghana, and a relief sculpture of Sir Ahmadu Bello (1986); all mounted in the sculpture garden of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, to mention but a few.

He has staged one solo exhibition and participated in several group exhibitions, some of which are *'Variety'* (1999), Alliance Francaise, Kaduna; *'Here and Now'* (2010), New Jersey, USA*; 'Santi'* Exhibition of Paintings and Sculptures, (2010), Terraculture, Victoria Island, Lagos; *'Santi II'*, Exhibition of Paintings and Sculptures (2012), Thought Pyramid Art Gallery, Abuja; amongst many others.

Jaji, like most contemporary artists, has an artistic style. One vivid characteristic, mostly evident in his works, is his interest in naturalistic forms. Despite the new and popular trends of producing sculptures, like 'installation' and 'conceptual arts'; he has over the years, maintained the naturalistic style of producing sculptures, which some argue, is old fashioned. When asked about

his view on installation art, he replies thus: “it is a way of escape from the real work”. As such, he is more drawn to the adoption of cement as his favourite medium of expression. This is not to say that Jaji has not explored the use of other media for his expressions. For instance, he has since metamorphosed into making both realistic and stylized sculptures in terracotta, which is another traditional medium, alongside other media like, bronze and fiber glass. Consequently, in his use of terracotta as a medium, he has produced some series of stunted sculptures; the first of which was produced during a workshop organised by the sculpture section of the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 2008. These stunted sculptures however, constitute the subject matter of this research.

Statement of Problem

The Ife School of Art, through the advent of *Onaism* and *Araism*, has been able to expose the contemporary world, to the beauty of traditional Yoruba culture. However, the effect of this stylistic experience, with the Yoruba traditional culture, on modern and contemporary art, is more evident in its painterly representations by contemporary artists. In recent times, the traditional Yoruba artistic philosophy, has suffered relative neglect, in its sculptural representation on the contemporary art scene. Though the stunted sculptures of Jaji seem to be tending towards filling this gulf; they have not been scholarly analysed and documented. Duniya (2006) holds that, “Jaji, though highly professional and proficient, has not been given much scholarly attention”. He went further to say that, Jaji’s artistic style, allows for the accommodation of complex ideas that would enable the work respond artistically, to the needs of the society. Jaji, Samuel (2012) says, now dwells more on the discovery of some aesthetic values, inherent in compressed and stunted figures, which he explores, by elucidating his ideas in sculpture composition. Thus, the researcher is not aware of any analysis or scholarly

documentation, of the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji. It is based on the foregoing, that the problem of this research centres on, discussing the context that inspires his stunted sculptures.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to contextually analyse Jaji's stunted sculptures, and the objectives of the study are to:

i. identify and categorise the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji.
ii. examine the media and style employed in the production of such sculptures
iii. analyse the ideological and philosophical basis for such sculptures

Research Questions

i. How many stunted sculptures were produced by Jaji and how can they be categorised?
ii. What are the materials and styles employed by Jaji in the production of the stunted sculptures?
iii. What is the ideological and philosophical content of Jaji's stunted sculptures?

Justification of the Study

The contribution of the Yoruba civilization, to the development of contemporary artistic expression, is immense. Ogbechie in Odiboh (2009) avers that, "Late Ben Enwonwu, Nigeria's foremost modernist artist, had asserted that, Africans must be prepared to tell their own stories as a reflection of the struggle of their age, and their right to self actualization." Thus, this research will serve as another means of telling the African story, within the philosophical context of the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji.

Also, *Onaism* and *Araism* express philosophical influences of the Yoruba culture, on the contemporary art scene; through experimentation with patterns and images. It is against this backdrop, that the researcher deems it necessary to examine how, such philosophical influences

have impacted sculpturally; hence, the need to document the contribution of Jaji, in his attempt to sculpturally present Yoruba ideas, through his stunted sculptures.

Significance of the Study

Researches like this bring to the fore, salient issues embedded in Nigeria's various traditions and cultures, as the study of past events help in understanding the present and determining the future. The artistic interrogations of such traditions and cultures, have brought about different styles like Onaism, Araism, as well as Jaji's stunted sculptures; hence, it will be important to know the context in which it has helped Jaji's sculptural practice and by implication, other artists.

In analysing the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji, the cultural context that forms the basis for these sculptures are outlined and discussed. By so doing, cogent elements in such cultures are discussed, consequently making this research a means for cultural understanding and appreciation, particularly for a contemporary society that is grappling with acculturation issues.

Scope of the Study

Jaji has explored with different materials and has also produced largely representational sculptures, as well as, in partial cubism and abstraction; however, this research is limited to his stunted sculptures, which were produced in semi realism and with terracotta and fibreglass, between 2008 and 2015 and are based on the Yoruba Aesthetics.

Conceptual Framework

The interrogation and understanding of the human environment, is interpreted by different individuals through diverse forms of impressions. Artists over the years have, investigated the various elements, that make up their society; elucidating their impressions through different artistic forms, such as sculptures, paintings, installations, and performance art, just to mention a few. Accordingly, Adiwu (2015) avers that "this experience and process have influenced many

artists and philosophers for many centuries; leading them to develop a unique form of expression that draws heavily from nature and its inhabitants. Not only does nature influence individuals, but several artistic movements too, have been influenced by nature."

In Nigerian contemporary art, some artistic movements, like *Onaism* and *Araism,* have been influenced by the interrogation of cultural inclinations of the Yoruba Aesthetics, which hinges a symbolic significance on the human head, among other stylistic tendencies like body scarifications and the likes. Ademuleya (2007) posits that:

> The largeness of the head as depicted in Yoruba human sculptural pieces, goes beyond the representation of proportion in the physical sense; rather, it is the representation of head in the metaphysical sense. The proportion depicted reflects the unquantifiable and immeasurable attributes of the head, while its physical largeness symbolises its largeness in content. In Yoruba sculpture of the human figure, be it for ritual purpose or as royal portraiture, the head is usually depicted to reflect the expressive meaning of o*ri* (head)… to reflect the content of the form and not to look like the form itself. To the sculptors and their people, the content is much more important than the form itself, it represents a phenomenon that is larger than the man himself.

He further explains that Yoruba sculptors, as revered members of the community, have learnt from tradition not to be interested in depicting man in his realistic form. And by virtue of their position in the community, traditional Yoruba sculptors are aware that their carved images are to serve as constant reminders to their people, of certain aspects of their belief patterns and philosophical thought. Their works are therefore, seen as instruments of effective communication. Through the carved figures, they translate the coded systems of thought, as received from tradition, into visual realities.

Affirming the foregoing, Banjo (2013) submits that "the head of a figure is emphasized physically, reflecting its spiritually overwhelming importance. This cultural ideology, is expressed in the attempt made by the artists today, to blend traditional and contemporary subject matters, by forging out modernism as reflected in their works." Conveying salient stylistic traits

from these various cultures with the contemporary artistic principles; these traditionally inspired stylistic traits, have gained significant relevance in the contemporary Nigerian art scene.

It is in the light of the conceptual collaborations between the traditional and contemporary stylistic tendencies, which Akpang's (2013) concept of Hybrid Aesthetics manifests. According to Akpang, Hybrid Aesthetics is "an art style or convention, which combines two or three art cultures, styles or techniques to create a unique art, which exist in the boundaries between the two cultures and at same time elevates mundane visual forms or art, to a creative contemporary status." Akpang further explains that, while some contemporary African artists have sacrificed traces of cultural identity in their art, in favour of western driven art styles, inspired by global creative advancement of the 21st century; others tend to exert Africanism in their art practice. This is to reflect the rich creative qualities of traditional visual forms and explore the various possibilities of restaging traditional identity in modernism. These ideas will constitute the conceptual basis for examining Jaji's works. This will be in terms of how they conform with Akpang's thesis on contemporary Nigerian artists' collaboration, with traditional stylistic trends, particularly in this case, Yoruba stylistic traits.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Scholarly literature on Jaji's artistic exploration is quite limited, especially literature that are directly related to the stunted figures produced by the artist. As such, the only available literatures are found in exhibition catalogues, a few journals and magazines. This chapter however, reviews related literature on sculptures and the styles artists have evolved over time; artist's usage of materials in sculpture, and the ideas as well as philosophies that accompany such sculptures.

Sculptures and the Styles Evolved by Artists

Laurie (2007) sees sculpture as "the notion of forming materials into an object, having aesthetic quality." Though Laurie's notion is relatively true, it neglects the functional aspects of art. African art, sculpture in this case, have been seen to possess salient functional attributes. Christa (2006) says that, "many African artworks were created to serve social, religious, or political function…an artifact may have different uses and embody a variety of meanings. These uses may change over time. A mask originally created for a particular performance may be used in a different context at a later time."

In furtherance, Arnason in Lamidi (2006) posits that, "the basic subject of exploration by sculptors from the beginning of time; until the twentieth century, had been the human

figure…sculptors have executed the human form using the basic elements of sculpture, line, space, mass, volume, texture and movement." In the same vein, Dennis (2006) adduces that "line, form, and juxtaposition, create dynamics in works of sculpture." The manipulation of these elements by sculptors is what gives birth to different individualized styles and techniques, in sculptural expressions. For instance, one common attribute of Brancusi's sculptures, according to Mackey and Bernstein (2009), is the shiny effect of his forms. In their words, "Brancusi often intensified the mirrored effect, by polishing the sculptures and manipulating the lighting in which they were seen. Brancusi explains that, the surface of a sculpture should appear to go on forever, unhindered by the boundaries of its form." Consequently, style to Lazzari and Schlesier (2005), "is the manner of expression that is characteristic of art, either made by an individual artist or from a historic period or an entire civilization. So a rose might be a rose, but all artistic representations of it are not the same." Muhammad (2006) reports that "Wenger's style by no means relates to the traditional Yoruba style, which is a product of her religious philosophy, of the mystical nature of the sacred, which was translated in her shrine sculptures." Though Susan Wenger was not a Nigerian, her artworks were grounded in the traditional Yoruba religious beliefs. This was as a result of the influence the environment she lived in, had on her. She got engrossed with the traditional Yoruba religious tradition, so much so, that she was made a Yoruba priestess.

Stemming from Muhammad's submission, it is pertinent to note that, the stylistic tendencies of artists and their works are mostly dependent on different factors. Factors like the availability of materials, the environment where the artists resides, socio-economic trends, and several others, inform the style and techniques, artists adopt in executing their works. For example, the availability of welding materials and equipment, according to Lamidi (2006), is one of the

reasons why some sculptors, embrace metal, as a sculptural medium. Also, Duniya (2009) states that "styles and trends in art, are generally determined by the realities of a particular environment." Duniya further, holds that, Aina Onabolu, the father of modern Nigerian art and in the words of Oloidi (2008), "not only in Nigeria but also in Africa"; adopted the western style of artistic expression as a response to the environment in which he resided. This research will determine if Jaji's artistic expressions are informed and influenced by the environment in which he resides.

Aniakor (2003) is also of the opinion that artists' "usable past should be exploited as an artistic resource in the search for both individual and national identity." Aniakor further posits that, the formal training of some artists have apparent influence on the orientation of their works. He says, 'through new contacts made from art residency programmes and workshops, and individual research, many of the artists have cultivated the studio culture of art installations, as a new spell on their art.' A visible stylistic trend in the art of most formally trained artists is seen in their abstracted expressions. Abstraction in art has been an avenue through which artists express their creative and stylistic inclinations, through the deconstruction and simplification of forms. Thus, in the words of Lazzari and Schlesier (2008), "…creativity is often thought to have two essential ingredients. The first is innovation, or the making of something that is new. The second is self-expression, which refers to individual artist's styles and personal concepts of the world, all of which are imbedded in their unique works of art." Abstraction and deconstruction of forms afford an artist, the opportunity to codify communicative symbols, within the space of his artistic form. Deconstructed forms also create avenues for disparities in interpretation and communication; as humans are of different backgrounds and perceptive inclinations. According to Putman in Umar (2016), "deconstruction is a means of breaking down forms into simple

components, so that new forms will emerge. It is characterized by the ideas of fragmentation, exaggeration and distortion where radical freedom and form are encouraged." Consequently, this research will examine how Jaji abstracts his works, within the context of how he manipulates Yoruba symbols in either constructing simple styles or deconstructing complex ones.

Rolina (2008) is of the opinion that "abstracting is the ideal opportunity not to follow the traditional and accepted, but instead, to strike out a path entirely of your own and develop your own style." She went further to explain that, to work abstractly, invokes abilities such as feeling, intuition, inventiveness, spontaneity, feeling for shape, colour, composition, harmony and many others. All these are abilities that form the basis of every pure and creative artistic expression. An example of a sculptor, who has worked extensively on the deconstruction and the exaggeration of the human form is Alberto Giacometti, in his elongated figures (See Figure i).



Figure i: '*Four women on a pedestal',* Alberto Giacometti. Bronze,

73.8 x 41.2 x 18.8 cm, 1950. courtesy Collection Fondation Giacometti, Paris.
https://alaintruong2014.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/2162.jpg

Nigerian painter and sculptor, Ben Enwonwu is another example of a sculptor who explored the world of abstraction extensively. In his exploration of nature, Enwonwu expressed himself through some sculptural elongations of the human form. '*Anyanwu*' produced in 1955(See Figure ii), is quite notable, in Enwonwu's elongated series. Enwonwu, in Bonhams.com (2016), said of the sculpture:

> My aim was to symbolize our rising nation. I have tried to combine material, crafts, and traditions, to express a conception that is based on womanhood – woman, the mother and nourisher of man. In our rising nation, I see the forces embodied in womanhood; the beginning, and then, the development and flowering into the fullest stature of a nation – a people! This sculpture is spiritual in conception, rhythmical in movement, and three dimensional in its architectural setting – these qualities are characteristic of the sculpture of my ancestors.



Figure ii: *'Anyanwu'*, Ben Enwonwu. Bronze 95 x 32 x 19cm, 1955.
Courtesy: http://www.artnet.com/artists/ben-enwonwu
/anyanwu-YIWnmXYmXXefaaqAB4TqHQ2

When considered merely on the surface level, the concept of abstraction seems like a contemporary innovation in Africa. On the contrary, symbolic abstractions had been the basis for artistic expressions in pre-colonial Africa. Ubani (2008) asserts that, "we may be forgetting that symbolism and abstraction are some of the backbones of traditional African art." The abstract nature of African art, actually formed the stylistic basis for abstract expressionism and several other movements like surrealism and cubism in the western world. This standpoint is backed up by a statement by Onoja (2015) that reads: "art movements usually start as a departure from conventional styles, or as a radical approach to materials and techniques, to make clear statements."

Sharing some stylistic semblance with the stunted figures of Jaji, are the stunted forms produced by Demas Nwoko, a Nigerian sculptor who has contributed to the development of contemporary sculpture and architecture in Nigeria. 'The woman' (Figure iii), is an example of his stunted terracotta forms.



Figure iii: 'The Woman'. Demas Nwoko, Terracotta.
(Size Unknown). 1966. Courtesy: de l'artiste

Ubani (2008), commenting on abstraction also, stresses that, "abstractions should be seen in public places and interpreted accordingly, to the spectator, who is inquisitive." Aligning with Ubani's standpoint, an effective abstract piece might not, require the interpretation of the artist; except in cases, where the philosophical and contextual foundations for such works are foreign to the observer. The form, as a symbolic and iconographic entity will communicate ideas to the observer, depending on the observer's level of exposure. This is not to say that some artistic expressions in total abstraction do not exist. However, some artists have tended towards partial abstraction, in order to bridge the gap of communication, mostly created by artistic expressions in total abstraction. Muyideen Adio Jaji falls into this category. However, because of the context in which the expressions are located, interpretations might be necessary. There are several other

forms of sculptural expressions like Installations, assemblage, construction, found objects, performance art, which artists have used, in expressing themselves over the years; some of which, might require interpretation, depending on the context or philosophies driving the ideas.

Materials and Styles in Sculpture

Materials are very essential component in the successful production of art works. Laurie (2007) states that "a sculptor's choice of a medium has personal, as well as, practical meaning." Without materials, the artist's idea, remains an idea; as such, materials are the embodiment of the sculptor's innate impression, a progression from the intangible nature of his philosophies, to the tangibility of his sculptural piece. Lazzari and Schlesier (2005) describe materials as "the physical substance that the artist uses, to make a work of art."

Different materials have been adopted as media of artistic expressions by sculptors, the world over. Some materials as well as techniques used in manipulating such materials have remained unaltered over the ages. However, the firing of clay, as a basic sculptural material, from simple terra-cotta to elaborately glazed ceramics, has varied greatly.

Sculpting in clay, one of the most common traditional sculptural materials, dates from the Paleolithic era of the Stone Age. According to visual-arts-cork.com (2016), it is the most plastic of all sculpting methods, versatile, light, inexpensive and durable. Although the contemporary usage of clay is mostly for preliminary models, later cast in bronze or other more durable materials; terracotta sculptures, have also been produced through the firing of the greenware. African artistic traditions such as Nok art, Ife art, Benin art, among others, have also produced sculptures in terracotta. Muyideen Adio Jaji falls in the category of contemporary artists who are still faithful to this traditional sculptural material in their artistic experimentations.

