AN EXPLORATION OF SCULPTURE FORMS IN INSTALLATION FROM THE CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTIONS OF *OMABE* TRADITION

By

Ifeanyichiukwu Fidelis ASOGWA

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA
NIGERIA

OCTOBER, 2016

AN EXPLORATION OF SCULPTURE FORMS IN INSTALLATION FROM THE CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTIONS OF *OMABE* TRADITION

By

Ifeanyichiukwu Fidelis ASOGWA
PhD/ Env. Des/ 3657/ 2009/2010
B. A., Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1994), M. F. A., Sculpture, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (2007)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SCULPTURE

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA
NIGERIA

OCTOBER, 2016

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled **An Exploration of Sculpture Forms in Installation from the Contemporary Conceptions of *Omabe* Tradition** has been written by me in the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The information derived from literature and works reviewed have been duly acknowledged in the text, and a list of references provided. No other part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any institution.

Ifeanyichiukwu Fidelis ASOGWA

_____	_____	_____
Name of Student	Signature	Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled AN EXPLORATION OF SCULPTURE FORMS IN INSTALLATION FROM THE CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTIONS OF *OMABE* TRADITION, by Ifeanyichiukwu Fidelis ASOGWA, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge, visual practice and literary presentation.

_____ _____

Dr. Ken Okoli — Date
Chairman, Supervisory Committee

_____ _____

Dr. Muyideen A. Jaji — Date
Member, Supervisory Committee

_____ _____

Dr. Gambo G. Duniya — Date
Member, Supervisory Committee

_____ _____

Dr. Gambo G. Duniya — Date
Head of Department

_____ _____

Professor Kabir Bala — Date
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father; Chief Asogwa Ugwu-Nweze, the Eche-obodo of Ohodo, in appreciation of his service-inspiring legacy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I give special thanks to God, the Almighty and the Most-merciful, for enabling the resources that made it possible for me to attain this academic height, and pray Him to grant me effective utilization of it, in bringing greater honour and glory to His holy name.

I owe special gratitude to my supervisors: Dr. Ken Okoli, Dr. Muyideen Jaji, and Dr. Gambo Duniya, as well as my fore-supervisors: Professor B. K. Olorukooba, Professor M. P. Mamza, and Professor Tonie Okpe, for their commitments, that saw me through this programme. My appreciation also goes to lecturers and programme facilitators – Professors Jerry Buhari, Jacob Jari, R. A. Saliu, Muazu Sani, Philip Gushem, and Rose Nkom; Doctors Kefas Danjuma, Emmanuel Wasley, Khadijat Tijjani, Aliyu Muhammad, Caleb Samuel and Ladi Agada, for their numerous words and acts of encouragement.

Special gratitude is also owed to my mother, worker (in God's vineyard) Rebecca Okike-shiere Ugwu-nwangwu (Asogwa), for imparting in me creative thought; my wife, Cynthia Ifeyinwa Asogwa; my daughters: Emmanuella Shiere Asogwa, Queen Ifeoma Enyi, and Jenifer Amuchechukwu Agbo; and to my sons: Raphael Nnabuike Asogwa, Michael Uchechukwu Asogwa, Joshua Amaechina Asogwa, Yusuf Zueoke Asogwa, and Fidelis Ifeanyi Asogwa (Junior) for their approval, moral support and forbearance, the numerous times 'Dad' left them behind, amid monumental crisis in Yobe State, and went to 'faraway' Zaria and Nsukka, in connection with this research.

I am grateful to all my research assistants and respondents, among whom are Messrs Kelechi Ngwu, Cosmas Idogwu, Francis Ukwuaba, Chukwuma Olinya, Osmond Ortuanya, Ifeanyi Agbo, Gabriel Ugwu, Rabil Garba, Umar Bukar (Alhaji), Liman Sani Muhammad, and elder Ugwu-egh

Ehgbo. I also acknowledge my programme mates and associates, (Doctors and Doctors to be): Lasis Lamidi, Tony Emodi, Emma Iroka, Blaise Gbaden, Kevin Damden, Abdul-Razaq Yusuf, Wale Ajayi, Amos Akparara, John Oyedemi, Ephraim Ugochukwu, Eze Ngene, Johnson Oladesu, Chidima Nwankwo, Sussan Dimgba, and Talatu Adiwu, as well as Sylvanus Dangoji of English and Literary Studies, for providing helping hands, inspirations, on-the-spot criticism, and error-checks that significantly aided this research.

I am equally grateful to all the students, staff and headships of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, and those of the entire institution, Umar Sulieman College of Education, Gashua, Yobe State, for accommodating all my inadequacies and makeshifts throughout the rather lengthy period of this study. I also acknowledge Tertiary Education Trust Fund, of the Federal Government of Nigeria, for providing a grant that supported the programme significantly.

Ifeanyichiukwu Fidelis ASOGWA

ABSTRACT

Following a sustained depletion of communal (tribal) values by Western civilization, *Omabe*, the central visual symbol upon which the life values of the Nsukka-Igbo were safeguarded for thousands of years, lost its worth, as interpretations of its form, followed divergent conceptions or understandings of the culture. As installation art utilizes elements of eroding cultural practice of this kind, to arouse public discourse, which sometimes, leads to its revitalization, this research was undertaken, with the aim of creating installation sculptures from the various conceptions of *Omabe* in Nsukka. Through practice-based research technique, involving: previous collections and documentations of unusual developments around *Omabe* tradition; reflection on popular statements of and about *Omabe*; participatory observation of *Omabe*-related activities; interaction with the key players in the affairs of *Omabe*; and conception simulation, involving metaphoric description of *Omabe* tradition by the natives; the form-conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in the area were extracted. In the results generally, the descriptions followed two main form-frames: horrific forms and glorious forms. It became apparent that, the present circumstance (today) is a battleground between the cultural protagonists, who reflected *Omabe's* past glory and wished that yesterday should return; and its antagonists, who projected that *Omabe* has no place in science-prone future (tomorrow) and wished that it is accelerated to the point of no return. So, refractive gaze studio approach, involving: "Reviewing Today", in which elements of the wishes, in all the form-descriptions of *Omabe* by the people, were directly gazed out and defined on pieces of its manifestation objects; "Predicting Yesterday", which engaged the forms of *Omabe*, as described by its cultural protagonists, by assimilating, gazing and defining them in household objects and trees; and "Invoking Tomorrow", which similarly engaged *Omabe* forms, as perceived by its cultural antagonists, in strange and unrelated materials like sticks, domestic animals, and children; was developed and employed to correlate and configure forms and installations from the two main positions. Then, remnants of bamboo, rattle-staff, and calabash, became *Omabe*-forms; stem-masked mango tree, baskets embossed with Naira notes, and stalk-ornamented flame of the forest tree, became *Omabe*-based installations; and sticks masked with jute, a girl, and a goat masked with Jewish-like shawl, and a chicken masked with cellophane, became *Omabe*-based installations too. The form-conceptions of the protagonists and those of the antagonists were also jointly contemplated upon and refracted in familiar and unfamiliar materials; and a configuration of palm frond stalks and a plastic chair; a hollowed trunk with a lad in it; and a barricaded masquerade-tree with a flag-pole, became *Omabe*-based installations as well. Most of these installations were executed site-specifically, where they provoked discussions and debates among the people on the conceptions of the *Omabe* tradition. It was discovered that, although *Omabe* was no more awesome in its inclinations, it could be revived in the conceptualism of installation art because: formless conception can be given physical representation. It was then recommended that, for sculpture (including installation-performances like *Omabe*) in the modern time to play a role of binding people together, it should be inclusive and conceptual in nature. By harnessing conceptions, adapting refractive gaze, and appropriating tree-masquerading, the research expanded the limits of artistic collaboration, approach, and language.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Subject	page
Title page - - - - - - - - - -	i
Declaration - - - - - - - - - -	ii
Certification - - - - - - - - - -	iii
Dedication - - - - - - - - - -	iv
Acknowledgments - - - - - - - - - -	v
Abstract - - - - - - - - - -	vii
Table of Contents - - - - - - - - - -	viii
List of Figures - - - - - - - - - -	xi
List of Plates - - - - - - - - - -	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background of the Study - - - - - - - -	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem - - - - - - - -	16
1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study - - - - - - -	17
1.4 Research Questions - - - - - - - - -	18
1.5 Justification of the Study - - - - - - - -	18
1.6 Significance of the Study - - - - - - - -	20
1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study - - - - -	21
1.8 Conceptual Framework - - - - - - - -	21
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND WORKS	
2.1 Introduction - - - - - - - - - -	24
2.2 Related Literature - - - - - - - -	24

2.2.1 The *Omabe* Tradition - - - - - - - - 24

2.2.2 Installation Art - - - - - - - - 33

2.3 Related Artworks - - - - - - - - 39

2.3.1 Works Related to Masquerade and *Omabe* Tradition - - - 39

2.3.2 Works Related to Installation - - - - - - - - 46

2.4 Extracts from the Review - - - - - - - - 53

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Introduction - - - - - - - - - 55

3.2 (Practice-based) Research Design - - - - - - 56

3.3 Research Procedure - - - - - - - - 57

3.3.1 Reflection on Personal Experience - - - - - - 58

3.3.2 Participatory Observation - - - - - - - 59

3.3.3 Interaction - - - - - - - - - 63

3.3.4 Conception Simulation - - - - - - - 79

3.3.5 Previous Collection and Documentation - - - - - 82

3.4 Development of Form (Studio Exploration) - - - - - 86

3.5 Work Contextualization - - - - - - - 94

3.6 Materials and Tools Used - - - - - - - 102

CHAPTER FOUR- DISCUSSION OF WORKS

4.1 Introduction - - - - - - - - - 103

4.2 Forms (Perceptions) of *Omabe* - - - - - - 104

4.3 Installation Sculptures based on Positive Perceptions of *Omabe* - - 107

4.4 Installation Sculptures Based on Negative Perceptions of *Omabe* - - 112

4.5 Unification of Opposing Conceptions in Installation - - - 117

4.6 Elicitation of Public Discourse - - - - - - 122

4.7 Art-Practice Direction - - - - - - - 126

CHAPTER FIVE: CATALOGUE OF WORKS

5.1 Introduction - - - - - - - - - 131

5.2 Curatorial Statement - - - - - - - - 131

5.3 Work Portfolio - - - - - - - - 134

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction - - - - - - - - - 207

6.2 Research Summary - - - - - - - - 207

6.3 Research Findings - - - - - - - - 209

6.4 Conclusion - - - - - - - - - 211

6.5 Recommendations - - - - - - - - 212

6.6 Contributions to Knowledge - - - - - - - 213

REFERENCES - - - - - - - - 214

APPENDICES - - - - - - - - - 219

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Title	Page
1:	Akuaba Doll, Yanda Figure, and Ritual Doll	2
2:	Oriokpa and Ekewo Law Enforcement Types of *Omabe*	3
3:	Agalaba (Ijele) and Monwu Masquerades	5
4:	Map of Enugu State, Demarcating Senatorial Districts	7
5:	Ujamh and Ne-Maa Entertainment Types of *Omabe*	11
6:	Masquerade (*Omabe*) being Tortured by the Police	14
7:	Live Installation and Still-life with Tree Installation	16
8:	Presentation of *Omabe* in Village-Square	30
9:	Ijele Installation by Kogulu Nweke	40
10:	Tapper, Wood Installation by El Anatsui	41
11:	In the World but Don't Know the World, Aluminum by El Anatsui	42
12:	Insatiable Desire, Hut Installation by Kelechi Ngwu	43
13:	Doxa, Bockade and Zthero, Ceramic Installation by Annabeth Rosen	44
14:	Stick-Hut-Sculptures, by Patrick Dougherty	45
15:	I Like America and America Likes Me, by Joseph Beuys	46
16:	Laundry 1 and Laundry 2, by Jerry Buhari	47
17:	Stonewall, by Olu Oguibe	48
18:	The-forbidden-colors, by Jann July	49
19:	Fam. Reunion, by Johan Jonnson	50
20:	Hope in Brokenness, by Forrest king	51
21:	Agbo Rago, by Jelili Atiku	52

22: *Omabe* Musical in Ochima - - - - - - - 60

23: Akatakpa (*Omabe*) Display in Obollo-Affor - - - - - 61

24: *Omabe* Musical in Idi-Opi - - - - - - - 61

25: *Omabe* Dance in Ogrutee-Enugwuezike - - - - - 62

26: *Omabe* Musical in Amojo-Ohodo - - - - - 62

27: Interaction Session with *Onyishi-Omabe* - - - - - 63

28: Interaction Session with *Onyishi-Omabe* - - - - - 64

29: Ujamh/Echaricha/Ugele, Entertainment Masquerade - - - 65

30: Mgbedike and Koprh, Entertainment Masquerades - - - 66

31: Oshagenyi and Ne-m-rh-Oha, Entertainment Masquerades - - - 67

32: Oriokpa/Akatakpa/Oth-nju, Law-enforcement Masquerade - - - 68

33: Utobo, Ozigbo, and Udele-Idenyi, Kinds of Ishi-Maa - - - 69

34: Nmgbrigba, Ogele, Ekwe, Omh and Arua-Ojjih *Omabe* - - - 71

35: Ancient Log as Enya *Omabe* - - - - - - - 71

36: Odo Manifestation in Chief Priest - - - - - - 72

37: *Omabe* Manifestation in Ogbanukwu - - - - - 73

38: Musical Instruments of *Omabe* - - - - - - 73

39: Shrine of *Omabe* - - - - - - - - 74

40: Abandoned *Omabe* – House - - - - - - - 76

41: Oriokpa Dressed Strangely - - - - - - - 77

42: Women Describing *Omabe* through Kporokpoto - - - - 81

43: Kporokpoto *Omabe*, Gathered for Artistic Exploration - - - 87

44: Ojjih *Omabe*, Gathered for Artistic Exploration - - - - 88

45: Defining Perceived Forms of *Omabe* in Kporokpoto - - - 89

46: Realizing Form Interpretations of *Omabe* in Ojjeh - - - - 90

47: Exploration of *Omabe*-form in Local Basket - - - - - 91

48: Refraction of *Omabe*-form in Stick - - - - - - 93

49: An Installation being Executed in Open-field - - - - 96

50: An Installation being Executed by roadside - - - - - 96

51: Direct Reflection of *Omabe* in a Tree - - - - - 98

52: Group Discussion Instigated by an *Omabe*-based Installation - - 123

53: Natives Interacting with an *Omabe*-based Installation - - - 124

54: Passersby Attracted to an *Omabe*-based Installation - - - - 124

55: Performers Interacting with a Tree Designated as *Omabe* - - - 125

LIST OF PLATES

Plate	Title	Page
I:	*Ovrh-uzo-Omabe*'s Encounter with a Born-again Woman	83
II:	*Omabe*'s Encounter with an Onyishi-Turned- Christian	84
III:	Deity and Cross Combined to Safeguard Property	85
IV:	Elders Weeping as *Omabe* Tradition Disintegrated	86
V:	Tree and Ground Considered as *Omabe*-based Installation	99
VI:	Full Tree Considered as *Omabe*-based Installation	100
VII:	Tree-Trunk Considered as *Omabe*-based Installation	101
VIII:	Tree-Trunk with Branches as *Omabe*-based Installation	102
IX:	Ezumezu Akpaa I, Distressed Bamboo	104
X:	Ezumezu Akpaa II, Coloured/ Distressed Bamboo	105
XI:	Ikpoh, Strung Pieces of Calabash	106
XII:	Ovrh-uzo, Coloured Rod (Ojjih *Omabe*)	107
XIII:	Ikpogwu-Maa, Fabric-Stripes-Embellished Totem Poles	108
XIV:	Oyima, Baobab-Tree-based Installation	109
XV:	Onyiaa-oha, Mango-Tree-based Installation	110
XVI:	Omaba, Basket/Money-based Installation	111
XVII:	Didigbo-digbo, Stick-based Installation	113
XVIII:	Oyikogo, Chaplet-based Installation	114
XIX:	Adh-nmeteh, Trunk/Money-based Installation	115
XX:	Ewu neh Okhko, Chicken-based Installation	116
XXI:	Ishi-Maa, Igbegiri-based Installation	118