Chris Echeta, though a ceramist, has also explored using terracotta in his sculptural ceramic pieces. Ozioma (2008) writes that "Chris Echeta, has created a large body of work that reflects on Nigeria's socio-political and economic history." Ozioma adds that, Echeta has produced a large corpus of works, most of them pursuing social themes and satirizing poor leadership and the consequent suffering of the common man. With works like '*Politician I*'(1981-1982) (as illustrated in Figure iv) and '*The Sacking of a Generation*' (2002). Also, Ene-Orji, in Ozioma (2008) observes that, Echeta's artistic concern has been almost entirely environmental, in the way his themes have revolved around his country, her economy, polity, and people. Tonie Okpe and Demas Nwoko are other indigenous artists who have produced works using terracotta.

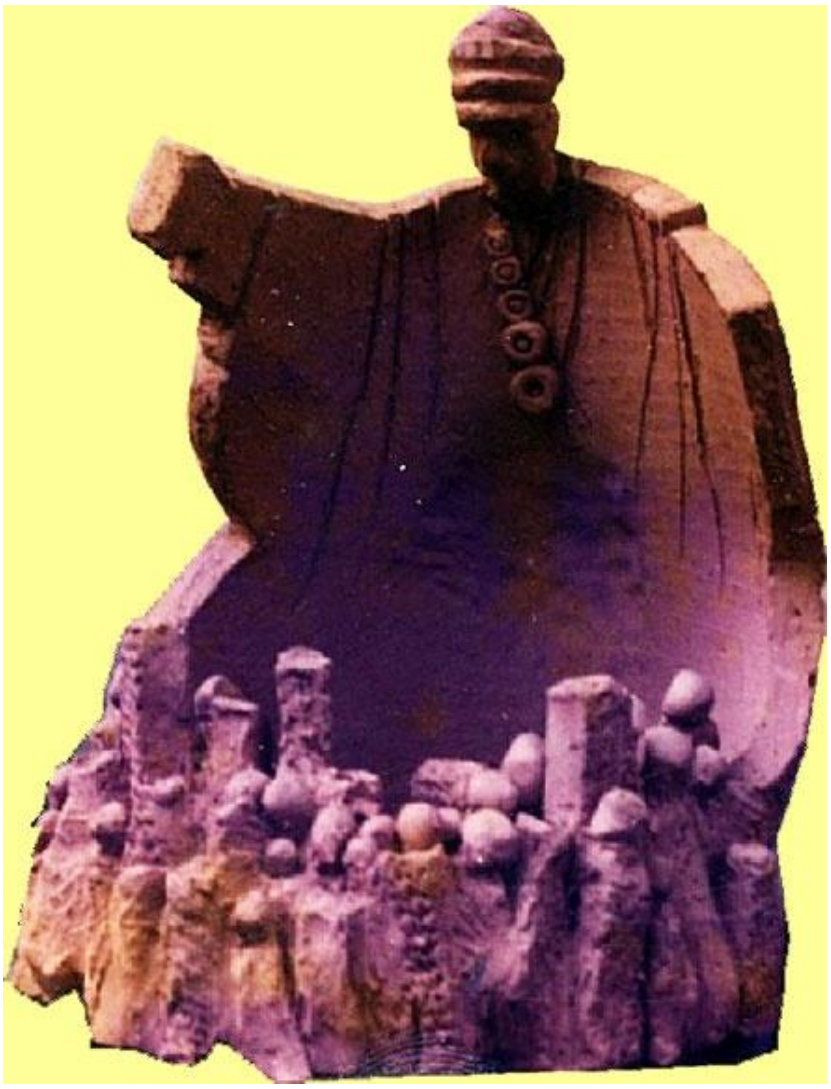


Figure iv: '*Politician I'*, Chris Echeta. Terra Cotta, Size Unknown, (1981 or 1982). Courtesy Ozioma (2008).

However, other sculptors outside the shores of Africa have also experimented using terracotta. For instance, African American artist, Elizabeth Catlett has produced "*Mother and Child*" in 1956 (See Figure v); Wilhelm Lehmbruck, "*Bust of the Ascending youth*" 1913-14 (Figure vi); and Jules Dalou's terracotta sculpture, "*Woman Reading*"; are some of the foreign sculptors, who have engaged with terracotta.



Figure v: 'Mother and Child'. Elizabeth Catlett. Terracotta, Size Unknown, 1956. Courtesy ofThe Museum of Modern Art, New York. http://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/01/05/social-realism-art-for-the-people



Figure vi: '*Bust of the Ascending Youth'*, Wilhelm Lehmbruck. Terracotta, 50.5 x 47 x 32 cm, 1913-14. Courtesy of Bavarian State Collection of Paintings, Modern Art Collection in the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich https://alaintruong2014.wordpress.com/category/modern-art/page/2/

As a means to enhance the durability of sculptural pieces, several types of casting and modeling materials have evolved. Concrete sculptures are achieved, either through the direct modeling method or through the modeling and casting method; bronze sculptures are done through the lost-wax or cire-perdue casting method; and there are other forms of casting materials and methods like paper Mache, Plaster of Paris and fibre glass. Fibre glass sculpture, according to Pearson (2016), "offers several advantages over other media. It is lightweight, so it can be transported easily and shipped inexpensively. It is also very strong and can withstand the elements, if the sculpture is placed outdoors." Sculptors like Abdulrasaq Yusuf and Kevin Damden have both worked with fiberglass. Several forms of organic and in organic materials have been employed in carving materials like wood, stone, calabash, bone, animal horn, marble, just to mention a few. Thus, this research will bring to light the materials, methods and techniques employed by Muyideen Adio Jaji, in producing his stunted sculptures.

In some cases, according to Dennis (2006), "sculpture materials, as well as, methods are combined". For instance, Sanni (2010) observes that, "the sculptural works of Lasisi Lamidi are mostly metal works clad with canvas materials." This method could be seen as a form of sculptural construction. Assemblage and found object sculptures are also forms of construction in sculpture. The history of conceptual art, which include, found object sculpture, could be traced to the experimentations of some western masters, who broke the boundaries of conventional arts, into the realms of the conceptual; propelled by the believe that, art should be driven by ideas, and not the material in which it is produced.



Figure vii: '*Fountain*', Marcel Duchamp. A porcelain urinal, 38.1 cm x 48.9 cm x 62.55 cm, 1917. courtesy https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/98.291

Works like '*Fountain',* produced in 1917 (See Figure vii), using a porcelain urinal by Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), and *'Head of a Bull'*, produced in 1943(See Figure viii), made from bicycle handle-bars and saddle, by Pablo Picasso, are examples of such found object sculptures.

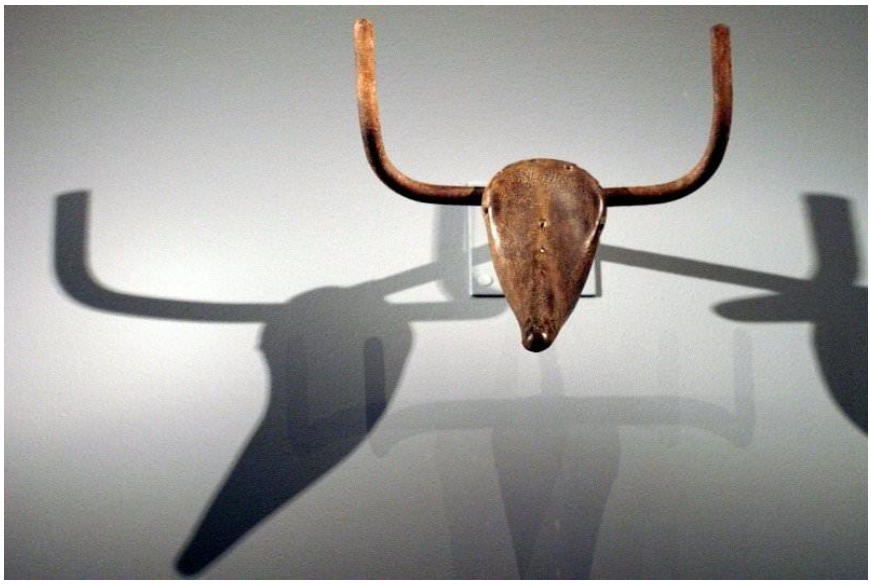


Figure viii: '*Bull's Head*', Pablo Picasso. Bicycle handle-bars and saddle, Size Unknown, 1942. Courtesy http://www.pablopicasso.org/bull-head.jsp#prettyPhoto

Dogo (2014) states that, "art should not be restricted to any stereotyped convention, and no material has just one value. Anything can be manipulated to become an art material, but it takes artistic insight to be able to recognize the value inherent in any object." This type of idea and approach to art, from the preliminary studies this researcher did on Muyideen Adio Jaji, are not acceptable to him. Thus, in carrying out this research, reasons for his reproach to conceptual arts, will be examined within the context of how it has guided his practice and perhaps, those of others like him. Paul and Ishola in Umar (2016) are also of the stand point that "the freedom of artists to express themselves using available resources in their environment, in terms of subjective approach, has paved the way for the acceptance of innovation and exploration in studio practice, in the area of materials." The use of materials in sculpture has been so diverse that, some sculptors have even gone into the use of ephemeral materials in their sculptural expressions.

Artists like Martin Hill and Philippa Jones, according to Jobson (2014) have been "creating temporary sculptures from ice, stone, and organic materials, that reflect nature's cyclical system;…the duo create sculptures and other installations that "metaphorically express concern for the interconnectedness of all living systems."

Other artists like Walter Mason, Richard Shilling, and Andy Goldsworthy have used natural materials like trees, rocks, river ice, as well as leaves as subjects and objects, to create site-specific art works, which reflect a relationship between artist(s) and their environment (See Figure ix).



Figure ix: '*Embodied*'. Martin Hill, Ice cut from the surface of the lake, 160 x 70 x 20cm, 2012. Diamond Lake, Wanaka, New Zealand. Courtesy http://martinhill.fluid.net.nz/?page_id=1167



Figure x: 'Clouds', Kumi Yamashita. Cut aluminum plate, single light source, shadow, 200cm X 120cm X 10cm, 2005. Courtesy http://laughingsquid.com/a-series-of-sculptures-that-cast-shadow-art-when-lit-from-a-specific-angle/

The term ‘Shadow Sculptures’ was used by Claire (2014). According to her, “When considering how to conserve the ephemeral, it would appear interesting therefore, to conduct a study into the shadow…These shadow sculptures position themselves between the ephemeral and the monument, between the presence of a body and its ineluctable disappearance.” Different Objects are arranged in a careful manner, so much so that, when light is cast against these objects, they create a visual image in the form of a shadow cast (See Figure x). In her words:

> A projected shadow is the dark area created when an opaque body intercepts light and projects it onto a surface, such as a floor, a wall or a screen. It is at once an immaterial material, remaining elusive, but above all it is an ephemeral material, being slippery, mobile and fugitive, “which lasts but a day,” or less, since it disappears and changes over the course of a day… While artists rarely mention shadows, be it in the titles of their works or in the list of materials in the work’s description, the shadow has always been a part of the vocabulary of art. From the outset, it held a place of its own in art practice and theory…The link that the shadow sustains between ephemerality and eternity renders it the dialectical image par excellence, be it on a formal or a conceptual level.

Although this kind of works last for a short while due to the ephemerality of their materials; their relevance is still kept intact, through photographic documentations. However, in recent years, some critics are of the view that, photography should not be reduced to a mere tool for documentation alone, but it should be seen as the art object itself.

Amanda (2008), citing Anton Karstell’s photographic documentation (2004), at the Visuality/Commentary exhibition, as well as, the Visual Dialogue (2007) created between Carla Crafford’s and Guy du Toit’s work, writes: “In both cases, photography no longer plays the dutiful role of technological handmaiden, but has emancipated itself, to the status of autonomous art object.” Glyptic sculpture, as described by Dennis (2006), emphasizes the material from which, the work is created and usually, retains the fundamental geometric qualities of that material. Different critics over the years have been of the opinion that, the material with which a work of art is produced, is as important, as the work itself. As such, the material adds to the

overall meaning of the work. In this sense, the stunted sculptures of Muyideen Adio Jaji will be examined, not just with their ideological foundations, but also, within the complementary role that material has come to bear, on the works', ideological, aesthetic and stylistic considerations.

Klaus (2015) used the term "*spiritual materiality*". He opines that, "this spiritual materialism ranges from art that either reconstructs or simulates 'material,' whether reflexive or poetic, in such a way as to manifest thereby, its rules or ideological structure; as do Roni Horn's sculptures and photographs; combines an expressed materialism, with the goal of changing social praxis." Klaus, further states that, one artist who has been creating works, that are both highly materialist and intensely transcendental is the German sculptor, Wolfgang Laib, best known for slabs of white marble, covered with milk and fields of yellow or orange pollen, sifted onto floors (See Figure xi).



Figure xi: Pouring the milk for '*Milkstone*,' Wolfgang Laib. White marble, milk; 2 x 122 x 130 cm, 1987-89. Courtesy http://www.skny.com/news/2010-11-03_wolfgang-laib-in-conversation/

All of his works are, in one sense or another, aimed at suspending reality, through both his choice of materials such as wax, milk, pollen; and the shapes of his sculptures, such as houses, ships, pyramids, cones, ziggurats; many of which imply transgression, the going 'somewhere else'; as the title of one of Laib's sculptures suggests.

James Lee Byars, was known for creating works that are extreme in their formal simplicity, yet exceedingly luxurious, in the choice of materials: marble, gold, black or red silk, and glass. While his earlier, predominantly performative works, guided by the model of Noh Theater, sought to dematerialize his silk and paper objects, through actions and performances; as reported by Klaus (2015), his later works re-materialize performance by making materials into actors that raise philosophical questions. Several other artists like Roni Horn, Marc Quinn, Felix Gonzalez-Torres have worked in line with the concept of spiritual materiality. Gormley (2015) asserts that "every object tells stories: the story of its making, whether human, geological or natural; the story that it illustrates; the story that the artist attaches to it and the story that we attach to it; the thing that makes us look."

From the foregoing, to say that the material in which an art work was produced, sometimes shares in the philosophical responsibility of the work would suffice. Sometimes, artists get inspired through a material they encountered, as such; the artist might not derive philosophical satisfaction if such inspiration was portrayed in another material. Amanda (2008), referring to art critic Clement Greenberg, says "…for him, the purity of art, was best conveyed not only through abstraction, but also through the specificity of the medium of art, namely painting and sculpture. Art stood at risk of losing its purity once contaminated by other media." On the whole, the attending philosophy of an art work is sometimes imbedded in its material; consequently, the material of an artwork is as significant as its philosophy.

Ideas and Philosophies that Accompany Sculptures

All forms of artistic expressions are driven by an idea or a philosophy. Over the years, artistic philosophies have been propelled by different cognitive and affective elements. Based on the researcher's earlier plunge, into the stylistic and material orientation of sculptures; it suffices to posit that, some sculptors' philosophies are derived from either materials, techniques used in manipulating such materials, or the milieu in which such sculptors reside.

Art critics like Greenberg, according to Amanda (2008), believe in absolute materiality, while others like Duchamp are of the notion that art should be driven by ideas and not materials. Individuals in the world of art have coined and propagated diverse philosophies in their artistic expedition. Some philosophies are based on beliefs, be it religious, cultural or ethical; while some others are driven by an individual or a group's perception of their environment and different elements that make up the human society, living and non-living. Oloidi (2008), while writing about the ideologies that propel different schools of art in Europe and America, adduce that: "all the above 'schools' among others, had their different enriching ideological, therefore stylistic, trappings that took their intents far beyond unexpected and unbelievable frontiers. The Impressionist, Expressionist and Cubist schools all became movements in Europe and the United States of America."

In Nigeria for example, there were experimental schools of art, that influenced the ideas and philosophies imbedded in the art produced by the artists that, were trained by these schools. Father Kevin Caroll's workshop in Oye-Ekiti was one of such experimental schools. This workshop, according to the account of Oloidi (2008), beginning in 1947, brought together a group of traditional Yoruba carvers, who were serving various aspects of the Yoruba socio-cultural, socio-political, and religious activities. Some of the carvers, brought together by the

Catholic Church and Carroll in creating art for the church, were Lamidi Fakeye, and George Bandele Areogun. They used traditional artistic and formalistic philosophy, to illustrate various aspects of the Bible. Consequently, the Christian subjects began to appear in Yoruba motifs and other cultural iconographic elements. The Osogbo School, often referred to as Osogbo Workshop or Experiment, with exponents like Susan Wenger, Ulli Beier and Georgina Beier is another example of these informal experimental schools.