XXII: Oluberh-Igbo, Cross-based Installation - - - - 119

XXIII: Ochi-eboh, Hollow-based Installation - - - - 120

XXIV: Enya-Maa, Hanging (Blind)-based Installation - - - 121

XXV: Ori-obrh, Masqueraded Pine Tree - - - - - 126

XXVI: Ogbh-yeh-meh, Masqueraded Flame of the Forest Tree - - 127

XXVII: Odo-shiere, Masqueraded Palm Tree - - - - - 129

XXVIII: Caged-god, Masqueraded Masquerade Tree - - - - 130

XXIX (A): Enya-Maa (Details) - - - - - - - 134

XXIX (B): Enya-Maa (Inside-out) - - - - - - 135

XXIX (C): Enya-Maa (Outside-in) - - - - - - 136

XXX (A): Ezumezu Akpaa I (Details) - - - - - - 137

XXX (B): Ezumezu Akpaa I (Left Side) - - - - - - 138

XXX (C): Ezumezu Akpaa I (Central Area) - - - - - 139

XXX (D): Ezumezu Akpaa I (Right Side) - - - - - 140

XXXI (A): Oluberh-Igbo (Details) - - - - - - 141

XXXI (B): Oluberh-Igbo (Left Side) - - - - - - 142

XXXI (C): Oluberh- Igbo (Upper-Left Side) - - - - - 143

XXXII (A): Oyima (Details) - - - - - - - 144

XXXII (B): Oyima (Details, Back View) - - - - - - 145

XXXII (C): Oyima (Details, Lower-front view) - - - - - 146

XXXIII (A): Ovrh-uzo (Details, Viewed Against flat-dark background); - - 147

XXXIII (B): Ovrh-uzo (Details, File-front view); - - - - - 148

XXXIII (C): Ovrh-uzo (Details, upper area) - - - - - 149

XXXIII (D): Ovrh-uzo (Details, lower part) - - - - - 150

XXXIV (A): Ejoh obth bh ugwah, Okra-based Installation - - - 151

XXXIV (B): Ejoh obth bh ugwah (left-side-view) - - - - 152

XXXIV (C): Ejoh obth bh ugwah (right-side-view) - - - - 153

XXXV (A): Adh-nmeteh (Details) - - - - - - - 154

XXXV (B): Adh-nmeteh (Details, lower area) - - - - - 155

XXXVI (A): Ezumezu Akpaa II (Details, Viewed against dark background) - 156

XXXVI (B): Ezumezu Akpaa II (Details, left side) - - - - - 157

XXXVI (C): Ezumezu Akpaa II (Details, central area) - - - - 158

XXXVI (D): Ezumezu Akpaa II (Details, right side) - - - - 159

XXXVII (A): Ewu neh Okhko (Details) - - - - - - 160

XXXVII (B): Ewu neh Okhko (Details, front view) - - - - - 161

XXXVII (C): Ewu neh Okhko (Details, side view) - - - - - 162

XXXIII (A): Onyiaa-oha (Details) - - - - - - - 163

XXXIII (B): Onyiaa-oha (Details, lower front view) - - - - 164

XXXIII (C): Onyiaa-oha (Details, lower back view) - - - - 165

XXXIX (A): Ewu neh Okhko II; Girl-based Installation, - - - - 166

XXXIX (B): Ewu neh Okhko II (Details, upper side-view) - - - 167

XXXIX (C): Ewu neh Okhko II (Details, back view) - - - - 168

XL: Attama neh Nugwu, Picture-manipulated Installation - - 169

XLI (A): Ikpogwu-Maa (Details), - - - - - - 170

XLI (B): Ikpogwu-Maa (Details, side view) - - - - - 171

XLI (C): Ikpogwu-Maa (Details, upper area) - - - - - 172

XLII (A): Transformation, (Details) - - - - - - 173

XLII (B): Transformation (Details, back view) - - - - - 174

XLII (C): Transformation (Details, upper front view) - - - - 175

XLIII (A): Ori-obrh (Details) - - - - - - - 176

XLIII (B): Ori-obrh (Details, upper area) - - - - - 177

XLIII (C): Ori-obrh (Details, lower area)- - - - - - 177

XLIV: Ewu neh Okhko III, Picture-manipulated Installation - - 178

XLV (A): Odo-shiere (Details) - - - - - - - 179

XLV (B): Odo-shiere (Details, right side) - - - - - 179

XLV (C): Odo-shiere (Details, left side) - - - - - - 180

XLVI (A): Didigbo-digbo (Details) - - - - - - 181

XLVI (B): Didigbo-digbo (Details, upper area - - - - - 182

XLVI (C): Didigbo-digbo (Details, lower area) - - - - - 183

XLVII (A): Ochi-eboh (Details) - - - - - - - 184

XLVII (B): Ochi-eboh (Details, central area) - - - - - 185

XLVIII (A): Omaba (Details) - - - - - - - 186

XLVIII (B): Omaba (Details, upper area - - - - - - 187

XLVIII (C): Omaba (Details, upper area, single) - - - - 188

XLIX (A): Caged-god (Details)- - - - - - - - 189

XLIX (B): Caged-god (Details, back view) - - - - - 190

XLIX (C): Caged-god (Details, front view) - - - - - 191

L (A): Oyikogo (Details) - - - - - - - 192

L (B): Oyikogo (Details, upper-central area) - - - - 193

L (C):	Oyikogo (Details, back-upper area) - - - - -	194
LI (A):	Ishi-Maa (Details) - - - - - - -	195
LI (B):	Ishi-Maa (Details, back view) - - - - - -	196
LI (C):	Ishi-Maa (Details, side-upper area - - - - -	197
LII (A):	Ikpoh (Details) - - - - - - -	198
LII (B):	Ikpoh (Details, upper area - - - - - -	198
LII (C):	Ikpoh (Details, lower area) - - - - - -	199
LIII (A):	Ogbh-yeh-meh (Details) - - - - - -	200
LIII (B):	Ogbh-yeh-meh (Details, center-half) - - - - -	201
LIII (C):	Ogbh-yeh-meh (Details, lower area) - - - - -	202
LIV:	Complete Metamorphosis, Picture-manipulated Installation - -	203
LV (A):	Something-Nothing; Suspended Fabric-based Installation - -	204
LV (B):	Something-Nothing (Details, lower area) - - - -	205
LV (C):	Something-Nothing (Details, lower back-area) - - -	206

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Naturally, man seems to be a rebellious being, always wanting to exert independence and freedom in his inclinations. Thus, it appears that art, including religion and other cultural practices, has been the instrument used to bind people together, under common values and for peaceful co-existence. According to Whitehand (2009), there has always been a natural desire in man, to seek explanations for cosmic mysteries, beyond language and human understanding; resulting in usage of symbolic visual language (art, especially sculpture) independent of time and place. This symbolic visual language, the author notes, enables people to respect the world beyond human ego, and believe in a world diffused with spiritual qualities. Traditional societies, especially in Africa, used symbolic visual language to harmonize perceptions and thus, held people of opposing characteristics - men and women, young and old, rich and the poor, tall and short, beautiful and ugly – together, in mutual respect for one another, for thousands of years.

For instance, the Ashanti (Akan) of Ghana, according to Ettlin (2000), used wooden sculpture known as *Akuaba Doll* (Figure 1 [A]), to unite the people's reproductive belief and bring women closer to the spirit of fertility gods. Thus, no matter how wealthy or wretched an Ashanti person was, during that period, he or she believed that children were gifts of the spirits and as such, abuse or quarrel over it, was direct challenge to the gods; and who would dare it? Similarly, the Zande of Democratic Republic of Congo, used *Yanda* figure (Figure 1 [B]) and the Ovambo or Mwila of

Angola, used Ritual *Bead Doll* (Figure 1 [C]), to unify belief that wealth possession comes from the gods (Ettlin, 2000).



Figure 1: (A); Akuaba Doll of Ashanti, Ghana, (B); Yanda figure of Zande, Democratic Republic of Congo, and (C); Ritual Doll of Ovambo/Mwila, Angola. Retrieved Online, 05/03/2014, from http://www.pinterest.com/pin/470696598524560269/**,** http://www.pinterest.com/pin/109212359685692876/ and http://www.pinterest.com/pin/101119954105560492/ respectively.

Among the Nsukka–Igbo of Nigeria, *Omabe* was the central visual symbol upon which the people's philosophy and life forces were expressed. *Omabe* is a culture, centered on the belief on the physical presence of the ancestral spirits, in form of deity. The *Omabe* deity was represented or given visible form by masquerades, initiated persons and adopted plant and animal objects. It was characterized by periodic festive presentations and performance, for entertainment and chastisement of the people. Aniakor (1978) notes that *Omabe* was used as an agent of social control, as its forces were harnessed, to check all the excesses of the people. Under its influence, people of all classes were controlled as they shared common belief and common fears.



Figure 2: (A); *Oriokpa* and (B); *Ekewo*; Law Enforcement types of *Omabe*, Picture, Michael Widjaja, Retrieved Online, 22/5/2012, from http://www.igboguide.org/HT-chapter9.htm

What is common with all these traditional African artworks is that, they were mainly about ideas (not logic), expressed in symbols and myths, which represented the collective belief of a people. They were not individual expressions, and a piece was communally owned, no matter where it was domiciled (Whitehand, 2009).

Presently however, Western civilizations, including scientific and technological developments, appear to have influenced different social orientations that have adversely affected the appreciation of myths and traditional inclinations. These developments have rather brought about logic and empirical reasoning, in the contemporary social relationship, including the conception, formation and appreciation of sculptures. This way, the natural forces that kept people together, under common values, have disappeared whereas individualism, fueled by capitalism, in which many people are isolated in their own societal development, thrives (Whitehand, 2009). As Suzuki in Whitehand (2009) notes, however, the usage of symbolic visual form has been built into the human psyche over thousands of generations and hundreds of thousands of years; and "if it is frustrated, we feel alienated" and fall prey to emotional ills.

The alienation of people from societal norms has brought about value diversification, leading to increased suspicion, rebellion and anarchy, in almost every part of the world. In Nigeria, religious intolerance has wreaked havoc that is fast dehumanizing all facets of social relation. In Nsukka area, clashes, resulting from interpretations of *Omabe* masquerading, have done serious damage to the social fabric of the society. Interpretation of *Omabe* myths has shifted from communal understanding, to divergent, parochial views; and this has brought about serious disagreements, which have resulted to loss of lives and destruction of property, and almost complete restriction of its physical appearance in public places. Thus, the collective conception (understanding) of *Omabe* got lost and the people disagreed in terms of its form appreciation.

According to King (2005), societal indicators, including visual symbols, produced out of individual interest, at the expense of holistic vision, is responsible for the increased disagreement currently facing human relation. In finding solution to problems associated with religious bigotry, the author notes that symbolic visual language is still necessary, but rather than using it in the modern order of individualism, it should be used, like in the traditional African society, to project communal understanding (idealism), rooted in inclusion, instead of isolation of individual aspirations. Insightfully, postmodern artists, according to Sullivan (2010), tend to use their art to draw public attention to worrisome elements in the society, as is the case here; drawing inference from past tradition.

Masquerading was generally an important part of the culture and tradition of the Igbo people of Southeastern Nigeria. Widjaja (2011) notes that, Igbo-land holds many festive and cultural performances, most notably, the masquerades associated with spiritual elements. These masquerades represented images of deities and dead relatives, and operated with some level of secrecy. According to Nwoye (2011), a variety of masquerade and secret society traditions existed

among the Igbo and played a big role in the male child's life, after the age of six. Referring to the total exclusion of women in the Igbo masquerade mythology, Ene (2007) points out that, African culture is mostly male-dominated, as is the culture of many native nations worldwide. The mystique surrounding masquerading was one of the key components of the Igbo culture that survived Western influences (Osewa, 2012). *Ijele* and *Ada-Monwu* (as reflected in Figure 3 [A and B] respectively), are other examples of masquerades in Igbo-land.