The formal art schools in Nigeria have also been a source of ideological and philosophical influence on some artists in conceptualizing their art. Schools like the Zaria Art School, Nsukka Art School, Yaba Art School, just to mention a few, have charted the course of contemporary art in Nigeria. Influenced by exponents like Kenneth Crossword Murray, the first graduate of the Zaria Art School sought philosophical inspiration from their diverse traditional backgrounds. In the words of Oloidi (2008):

> However, it was not the activities of these students in the college that made them very notable in the study of modern Nigerian art, it was their activities after graduation. That is, it was after some of these creatively prosperous students had graduated and got into leadership positions that they had the natural opportunity to advocate and perpetuate their art ideology. Prominent in this category were Uche Okeke, Yusuf Grillo and Demas Nwoko.

The contributions of these *Zarianists* indirectly fuelled the formation of other artistic movements and groups for art advocacy. *Onaism*, *Ulism* and *Araism*, are prominent examples of such movements; while some of these groups are, the *Nogh Nogh* Group, and according to Jari (2008), *Aka* Group, and the Eye Society, just to mention a few. All these movements and schools have their distinguished ideas and philosophies. The idea of schools and movements of art might seem like a concept that is restricted to the contemporary context of art in Africa; but on the contrary, in traditional Africa, the artistic system of thought was, in most cases, determined by rulers and kings, in their kingdoms and communities. This position stems from the assertion of Oloidi

(2008), while referring to the kings of the Bakuba group of the Congo region, the Asantehene of Ashanti of Ghana, the Fon of the Republic of Benin, the Oba of Benin, and the Oni of Ife. He says: "…these paramount rulers, among others, were able to decree, by tradition, artistic codes or prescriptions, which generations upon generations followed and kept. Each of these art traditions displayed its unique formalistic characters, in such a way that, constituted a school of its own." The artists in these kingdoms produced sculptures, especially as regards the court art, based on the specification of the King. As such, their sculptures possess similar stylistic traits, connoting the same ideas and philosophy.

Owing to this form of ideological and stylistic congruence in the art of the traditional Africans, the art of a particular people is relatively easy to identify. However, the exaggeration of the human head in African depiction of the human figure is a common stylistic trait in most African sculptures. This is not as a result of the traditional sculptors' limitation in effectively and proportionately depicting the human figure; but it possesses ideological and salient philosophical connotations in the African societies. Dennis (2008) writes that, "the way artists portrayed the human form, reveals much about its meaning in a work of art."

Ademuleya (2007) posits that "to understand the traditional arts of Africa South of the Sahara, it is very necessary to have a grasp of the traditional African system of thought, from which such art emerges." In the same vein, in a bid to understand such stylistic traits, Kalilu and Areo (2013) sees art, as "an expression of the context of a people's philosophical, cultural and religious worldview, and hence the artist within that society is expected to express his understanding of his milieu." Consequently, a way through which this distortion in the artistic representation of the human figure, in traditional Africa could be comprehended and well appreciated, is by taking a periscopic view at the cultural context, of the whole complex, that produced it, as well as, the

distinguished function for which it was intended; taking the traditional Yoruba sculptural tradition as a sample for this perusal.

Yoruba people of South-Western Nigeria, according to Lawal (2012), constitute one of the strongest and largest ethnic groups in Africa. They are descendants of a great ancestry and progeny of noble tradition. They speak numerous dialects of the same generic language, called Yoruba. Lawal further explains that, numbering more than twenty-five million people presently, and living mainly in Nigeria and the republics of Benin and Togo, the Yoruba are made up of several kingdoms, each headed by a king. They created a strong economy through farming, trading, and art production. The author further explains that the ancient arts of Ilè-Ifè, their most sacred city, include extremely naturalistic terracotta and bronze sculptures, dating from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, pointing to an era of economic prosperity and intense cultural activity.

According to the Yoruba cosmology, as posited by Ademuleya (2007), the origin of human existence is traced to a supreme Divinity called '*Eleda*'-the creator of all. He is believed to be in charge of all human affairs. Ademuleya further writes about the Yoruba creation myth that:

> … When human (sic) comes into the world at birth…It is only his ori that remembers the course and content of his chosen destiny, and pursues this accordingly. It directs human's (sic) affairs in this world. To the Yoruba people, the "ori" is invisible, and is therefore referred to as ori -inu (the inner head), destined to become the person's instructor, his 'guardian angel',…Ori in Yoruba belief is the man's personality soul, his guardian angel and his personal deity, which is elevated to the level of a divinity, and thus worshipped by a man for things to be well with him. For a man's designated role in life – his destiny – to be well fulfilled, it becomes necessary for him to be on good terms with his ori. This demands its being kept in good condition, well respected, and propitiated from time to time.

'*Ori*'(the head) holds a metaphorically symbolic significance in the Yoruba traditional culture. The head carries most of the vital organs of the body, it is a point of identity for every individual,

it carries the brain and unlike some other parts of the body that the body can survive without, the absence of the head in the human body, signifies death. Apart from these biological significance attached to the head, traditional Africans, Yorubas in this case, have some socio-religious attachments to the human head. As adduced by Ademuleya (2007), the word '*ori*', in contrast to its English meaning as the physical 'head', or its biological description as the seat of the major sensory organs, to the Yoruba, connotes the total nature of its bearer; the head in its totality is an element of worship.

It carries the true essence and predestined fate for every man's existence. Consequently, the Yoruba traditional artists rendered the human head, in respect to their symbolic and sacred attachments to the human head.



Figure xii: '*Ooni of Ife & wife', artist unknown. Bronze, Size Unspecified. Courtesy of Ademuleya (2007).*

Typical examples of this form of exaggeration is seen in some Yoruba carved images, like the twin figure - *ere ibeji*, the Bronze figure of an *Ooni of Ife and wife (*Figure xii), the human images in several *Epa* headdresses of *Bamgboye* of *Odo-Owa* in Ekiti and many other traditional Yoruba sculptures (Ademuleya 2007).

Traditionally, the human head is rendered in ratio one to three or one to four, with respect to the head and the body, as opposed to the one to seven or seven and a half conventional ratio of an average human body, based on the Western idea of accurate proportion. In the socio-political setting of traditional Africa, the exaggeration of the human head is sometimes adopted to connote leadership. For instance, in the court art of Benin, Christa (2006) observes that, "on plaques with multiple figures, the scale of the figures denotes their positions within Benin court hierarchy.



Figure xiii: 'Oba on Horseback', ca. 1550–1680. Bronze Plaque, Kingdom of Benin, Nigeria. Courtesy of Christa (2006).

The largest one is the most important, with others decreasing in size, according to their relative significance" (See Figure xiii). This metaphoric connotations imbedded in the court art of Benin, can also be identified in the art of the traditional Yoruba (as illustrated in Figure xii).

This symbolic significance attached to the human head by traditional Africans, forms the philosophical and ideological basis for most of their sculptures. As such, their sculptures connote different forms of symbolic implications; ranging from leadership to fertility, rites of passage, courage, authority, power, religious purity, ancestral commemoration, funeral rites, and the list goes on. Some contemporary artists have delved into interrogating these cultures and traditions artistically, in a bid to widen their usage and increase their appreciation of the philosophical basis, for the introduction of these contemporary arts, that speak not only to members of such cultures, but the larger world's society. Artistic styles like *Onaism, Araism*- championed by artists such as Moyo Okediji, Kunle Filani, Tola Wewe and Mufu Onifade; and recently, the stunted figures of Jaji, are examples of the result of such cultural interrogations.

Literature on Muyideen Adio Jaji

As earlier stated, the scholarly literature on Jaji's artistic exploration is quite limited. However, the researcher was able to find some commentaries made about the artist in some exhibition catalogues, internet blogs, journals, research thesis and magazines.

Based on his sculptural explorations, Jaji has been referred to as a realist, by a number of art scholars and enthusiasts. For instance, Samuel (2012), observes that "…he is a realist and often finds himself distorting and elongating or exaggerating his figures, to emphasize some concepts." Though Samuel did not elaborate on these concepts, which this research hopes to, Odulaja (2016) on the other hand, reports that "Jaji has warned artists to realize and accept 'the fact that, the ship of art, is moving towards the rocks by their belief in conceptual art'…." Considering the

foregoing, the question that comes to mind is that: If Jaji is not so keen on conceptual art, as deduced from the report of Odulaja (2016), why then, will he engage in distortions, exaggerations, and elongations in elucidating his sculptural ideas? Perhaps this is a pointer to the artist's struggle, between conforming to contemporary artistic concepts and his loyalty to nature, as well as, his cultural heritage. Owing to this probable struggle, most of Jaji's 'conceptual' works were rendered in partial abstraction; giving some room for nature to chart its course. Some examples of such works are '*Yoruba Drummer'* (1998), *'Mai-goger'* (1998) and *'Destitute'* (2006) (as in Figure xiv), just to mention a few. His allegiance to nature, as well as, the traditional form of sculptural representation, is also made evident in his extensive use of terracotta, as a material of expression.



Figure Iv: 'Destitute', Muyideen Adio Jaji, Terracotta, 32cm, 2006. Artist's Collection.

To further buttress the foregoing notion, Sowole (2012) adduces that, "Jaji sees no alternative or, hidden place for art, outside the traditional core expression, noting that it would be deceptive to say that the future of art appreciation is in the new media." Jaji's love and loyalty to nature, especially figurative sculptures, was also brought to the fore in the statement of Duniya (2009)

that : “He is someone whose environment has greatly influenced, such that, when he was in Ilorin, the environment restricted his work to calligraphic expressions, because of certain socio-religious factors. However, his return to Zaria has afforded him another opportunity to dwell on figurative expressions.” While this statement is informative, details of the figurative expressions have not been given, particularly as it relates to his Yoruba culture and its artistic culture.

Just as the exponents of the Natural Synthesis from Zaria have tapped into their diverse cultures to seek philosophical inspiration, the stunted sculptures of Jaji, seem to share some stylistic traits, with the traditional African sculptures. His stunted sculptures possess the traditional scale of proportion, in which more attention is placed on the head of the figure. The title of his works like ‘*Bobajiroro’*, 2010, and the regalia, as well as, the beaded adornments he incorporates in some of these sculptures, further buttresses this notion. However, these notions and others, are yet to be researched, for the purpose of confirming or discarding them. It is therefore, the intent of this research to investigate, not just the stunted sculptures of Jaji, but to unveil their philosophical advocacies and their aesthetic attachments.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is on Jaji's stunted sculptures; therefore, in order to achieve the aim of this research; the researcher adopts a method of research and procedures that would help in this regard. Hence, the methodology adopted in this research is discussed under the following subheads: Research Design, Sources of Data, Population and Sampling Technique, and Field Work.

Research Design

Research design according to Kothari (2004) "is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. As such, the design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data." Consequently, in order to achieve the contextual analysis of Jaji's stunted sculpture, the qualitative method of research was adopted, using a descriptive and historical approach.

Historical research as defined by Jegede (1999) "is a procedure in which the research conducts a systematic search for documents, in order to answer questions about some past events, which could lead to a better understanding of the present." In this regard, this research relies on the historical approach, in order to trace the tradition, evolution, and philosophical influences that might have inspired Jaji into producing stunted sculptures.

In adopting the historical approach, the descriptive method of analysis was also used, in analyzing the formal attributes of these stunted sculptures; situating them historically or otherwise, in relation to certain stylistic inclinations, inherent in the traditional Yoruba aesthetics. According to Ikpakronyi (2006) "in descriptive research, as it concerns art, the art

researcher describes art works in detail, stating its various components and placing it in relation to certain events that led to its production". Mamza (2008) is also of the notion that while historical method tells us about what existed in the past, descriptive method tells us about what currently exists.

The historical approach and descriptive method of analysis has therefore, been used in interpreting and analyzing the information gathered.

Sources of Data

Jegede (1999) asserts that "historical research, unlike any other researches, depends heavily on both primary and secondary sources of data collection." As such, this research, being an art historical one, relies on data gotten from both the primary source, which is Jaji, and the secondary sources, such as books, journals, internet and exhibition catalogues.

Primary information according to Mamza (2008) "are the original materials or testimony of an eye witness." The researcher obtained first hand information, through personal interactions and interviews with the artist, as well as, through visitations to the artist's home, in Ilorin, Kwara state, and his home and studio, in Zaria, Kaduna State. The researcher also visited the sculpture garden of the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in order to take pictures of some of the artist's previous works.

Secondary sources of information usually, are such that, there is no direct contact with the object or person in question. According to Kothari (2004), "secondary data refer to the data which have already been collected and analysed by someone else. Secondary data may either be published data or unpublished data… Examples of published data are books, magazines, newspapers and association publications; while examples of unpublished data are diaries, letters, and unpublished biographies and autobiographies." The secondary sources that have been consulted include

exhibition catalogues, textbooks, journals, internet, unpublished thesis, as well as, dissertations gotten from libraries.

Population and Sampling Technique

In this study, purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sculptures that possess the stunted characteristics, amongst other sculptures produced by Jaji. According to Crossman (2016), "a purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study." Charles (2007) also sees purposive sampling as a technique that "involves selecting certain units or cases based on a specific purpose rather than randomly". Researchers like Duniya (2009), Danjuma (2010), and Gushem (2011), have used this sampling technique successfully. Consequently, the whole population of stunted sculptures produced by Jaji, between 2008 and 2015, which constitutes ten (10) sculptures, have been selected and used in the study.

Field Work

Field work entails gathering first hand information. Okpoko and Ezeh (2005) states that "the researcher is expected to familiarize himself or herself with the environmental setting of the study, in order to appreciate how they perceive or relate to it." Stokstad in Obadofin (2015) also recommends 'the actual field research' which means that, a researcher should go into the field, for personal contact with the subject of research. Consequently, instruments like, observation, photography and interviews; as well as, tools, such as a multimedia digital camera, draft-interview questions, an audio recorder and a laptop, were relied on for teasing out information on the stunted sculptures.

On March 22 and 31, 2017, the researcher visited the artist's home, in Ilorin, Kwara state. Also, the researcher visited the artist's Zaria residence at the Ahmadu Bello University's Staff Quarters

on July 14, 2017; as well as, his studio, where oral interviews were conducted and photographs of the stunted sculptures taken. Draft-interview questions were used to extract information from the artist, by the researcher; the information gathered has been utilized in the analysis of the artist's works.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter focuses on the contextual analysis of the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji between 2008 and 2015. The data gathered from the field is analysed under these headings: 'The Stunted Sculptures of Jaji and their Categories'; 'The Materials and Styles Employed by Jaji' and 'The Ideological and Philosophical Basis for the Stunted Sculptures.' Two works each are analysed under the first and second subheads, respectively. While in the third subhead, which deals with the ideological and philosophical basis of the works, the stunted figures have been categorized into three different groups, based on the thematic philosophies surrounding the production of each of these sculptures. Two works each are analysed under the following categories: 'Socio-Political Ideas'; 'Socio-Religious Ideas'; and 'The Ghanaian Influenced Stunted Sculptures'.

The categorization is based on the notion that, art in the traditional African setting is usually grounded in either religious or political philosophies. This is in accordance with the traditional mode of belief, which hinges most of life's happenings, on the supernatural; as well as, their belief in the significance of the human head as a symbol of leadership. Thus, most artistic effort in the traditional African setting is aimed at alluding honour and respect to these two significant ideologies. Presumably, the foregoing is the foundation on which Jaji built the ideological and philosophical essence of these stunted sculptures.

The Stunted Sculptures of Jaji and their Categories

As a result of his plunge into the experimental world of art, Jaji produced a total of ten stunted sculptures between the years 2008 and 2015. In line with the concept of Hybrid Aesthetics, virtually all the stunted sculptures he produced, possess indigenous Yoruba themes. The

sculptures are also stunted depictions, of middle-aged and elderly men and women. According to their year of production, the titles of the stunted figures produced by Jaji are: *'Eshu'* (2008), *'Odeya' (2008)*, '*Ayo'* (2009), '*Iyalode i'* (2009), *'Iyalode ii' (2010), 'Bobajiroro'* (2010), *'Oheneba' (2012)*, '*Obokun' (2013), 'Asantehene* (2014)', and *'Sango'* (2015).

The categorization of these sculptures, is based on the social ideologies and philosophies they have been seen to propagate; hence, the stunted sculptures have been categorised into four major categories. They are based on works that postulate 'Socio-Religious Ideas', 'Socio-Political Ideas', 'Socio-Cultural Ideas', and 'Ghanaian Influenced Stunted Sculptures'.

The relationship between art and religion, in the traditional African sphere, cannot be over emphasized. Art has been seen to serve diverse salient functions in catapulting some socio-religious concepts within the African society; including being the major catalyst for cogent aspects, like their ritualistic processes. Some of Jaji's stunted sculptures have been seen to posit these socio-religious ideas, specifically, in the traditional Yoruba religious domain. In terms of their socio-political relevance, some of these stunted sculptures possess significant political attributes. A major attribute in Jaji's exploration, that expouses the socio-political essence of his exploration, is the exaggerated heads of the stunted sculptures. Having spent a substantial amount of his early formative years in Ghana, justifies his choice for the Ghanaian influenced stunted sculptures. Detailed discussions of the foregoing categories, as well as the works that fall under these categories are made under the subtopic, 'The Ideological and Philosophical Basis for the Stunted Sculptures.'