Figure 3: (A); Agalaba (Ijele) and (B); Monwu Types of Igbo Masquerade, Photograph, Michael Widjaja, Retrieved Online, 22/5/2012, from http://www.igboguide.org/HT-chapter9.htm

From an aesthetic point of view, according to Enekwe (1987), masquerading is a synthesis of many art forms, including costuming, impersonation, miming, sculpture, music, dance, poetry, movement, dialogue and painting. As the author observes, in masking, the active potentiality of the image is made possible through motion; masking, is the soul of the Igbo theatre.

Apart from the spiritual powers that surrounded them, masquerades played many other important roles in the lives of the adherents, appearing more active and effective in the past, than the days of this research. Widjaja (2011) observes that, in the past, masquerades were regarded as instruments for maintaining peace and order and were primarily used as law enforcement agents. Accordingly, the whole village would come out for the ceremony of colourful masquerades and while

entertaining through dances and exhibiting extra-human feats, they (the masquerades) would walk up to certain individuals and loudly expose their bad habits, crimes, or misbehaviour. The author further notes that, as people would always take corrections from these exposures, the masquerades were effective in keeping up with traditional norms and values in the communities. With colonization in the 20th century, however, masquerading became more relevant as an institution for cultural entertainment, greatly influenced by European elements. Osewa (2012) points out that, the nature of the masquerades, both in their traditional and modern states, varied, depending on the place of origin, within Igbo-land.

Nsukka has a multiple level of association in its contemporary usage. According to Ugwu (2012), the name Nsukka connotes three levels of socio-political organization of people, who share related topography and cultural affinity. First, Nsukka is the name of a community of the descendants of Asadu Ideke Arumona, who lived in the central area, which later became the Administrative Headquarters of the Northern Igbo-land, during the British colonial rule. Secondly, Nsukka is a name of a local government area in Enugu State, which comprises communities like Nsukka, Obukpa, Edem, Lejja, Ede-Obara, Opi, and Eha-Arumona. Finally, Nsukka is used to refer to, all the people of Northern part of Enugu State, who share related culture, under a political arrangement in Nigeria, known as Senatorial Zone. It is comprised of seven local government areas, namely: Igbo-Etiti, Uzouwani, Nsukka, Igbo-Eze South, Igbo-Eze North, Udenu, and Isiuzo. Although Isiuzo Local Government has recently been moved to Enugu District (see Figure 4), it shares the same culture with Nsukka and is included in this research. According to the Diary and Directory (2012) of the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, the name Nsukka, is today, used to designate the political, cultural, and religious identity of the entire people of the Northern part of Igbo-land. It was in this broadest sense, as a socio-cultural and

political zone, that the name Nsukka, with an estimated population of 1,377,001 people, in the 2006 census (Ugwu, 2012), is reflected in this research.



Figure 4: Map of Enugu State, Demarcating Local Government Areas and Senatorial Districts (Nsukka in Yellow). Retrieved 22/07/2015 from http://www.nigerianmuse.com/20100527092749zg/sections/pictures-maps-cartoons/maps-of-various-states-and-their-local-governments-in-nigeria/

Nsukka is a beautiful land, endowed with rich artistic resources, both in its topography and culture, especially in its traditional setting. Obiechina in Nwoko (1989) captures its picture poetically, seeing magnificence in:

> its breath-taking scenic beauty, its round, green hills that roll away from the observer's view till they embrace the distant skyline, revealing in this embrace exquisitely formed breasts of the earth-mother goddess, its enchanted sunsets splashed over with known and unknown colours, from the deep rusty yellow that forms a halo round the hills to the multiple-tinged red and orange mix that hangs down like a magic tapestry between the hills. Surmounting the riot of colours is the majestic sun itself, a huge, round, like a ball of fire. Divinity and mystery are compounded here to create a thing of grandeur and primeval fear.

The philosophy and religious belief of the Nsukka-Igbo varied remarkably, between traditional and modern settings and was reflected along the two lines, for better understanding of the people. As Onyeke (2009) notes, in the typical traditional Nsukka philosophy, people's attitudes were guided by the principle of dual balance, upon which, the natural creative forces radiated. The philosophy was that, all things are in pairs or twos (Ihe dh Eboo), working perfectly in a good balance, but could counteract at any alteration, in this dual radiating lines. Thus, they maintained that there were *Uje neh Ula* (Going Out and Coming Back), *Elh ne Alh* (Up and Down), *Oke neh Ne* (Male and Female), *Onwu neh Ndu* (Death and Life), *Ocha neh Ojii* (White and Black), *Ogologo neh Nkp-nkp* (Long and Short), and so on, each occurring at its appointed time, for the good of all. In their calendar, there were four days in a week, seven weeks in a month, and 13 months in a year.

To the people, death was for good and birth was for good also, and each was celebrated, provided that it came at an appropriate time. Death, birth, or wealth, coming at a time considered inappropriate was detested, not welcome and was not celebrated. Appropriateness of time in occurrence, was determined then, by the elders and the gifted or wise ones, especially the *Onyishi*

and the *Dibia*, who were the 'go-betweens' in human and spirit matters. Such views and beliefs were exemplarily transmitted to the younger generations in form of folk tales.

In line with this philosophy, the religious belief of the Nsukka-Igbo has remained that, there is a Supreme Being, the Creator (Chi-ukwu or Ezechitoke), at the centre of everything and from whom all creative forces emanate, passing through the hierarchies of spirits, the lesser gods (chi) to every physical object, with *Omabe* as the go-between. Ugwueg (2012) points out that, behind every seen (physical) is an unseen (spiritual, personal chi) and the affairs of the physical is determined, to a large extent, by the spiritual. Thus, every spirit and every physical being, possesses some powers and each, is appeased or chastised when suspected to be using such powers to cause obstruction in the smooth running of the latent forces. Due to the belief that their ancestors influenced their lives from the world beyond, they established communication links with the dead, through divinations, rituals and worship. For this reason, the people had so many gods (chi) to appease, including the Supreme God, known as Chiukwu. This explains why there used to be many festivals in the traditional setting of this region.

Traditionally, Nsukka people held many feasts or festivals, especially those associated with *Omabe* (Uda *Omabe*, Ula *Omabe*). Others, according to Ugwueg (2012), included *Sfujiokh* (Feast of Yam Spirits), *Iwa Ji* (New Yam Festival), *Egba Chiukwu* (Feast of the Supreme God), *Enyanwh* (Feast of Sun god) and *Ndushi* (Feast of Ancestral Spirits). It should be noted that most of these traditional festivals were also identified by the *Onwa* (month) in which they were observed. In Ohodo, for instance, *Egba Sfujiokh* (veneration of Male Farm-Spirits) was observed in *Onwa Enoh* (4th month) and it was simply referred to, as *Egba Onwa Enoh* in most Nsukka communities.

As pointed out earlier, *Omabe* was the most important and most popular religious observance in the traditional setting of Nsukka-Igbo, because it was believed to be the spirit of the ancestors, which would come to commune with humans, to carter for their super-natural needs. *Omabe* was the physical representation or artistic expression of the entire philosophy of the people, which was performed in all the communities of Nsukka.

Omabe observance was multifaceted in its dimension, involving great occasions, marked by cultural rites, sumptuous feasting and masking. Nwoko (1989) notes that, *Omabe* performance assumes a spectacular prominence as a visual expression of the people's sense of communion with their ancestors, as well as the perpetuation of that historical chain of continuity, reflective of their ideals, norms, values, aesthetics, character-traits and accomplishments, all of which were associated with their ancestors. For instance, such qualities as probity, bravery, brutality, as well as concepts like justice, beauty, elegance, youthfulness, adoration, retribution, wealth, competition, among others, were fully dramatized by the people's respective masquerades. Aniakor (1978) describes *Omabe* spirit as a ritual incarnation of leopard; observing that by 'tearing out' things, the *Omabe* as a re-embodied leopard spirit will 'tear out' wealth, children, life stock, beautiful women and other bounties, for the people. It was in this very sense that some people, in this area, referred to *Omabe* simply as *Omaba* (tear-er). *Omabe* masking tradition was also an ideal period when major family and inter-personal rifts were reconciled.

It is important to point out that in line with the duality principle, the nature of the tradition was that there is *Omabe* and there is *Odo,* which split the communities into two groups: *Omabe* operating communities (Igbo *Omabe*) and *Odo* operating communities (Igbo *Odo*). As Aniakor (1978) and Ugwunweze (2012) point out, the difference between the two was only in the

maintenance of the philosophy of duality and balance. To the people, it was *Omabe* and *Odo* in the balance of the spiritual realm. *Omabe* was associated with masculinity and his festivals were marked on Eke/Orie market-days whereas *Odo* was inclined to femininity and her festivals were marked on Aho/Nkwo market-days. *Omabe* and *Odo* were performed in alternating years and that was why the Lunar-calendar (Ahua), in the area, was only two: *Ahua Omabe* and *Ahua Odo*. The interval in the performance of *Omabe* or *Odo,* however, varied from one community to another. *Omabe* is therefore, used interchangeably with *Odo,* in this research, to refer to the same ancestral spirits that shaped the cultural practice of the Nsukka-Igbo.