Socio-Culturally however, contemporary African arts have over the years, addressed salient socio-cultural issues, relating to human existence. Some contemporary artists have chosen to tap into the cultural archives of their various indigenous societies. This is in a quest to understand

the cultural dynamism of the human society, appreciate and interrogate these various cultural inclinations, and educate uninformed individuals in the society, on the relevance and significance of these salient cultural trends. Jaji, being a Yoruba sculptor, has not fallen short of this stylistic inclination. Some products of his interrogation, which are socio-culturally contextualized, will be analysed in this section. For instance, '*Odeya'* (Plate i) is an example of his work that postulates socio-cultural ideology.

Produced in 2008, '*Odeya*' is a stunted sculpture produced by Jaji in elucidating his socio-cultural views of the society. The terracotta sculpture carries the physical attribute of a middle-aged Yoruba woman, dressed in the indigenous Yoruba ceremonial attire of *Iro and Buba*. The attire, which is *Aso Oke,* the traditional cloth of the Yoruba, comprises of a head gear, usually tied elaborately in different styles; the blouse, is tucked into her wrapper, and also tied generously over her belly, which covers up to her ankles; revealing the sandals worn on her exaggerated feet, completes her costume.

Assuming a pose that exudes confidence and elegance, the sculpted woman has her face adorned with the indigenous Yoruba tribal marks, running down her temples, towards the corners of her mouth. Though the stunted figure was produced with some contemporary inclinations to it, the artist still acculturated the form, by introducing a simple beaded necklace, with a big pendant round the neck of the figure. Earrings and a portable hand bag, held in her right hand, allude to the stunted figure's ceremonial look.



Plate i(a) (Front View) **Plate i(b) (Side View)**

Odeya, Terracotta, 49 x 27cm, 2008. The Artist's Collection.

'*Odeya*', in Yoruba means 'outing time!' It is a word that connotes an individual's material and mental readiness, for festivities and merry making. It also means that, an individual making such statement, must have examined himself or herself, and found herself and her beautification process, worthy of the occasion at hand. This stunted figure symbolizes the relatively lengthy process women go through every day, to beautify and embellish themselves. It also signifies one of the things that are chief, in the priorities of women, especially in the African society. In the contemporary times, women spend so much money on ceremonial uniforms, chosen by

associations, colleagues, family and friends. In dressing for an occasion, women spend hours making their hairs, filing their nails, painting their faces and body, and picking out jewelries to adorn their bodies with, just to mention a few. Some women even go the extra mile of borrowing money to pay for some of these relatively unnecessary luxuries.

Having produced two works under the theme '*Iyalode'*, the artist's respect and recognition of the importance of women in the society, is magnified by representing his social views in the theme '*Odeya*', using a female form. However, as much as, Jaji's sculpture stands to symbolize the beauty, elegance and relevance of a woman, to the family and the society at large; it also illuminates a satirical notion that frowns at their material excesses. This satirical point of view is needful, because several women over the years have found themselves in financial complications, as a result of such indulgencies.

'*Ayo*' (Plate ii) is another stunted sculpture that falls under the socio-cultural category. The concept of Ayo is from the Yoruba culture, as experienced by Jaji. '*Ayo'* is a two-figured sculptural composition of two elderly Yoruba men. The sculptural composition, produced in 2009, is rendered in fiberglass resin. This partially stunted figures, made vivid, the struggle he had with breaking off from his realistic and naturalistic presentation of his works and delving into the conceptual world of art. Thus, after taking such a bold step, into the conceptual series of the stunted sculptures, by delivering his debut which was '*Eshu'* (Plate viii) and '*Odeya*'(Plate i), both in 2008, the artist consciously or unconsciously, found himself going back to his first love, by rendering '*Ayo*' with some realistic tendencies in 2009. '*Ayo*' lacks some stylistic traits that defined the stunted sculpture exploration. Such traits include the compressed torso, obviously exaggerated head and feet, and short limbs. Jaji, having been regarded by some critics, such as Samuel (2012), as a realist, probably found his way back into the conceptual, by staying faithful

to the stylistic traits that defines the stunted sculptures. He then made use of these stylistic traits in elucidating his views on '*Iyalode i*' (Plate vi) in the same 2009.



Plate ii(a) (Side View): Ayo, Fibreglass, 55 x 80cm, 2009. The Artist's Collection.



Plate ii(b) (Aerial View)

The two elderly male figures that make up the '*Ayo*' composition are casually dressed in indigenous Yoruba attires. Though shaped to face different directions, the two men have caps on. They also have their leisurely '*Agbada and Sokoto'* on. For the sake of context, the figures have no shoes on; despite the contemporary tendencies of their attire. Seated on two low stools, they are both focused on the game at hand; each of them, keenly contemplating his opponent's next move. Taking a closer look, one will observe that, these sculptural figures have no element of beaded ornamentation on them, coupled with their bare feet. This might be a pointer to the idea that they assume no significant role in the society; thus they are men of the middle class or the low class, based on societal stratum.

In Yoruba speaking territories, according to Awale.info.com (2009) "the game board is called '*ayo olopon*' and the seeds are called '*omo ayo'*. *Ayo Olopon* games are played by elders, adult men and young men…the players move green seeds from one hole to another. Each player's goal is to capture as many seeds, at the end of the game." In accordance with the artist's search for peace in all he does; the *Ayo* game is such that fosters togetherness and communal living among members of a society. The human society is dynamic, and as such, different complex elements like religion, culture, education, status, systems of thought and many others; tend to pose as elements of disparity, among humans. Recreational activities such as, sport or '*Ayo'* in this case, serve as a binding element, as well as, a common ground for the several societal sects, to come together. Young and old, players and spectators alike, all involved in the game process, are in it for a common goal of recreation and relaxation. Taking a more microscopic view of the stunted figure '*Ayo*', one could portend that these figures could be regarded as the two major religions that are in Nigeria; Christianity and Islam. As a message to the different religious sects, that have refused to respect the beliefs and morals of the other religion; this work proffers peaceful

coexistence and dialogue, in chiseling out issues that concern the two parties. Every misunderstanding and misconception should not result to violence, chaos and bloodshed; but should rather be settled with mutual respect and understanding.

However, in recent times, the essence of such communal game such as *Ayo*, which was intended to foster peaceful coexistence and communalism, has been defiled. Individuals in the contemporary societies have exploited such avenues for the satisfaction of their immoral cravings like gambling. Accordingly, one of the morals that Jaji's sculpture, '*Ayo'* tends to portend, is to discourage people from engaging in this game out of sheer laziness; playing the game while there is still a lot of work to be done.

Jaji used '*Ayo*', as a vehicle for the promotion and exhibition, of the traditional African's recreational culture. Such culture reveals that, as 'primitive' as traditional Africans might have been presumed to be, they also believe in the positive effect of rest and relaxation, on the mental wellness and overall productivity, of the human body. Other recreational activities asides *Ayo*, are the different forms of storytelling tradition, folk dances, hunting, local wrestling and other calisthenics. One social function of such recreational gathering is that, it serves as a center for information dissemination. According to Awale.info.com (2009), "playing *Ayo Olopon* game helps players and spectators to hear news, get information and keep abreast of local gossip, while talking about something around the board game. Some even take the opportunity to recall outstanding debts."



Plate iii (a): The Detached Version 'Ayo', Fibreglass. 2009. The Artist's Collection.



Plate iii(b)

The artist displayed his artistic ingenuity, in the manner in which, he mounted the work. Instead of mounting the two figures, that make up the composition, on one single pedestal; the artist mounted the figures on two different pedestals; see Plates iii (a) and (b). As such, it allows for easier mobility, when the work needs to be moved from place to place. Again, this composition can be separated and presented as unique figures, if the artist so desires; as they can be seen as complete sculptural pieces independently.

The Materials and Styles Employed By Jaji

Jaji, during some of his explorations, has experimented with a number of materials like concrete, bronze, fiberglass, Plaster of Paris, and terracotta. However, his stunted sculptures were produced, using terracotta and fiberglass. As a result of his loyalty to the traditional artistic culture, availability of material and the cost of production; a larger portion of the stunted sculptures were produced in terracotta, a traditional sculpting material.

Relying on Laurie (2007)'s assertion that "a sculptor's choice of medium has personal, as well as, practical meaning", one could say that Jaji's choice of terracotta, as a medium for exploring the stunted figures, was by no means accidental. His choice for terracotta could be attributed to his love for nature, as well as, the environment in which he resides; which made clay quite available and inexpensive. In an interview with Jaji, he said that "I am from a poor background. I was almost not given the permission to go into sculpture, because my parents were Muslims. So the most available material was clay…" Apart from the availability of the material, it is quite easy to manipulate and it further exhibits the traditional inclinations of the exploration; an essential characteristic, that is quite relevant to the exploration, based on its conceptual framework. An example of such stunted sculpture, produced in terracotta is '*Obokun*'.





Plate iv (a) (Front View) **Plate iv (b) (Side View)**

Obokun, Terracotta 48 x 26cm, 2013. The Artist's Collection.

Produced in 2013, '*Obokun*'(Plate iv) is a stunted terracotta sculpture, produced by Jaji, during his exploration of the stunted figures. The sculpted figure is that of a middle aged man, carrying a gourd in his left hand and a calabash bowl in the right hand. The sculpted figure is made bare footed, clad with a short skirt, which is traditionally referred to, as '*bante'*. With his mouth agape, the figure wears a tired expression on his slightly exaggerated face. The traditional attribute of the sculpture, was made more visible, by the beaded ornamentation round its neck and left wrist; as well as, its traditional haircut, which allows the whole head to be shaved, except for a substantial amount that is left at the middle of the head, running from the fore head to the

back of the head. Left in its natural state, after firing, the sculpture '*Obokun*', has random black patches on its body, as a result of firing. No pedestal was required for the work, as Jaji has stylishly exaggerated the feet of the sculpture. Thus, introducing balance and stability into the work, as well as, serving as a pedestal.

'*Obokun*' which means 'he who fetches the sea water', emanates from a legend, according to the historical account of the *Egbe Omo Obokun of Ijesha*, INC (2010), which explains that, *Obokun* was the youngest son of *Oduduwa*. Of all Oduduwa's sons, only *Olofin (Obokun)* volunteered to go fetch sea water, which was part of the requirements for curing his father's blindness. On his return, he was told that all inheritances, including crowns, were given to his elder brothers. Instead, he was given a sword named '*Ida Ajase*' (sword of conquest) and was told to seize his heritage from his elder brothers. As a catalyst for producing the sculpture, Jaji's account of the *Obokun* legend reads:

> …*Obokun* was the one that went to Lagos to fetch the sea water, and came back. Nobody knew how he did it; whether on foot or whatever. Just imagine those days with forests, dangerous animals and other things. But he went, and came back with the sea water; though the father was almost dead by the time he got back…

At a first glance, when an uninformed observer encounters this stunted sculpture, judging by the gourd and calabash, the sculptural male figure holds quite dearly and securely, the most probable title that comes to mind is 'The Drunkard'. However, an awareness of the historical account, that surrounds the theme '*Obokun*', erases such misconception. Then, one will start seeing the effort, with which the man is guarding the gourd, as a sign of his commitment to his quest; rather than seeing the gesture as a drunken enthusiasm, of an unrepentant drunk. Also, the opened representation of the sculpture's mouth, could be seen as, a show of tiredness from the long and dangerous journey. As well, sadness and despair could be an alternative interpretation; having gone through the dangerous ordeal, only to return to his half dead father.

As a Yoruba man, it is only natural for him to tap into such historical archives, as a means to exhibit his sculptural experimentations. The symbolic connotation of the stunted sculpture '*Obokun*' therefore, entails service to humanity, selflessness, courage, perseverance, sacrifice and many others. This sculpture can also be seen as a satirical effort, towards addressing the selfishness and greed, which ravages our contemporary society. The exaggerated head of this sculpture can be seen as a symbolic characteristic, which shows the magnitude of responsibility, the personality '*Obokun'* carries. The notion of "every man for himself", has become the order of the day; thus, making the idea of "being one's brothers' keeper", a thing of the past. Thus, '*Obokun*' stands as a symbol of selflessness and love, in the present society. Societal issues such as this, which fosters peaceful coexistence and selflessness, are mostly the thematic focus of his stunted sculptures. He also adopts traditional historical contexts, as his thematic pedestal.

The production of this work in terracotta made vivid the pinching approach Jaji adopted during the modeling. The pinching method also in turn, gave the sculpture, '*Obokun'* an evenly rough textural pattern. Asides his exploration using terracotta, as a contemporary artist, Jaji also produced some of his stunted sculptures in fibre glass. Fibre glass, being one of the numerous contemporary materials in sculpture, is often lighter in weight than terracotta; thus, giving room for easier mobility of the work. One of his stunted sculptures that were produced in fiberglass, is '*Bobajiroro*' (Plate v).





Plate v (a) (Front View) **Plate v (b) (Side View)**
Bobajiroro, Fiberglass, 58 x 30cm, 2010. the Artist's Collection.

'Bobajiroro' **(Plate v)** is a stunted terracotta sculpture that was produced by Jaji in 2010. Postulating a socio-political ideology, the stunted figure assumes the persona of an elderly Yoruba chief, in his full traditional, official regalia. Wearing his indigenous '*agbada and sokoto'*, along with the traditional '*abetiaja*' cap, Jaji presented the stunted sculpture, with some edge of importance. The right hand of the sculpture raises the hem of his regalia, as if in a bid to fold it back on his shoulder. Socially however, the Yoruba sometimes consider this gesture as a conscious or unconscious exhibition of confidence, affluence and influence. The beaded wrist band, necklace, as well as, the horse tail held in the left hand of the sculpted figure, go a long way in contributing to the chiefly look of the figure.

The word '*Bobajiroro'* means 'to deliberate with the king'. As such, this stunted figure represents the personalities involved in decision making, in the political arena; the advisers of the king. By implication, a person that deliberates and advises the king, has to be quite witty, proactive, and should posses a significant level of diplomatic skills. Education and knowledge, are other important ingredients, for a productive deliberation. Such requirements are necessary because, the king has to be seen as wise, knowledgeable and fair in judgment. Again, to attain such level of proximity with the king, such person must have been seen as, trust worthy and loyal. In contemporary politics, such personalities are referred to as, senators and special advisers.

Governance, being one of the major problems that face a society, has attracted the artistic curiosity of Jaji; as this generates conflicts, between the government and the governed. Though Jaji has made a traditional Yoruba thematic choice, in elucidating his ideas in this stunted sculpture; the figure however, serves as a window into the socio-political proceeding, of both traditional and contemporary societies. The stunted sculpture, in a way, propounds the fact that, the blame of bad governance, should not be placed on just the office holders all the time. Sometimes, it is a function of the quality of advice they receive, from the people that surrounds them; as well as, the selfish interest of some subordinates, they delegate responsibilities to.

The artist did not only make this work, '*Bobajiroro*' a symbol of hope for a better governance; but he has also made it a satirical tool, to address the political misconducts going on in the human society. For instance, making the figure pot-bellied, addresses the issue of corruption on the part of political leaders; who are more concerned about their estates and bank accounts. This is not to rule out the possibility that, Jaji intended the chubby nature of the sculpture, to connote

wealth and affluence. The chubby nature of the figure, may also be seen as, a show of strength and capacity, to wield such political authority.

The exaggeration of the legs, in this particular stunted sculpture, might not just be for the sake of stability alone. The exaggerated legs may be seen as the power with which political leaders use in trampling on the rights of their citizens; hence the boots the figure is wearing. Taking another perspective, the legs could be seen as a display of the strength, authority and power the office holder wields. More critically, it could also be seen as the magnitude of authority and financial strength such leaders rely on; which can afford them the opportunity to get away with whatever unjust act they perpetrate.

As a result of the artist's probable struggle, between yielding totally to the contemporary form of artistic expression, and his lingering attachment, to the traditional modes of artistic expression; he has two themes, in his stunted sculptures exploration, which were produced in both terracotta and fiberglass. The figures are titled '*Bobajiroro*' and *Iyalode*. However, the terracotta version of '*Bobajiroro*' was not in the possession of the artist, as at the time of this research.

Jaji's use of material, in exploring the stunted sculptures, did not stop at just terracotta and fiberglass alone. Though unsuccessful, the artist had actually tried his hand on other materials, like bronze. He explained that the failure of the casting process, lies with the inability of the casters, to successfully execute the work; the end result of his attempts were just complaints and excuses, after he must have invested so much money into the process.

In terms of Jaji's stylistic inclinations in his stunted sculpture exploration, one of the most obvious stylistic traits found in all the sculptures, is the dwarfish representation, which could be seen as stylization or semi realism. Forming the major basis for his exploration, Jaji stylishly

compressed the figures in a way that, the forms were not lost, and some relative proportions were still maintained.

The exaggeration of the feet of the sculptures is another stylistic trait that cuts across all the sculptures in the exploration. The exaggerated feet, some wearing foot wears, while others are bare; serve two significant purposes in the artist's exploration. Firstly, it serves as a form of pedestal for the stunted sculptures produced in terracotta, as it gives balance and stability to the sculptures. In addition, the exaggerated feet, also serve as a form of artistic and experimental signature for the artist; as this characteristic applies to all the works in the exploration.

The Ideological and Philosophical Basis for the Stunted Sculptures

Though Jaji's works are based on four divergent ideological bases, which includes the Socio-Cultural, Socio-Religious and Socio-Political ideologies, as well as, the Ghanaian influenced stunted sculptures; this section will discuss three of these categories, which are works that avers 'Socio-Political Ideas', 'Socio-Religious Ideas' and 'The Ghanaian Influenced Works'. This is because the 'Socio-Cultural' Category had been discussed, under the first subtopic.

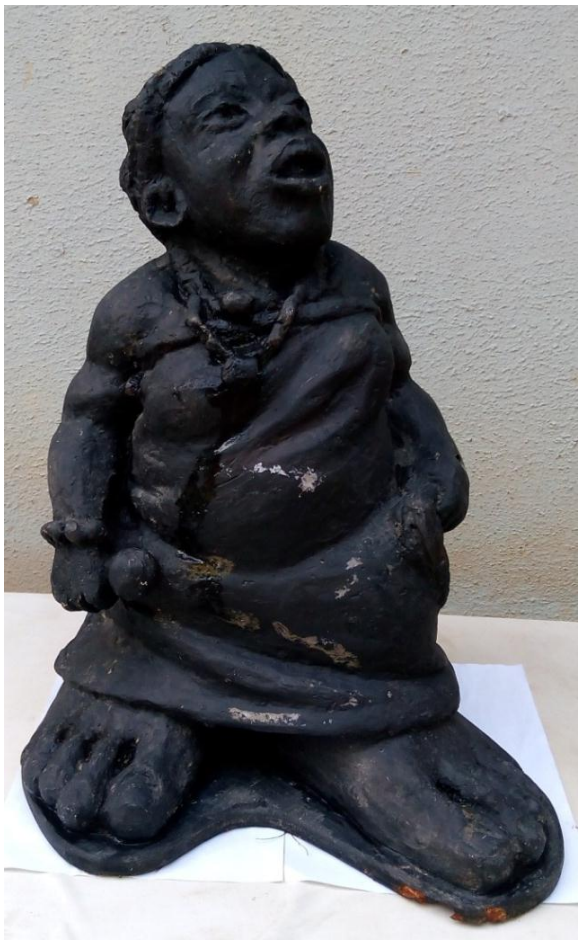
Politics and religion are two phenomenal concepts that exert significant influence on the affairs of humans, generally. Directly or indirectly, every member of a society is affected by the politics and policies of the society in which he/she resides; whether he/she participates actively or passively, in the political activities. In the same vein, religion is another aspect, that almost all humans participate and believe in. As such, human responses and participation in religious activities, come in varying degrees. Some religious practices could be, as spiritual as, being a belief and worship of a supernatural controlling power or god; while others are, as simple as, being faithful to some sets of principles and ideologies.

Religious heads and political leaders, are two significant groups of personalities that direct the affairs of humans, in the traditional African sphere. Mostly, traditional Africans seek religious guidance and directions, before embarking on any important quest. In some sense, one could say that, religious heads have a stronger hold on the traditional Africans, than the political leaders. This is so because, most important decisions that could have consequential implications on the welfare of a people, are taken most times, based on the guidance of the gods; the supernatural being. Thus, religion, unlike politics is concerned with every aspect of a people's life; from the most significant issues, like who should be the next king, to the less relevant ones, like having body scarification. From the rites of child birth, to the rites of passage, every human activity in the traditional African scene, is hinged on religion. Political activities seem to seek confirmations from the religious sects, before swinging into action. In the present day traditional societies, for instance, religion has a stronger hold on the affairs of the people, because major political responsibilities have been taken off the hands of the kings and chiefs and now placed in the hands of the modern local government administrators.

It is based on the fore going, as well as, the belief of the traditional Yoruba in the symbolic significance of the human head; that most traditional artistic representations of the human form place more emphasis on the head, as a sign of their reverence for the supernatural. Commemoration and respect for political leadership is another reason for this form of emphasis. The juxtaposition of traditional artistic elements, with contemporary artistic practice in Jaji's exploration, is driven by several ideologies. One of such ideologies is that; for the present to be well understood, the past needs to be adequately interrogated. This is imperative because, according to Le Corbusier, in Maycroft (2002), "the past teaches or forms the foundation of the present or is seen as lessons and the sign post of permanent human value."

Accordingly, Akpang (2013) stresses that the re-invention of traditional visual idioms in creative experimentations, such as Jaji's, bears credence to the significance of influences of past generations on modern art. Having interrogated these systems of thought, Jaji's exploration of the stunted sculptures, using the traditional African artistic inclinations, as a vehicle of expression, has its context in salient socio-political philosophies and socio-religious ideologies. Thus, two works each will be analysed under the following subheads: 'Socio-Political Themes', 'Socio-Religious Themes' and 'Socio-Cultural Themes'.

Socio-Political Ideas: In relation to Jaji's personal and artistic philosophy, which seeks for peace always; Plato, according to Elechi (2012), relates peace, to the original inclinations and desires of human beings (state of nature), to address the social context of peace. In the socio-political context however, he discusses justice as the most fundamental basis of peaceful social existence. Justice in this context refers to political equality and fairness, which are significant ingredients, to mutual understanding and societal peace. *'Iyalode I'* (Plate vi) is a stunted sculpture which is based on the aforementioned socio-political inclinations.



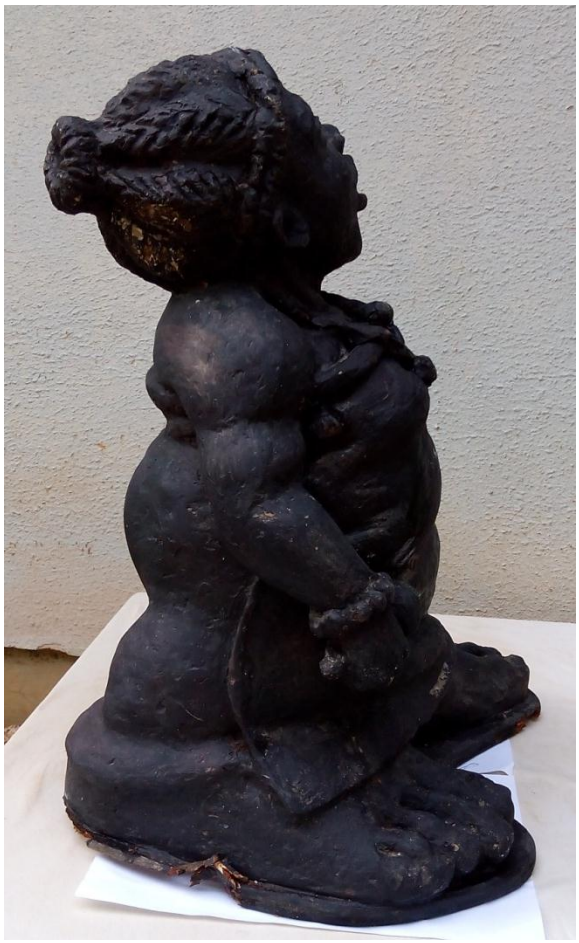


Plate vi (a) (Front View) **Plate vi (b) (Side View)**

Iyalode I, fiberglass 55 x 41cm, 2009. The Artist's Collection

The sculpture, assumes the physical features of a middle aged African woman. She has a wrapper tied round her chest region and extends down her legs; typical of traditional African women. Apart from the beaded adornment that serves as a complimentary element to her traditional hair-do, she is also adorned with different beaded jewels, dangling round her neck and her right wrist. These beaded elements on her, serve other purposes, apart from being beautification elements, which include stratification; that is, to denote her position in the society and they also serve as protective apparatus, to ward off evil spirits, as some of these beads have ritualistic inclinations.

An object that looks like a whip is held in her left hand, serving as a symbol of her chieftainess; while in her right hand is held a gourd-like object. This object, in the traditional African setting possesses some ritualistic implications; as it is one of the props that are used in rituals and ancestral worships. This enhances the appearance of the sculpture as a traditional warrior; a woman that fights for the rights of other women and the society, as a whole. As such, the feminine curviness of the stunted figure, has been down played; drawing more attention to the unusually muscular biceps of the figure; consequently, giving off a symbolic masculine connotation. The masculine look the sculpture possesses, magnifies her ability to defend and dispense her symbolic responsibility, within the society as an *Iyalode.*

Iyalode, in the traditional Yoruba political affairs, according to Nigerianwiki.com (2008), "is a chieftaincy title, commonly bestowed on women in Yoruba land. Traditionally, the *iyalode* signifies 'the queen of ladies', and is given to the most distinguished lady in or from the town…she is also the major representative of women in the traditional council, where the voices of women are heard." The author further explains that *Iyalode*, was the most senior female in the hierarchy of chiefs. Following the collapse of the Oyo Empire and subsequent civil wars, a new breed of astute and enterprising women leaders, in Abeokuta and Ibadan became *Iyalodes*, re-defining their roles and competing with male chiefs, in goods and slaves.

Efunsetan Aniwura was one of such women who, in spite of their gender, refused to bow to the discriminatory tauntings, of the society and therefore, left their mark in the history of the people. Ilesanmi (2014) adds that, "she was a powerful, rich and influential High Chief of Ibadan – the *Iyalode* of Ibadan, who hailed from *Egba*. As women leader in Ibadan and a successful trader in arms, she was able to contribute to the debate on the issues of war and peace." As if to justify his recognition of the important role women play in the African society, another version of the

theme *'Iyalode ii'* (Plate vii) was produced by the artist, during his exploration of the stunted sculptures.



Plate vii (a) (Front View)



Plate vii (b) (Side View)

Iyalode II, Terracotta 48 x 25cm, 2010. The artist's Collection

'*Iyalode ii*' assumes the pose of a confident African woman, in her traditional and ceremonial attire. While her left hand, which has some beads on the wrist is folded by her waist; held in her stretched right hand, is an object that probably signifies her symbol of authority. Though having the same theme, as well as, the same stylistic traits, as the former; the physical appearance of this version of '*Iyalode'* looks more contemporary. An element that supports the foregoing is the pair of shoes on her feet, which is quite a strange choice, for women in the traditional setting, except

probably, for the wealthy and influential members of the society. The figure is clad with the traditional Yoruba women's attire, '*iro* and *buba*', with her neck, bedecked with beaded ornaments, as well as, her facial scarification, which depicts the traditional African's belief in tattoos for beautification and other purposes. Jaji has been able to, systematically point out some key elements, in traditional Africans' display of wealth and beauty, on this sculptural piece.
With her well tied head gear, the sculpture's facial expression radiates confidence, affluence and assurance; elements that are necessary for the position she assumes, within the traditional Yoruba political sphere. These elements are necessary in order to ward off, any form of discriminatory gestures, that might be coming her way; as a result of the traditional African system of thought, that sees women as lesser or weaker beings, and as such, their voices are not to be heard.

Apart from being an ambassador for women, she is also meant to be a role model to other women in the society. As such, the recipient of such title, should be an influential and a reasonably wealthy person within the society. An example of such women, is Madame Efunporoye Tinubu. According to the account of Akioye (2014), "she was the first *iyalode* of *Egba* and occupied the position for 23 years, and after her death, no other woman of equal status was found to fill the post…many Nigerians viewed Madam Tinubu as a strong and courageous woman, kind and accommodating." Akioye further explains that Madam Tinubu was the wealthiest woman in Yoruba land, in the 19th century A.D., controlling 360 slaves and trade routes with European merchants. She was a great woman, who helped to install kings. She fought against the European domination of her people, and centuries after her death, Madam Tinubu remains a heroine.

Considering '*iyalode ii'* from the point of view of Jaji's artistic philosophy, which is basically hinged on peace; one would realize that '*iyalode ii'* stands as a symbol of peace, equality and

justice for the women folk, in the traditional African setting. She stands as a backbone for the society; a role model for women and mothers alike, as well as, a pillar to hold onto, when in need.

The motherly instinct to protect and guide her off springs, was made visible in the sculpture by Jaji, through his effective portrayal of some motherly attributes, such as the big stomach, the slightly protruding buttocks and the slightly saggy breast. For example, Iyalode Tinubu, according to Akioye (2014), "championed the cause of the oppressed, irrespective of the status of the victim. To her, justice must be served. When Oba Akintoye was in exile, she supported him with all her material wealth until he was finally restored to the throne in Lagos."

Based on the fore-going, it has been made evident that the chieftaincy title of *Iyalode*, is such that accords some level of authority and power to women. As such, whoever will wield such power, must be of substantial strength and courage. Consequently, the stunted representation of the sculpture, '*iyalode ii*'(Plate vi), which gives it a compacted look, as well as, the balance achieved, as a result of the placement and the exaggeration of her legs; exhibits salient attributes, such as strength, solidity and stability. These attributes, when placed against the backdrop of the essential role an *iyalode* plays in the traditional Yoruba society, goes a long way in expressing some ideologies the sculpture propounds; like hope, justice and leadership.

When placed side by side, the two stunted figures, '*Iyalode i'* (2009) (Plate vi) and '*Iyalode ii'* (2010) (Plate vii), one will notice some certain historical progression in their regalia; from the pre-colonial era to the post-colonial times. The choice of regalia on '*Iyalode i'* looks more indigenously African than that of *Iyalode ii*; which has some sense of modernity attached to it. These sculptures also seem like two important arms of a political office, which depend on each other's effort for the overall effectiveness of the dispensation of their duties. '*Iyalode i*' assumes

the executive role, charged with the responsibility of executing and effecting the laws, while *'Iyalode ii'*, with her more contemporary and formal look, seems like the legislative arm, charged with the responsibility of making law as well as making formal appearances.

The strong and serious look of '*Iyalode i*', with her mouth agog, as if engaging in some sort of confrontation; gives an impression of a confident and fierce woman, who is capable of defending herself. In another sense, the figure seems to be fighting for the place and rights of women in governance, as opposed to the patriarchy inclinations of the human society, that has been the prevailing political fashion, since the pre-colonial era. On the whole, the theme '*Iyalode*' does not only allude to the strength of a woman, but it also expounds the importance of women, to the society in general.

On the whole, contemporary socio-political issues such as the foregoing discussion are some of the concerns of Jaji. His love for peace and nature drives him to put important personalities such as the political leaders in the society, on a pedestal for all to see. Jaji sometimes, does this with the awareness that, the well being and the peaceful co-existence of the society at large, directly or indirectly depends on the conducts of these significant personalities. The foregoing stems from the report of Nisbet, in Elechi (2012) that "Plato argues that every society requires three functions, to achieve harmony namely production, security and political rule. These necessitate three aptitude in the populace — appetite, courage and knowledge." He further explains that people of appetite work and produce society's means of material existence, those with courage defend the territorial integrity of the society, while the knowledgeable provide political leadership. Here, knowledge and wisdom become essential ingredients for good and peaceful governance

Socio-Religious Ideas: Art as a universal language performs different functions in the human society. One of such functions is the symbolic essence, inherent in every art piece. In traditional Africa, one of the ultimate uses of art, is in their religious proceedings. As most social activities are hinged on religion, so also, art plays a significant role in the day to day activities of the traditional Africans. As such, salient art forms like masks, totems, and divination props, just to mention a few, are directly or indirectly responsible for the smooth conduct of most ritualistic processes. Accordingly, some art forms are produced by the traditional artists to embody the spirit of the gods and ancestors they worship. These art forms, consequently serve as intermediaries between the people and their ancestral gods.

It is in the context of the forgoing socio-religious ideology, that Jaji has based the premise of two of his works, in his stunted sculpture exploration. As such, the two works 'Sango' and '*Eshu*', will be analysed here, in line with the socio-religious context on which they were based.





Plate viii (a) (Front View) **Plate viii (b) (Side View)**

Eshu, Terracotta, 46 x 26cm, 2008. The Artist's Collection.

'***Eshu***' **(Plate viii)** is a stunted terracotta figure, that was produced in 2008 by Jaji. The stunted figure assumes the physical features of a scarcely dressed young man; with only a traditional African skirt, worn round his waist. Typical of the traditional *Eshu* worshippers, the figure wears a hair cut that leaves a little part of the head, with hair around the frontal hairline. The artist attached two beaded necklaces, with an oval and cylindrical pendants, round the neck of the figure. These neck adornments are intended to show the level of importance of this figure, in the traditional Yoruba society; since beaded ornaments are used by important personalities in

Yoruba societies. However, since the sculpture is an embodiment of a deity, these beaded ornaments, are also seen as part of the figure's mystical elements.