Figure 5: (A); Ujamh (Nwoke) and (B); Ne-Maa; Entertaining Types of *Omabe* Masquerade, Photograph, Michael Widjaja, Retrieved Online, 22/5/2012, from http://www.igboguide.org/HT-chapter9.htm

In its original state, *Omabe* manifested in different ways and on different objects, performing basically two functions: law enforcement (Figure 2) and entertainment (Figure 5)) and there were masquerades, initiated persons, as well as, possessed animal and plant objects, used as special agents, for each purpose. It is important to note that, the secrecy surrounding *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka area, was not basically in its form. Rather, it was in its nature, because *Omabe'*s

performances were usually astonishing. Eya (2006) notes that *Omabe*'s costume, movement and dance style; its manner of speech and voice; where it came from and where it returned to, as well as, its way of gathering information, were thrilling and the means of achieving these feats were kept secret. People would always wonder if it was a human, animal or spirit, that was inside a given form of *Omabe*. The belief was that, when any of the instruments used in achieving these extraordinary feats was exposed, *Omabe* became naked and when *Omabe* went naked, 'ordinary eyes' must not see it (Onyeke, 2009). All the objects on which *Omabe* manifested its power, were therefore, feared and respected by everybody in the society, including women and children. *Omabe* tradition lived, grew, and solely enjoyed the worship and submission of Nsukka people, until the early 20th century, when Christianity came in.

At the advent of Christianity, the monopolistic control and command of *Omabe* was challenged and threatened, bringing about, variety of spiritual governance and religion, to Nsukka people (Chase, 2010). Converts were made from *Omabe* worshippers to Christianity and the struggle for dominance between the two forces started. The two spiritual groups (Christianity and *Omabe*) engaged each other in both spiritual and physical wars, employing all sorts of strategies to subdue, dominate, and even oust the other, and this has continued even to the period of this research.

This struggle seems to have an adverse effect on *Omabe*'s form. For instance, Uchendu (2011) gives an account of the unbecoming activities of *Omabe* in the period, which increasingly makes people wonder if the 'incarnates of our ancestors' were still intact in their original conceptualization. According to the author, *Akatakpa* masquerade (a law enforcement type of *Omabe*) from Ibagwa-Aka, accompanied by the youth, including ladies, in a convoy of buses and motorcycles, armed with pump-action riffles, invaded Iheakpu-Awka (both communities in Igbo-Eze South Local Government in Nsukka area of Enugu State), resulting to burning of houses,

killing of people, looting and destruction of property. Again, Ozor (2012) reports that, *Omabe* masquerades took turn in the series of rape in Opi community, defiling a nursing mother. In the victim's narrative, some 'unmentionables', according to *Omabe* mythology, were made, as following:

> … The masquerade (*Omabe*) was arrested and hurriedly released on the flimsy excuse that he was going to write JAMB exams; … the mother of the suspected person in the masquerade came and pleaded that her son should be forgiven. The boy (*Omabe*) who raped me gave police his name as (with-held so as not to personalize the issue).

What is evident in these reports is that, *Omabe*'s secrets are divulged (a kaa maa); thus, it is no more *Omabe* in itself. *Omabe* being mingled with women, accused of rape, named as a living person, its mode of operation and physical appearance being restricted by a bye-law of the local government, are just unimaginable in its original conception and portray it in strange ways. Humans are now directing the affairs of *Omabe*. These incidents are clear indications of changes and transformations of *Omabe* from what it used to be. Nsukka people have started to see *Omabe* in different ways and forms, because its influence has given way to modern civilization and the new Christian religion, which disallows physical expression of its original ideas and concepts. Thus, the true forms of *Omabe* are only conceived and borne in individual minds, which appear heterogeneous. Sometimes, *Omabe* is publicly abused and ridiculed (see Figure 6), to the delight, instead of frustration of the people, as it used to be. Dinjos (2012) notes:

> I remember my father and other older relations telling me fascinating tales about spirits (masquerades) of the olden days. The stories, while filled with some abominable practices, spoke highly of the mysteries, excitement, and respect the spirit fraternity commanded. Now, I'm aggrieved at the lawlessness that governs the fraternity…., as the modern masquerade got even more careless and ruthless, society began to lose her respect and admiration for it. There have been cases where an angered community set a masquerade on fire.



Figure 6: "The Torturer Being Tortured", Masquerade (*Omabe*) and the Police, Photograph, Retrieved Online, 14/6/2013, from https://www.facebook.com/Ndi.Igbo/app_193400537373897

Even though Western civilization is exerting such overwhelming influence on the people, mobilization of the masses for general reconciliation or total acculturation has not been possible in Nsukka. How then, could appropriate forms of *Omabe*, be restored in this area?

Interestingly, in postmodernist installations, elements of burning social issues, especially eroding cultural practices of this kind, are utilized in artistic design, to elicit public discourse, for possible reconciliation. Specifically, installation is a kind of conceptual art style, in which, familiar objects are idealistically put in strange ways or designated as arts, to extract reaction from the observer (McEvilley, 1999). Basically, it adapts elements of a worrisome development in a society, in creating artworks, which can draw public attention and stimulate discourse. Installation art, according to the author, deals mainly with perception and conception. In its design, artists tend to collaborate with people that bear the characteristics of a worrisome development; incorporating them physically or employing their images to complement a work. Jari (2014) and Buhari (2015) further situate installation into conceptual art, in their maintenances that, it is a postmodernist approach, which puts premium on idea over medium and technique.

Rooted in traditional African artistic ideology, installation seems to have great potentials in contemporary artistic expression, as it is increasingly being recycled in postmodernist art practice. Docx (2011) notes that "if there's one word that confuses, upsets, angers, beleaguers, exhausts and contaminates us all, then it is postmodernism. And yet, properly understood, postmodernism is playful, intelligent, funny and fascinating. …, its influence has been everywhere and continues. It has been the dominant idea of our age." Evidently, in 2006, Myeongbeom Kim, sculpturally considered the changes taking place in his Korean village and simply hung a chair on a tree installation (see Figure 7A), to indicate total transversal of peoples' norms. Similarly, in 2008, Cornelia Konrads metaphorically related colossal abnormalities taking place in her locality, in an installation entitled: Still Life with Tree (see Figure 7B). Here in Nigeria, the continued experimentation, with indigenous forms and concepts, by renowned artists like El Anatsui and Jerry Buhari (works in chapter two), has wetted the ground significantly, for the development of installation in educational institutions. The good qualities of these works do not lie in the materials used but on the ideas and connotations of each. According to Whitehand (2009), "we know that any kind of reconstruction of reality based on logical reasoning and empirical evidence will ignore many aspects of reality that are just beyond words."



Figure 7: (A); Live installations, Wooden Chair on Tree, 2006, Myeongbeom Kim and (B); Still Life with Tree, Tree Growing out of the Window of a Sinking House, 2008, Cornelia Konrads

Retrieved Online, 04/03/2014, from http://creoflick.net/creo/Installation-art-1114 and http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2012/04/gravity-defying-land-art-by-cornelia-konrads/ respectively

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Modernity seems to have corrupted the conception of *Omabe* mythology, which is the central visual symbol upon which, the life philosophy of the Nsukka-Igbo is built. Traditionally, the people were prohibited from expressing deep knowledge of *Omabe* publicly. On conversion, many of them therefore, carried their unheard understandings of its myth into Western civilization, where Christianity also forbids any expression, tantamount to indulgence, of pagan practice. Thus, *Omabe*'s true meaning and form orientation got lost, because its understanding became diversified and distorted, due to individual member's experience of it.

This situation, led to some people launching anti-establishment campaigns and others supporting greater secularism. Consequently, *Omabe*'s paraphernalia (form definitions) and modes of operation become unacceptable to many, as they are no longer formed and performed in the manner that would represent the collective interest of the people. As such, when it makes rare physical appearance, the individual dispositions and therefore, conceptions become varied and intensely so, causing disagreements that often threaten peaceful co-existence in the area.

These unexpressed conceptions of *Omabe* seem to be reservoirs of forms, premised on the realms of postmodernist installation. Being that the idea and physicality of *Omabe,* has become an issue in its appreciation, the creative prowess of the sculptor is challenged, to make form out of the varied conceptions, among Nsukka people. This development provides a good opportunity for the sculpture practice of the researcher, to be given the desired indigenous knowledge-based quality that is becoming essential, to postmodernist art professionalism and practice-based research.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to create installation sculptures from the contemporary conceptual interpretations of Omabe tradition in Nsukka-Igbo. Thus, the objectives of this research are to:

1. explore visible forms from the various perceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka Igbo
2. employ the perceived forms in creating installation sculptures based on related groups of perceptions of *Omabe* tradition.
3. develop installation sculptures which unify opposing perceptions of *Omabe* tradition.
4. execute some installation sculptures of the perceived forms of *Omabe* tradition in public spaces.
5. create a personal artistic language from the emergent forms of *Omabe* conception.

1.4 Research Questions

The basic questions for the research are:

1. How can visible forms be explored from the various perceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo?
2. In what way(s) can the perceived forms be employed in creating installation sculptures based on related groups of perceptions of *Omabe* tradition?
3. How can installation sculptures which unify opposing perceptions of *Omabe* tradition be developed?
4. In what way(s) can some installation sculptures of the perceived forms of *Omabe* tradition be executed in public spaces?