Also, contributing to the mystical inclinations of the figure is the object it holds in its right hand, which looks like an animal horn. In its left hand is another object that looks like a horse tale; a symbol of its spiritual authority. The figure's mouth is slightly opened and directed towards the horn-like object in its hand; the figure seems busy in a ritualistic process. Its kinetic posture, leaning towards its frontal-left, also alludes to this assumption. This, according to the artist, is a representation of an *Eshu* worshipper and not a physical representation of the *Eshu* deity itself. The choice of Jaji's material is terracotta, which adds to the significance of the sculpture.

'*Eshu*', being the debut work in Jaji's exploration of the stunted sculpture, was triggered by his love for the traditional Yoruba culture, as well as, his encounter with a dwarf named Wale, in 2008. The theme '*Eshu*' however, according to ifamatters.com (2011), "is a special relations officer between *Orun* (heaven) and *Aye* (Earth). He is the "inspector-general" or the confidential secretary of *Olodumare*, who makes the final recommendation to the *Olodumare* for the latter's approval. He also reports…to *Olodumare* on the deeds of men and divinities, incorrectness of worship and sacrifices." Jaji, as a contemporary Yoruba sculptor, erected this sculpture, as a religious symbol, to correct some general misconceptions, about the *Eshu* deity.

Eshu, over the years, has been generally termed as the originator of evil; being likened to the biblical devil or Satan. This ideology is one of several other ideologies, that have corrupted a lot of uninformed people's perception, of the African traditional religion, as devilish and fetish.

According to Jaji, when asked about his artistic philosophy, he said:

> …I go for peace. When you look at my themes, they are on people suffering in the society. My philosophy is channeled towards making people see that such people exist. Then when you think of the solutions, you go down to the culture of the people to see how they have been making peace in the past; hence the reason for bringing in themes like '*Esu*', and all those other gods…

Accordingly, takeupanarm.com (2011) also states that, "*Eshu* is not evil…today, millions of Yoruba have seen *Eshu* as the Christian devil, with the influence of the translation of the Yoruba Bible. The Yoruba dictionary clearly shows that, elitism crept into the translating pen of the translators, as a result of their little knowledge of Yoruba spiritual beliefs…" the author further explains that, *Eshu* has the power to decree any god, not to harm a mortal, and can also look away, if the mortal refuses to perform sacrifices to ward off evil. *Eshu* does not cast evil; he is merely performing his duties to ensure that no human, is unjustly attacked by evil. *Eshu*, as a messenger of *Olodumare*, is saddled with the responsibility of bringing to justice, those that have erred and have refused to appease him, in atonement for their sins. In alignment with the forgoing, Jaji's impression of the *Eshu* deity goes thus:

> *Eshu* himself is not the problem; he is the intermediary between God and man. So, when a man errs, he offers sacrifice to *Eshu*, appeasing *Eshu*. Then *Eshu*, having a way to reach God, in turn, presents the individual's problems before God. So, *Eshu* is more of a peaceful symbol, than what people think him to be.

The foregoing line of discussion might be the reason why, the artist's sculptural presentation of the theme, is rather calm and humane; as opposed to the mental picture most people paint in their subconscious, whenever the theme '*Eshu*' is being discussed. In fact, the traditional Yorubas, who understand the concept of '*Eshu*' deity quite well, go as far as making '*Eshu*', a prefix to their children's names. For instance, there are names like *Eshu-Biyi*, *Eshu-Tunde*, *Eshu-gbayi*, *Eshu-Bunmi,* and many others.

Consequently, the ideology being propounded by Jaji's stunted figure '*Eshu'*, from its socio-religious context, is that, the mayhem that has taken over the affairs of humans, in their society in

recent years, is not a function of *Eshu*. Most of these problems are self-inflicted consequences of greed and selfishness; while some others are as a result of humans' refusal to desist from their wicked ways. *Eshu* poses as the nemesis for human's wrong doings. However, these wrong doings can be forgiven, only if the necessary steps to make them right are taken. It is therefore, the refusal to correct these wrong doings that invites *Eshu's* wrath on such individuals. It is imperative to note here that, *Eshu* in this sense is subject to context. For instance, '*Eshu*' in governance could mean the law and justice system; which will bring to book, all corrupt acts. In the workplace, *Eshu* could be one's boss; who can terminate a worker's appointment, if such worker is found wanting and he or she is refusing to desist from such acts. In academics, *Eshu* could be seen as the school's governing body, which can expel any student that is found deserving of such reprehension.

On the whole; apart from being a form of nemesis for wrong doings, Eshu also rewards repentance and good acts. The deity does not perpetrate evil, as it is generally presumed, but he rewards both good and bad deeds. *Eshu* in Jaji's exploration of the stunted figure, stands on a socio-religious pedestal; propagating social values such as justice, peace, forgiveness, retribution, uprightness and equality. It promotes other values like acceptance of responsibility and consequences for one's actions. The stunted sculpture has also tried to debunk the societal misconception of seeing the concept of *Eshu* as a devilish and satanic phenomenon.





Plate ix (a) (Front View) **Plate ix (b) (Side View)**
Sango, Terracotta, 53 x 29cm, 2015. The Artist's Collection.

Another stunted figure, which is contextualized in socio-religious ideologies, is '*Sango*'. '*Sango*' (Plate ix), a stunted terracotta sculpture, embodies the form of a young, traditional Yoruba man, with strong muscular features. Produced in 2015, '*Sango* stands as the last work produced under Jaji's exploration of the stunted figures. This could be a pointer to the fact that, he might be a religious man. Though he says it is purely coincidental, however, he started the exploration of the stunted figures on a religious note with '*Eshu*' in 2008 (Plate viii), and also ended it on a religious note, with '*Sango*' in 2015(Plate ix). This assumption however, is not in any way,

questioning Jaji's religious inclinations; rather, it extols his respect for the religious beliefs of the Yoruba, on which he based most of the works in his exploration. *Sango*, in this case, was known for his strength and military valor.

According to legend, as reported by Charbens (2016), '*Sango* was the third king of the Oyo kingdom. He succeeded *Ajaka*, son of *Oranmiyan*…his symbol is a double-headed axe, which represents swift and balanced justice…He is associated with the sacred animal, the ram, and the colours red and white'. In another account by Peoplesdailyng.com (2015), "*Sango's* symbol, the twin axe…is believed to be energized with protective powers. *Sango* is portrayed with a double axe on his head (the symbol of thunder) with six eyes and sometimes with three heads…he has a special type of drum known as '*Bata*'…"

The author further explains that, *Sango* is the son of *Yemoja*, the mother goddess and protector of birth. *Sango* had three wives; *Oya*, who stole *Sango'*s secrets of magic, *Oshun*, the river goddess who is *Sango's* favourite because of her culinary abilities and *Oba*, who tried to win his love by offering her ear for him to eat. He sent her away in anger and she became the river oba, which is very turbulent where it meets the river Osun.

In the same vein, according to the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III, as reported by Durojaiye (2014), "*Sango* was a strong warrior, strengthened to a point of historical dominance, and became a symbol of power and truth, serving as the supreme judge in the Oyo Empire…his power… the flame and lightening…produced energy larger and more intense than what mere mortals can generate…" the author went further to assert that, under the leadership of *Sango*, the Oyo kingdom became known, not just for the effectiveness of its political system, but for its military strength. Sango's seven years reign was marked with several wars fought to liberate Oyo from its predatory and truculent older neighbours. His short reign consolidated the

position of Oyo, as the foremost Guinea Savannah State and also secured the independence and sovereignty of the nascent kingdom. *Sango* festival is celebrated annually in Oyo town, in Oyo state, till date.

Thus, judging from the foregoing account and Jaji's muscular presentation of *Sango*, it will be safe, to infer that Jaji's interest in *Sango,* was triggered by the accounts of the deity's military strength and valour.

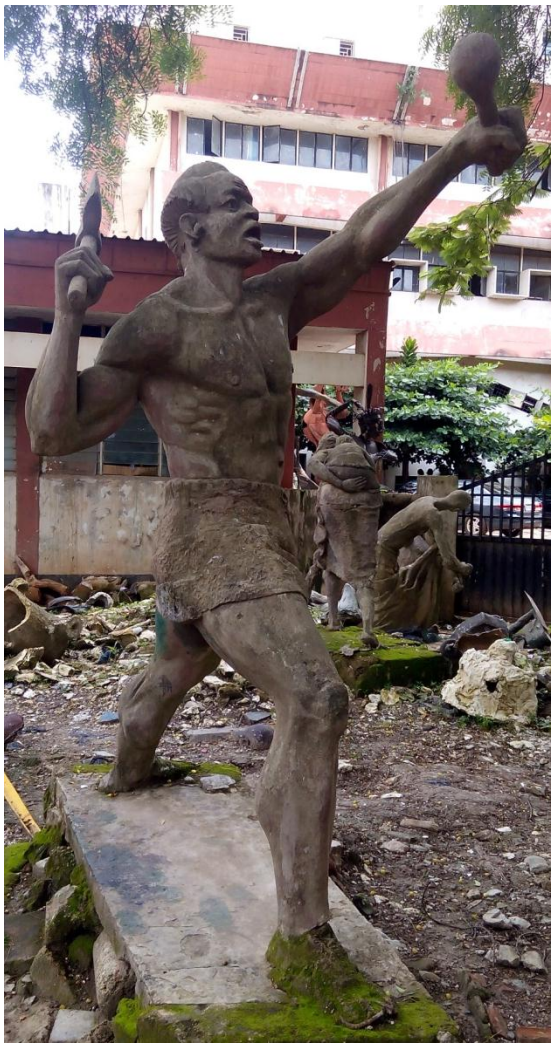


Plate x: Sango,. Concrete, 250 x 191cm, 1986. The Sculpture Garden, Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

However, the muscular features of this stunted sculpture, are not as expressive as Jaji's 1986 version of the theme '*Sango*' in concrete (Plate x), which assumes the physique of a strong and giant young man. This naturalistic, larger-than-life representation of the theme, which is mounted in the sculpture garden of the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; assumes a pose that oozes strength, power and valour. The muscular forms on the legs and arms, the broad confronting chest, as well as, his kinetic facial expression, alludes to the sculpture's intimidating pose; a stature, befitting a god, that assumes such an important position in the pantheon of the Yoruba. As if this enormous sculptural piece was not enough, in expressing Jaji's views on the theme '*Sango*', he still seized his exploration of the stunted sculptures, as an opportunity to vent his views on the subject. Again, it shows the level of interest he has in the traditional African system of thought, particularly that of his background, the Yoruba.

The artist's choice of terracotta as a material of expression has however, posed some difficulty in the artist's quest to fully express the personality that '*Sango*' represents, unlike the concrete version, where he was able to stretch the hands and spread the legs of the figure, to adequately portray the figure in action. Clay, as a sculpting material, is quite delicate and an attempt to over-stretch a form, out of a compacted composition without adequate support, might lead to the breakage or loss of such stretched form. For instance, in the stunted terracotta version of the theme '*Sango'*, the legs of the sculpture are quite static in order to maintain the compact nature of the work, unlike the concrete version, where the legs and arms of the sculpture were relatively expressive.

However, he made an effort to extend the right hand of the stunted terracotta sculpture, which carries the double-edged axe. The necessity of the axe being incorporated into the composition

lies with its significance to the theme. According to legend, the double-edged axe is the major symbolic object that '*Sango*' wields, which implies swift and impartial justice. He also invokes thunder and lightning; a mystical act, that the deity is specially known for; hence, his appellation as the 'god of thunder'. This delicate nature of the material, could be the reason why the figures produced in the exploration, though stunted, are quite compacted, with little extensions.

The material-induced restriction he encountered during his exploration could be the reason why the left hand of the stunted terracotta sculpture, holding a gourd-like object, was stylishly left relaxed at the side of the figure (See Plate ix). This is in contradiction with the earlier concrete depiction, where the left hand, holding the same object, is well stretched out, as if in confrontation with an external force. It is worthy of note here that, this type of uncut gourd, has a religious significance in the traditional Yoruba religion; as it is one of the many props used in their ritualistic worships.

The interrogative facial expression of the stunted sculpture, as well as, the traditional hairstyle of the stunted figure, shares some semblance with the earlier concrete version, which Samaila (2004) likened to the hairstyle of Nok terracotta heads. Unlike the earlier version of the theme, '*Sango*', neck beads and wrist adornments were incorporated into the sculpture; probably to emphasize on the traditionality of the figure. The symbolic connotation of the role *Sango* assumes in the traditional Yoruba Society, are the reason for adopting such symbolic element. The type of traditional skirt, clad round the waist of this stunted sculpture, is the type given to some other stunted figures in the exploration like '*Eshu*' (Plate viii), '*Obokun*'(Plate iv), as well as, the earlier larger-than-life version of *Sango*. This choice of costume for these symbolic personalities, in the history of the Yoruba, hints at their time of existence, which is the pre-

colonial era, with no form of western adulteration, whatsoever, which also conforms with Yoruba aesthetic nuances.

Known for his swift and balanced justice, his worshippers in the present day invoke his spirit to exert justice on whoever wrongs them. Presently, *Sango* worship is not restricted to western Nigeria alone, but it cuts across countries and continents. According to Durojaiye (2014), "*Sango* is venerated in Haiti, as a god of thunder and weather; in Brazil, known as *Xango*; in Umbanda, as the very powerful *IoaNago Shango*; in Trinidad and Tobago, as *Shango* god of thunder, drumming and dance; in Cuba, Puerto Rico and Venezuela-the Santeria equivalent of St. Barbara, as *Chango*."

While Jaji was talking about the relationship between his quest for peace and the theme *Sango,* he affirmed that:

> When you look at my themes, they are on people suffering in the society. It is a kind of effort to make people see that, such people exist in our society. Then when you think of the solution, you go down to the culture of the people, to see how they have been making peace in the past; thus, the reason for bringing in themes like *'Eshu'*, and all those other gods like *'Sango'* and others. So peace is all I seek, everywhere I go.

The stunted sculpture '*Sango*', though situated on a socio religious context, is also relevant for socio-political inference; as *Sango* was known for his gallant leadership skills. *Sango's* leadership skills and his balanced, swift and impartial approach to justice, will go a long way in helping the contemporary government, in addressing societal ills, like insurgence and corruption, if emulated.

Ghanaian Influenced Stunted Sculptures

Jaji's residence in Ghana, during his early formative years, exerted some level of influence on his themes, in the contextualization of his stunted sculptures. Perhaps, this is a confirmation for

Kalilu and Areo's (2013) inclination towards art, which sees art, as "an expression of the context of a people's philosophical, cultural and religious worldview, hence, the artist within that society is expected to express his understanding of his milieu." The Ghanaian influenced stunted figures, produced during this exploration, are based on Jaji's impressions of the Ghanaian society, especially in its political arena. Again, the artist's focus on the political demographics of the Ghanaians, could be a pointer to the leadership connotations, that are inherent in the art of the traditional Africans.

The hybridism of the stunted sculptures in this category, are further elucidated in the fact that, though these works are centred on the Ghanaian context, the artist has been able to incorporate artistic traits, that are peculiar to the Yoruba aesthetics like the exaggeration of the head, within the Ghanaian thematic context. Also, Jaji's hybridized conceptualization of Ghanaian experience within Yoruba stylistic tendencies, alludes to Akpang's (2013) concept of Hybrid Aesthetics. One of such works is titled '*Oheneba'* (Plate xi).

According to the artist, the word '*Oheneba*' is a Ghanaian word, which implies 'the chief has come'. '*Oheneba'*, is a stunted sculpture produced in 2012; it embodies a Ghanaian chief in his full ceremonial regalia. Wrapped in a fabric, that would likely be the indigenous Ghanaian fabric like the *kente* cloth; the wrapper was tied over the left shoulder of the chief, leaving the right shoulder exposed; typical of the Ghanaian traditional regalia. The chief is adorned with different body ornamentations, to accentuate his position in the society, and perhaps add to his personality.





Plate xi (a) (Front View) **Plate xi (a) (Side View)**

Oheneba. Terracotta, 95 x 43cm, 2012. The Artist's Collection

The monochromatic choice of patina used in finishing the sculpture has made it quite difficult, to ascertain whether some of the body ornamentations, are gold or not. However, based on oral tradition, gold is an available, but priced commodity in Ghana, being the gold coast. Furthermore, in Africa, a display of affluence and wealth amongst the upper class in the society is sometimes done through the display of rare objects, such as gold. Thus, it suffices to assume that, some of the ornamental adornments that he has attached to the body of this stunted sculpture, might be portrayals of golden jewels; so as to adequately portray the chiefly persona.

Such ornamental portrayals on the sculpture '*Oheneba*' includes, the slim leather-like strip that has some rectangular shaped objects, that could be gold, attached to it, strapped round the figure's head and some beaded neck adornments. Others are beaded wrist bands on both his wrists and another beaded band above his left elbow. As earlier pointed out, it will be difficult to ascertain if these wrist bands were portrayals of golden wrist band or other materials.

One of the many distinguishing factors between the ordinary wealthy member of the society and a wealthy royal personality is the possession of an insignia. This, Jaji has carefully taken care of by depicting the chiefly figure, holding a sword insignia in his right hand, and using his left hand to support it. With such symbol of authority, a chief cannot be mistaken for a mere member of the society. According to the artist, 'the main symbol of authority in the sculpture '*Oheneba*' is the sword, the chief carries. Just like the Yoruba carry the horse tail in Nigeria, the Ghanaians carry a sword... The Ghanaians have other symbols of authority like the golden stool which is believed to have descended from heaven'.

Probably adorned with gold as well, the pair of sandals the chief is wearing adds to his display of affluence. Typical of traditional African leaders, as ambassadors of their various societies and cultures; their regalia is always majestic. This sandal, according to Jaji, is actually referred to as '*Oheneba*'. According to him, '…the types of sandals these chiefs wear are called '*Oheneba*', which means the chief or king has come. Such sandals, with gold trinkets strapped to them, represents affluence. The moment you see anyone wearing such sandals, you know that, this is a chief'. These leaders, in their elaborate regalia, promote the cultures and traditions of the people they represent and govern. Sometimes, such display of affluence signifies the position, as well as, the financial and military strength of a particular kingdom, amongst other surrounding kingdoms; thus, sometimes bringing about rivalry.

Having lived part of his early life in Ghana, the environment where Jaji lived, as well as his personal quest and love for African culture and tradition, are responsible for this thematic choice, in embellishing his exploration of the stunted sculptures. According to the artist,

> …during my formative years, when I was in secondary school, I lived in Ghana; so I imbibed their culture. I used to go round to festivals and other places, to see what was going on. The way their chiefs dress in big Kente clothes, with gold pendants and heavy display of riches, caught my attention… So having titles like '*Oheneba*' and '*Asantehene*' which means the owner of Ashanti, is as a result of my stay in Ghana, as well as, my love for my environment.

Being an artist caught in the dilemma of diverting his stylistic focus, away from his love for the traditional modes of artistic representation, and embracing the conceptual inclinations of contemporary art; Jaji's exploration found solace in Akpang's concept of Hybrid Aesthetics. This affords him the opportunity to strike a balance between these two factions; the traditional and the contemporary artistic trends.

'Ashantehene' **(Plate xii)** is another stunted sculpture in the exploration, which Jaji channeled towards his socio-political impressions of the society in which he found himself. Having spent part of his early years in Ghana, he has been able to interrogate the visual, philosophical and ideological inclinations of the Ghanaians; thus using his exploration of the stunted sculptures as an opportunity, to visualize his impressions. According to him, the title *'Ashantehene',* is given to the king of Ashanti, an ethnic group of Akan origin, in Ghana.





Plate xii (a) (Front View) **Plate xii (b) (Side View)**
Ashantehene, Terracotta, 53 x 25cm, 2014. The Artist's Collection.

The sculpted stunted figure assumes the expression of a calm looking, elderly man. Dressed in his royal attire, a wrapper tied over his left shoulder, running across under his right arm; the figure's attire shares some semblances with that of '*Oheneba*' (Plate xi), a stunted sculpture that was discussed earlier. According to oral tradition, the position of an *Ashantehene* is such that attracts a lot of attention, respect and influence; so much so that, even the contemporary political leaders revere him.

As such, it will only be natural to assume that the bodily adornments attached to this stunted figure are intended to be gold, by the artist. Such attachments include the crown-like belt, with some basic shapes embossed round it, strapped to the head of the figure, with a knot at the back of the head; as well as, the beaded necklace with large rectangular and triangular pendants, resting majestically on the chest of the king. The figure also has an ample sized bracelet, worn on its right wrist and a ring, worn on the leech-finger of the same hand. The overall impression, these decorative and symbolic attachments on the figure exhibit, is that of a kingly personality.

For instance, an Akan saying, according to Monica et al (2008), goes thus: "Great men move slowly". This saying is a metaphorical statement, made in order to lay emphasis on the heavy and cumbersome props and regalia, traditional African leaders put on. In the traditional African setting, kings are heavily laden with enormous regalia, in order to help them to enhance their royal comportment; which has to be relatively calm and majestic. Sometimes, the heavy regalia are intended to make the king look big, as opposed to his perhaps, and sometimes, thin body structure. The necessity of this process is justified in the traditional Africans' belief, that a king's image should attract attention, respect and sometimes fear, from his citizens. The idea that the king is an ambassador of the people, and as such, he must be adequately portrayed, is another justification for this kind of system of thought.

Seated on a throne, a traditional stool, probably the legendary golden stool; the figure holds its emblem of authority, a short sword, in its hands. This emblem of authority, the throne, and the crown are three major elements that distinguish a king from his subordinates. As such, with the level of authority bestowed on such personalities in the society, more care is taken in dispensing their duties; as the eyes of the society is fixed on them. This could be a pointer to the calm expression on the face of the sculpture. A king should take charge of his role as the leader, in the

society; being the head, he needs to take the lead and point out a clear path to the realization of his citizens' goals. Again, this leadership responsibility alludes to the significance, placed on the human head, in the traditional African artistic culture; hence, the exaggeration.

Wearing his royal foot wear, probably the '*Oheneba*' sandals; the exaggerated legs of the stunted figure literarily symbolizes leadership. In taking the lead, the followers are meant to walk in the large footsteps of the leaders. The large feet could also be regarded as a metaphorical element, showing leaders that whatever they do while in power, whether good or otherwise, will not be forgotten in a hurry. As such, they should strive to leave positive footprints in the history of the people.

On the whole, just as art has been described by some critics as a universal language of expression which is subject to individual observer's interpretation; Jaji, using these sculptures as communicative symbols, has been able to express his impressions of the Ghanaian society, within their socio-political context.

In *'Bobajiroro'*, the exaggeration of the figure's head, based on the Yoruba aesthetics, which sees the human head as the seat of wisdom, as well as, being the source of vital spiritual powers; signifies the leadership responsibilities the figure plays in the society. In the sculpture titled '*Ashantehene'*, the artist also, skillfully exaggerated the head of the figure. Despite the fact that the sculpture was inspired by his stay in Ghana, the exaggeration of the head, which is a stylistic trait peculiar to the Yoruba concept of aesthetics, is essential, so as to, also symbolize the leadership role the figure plays in the society.

In conclusion, the exaggeration of the head, has served as a symbol of leadership socially, religiously and politically, in the artist's exploration. Also, the exaggerated head of these

sculptures, fulfill Akpang's concept of Hybrid Aesthetics; as the trait is a major derivative of the traditional Yoruba aesthetics. As such, ten stunted figures, produced by Jaji, between 2008 and 2015, have been analysed under three subheads. Produced in naturalism and semi realism, terracotta and fiberglass are the two materials adopted in the production of these figures. The thematic choices, adopted in his exploration have been found to belong to four major philosophical and ideological contexts which are Socio-Political Ideas; Socio-Religious Ideas, Socio-Cultural Ideas and Ghanaian Influenced Stunted Sculptures. Consequently, two works each have been analysed under these philosophical and ideological contexts.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter contains a summary of the study. It also outlines the specific findings of the research, while conclusions, which include some recommendations, have been drawn, based on the discussions, analysis and findings made.

Summary

Art played quite a significant role in the life of traditional Africans. It suffices to say that, art was an important vehicle that conveys the religious and political phenomena that guides the day to day conducts of the African people. The belief of the African society in the significance of art, to the overall well being of the society is however, propelled by some salient visual characteristics that have been incorporated into these art works. In addition to being a means to educate people, or posterity on some cultural significance imbedded in the traditions of these societies; these visual characteristics also play various other functions. These functions range from Commemoration, to rites of birth, rites of passage, identification, beautification, for spiritual purposes, political purposes, and the list goes on.

These aforementioned visual elements, have exerted significant stylistic influence, in the contemporary art of Nigeria. Contemporary artists have delved into the exploration of visual traits that abound, in their various indigenous cultures; to elucidate their contemporary artistic ideas. In the same vein, this form of stylistic inclination brought the first set of graduates from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to the centre stage of Nigerian contemporary art history. Many of these artists sought original forms from their basic ethnic background, with which they used modern materials and techniques to explore. These stylistic experimentations in turn, brought about art schools, groups and movements like the Nsukka School, known for *Ulism* and

Ife, known for *Onaism* and later, *Araism*; two painterly movements that thrives basically by interrogating the Yoruba aesthetics, in making their art.

Asides the exponent of these movements, other individual artists have also explored the stylistic traits of Yoruba aesthetics. Muyideen Adio Jaji is one of such artists. Muyideen Adio Jaji was born in Lagos on the 11th of October, 1955, by a Ghana based Nigerian business man, from Kwara State, called Alhaji Wahab Jaji. Jaji's father left him in Nigeria, with his uncle, who raised him during his primary school years. In those early years, Jaji started developing interest in sculpture. At the age of six, he had started creating forms and shapes from clay. After his secondary education in Ghana, he enrolled into the University of Arts, Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana to study fine arts.

Later, in 1979, he left Ghana for Nigeria, due to students' unrest, that also led to the closure of universities in Ghana, during the regime of Jerry Rawlings, as President. On his return to Nigeria in 1980, he was offered an opportunity to study fine arts, at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He thereafter bagged a Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts, Master of Fine Arts in sculpture, and a doctorate degree (PhD) in art education; all from the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The artist has one solo exhibition and several group exhibitions to his credit.

In his exploration into the conceptual world of art, Jaji produced a series of stunted sculptures. The problem of this research therefore, is to outline the context that locates his stunted sculptures. The study aimed at contextually analysing Jaji's stunted sculptures, while the specific objectives of the study are to:

iv. identify and categorise the stunted sculptures produced by Muyideen Adio Jaji.

v. examine the media and style employed in the production of such sculptures

vi. analyse the ideological and philosophical basis for such sculptures

The research questions that were formulated to answer these objectives are:

iv. How many stunted sculptures were produced by Jaji and how can they be categorised?

v. What are the materials and styles employed by Jaji in the production of the stunted sculptures?

vi. What is the ideological and philosophical content of Jaji's stunted sculptures?

The justification of this research therefore, lies in its capacity to tell the African story, from an artistic point of view. Also, having established painterly movements like *Onaism* and *Araism* from their exploration of the Yoruba aesthetics; there is need to document the contributions of sculptors like Muyideen Adio Jaji, in his attempt to sculpturally present Yoruba ideas, through his stunted sculptures. The study is therefore, significant for bringing to the fore, salient issues imbedded in our various traditions and cultures, through the analysis of the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji. By so doing, the cultural contexts that form the basis for these sculptures, which has been established by the study, as majorly Yoruba culture and the Ghanaian culture, were outlined; and the cogent elements in these cultures discussed. Thus, making this research a means for cultural understanding and appreciation, particularly for a contemporary society that is grabbling with acculturation issues.

Having in mind that the artist has, over the years explored, using different materials and styles; this research, is limited to his stunted sculptures, which were produced in partial abstraction, using terracotta and fibreglass, between 2008 and 2015.

The conceptual framework, on which the analysis of these stunted figures was based, is the concept of Hybrid Aesthetics, as propounded by Akpang. According to Akpang (2013), Hybrid Aesthetics is "an art style or convention, which combines two or three art cultures, styles or

techniques to create a unique art, which exist in the boundaries between the two cultures and at the same time elevates mundane visual forms of art, to a creative contemporary status." The analysis of Jaji's stunted figures was therefore, done in line with how they conform to Akpang's thesis, on contemporary Nigerian artists' collaboration, with traditional stylistic trends, particularly in this case, Yoruba aesthetics.

The literature reviewed were based on the sculptural styles artists have evolved over the years; the materials and styles they adopt in producing their sculptures; the ideas and philosophies that accompany these sculptures and some literatures on Jaji. Based on the review, it was established that the environment, in which an artist resides, as well as, the availability of materials, influences his kind of art. The manipulation of the elements of art by sculptors is what gives birth to different individualized styles and techniques, in sculptural expressions. It was also brought to fore that, symbolic abstraction is not a contemporary innovation; but had been the basis for artistic expressions in pre-colonial Africa. Works of artists like Alberto Giacometti, Ben Enwonwu and the stunted figure of Demas Nwoko were reviewed as well.

African artistic traditions, such as Nok art, Ife art, Benin art, among others, have produced sculptures in terracotta, among other materials. Thus, terracotta works of artists like Chris Echeta, Elizabeth Catlett and **Wilhelm Lehmbruck, were looked at.** The review also propagates the idea that the material used in producing an art work is sometimes as important as the philosophy, such artwork seeks to convey. This forms the conceptual basis for some artists like Martin Hill, Philippa Jones, Walter Mason, Richard Shilling, and Andy Goldsworthy who have gone into the use of ephemeral materials like ice, fire, light, butter, fruits, trees, leaves, and many other organic materials. Other artists' works reviewed include Marcel Duchamp, Pablo Picasso, Wolfgang Laib and Kumi Yamashita.

The ideas and philosophies that accompany artworks are subject to several factors like the school of thought, or in this case, school of art the artist belongs to. The environment and its attending dynamics, constitute another factor that informs such ideas and philosophies. The cultural background, as well as, beliefs and mythologies of the artist, are other relevant factors. For instance, the exaggeration of the human head is based on the belief of the Yoruba in the significance of the head. As such, such exaggerations could be addressing ideas that relates to political or religious leadership. Reviewed literature on Jaji brought to fore that, having tapped substantial amount of inspiration from nature; he has been regarded by some critics as a realist, who has remained loyal to the traditional modes of producing sculptures. However, with an exploration such as the subject matter of this research, Jaji has been seen to be delving into the world of the conceptual art. An example of his effort into producing conceptual sculpture is his partially abstracted terracotta figure, titled 'Destitute', produced in 2006.

In order to achieve the contextual analysis of Jaji's stunted sculpture, the qualitative method of research was adopted, using a descriptive and historical approach as recommended by Kothari (2004). In adopting the historical approach, the descriptive method of analysis was used, in analyzing the formal attributes of these stunted sculptures; situating them historically or otherwise, in relation to certain stylistic inclinations, inherent in traditional Yoruba aesthetics.

The research relied on data gotten from both the primary source, and the secondary sources, such as books, journals, internet and exhibition catalogues. The purposive sampling technique as recommended by Crossman (2016) was used in selecting the stunted sculptures produced by Jaji out of all his other forms of exploration. Consequently, ten (10) different stunted sculptures, produced by Jaji, between 2008 and 2015, have been considered and analysed in the study. During the fieldwork, instruments like, observation, photography and interviews; as well as,

tools, such as a multimedia digital camera, draft-interview questions, an audio recorder and a laptop, were relied on, for teasing out information and documenting the stunted sculptures.

The researcher visited the artist's home, both in Ilorin, Kwara state, and in his Zaria residence, at the Ahmadu Bello University's Staff Quarters; as well as, his studio, where oral interviews were conducted and photographs of the stunted sculptures taken.

Owing to his keen study of the stylistic inclinations of the traditional African sculpture, he placed more emphasis on the heads of the stunted figures. This stems from the artist's realization of the connotative essence of the human head, to traditional Africans. Believing that the head, serves as an intermediary to one's creator and destiny, as well as, serving as a symbol of leadership, amongst other relative symbolism, like being a means of identification. These African sculptures like the Yamban headdress of Baga, in Guinea, and commemorative sculptures, like the memorial heads of the Akan in Ghana, as well as, the commemorative heads of the Benin Empire; appear as representations of just heads, without bodies. As such, the heads of the stunted sculptures were more detailed, compared to the rest of the bodies.

For instance, in the stunted sculpture '*Obokun*' (Plate iv), the head of the sculpture was quite detailed compared to the body, which was virtually idealized. This idealization of forms by Muyideen shares some semblances with the sculptural style of Marino Marini; an Italian sculptor, whose sculptures majorly carry idealized forms. It aligns with the generally conceptualized nature of African art and specifically answers to the dictates of Yoruba aesthetics.

Though sculptural, his exploration of the stunted sculptures shares some similarities, with Yoruba inspired painterly explorations, such as *Onaism* and *Araism*, which were done by some exponents of contemporary Yoruba arts. This notion stems from his combination of some

contemporary artistic elements like exaggeration, naturalization, proportion and partial realism, with some significant traditional African stylistic traits, like the emphasis placed on the head, traditional regalia, body scarification, as well as, his adoption of indigenous African themes. Thus, his exploration seems to be a sculptural version of painterly explorations, done by the exponents of ideas such as, *Onaism* and *Araism*.