5. By what means can personal artistic language be created from the emergent forms of *Omabe* conception?

1.5 Justification of the Study

Contemporary trends in art academia tend to be shifting in favour of multiple or collaborative approaches, where cultural perceptions and personal-professional issues are artistically investigated, thereby, strengthening indigenous knowledge-based concepts in art practice. Sullivan (2010) notes that, studio art experiences are inclusive of the full range of ideas and images that inform individual, social, and cultural actions. Stokstad (2008) points out that, postmodern artists use art to comment on their world, and tend to revive previous styles and media, because they discovered that referring to past art, in a knowing fashion, can add meaning to an artistic statement. As a native of Nsukka, exploration of the conceptions of *Omabe* would relocate the researcher's sculpture practice, from individually appreciated formalism, to emerging internationally valued indigenous knowledge-based professionalism (idealism).

This call for examining artistic practices with traditional ideologies and contemporary perceptions to enhance professionalism has attracted significant attention in art academia, especially in studio-based doctoral programme and practice-based/led research. Elkins (2009) reports that in a postgraduate work carried out in 2002, Sue Lovegrove studied "The Un-solidity of the Ground" in painting, based on the analysis of the cultural practice and perceptions of the aboriginal desert women of Australia; and Frank Thirion, in a similar programme in 2004, investigated "Circular Continuum: (using) the Depiction of Historical Time in the Art of Paddy Fordham Wainburranga". According to the author, Thirion's studio practice was concerned with the concept of cultural measurements and complemented by his research into the indigenous

Australian Rembarrnga artist, Paddy Fordham Wainburranga. In Africa too, Oloidi (2009) notes that, like in the pre-colonial time, the postmodern African artists have "taken man and life into consideration and have directed their creative efforts to those experiences that can bring fructifying changes to the society". Although *Omabe* operates in secrecy and using its elements in an artistic research that is open to all and sundry might constitute an offence of sort, revelation of its secrets, in time, is unavoidable. According to Beidelman (1993),

> … For a secret to be realized, someone must not only conceal something but someone else must know or suspect this concealment. Consequently, while the import of a secret may remain hidden, the act of concealment must be revealed if the secret is to have an audience and hence a social existence. Furthermore, the power and attraction of the secret lie in the possibility that it may be disclosed, either as a favor to the uninformed who seek to learn it or as a betrayal or lapse on the part of those hiding it. In either case, secrets imply that their own disclosure and knowledge are desired, because secrets give power to those who know them.

Thus, exploring form from formless conceptions, based on the transformations in *Omabe*, a traditional performance shielded with secrecy, is not out of place.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research goes beyond physical representation to give form to the invisible perceptions of *Omabe*. Its outcome relays to artists and art observers, how to locate the eroding cultural forms, increasingly demanded in installation art. In its all-inclusive nature, it would enhance communal appreciation, thereby returning sculpture to its original communal object. Again, the refractive gaze studio approach introduced in this research, would expand the scope of reflective thinking in studio art practice. The advantage of installation over other artistic research types, in facilitating social reconciliation, is that, it is highly permissible in practice-based/led research, which enhances practice through collaboration (Stokstad, 2008). As an observer's personal experience is required to complement a form in installation, usually executed site-specifically in public location, many viewers would likely find consolation in conceptual based *Omabe* installation, no

matter the difference in the level of their disorientation. This is significant, especially in postmodern societies, increasingly besieged with troubles of disagreement and distrust and it would, at the same time, help in expanding understanding and significance of sculpture (art) in general human development.

By pursuing greater understanding of art practice through the creation of artifact, this research would bridge the dichotomy of practice-based and practice-led researches; thereby shifting the frontier of contemporary art practice and research. As Haberkorn (2007) observes, no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it; such being the case, the visual artist seeks to relay human experience from the inside out, and assign it, as a wave of truth. Without creativity and alternative thought dimension of this kind, innovation and change will remain stunted. Generally, this research would bring to the fore, elements of eroding civilization, for possible contemporary utilization and future historic substantiation, necessary for proper development of a nation and healthy international relation.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This research is concerned with forms and manifestations of *Omabe* in all the communities that constitute Nsukka socio-cultural zone. In the traditional Nsukka setting, *Omabe* possessed many forms associated with it, but it is only its conceptual forms, especially its masquerade ideology, from people mobilized across the seven local government areas in the zone, that is concentrated upon, in the studio-work of this research. It is important to point out that this research is not set out to judge authenticity of notions. It therefore, adapts various people's conception of *Omabe* in creating sculptural forms, without seeking to judge which conception is superior to another. To accommodate wide conceptions in a spiritual matter of this kind, symbolic forms, especially

Omabe's manifestation instruments, were basically adapted in the creation of installation sculptures, domiciled in both Nsukka (the researched area) and Zaria (the researcher's location).

1.8 Conceptual Framework

This research was conceived upon a multifaceted postmodernist design concept, configured personally as, Patterned Anarchism in Instrumental Designation. It is a composition made up of four different design concepts: Anarchical Representation, Cyclical Pattern of Artistic Activity, Continuous Interaction in Embodied Manifestation, and Readymade Designation as Sculpture.

In the first instance, concept of Anarchism was adopted in collecting conceptions of *Omabe* in the research field. Propounded in 1988 by Paul Kari Feyerabend (professor of philosophy), the concept of Anarchism infers that anarchism should replace rationalism in the theory of knowledge and design (Gray and Malins, 1993). According to the authors, the concept of Anarchism postulates that "the only principle that does not inhibit progress is 'anything goes'". This implies that when every view-point is accommodated in a chaotic circumstance, progress is made towards resolution; as there is no 'absolute truth'. Various conceptions of *Omabe*, whether positive or negative, ancient or modern, were therefore, accommodated in the installation sculptures in this research. Expatiating on the merit of the concept of Anarchism, in relation to artistic research, Rayworth, in Gray and Malins (1993) notes that postmodern research paradigm is a double voiced discourse, radically eclectic, which accepts and criticizes at the same time.

Secondly, in relating *Omabe*'s manifestation instruments to its conceptions for form-definition, Cornock's cyclical pattern of artistic activities, Generative – Analytical – Reflective, was followed. Work-concept was first, anarchically generated from all the view-points of the people

(natives of Nsukka), analyzed in the paradigm of postmodernist practice-based research and reflected in the creation of artwork. Although concept generation was anarchical, work design was systematic. Propounded first in 1978 by a sculptor and art-educator, Stroud Cornock, Activity Pattern concept, according to Gray and Malins (1993), posits that in relation to student-centered teaching and learning in art and design, the identification and articulation of method*o*logy is particularly important, where individuality and personal development are key objectives. Thus, people's perceptions of *Omabe* were generated via metaphoric description, using remnants of *Omabe* manifestation instruments to trigger reaction, and used as work materials. The choice of real *Omabe'*s manifestation instruments for concept development, was encouraged by Haberkorn's (2007) postulation that, embodied manifestation is the key to knowing and understanding the invisible, and the principle of contiguity which states that 'things which have been in contact with each other will continue to interact, even when the contact is broken' (Dukor, 1994).

Finally, in developing the art forms, Designation concept of Marcel Duchamp, was applied. Propounded between 1913 and 1914, Duchampian Readymade, posits that 'anything' can be rendered a sculpture, by designating it as such (McEvilley, 1999). Reflecting the importance of this concept in the postmodernist art approach, the author states that "sculpture for the last generation or two has been dominated by the Readymade, more than by all other models or influences put together. Duchamp radically turned around the concept of art in general and sculpture in particular." Designating as *Omabe*-based installation, 'anything' which suggested features of its form-definition, facilitated wider anarchical coverage of conceptions of *Omabe*, in all-inclusive and subjective installations developed.

The intention of this multifaceted framework (Patterned Anarchism in Instrumental Designation) therefore, is that, the artist-researcher should use these outlined means to first, get himself subsumed in the various conceptions of *Omabe*, align them in the premise of the postmodernist installation sculpture, and then, attain a state, where he could, freely and sub-consciously, perceive and reflect *Omabe* forms, in readymade objects. Thus, encountering various perceptions of *Omabe* in the premise of practice-based/led research, via installation sculpture, for empathetic expression of varied forms, in which "anything goes", is the target of this conceptual framework.

CHAPTERTWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND ARTWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature and artworks that gave credence to both studio and theoretical articulation of works in this research. Its outcome is presented in two main areas: Review of Literature and Review of Artworks, focusing on masquerades and installations. It also presents a Summary, which highlights the major findings from the exercise and the specific gap, this research attempted to fill.

2.2 Related Literature

The objective of this unit is to seek opinions of earlier researchers, written or verbalized, for greater understanding of the subject matters, reflecting the aim and objectives, of this research. Thus, details of *Omabe* Tradition, and sculpture installation, are reviewed.

2.2.1 The *Omabe* Tradition

In this unit, dimensions of *Omabe* cultural developments are reflected, so as to cover all essential information needed, not only for all-inclusive form definition but also for applicability and appreciation of the outcome of this research as a fair representation of the entire Nsukka area. As Biobaku (1976) observes, culture manifests itself in a variety of forms, and those who wish to comprehend it, must look into the totality of a people's way of life.

Historically, it is not easy to tell precisely, when *Omabe* tradition started among the Nsukka-Igbo, because it is believed to have preceded modern education and recording techniques in Africa.

Elders (Ugwu Omeye Eze – Onyish Amojo, Ugwu-Nweze Ozo, and Ugwu-Eg Egbo – Onyishi Umu-Ezikenwoke) and books (Onyeke, 2009 and Obayi and Ezugwu, 2009), maintain that, the understanding and form definitions of *Omabe* could be configured from the socio-cultural metamorphosis surrounding its development in Nsukka region and that, it is not everybody that can tell its stories correctly. They inform that, they and their grandfathers met the practice of *Omabe* in the communities of Nsukka. Their position, which is shared by many people in the area, is simply that *Omabe* is indigenous and originated from Nsukka area; "*Omabe* frh-efh n'al haa" (*Omabe* sprang out of this land).

Another version on the origins of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka area, as stated by Obayi and Ezugwu (2009), and which is not open to *Ogbodu* (non-initiates), is that, its origins can be traced to Igala land. Legend, reflected also by Aniakor (1978), has it that, at a time, during inter-tribal wars, in pre-colonial Africa, Igala kingdom defeated and annexed parts of Igbo-land, especially the Northern region. As a result of this suppression, parts of Igala culture, including *Omabe* tradition, were imposed on the people and as time went on, Nsukka, being their immediate neighbour, assimilated them. This probably explains the reason why Nsukka, Igala, and Idoma people share many cultural elements, including names.

Originally, according to Ugwueg (2012), *Omabe* was a kind of charm belonging to Atta, the king of Igala land and used by his warriors, in form of mask, during military expeditions. On sighting a masked warrior, a mysterious image to Nsukka people then, they would exclaim 'Obh maa-beh!' (It is a spirit, clearly!). Perhaps, on reporting the superiority of their men and in making jest of the frightening of the enemies in the war, the Igala warriors, due to language difference, said that they were called *O-ma-be*, a corruption of the phrase *Obh maa-beh*. This is believed to be how *Omabe*

became the name of the war-charm, used by Igala warriors, by way of masking, to achieve victory in war. The practice was adopted in Nsukka area and over time; it developed into a full tradition, with spiritual connotations, associated with it, at the first contact. Atadoga (2012), a 94 year old Omojatta Igala, in an interaction, confirms that there was a charm-related masquerade known as *Omabe* and exclusively belonging to Atta Igala, in the olden days. According to him, *Omabe* represented the eye of Atta, in overseeing the length and breadth of Igala Land. It was everywhere and in everything, possessing a masquerade that appeared only on special occasions, like war, or when the law of the land was seriously violated, and also during the burial of an Atta. He adds that people did not look straight into the eye of *Omabe* masquerade, and that its meaning and secrets were only known to the Atta and his cabinet. He points out that *Omabe* cult or tradition was also found in surrounding ethnic groups like the Idoma, in Benue state. In this regard, there may be a connotation between *Omabe* and *Omoba* (son of king) of the Yoruba, in Western Nigeria; being that, according to Eyo (1990), they were also in close contact with the Igala kingdom.

Although the name *Omabe* is of Nsukka origin, in defining its form, Igala cultural values should be considered and concentration paid to the head, facial (identity) coverage, reflecting both masculinity and femininity (*Odo* aspect) qualities. While *Omabe* is regarded as a charm in Igala, it is a spirit in Nsukka. This spiritual attachment to *Omabe,* in Nsukka, makes the tradition unique. It appears to be an amalgamation of spiritualism, which had spread in Igbo land from Nri, and fetishism of the Igala.

On the spread of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo, oral record, according to Ugwueg (2012), has it that Lejja community is its port-of-call or head (Onyishi *Omabe*). It was from Lejja that *Omabe*

tradition spread to other communities of Nsukka. The chronology, according to Ugwueg (2012), is that *Omabe* came from Nshi (a place or people not properly identified by the informants to this research, but given its claims as the cradle of Igbo civilization [Nwoye, 2011] and its proximity to Awka, it is suspected to be Nri) to Awka, and from Awka to Oro (Olo). It was from *Oro* that *Omabe* came to Ugbele-Lejja. Awka is the headquarters of it all, while other places are just links. He substantiates this assertion with a revelation that in *Omabe* musical lyrics, especially during its departure period, it says "Anyi ga-lako n'Egr-Oka" (we will be returning to Egr-Awka). So, musical lyrics and intervals in presentation, among the communities, could inform variety and richness of forms in the definition of *Omabe*.

One form of *Omabe*-related festival or another is observed almost every week in an *Omabe* year (ahua *Omabe*) by Nsukka people; but the most popular ones are *Uda-Omabe* (Homecoming of *Omabe* to the Mortal-World) and *Ula-Omabe* (departure of *Omabe* to the Spirit-World). Ugwueg (2012) notes further that, other *Omabe*-related feasts that come between *Uda Omabe* and *Ula Omabe* include: *Uda Udele, Nkaji Udele, Nmaji Onu-Okachi, Okikpe, Idu-ishi, Ohoro, Ishi-maa, Ita Azhzh, Ogbeje, Memh-Di, Nri Otobo, Nri Mgboto/Iri Okpa,* and *Oje n'ikpogwu*. He points out that, although the concepts are the same, nomenclatures of most *Omabe* forms and the observation period of its festivals vary among the component communities of Nsukka. Performance of one of these popular *Omabe* festivals is reflected here, for greater appreciation of the tradition in form imagination and framing.

During the homecoming of *Omabe* (Uda *Omabe*), in an *Omabe* year, the people are usually very excited as they pass through series of preparation. Ugwunweze (2012) narrates the stages of preparation for *Uda Omabe*: The first stage in the preparation is called "Iwo-ol neh Imior-maa"

(*Omabe*'s alerting), in which *Omabe* gives signals, by staging its music for a short time in distant grooves; and on perceiving the sound, the entire community would shout in jubilation, appealingly calling on *Omabe* to come to their aid, by returning to them. This happens several times, in intervals that reduce as the day of its homecoming gets closer. This is to give the people enough notice to prepare, usually by acquiring the necessary celebration items and purifying themselves. At this stage, Ugwunweze (2012), notes that, the initiates only, go to *Uham* (the groove or sacred forest), to prepare the required operating items and costume of *Omabe*. It should be noted that, operating items and mechanisms of *Omabe* are kept secret from women and *Ogbodu* (non-initiates, regarded as un-worthy men). In expressing difficulty in understanding a riddle or proverb, an Nsukka man would simply say "Ogbodu a mag maa" (non-initiate does not know the spirit – *Omabe*).

Body purification, according to Ugwunweze (2012), is a pre-condition and a very important aspect of the preparation for receiving *Omabe* in the land of the living. This is so, because it is believed that abominable acts do not thrive in *Omabe*'s presence. For this reason, the first set of *Omabe* that comes home is *Ovr-Uzo* (the fore-runner spirit). It comes ahead of the main *Omabe,* to cleanse the land. Within one native week (Four days) of its return, *Ovr-Uzo* would go round the whole community, village by village and clan by clan and on its own, pronounces abominations committed by each person and atone for them, through sacrifices. Crimes like murder, adultery, and divulging of *Omabe*'s secret to women and *Ogbodu* (Ika maa) are regarded as "unmentionable" kinds of abomination and receive stiffer penalties. If any of these crimes is committed in an *Omabe* year, the penalty is banishment and sometimes, instant lynching of the culprit and demolition of his belongings by *Omabe*. If it is in a non-*Omabe*-year that an abomination is committed however, it is only treated as rumor because, mortals do not possess

full understanding and authority to condemn a kinsman to death. Suspects of such offences rather go to special diviners and deities to contest their accusation (Inwh-maa) and if any of such persons survives until *Omabe*-year came, *Ovr-Uzo*, who sees the secret and knows the truth, will confess, atone and cleanse him.

Unlike the main *Omabe, Ovr-Uzo* does not kill; rather; it purifies offenders. The mystery in the practice is how *Ovr-Uzo* gets information about abomination in a land and who the culprits are, even when it is not present. Regarding this feat, Ugwueg (2012) notes that, *Omabe* manifested its powers in some objects, plants, animals, humans and deities; and these special objects miraculously keep record of all that happen around them. When *Omabe (Ovr-Uzo*) returns, through its spiritual eyes, it reads all that is harboured in each of these special objects and then, makes pronouncement.

Three native weeks (12 days) after the coming of *Ovr-Uzo*, *Omabe* will return for a new operating-year. The return of *Omabe* is a grandiose festival in any Nsukka community. Ugwu (2011) notes that, a major difference that may be established between other masquerades on the one hand and *Omabe* on the other, is that, whereas the former, appear because a celebration is taking place, celebrations take place because, the latter is appearing. Right from *Eke-maa* (the eve of the emergence of *Omabe*), according to Asogwa (2012), every place wears a festive look. Natives are adorned with colourful apparels, prize animals like cow, ram, and goat are slaughtered, special dishes and palm-wine are prepared and friends (Oke-maa) received. People's homes, streets, village squares (Otobo), as well as *Omabe's* grooves and houses (Ulo-maa or Okhti), are cleaned up and delightfully decorated. On this occasion, women and children wear special hair-do/cut and decorate their bodies with *Uri* (black Cam-wood dye), *Usfueyi* (red dye)

and *Odo* (yellow dye). Elderly persons also put on these make-ups but in addition, they wear special ornaments, hats and free-flowing gowns (Ewurh Oseje) with staff of authority in their hands. Young men simply wear shorts, tying wrappers around them and most times, leave out their torsos bare. They also wear special hair-cuts, put special beads (Aka) around their necks and brandish dane-guns and *Omh-nkwu* (virgin palm frond) in their hands (see Figure 7A). Esogbue (2011) notes that *Omabe* feast signifies 'plenty', in the culture of Nsukka people. From the eve of the ceremony (Eke-maa), through the main day, to the end of the market-display day (Ifh Asfua), *Omabe*'s music and gunshots occupy the air-wave of each village.