Findings

Based on specific objectives, this study reveals the following:

1. Jaji had an encounter with a dwarf called Wale, who came to the Fine arts department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in search of admission into the university in 2008. The encounter, coupled with his keen interest in the traditional African modes of artistic expression; prompted him, into delving into an exploration of stunted sculptures. The result is a total of ten stunted sculptures, produced by the artist between 2008 and 2015. The stunted sculptures were thereafter grouped into four different categories. Thus, two stunted sculptures each, were analysed under these four categories. They are stunted sculptures that propound 'Socio-Political Ideas', 'Socio-Religious Ideas', 'Socio-Cultural Ideas' and 'The Ghanaian Influenced Stunted Sculptures'.
2. In elucidating his investigation of the stunted body of Wale, as it relates to the stylistic inclinations of traditional African sculptures; he made use of two major materials. Clay, a traditional sculpting material, which is also usually fired into terracotta as the finishing. One significant reason for choosing this material according to the artist is because, asides its availability and workability; it is inexpensive. The artist's interest and inclination towards the traditional mode of artistic expression, especially the Yoruba aesthetic traits, also played a significant role in his choice for terracotta. Hence, six works in the

exploration were produced in terracotta. They are: *'Eshu'* (2008), *'Odeya' (2008)*, *'Iyalode II' (2010)*, '*Obokun' (2013), 'Asantehene* (2014)', and *'Sango'* (2015).

Though loyal to the traditional sculptural inclinations, he however, as a contemporary artist, made use of Fibreglass resin, a contemporary sculpting material, in venting his impressions of the stunted figures. This material, asides being durable, is also lighter than terracotta; thus easing the stress of mobility, if there is need to move the works for exhibitions, or by an art collector. Four works were produced using Fibreglass resin during the exploration. They are: '*Ayo'* (2009), '*Iyalode I'* (2009), *'Bobajiroro'* (2010), and *'Oheneba' (2012).*

Though unsuccessful, the artist also tried producing some of the stunted figures using bronze, during his exploration. Apart from the fact that, the bronze casting process is relatively expensive, it was observed that, the process needs competent and experienced casters, as well as, keen supervision.

3. During the course of the research, it was observed that, the significant stylistic characteristic employed by the artist, in the exploration, which is the dwarfish representation of the figures, is referred to, as stylization or semi-realism. The exaggerated feet of the figures, serving as a form of pedestal for the figures, as well as, a form of signature for the artist in this exploration; is another stylistic inclination employed in the production of the stunted sculptures.
4. As an artist that gets inspired by the dynamics of his environment, Jaji's cultural heritage, which is Yoruba, as well as, his stay in Ghana, played significant roles in contextualizing his exploration of the stunted figures. The traditional Yoruba system of thought avouches that, the exaggerated depiction of the human head in their sculptures, go beyond the representation of the physical proportion of the human body; rather, it connotes the

symbolic spiritual and social significance the head represents. Political leadership and religious leadership are two significant ideologies that this artistic exaggeration propagates, in traditional Yoruba societies.

The foregoing served as the ideological basis for his exploration of the stunted sculptures. As such, this stylistic adaptation from the Yoruba aesthetics, reflects in all the sculptures produced in the exploration; the Ghanaian themed figures inclusive. The stunted figures, produced in accordance with such philosophical templates, are grounded in diverse political, religious and cultural ideologies that abound in human societies. Thus, the sculptures were analysed based on the socio-political, religious, as well as, the cultural ideas they propagate, particularly within the Yoruba society of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Though art is sometimes seen as a universal language, there are some salient coded signs and symbols imbedded in the artworks produced, both in the pre-colonial era and the contemporary times, which might seem alien to an uninformed observer. The ignorance of an observer towards such coded symbols, could be as a result of his or her negligence, or disparity in cultural or geographical origination. Researches such as this, interrogates and brings to fore, the diverse characteristics and symbolic connotations of such signs.

The visual traits imbedded in the art of the traditional Africans, like the exaggeration of the human head, were not achieved as mere flukes, neither were they evidence of incompetence on the path of the traditional African artists; but they were deliberate acts, incorporated into these art forms as communicative apparatus. The exaggeration of the human head, most of the time, connotes the symbolic functions, the head play in African societies. For instance, in the traditional Yoruba system of belief, the human head is seen as a link between man and his

creator, the carrier of man's destiny, as well as, the source of good or bad fortune; hence the reverence attached to the head (Ademuleya, 2007). The foregoing is probably the reason why the Gwari of Nigeria, would rather carry their loads on their shoulder rather than using their head.

In line with Akpang's (2013) concept of hybrid aesthetics, explorations where traditional artistic traits are combined with modern modes of artistic representation, such as Jaji's exploration of the stunted sculptures, helps traditional artistic tendencies, gain relevance on the contemporary art scene. Basically, the systematic exaggeration of the human head, which is a significant trait that emanates from the traditional Yoruba aesthetics, has served as a channel through which the artist expressed his socio-political, cultural and religious impressions of his society.

Jaji has been directly or indirectly, influenced by the aforementioned traditional African system of thought; consequently leading to his sculptural experimentations, such as the stunted figures. His stunted figures share similar visual attributes, with the traditional African sculptures. Such visual traits include, exaggerated head, facial and body scarification, depiction of body adornments like beads and other organic and inorganic materials. The artist also achieved balance in all the works, by skillfully exaggerating the legs that carry the compacted or stunted torso; thus, serving as the pedestal for the sculptures.

Relying on Duniya's (2009) position that, "styles and trends in art, are generally determined by the realities of a particular environment"; the environment in which Jaji resides(d) has had significant influence on the choice of themes, attached to his stunted figures. Thus, the fact that Jaji spent some part of his early life in Ghana, before he moved back to Nigeria in 1979 to settle, as well as, his being from the Yoruba Ethnic group of Nigeria; explains his choice in using Yoruba, and Ghanaian nuances in locating his themes. Jaji avers that, "as a Yoruba man, I am bound to be attracted to my culture."

Being an artist that derives substantial inspiration from his environment, Jaji's interrogation of his environment is not restricted to its physical characteristics alone, but he is also interested in the philosophical and the ideological inclinations of his environment. As such, the thematic basis on which he mounted these stunted sculptures is majorly grounded in concepts and philosophies that govern human existence, in his environment. Some of such concepts are religious, political, and social ideologies.

This research therefore recommends that:

- Explorations like this, which interrogates and preserves the cultural heritage of societies, are important to the general populace. This is because, the knowledge of the significance of these artistic traditions, will help keep these cultures and traditions alive for posterity. Hence, the National Gallery of Arts, should sort out significant explorations like this so as to bring them to the full view of Nigerians and the entire world.
- Art historians generally, should dig more, into the various artistic cultures; interrogating the salient attributes of such cultures. This will afford society, the opportunity of knowing the socio-cultural, political and religious basis of such cultural arts, instead of relying on some biased foreign report, of the African culture and its arts.

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APPENDIX I

Draft-Interview Questions

These structured interview questions are meant to help in extracting questions that are relevant to the research from the artist.

1. What is your philosophy of life in general?
2. Does that in any way share any similarity with your artistic philosophy?
3. What are the styles of art you have explored?
4. Can you please tell us about your exploration of the stunted sculptures?
5. What ideas informed your exploration of the stunted sculptures?
6. What materials have you used in your exploration of the stunted sculpture?
7. What sculptural technique did you employ in the production of the stunted sculptures?
8. Why did you stylize them?
9. In this stunted sculpture series, how many works have you produced so far?
10. Can you remember some of their titles?
11. What influenced your choice of themes for the stunted sculptures?
12. Give us some examples.
13. I observed that some of your titles are Yoruba in nature; is there any Yoruba influence in your exploration of the stunted sculpture?
14. I observed that two of your stunted sculptures have Ghanaian titles; why?
15. These stunted sculptures were produced within which period?
16. What influenced your thoughts to have delved into this kind of exploration?
17. Is there any philosophical backing for titling your work '*Eshu*'?

APPENDIX II

Interview Questions and Answers

This interview was conducted on the 14th of July, 2016 at the artist's Zaria residence. The structured interview questions were used in extracting information that are relevant to the research from the artist.

Question: ***Sir, what is your philosophy of life in general?***

Answer: My philosophy of life in general is do onto others as you want others to do to you; because I love peace and I make peace always. Based on that, I look out for peaceful environments.

Question*: Does that in anyway share any similarity with your artistic philosophy?*

Answer: Somehow it does. Firstly, I have already said I go for peace; so when you look at my themes, they are on people suffering in the society. It is a kind of effort to make people see that such people exist in our society. Then when you think of the solution, you go down to the culture of the people to see how they have been making peace in the past; thus, the reason for bringing in themes like *'Eshu'*, and all those other gods like *'Sango'* and others. So peace is all I seek everywhere I go.

Question*: What are the styles of art you have explored in so far?*

Answer: I have explored several styles. Generally, I have explored elongation, because of that elegance it gives to art works. I have tried my hands on distortion, distorting some forms and creating my own forms. Then moving from there, it came down to stunted figures, these stunted figures you are so interested in. Cubism was another effort I made during the course of my career in art. I tried my hands on cubism, some examples of which you can find in the sculpture garden

of the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. so I think those are the few; basically, naturalistic stylization.

Question*: Examples of such cubist's works are?*

Answer: An example is '*Ilu meta Eeyan kansoso'* meaning 'three drums and a drummer'. However, the drums are falling off as a result of people pulling them; even the neck is off. But you can get the picture in my master's thesis in the departmental Library if you want to study that.

Question*: Can you please tell us about the exploration of the stunted sculptures?*

Answer: The interest came after having a contact with a dwarf. The dwarf came around to seek admission into the university. He happened to be somebody from Lagos, and he saw me as the best person he could pitch his camp with on his arrival, he was called Olaw*ale Ajiyan* . after studying him for some time, I discovered that there are some interesting forms on the body of this person. Why can't one try one's hands on these forms sculpturally? Then this pushed me to study the works of the Africans. Because, you will discover that studying that man; he has a bigger head than a normal human being and he has long torso like these African sculptures. So, I merged the two. He was available for me anytime I went to the studio to teach the postgraduate student, he was always there. And from there, I came up with my own view. So instead of making him the normal size, I tried to exaggerate again. I exaggerated the feet, just to give the work stability; and it was working. So that was how I went into the production of the stunted sculptures. That was before 2008. But the first stunted figure was produced when I had an opportunity to vent it when Lasisi Lamidi organised a workshop for sculpture staff in 2008. Then, the first stunted figure which was *Eshu* was produced. It caught the attention of many

people, and as a result, I tried my hand on the next one which was '*Odeya'*; so as to give it a female version.

Question*: Were there prior attempts to produce any form of stunted sculpture before Olawale Ajiyan came to Zaria?*

Answer: No, not at all.

Question: ***What materials have you used in your exploration of the stunted sculptures?***

Answer: In the stunted sculpture, I have tried my hands on terracotta, most of the ones you have with you are in terracotta. Then I also used fibreglass. I also tried my hands on bronze, but the casters could not bring them out. I gave them in wax but they could not bring them out. So for that reason, I became discouraged and I forgot about it. Because you spend so much giving money to the caster to buy this and that, but at the end there will be no result. So it was better for one to stop where one could monitor or even present by one's self. You execute the work yourself and then present it, rather than making somebody work on it at a stage that you cannot understand. Anyway, you are also a sculptor so you should understand the intricacies of casting. It is only when it comes out that you can say hallelujah. So those challenges took me back to terracotta.

Question*: Why terracotta sir?*

Answer: I am from a poor background, background. I was almost not given the permission to go into sculpture because my parents were Muslims. So the most available material was clay. So I went for it and you will still see that it works well, even better than other materials for modeling. It is quite malleable, it responds to touch, and there was no problem in getting clay. Especially in Ahmadu Bello University, you don't have to buy it. So that was the main reason for using clay.

Question*: What special technique was introduced into the production of the stunted sculptures?*

Answer: No special technique, other than the normal technique. Because the creative aspect is just what makes it different from the other forms. The creative aspect involved conceptualising the figure into that stunted form. So the same technique used in other sculptures was employed.

Question*: Why were the stunted sculptures stylized?*

Answer: Naturalism these days is becoming out of place, because they will want to tell you that there is no thinking involved, just dubbing. For example, this is *Bolaji*, and then you dub *Bolaji* as he is. But where you can create some effects on *Bolaji* and people will still be able to see him as *Bolaji*, but *Bolaji* has been reconceptualised in another form. So the idea is that you want to move with the tide, but then you still have a hand writing people should know you with. All these things are in stages, there was a time when elongation was the main thing. And at another time, stunted figures became the main thing. Just like when you think of Picasso, he had his own group period, he had different stages of development. So one keeps searching and experimenting.

Question*: Apart from these eight sculptures that are available, are there other works in the series?*

Answer: Yes, I think so. But they are in the store. I think I have two of them. Those playing '*ayo'* 'the *ayo* players', and I think there is another '*Iyalode'*; though this one assumes a different gesture, standing. So those are the two other ones I think you have not seen.

Question*: What informed your choice of themes?*

Answer: Like I told you, I am a peace loving person; I always want to live in peace. So, everywhere I go to, I look around, see the life of the people, and try to see the area where they try to make peace with themselves and the society. Those are the concepts I considered before arriving at my themes. Like '*Eshu'* that I told you about, *Eshu* in Yoruba land is a deity. He is a small god, so people appease him. They go to him with series of sacrifices in order for them to reach God, the '*Eledumare'* Himself. *Eledumare* is the Most High God on the throne. But these smaller gods like *Eshu* and others are just simple lesser deities who have certain requirements like animals and the likes that people sacrifice to them in order for people to get peace. *Eshu* does not represent violence, contrary to people's general belief. In the past, themes like 'beggar', 'the drummer' and the likes were themes we have used to address some societal issues as well as teaching people good virtues. Just like '*Ayo'*, it's a local game that is played where there is peaceful co-existence.

Question*: Can you talk about the stunted sculpture titled 'Oheneba'?*

Answer: During my formative years, when I was in secondary school, I lived in Ghana; so I imbibed their culture. I used to go round to festivals and other places to see what was going on. The way their chiefs dress in big Kente clothes with gold pendants and heavy display of riches caught my attention. The type of sandals these chiefs wear is called '*Oheneba'* which means the chief or king has come. Such sandals, with gold trinkets strapped to them, represents affluence. The moment you see anyone wearing such sandals, you know that this is a chief. Just like here in Nigeria, when you see somebody with beads and other things, you know that this is a chief. So having titles like '*Oheneba'* and '*Asantehene'* which means the owner of Ashanti, is as a result of my stay in Ghana as well as my love for my environment. So, the main symbol of authority in the sculpture '*Oheneba'* is the sword the chief is carrying. So just like we carry the horse tail

over here, they carry their sword. And they even have boys who carry this sword for them. The Ghanaians have other symbols of authority like their golden stool which is believed to have come from heaven.

Question*: I observed that some of your titles are Yoruba in nature; is there any Yoruba influence in your exploration of the stunted sculptures?*

Answer: The artist is Yoruba, and one is bound to be influenced by his own culture. So, while working, since you know so much about your culture and people; it is only natural for one to fetch from such reservoir.

Question*: Is there any philosophical backing for titling your work 'Eshu'?*

Answer: *Eshu* himself is not the problem; he is the intermediary between God and man. So, when a man errs, he offers sacrifice to *Eshu*, appeasing *Eshu*. Then *Eshu*, having a way to reach God, in turn presents the individual's problems before God. So, *Eshu* is more of a peaceful symbol than what people think him to be.

Question*: What if such a person refuses to appease Eshu?*

Answer: Normally, that is the problem. When you sin, you are bound to be punished by *Eledumare*. *Eledumare* loves *Eshu*, because he is one of His ministers, the one he sends about. So if *Eshu* now goes to *Eledumare* after he has been appeased, such an individual may be forgiven.

Question*: Can you please say something on 'Obokun'?*

Answer: *Obokun* was once the king of Ijesha land. He was even the first king of Ijesha land. When his father, who was from the lineage of *Oduduwa*, was sick, they needed sea water. And to think of where the sea was in those days, without any means of transportation, was almost impossible. He was the one that went to Lagos to fetch the sea water, and came back. Nobody knew how he did it; whether on foot or whatever. Just imagine those days with forests, dangerous animals and other things. But he went, and came back with the sea water; though the father was almost dead by the time he got back. But the father, who was the then king, saw the sea water and raised him as the next king. So you say *Obokun* of *Ijesha* land.

APPENDIX III

The Researcher with the Artist during Fieldwork



The Researcher with the Artist at his residence in Ilorin, Kwara State on Tuesday, 22nd March, 2016.



The Researcher with Muyideen Adio Jaji during an Interview in his Zaria Residence, on Thursday, 14th July, 2016.



The Researcher with Muyideen Adio Jaji in his Office at the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, on Monday, 18th July, 2016.



The Researcher with the Artist at his Residence in Ilorin Kwara State on Thursday, 31st March, 2016