Figure 8 (A and B): Presentations of *Omabe* in Village-square, Pictures by Chase (2010) and Widjaja (2011), Retrieved 2 July, 2012, from http://wwwnsukkamasquerades-chase.blogspot.com/ and http://www.igboguide.org/HT-chapter9.htm respectively.

In the presentation, there are different types of *Omabe* masquerades, dressed in special costumes and masks, which file out from the groove and take turns to put up fascinating and splendid dance performances; some with shows of masculinity and others, of femininity, to the jubilation of the anxiously waiting audience, positioned according to social status, at the village square. Figure 8 (A and B) shows the village square presentation setting. Nwoko (1989) notes that, whereas

masquerades like *Igele, Agbeji* and *Ekwe*, entertain by capitalizing on their elegance, youthfulness and remarkable gestures, the *Oshagenyi, Nweye, Udele-Idenyi, Od-kwe, Otunju* and *Edi Ogbene*, otherwise known as *Ishi-Maa* (Heads of Masquerade), entertain by their skillful use of proverbs, idioms, conundrum, simile and metaphor. Ability to emerge as the winner (result not centrally declared but borne in each observer's mind) depends on the quality of the costume, which indicates the degree of care taken and amount of money spent, to produce an aesthetically suitable outfit, and the dexterity of skill, displayed to arouse the aesthetic sensibilities of the audience (Ugwu-Omeye, 2012). The village, whose *Omabe* spirit (masquerade) emerges the winner, proudly accompanies it home, amidst great excitement and praise-songs, whereas, the loser is ridiculed by the audience. As Aniakor (1978) observes, echoes of applause, float through the air, as the audience acclaims the village, whose *Omabe* masquerade, has out-displayed the others. Soon, stories and mimicking of outstanding masquerades become the talk of the town. Metaphoric expressions and praise-songs seem to be important in the *Omabe* tradition and would be given adequate attention in the development of form in this research.

Immediately after the presentation of dance and other performances, deep quietness grips the entire community, as the law enforcement types of *Omabe*, take over the stage. *Omabe*, in this form, will start to issue out decrees, fixing dates for one feast or the other; reprimanding gossiping and nagging women; chastising idle men and children and intervening in disputes between husband and wife, man versus village, and community versus community. Eya (2006) notes that, *Omabe* was able to play those roles because, the mythology regards *Omabe* simply, as a metaphysical reality. No man, whether initiated or not, ever admits knowing *Omabe*; and according to Eya (2006), whenever *Omabe* addresses a man, no matter how elderly, the person normally responds with *Maa* (spirit) or *Nna-m* (my father*)*. Thus, nobody dared retaliate against

any of *Omabe*'s actions or challenge its decision. For instance, Eya (2006) further observes that *Omabe* can come to the village market and cart away any palm wine of its choice, displayed for sale, and the most the owner can do, is to pray that he returns the empty container afterwards.

Despite the fear of uncertainty in the minds of the people, especially the non-initiates, the *Omabe*-year, according to Ugwu-Omeye (2012), is believed to be a year of peace and tremendous economic and human growth. He notes that, this belief is evident in abundant conception and reproduction of male offspring among human, livestock and economic plants, during the period. *Omabe*-year is usually described as year of abundant harvest.

A lot of changes have however, taken place in the *Omabe* tradition, in connection with the arrival of Western civilization. European colonization, according to Ugwu (2011), brought in new philosophy and religious ideology that conflicted with that of *Omabe* tradition. According to Mbah and Uzodigwe (2009), many people, especially those classified as lesser citizens (the Ogbodu, slaves and the out-cast) and those disenchanted under *Omabe* tradition, took advantage of the presence of Western powers to launch anti-establishment against the tradition. Thus, *Omabe*'s laws started receiving massive violation. Aniakor (1978) observes that "children nowadays participate in *Omabe* festival … change is beginning to affect the intense sacredness of the institution". Omeye (2012) points out that on the authority of the church, women and children have continued to disobey *Omabe*'s orders; "they enter places, see, touch and eat things forbidden of them; and its structures have collapsed; leaving only remnants, which will soon be scraped". The cultural landscape of Nsukka-Igbo has thus, changed. The phenomenon re-echoes Okonkwo's anxiety in the imagination of what the presence of the 'Whiteman's god' in Africa

would result to (Achebe 1958); "He saw himself and his father crowding round their ancestral shrine waiting in vain for worship and sacrifice and finding nothing but ashes of bygone days…"

Presently, in Nsukka area, Christianity is growing and *Omabe* is diminishing, leaving shrines and grooves unattended to, but the ashes of yester-years are still there. The cultural transition, being experienced in Nsukka, is coming through gradual metamorphosis, and not by sharp change. According to Offiah and Okike (2009), in all the changes taking place, there is inherent identity of the Nsukka, no matter the level of transformation. At least, children still bear their father's name. All about *Omabe,* in Nsukka, has not been lost.

It can be said therefore, that *Omabe* tradition has witnessed series of transformations, some of which had defaming effects, but it is not completely destructible, in Nsukka-Igbo. Its influence penetrated the psyche of the people and its ideologies and formations percolate in their minds and inclinations. *Omabe* tradition is revivable in Nsukka.

2.2.2 Installation Art

The history of visual art is rich with a lot of adaptations and re-adaptations, popular and unpopular, current and out-dated practices, especially as regards the choice of material and presentation style. Artistic styles or movements like realism, abstractionism, impressionism, expressionism, dadaism, and minimalism, characterized art practice at one point in time or another. At any given time, there is always a fashion, in which art practice, especially in academic institutions, tends to follow. Stokstad (2008) notes that, artists have always tried to create more than a superficial likeness in order to engage their audience and express the cultural contexts of their particular time and place. This subsection attempts to locate the basic direction of installation sculpture, so as to present the subject, object, content, and context of this research

appropriately. It reflects the opinions of authors on the technique, material and tool and the involvement of traditional art objects and people's perception in it. As Cole and Knowles (2008) observe, form is the main defining element of arts-informed research. Choice of art form that will guide inquiry processes and presentation however, involves a consideration of forms in its many manifestations.

Conceptualism seems to be the most fashionable movement or style of art practice in the present day. Conceptual art, according to McEvilley (1999), refers to an art form in which idea is placed above formal material appeal. Reflecting on the nature of conceptual art, Sullivan (2010) notes that, in it, local cultural practices are valued; the differences of those historically marginalized by virtue of gender, race, ethnicity, or class are celebrated; and the cultural artifacts of all places and times are valid forms for study by art educators and students. He points out that in conceptualism, pessimists would see an aimless, fragmented, relativistic art education, cut off from standards of excellence.

Similarly, Connor in Sullivan (2010) sees the postmodern condition as a condition of 'refusal' in which issues of personality, expressive intention, ambition to represent the real world, or represent it realistically, and observance of social norms and conventions, especially the conventions of communication itself, are refused by artists. Sullivan (2010) rather describes conceptual times in art practice as "characterized by a sense of meaning, a sense of connection, a sense of doubt, and a sense of perspective". Describing one of the successfully realized conceptual art pieces, the author notes ".... theory was seen to be a part of practice; form was content, thought was action, mind was body; fact was fiction; and science was art".

Conceptualism appears to be used interchangeably with postmodernism and installation-art to refer to the type of art executed in the interrogation of the standard rules in art-practice. Emma

Shaw in Whitehand (2009) observes that, "installation has become a 'blanket term' to indicate works that are large, do not fit on plinths, employ multiplicity or are site specific". Whitehand (2009) notes that, in contemporary art practice, installation is a method whereby, artists frequently employ a mixed media approach to redefine a space, creating an environment into which "the viewer physically enters, and which is often described as 'theatrical', 'immersive' or 'experiential'". According to her, two common factors that emerge from this approach are site specificity and viewer participation. Lazzari and Schlesier (2008) acknowledge multiple objects in installation and point out that it is designed "for a specific interior or exterior space".

There seems to be a slight difference between "installation of art" and "installation art". Bishop (2010), notes that, installation of art refers to "the way in which an exhibition is arranged"; whereas installation art connotes an artwork which integrates viewer presence; insisting that, a sculpture becomes an installation "when the space, and the ensemble of elements within it, are regarded in their entirety as a singular entity"; pointing out that installation art creates a situation in which the viewer physically (or emotionally) enters, and insists that "you regard this as a singular totality."

On the specific approach to installation art (sculpture), Stokstad (2008) observes that, postmodern artists generally avoid the modernist goals of researching the qualities of their media and exploring aesthetic issues. They create works as experiments in form of challenges to the boundaries of art; and rely on their photographs and video images because, such works are usually ephemeral, site-specific and unsalable in nature. Postmodern artists, she observes, gave up the quest for formal novelty and there arose a plurality of styles in a more globalized art world, where artists found novel ways of exploring their identity and commenting about issues such as race, gender, the environment, and globalization. Still on the postmodernist installation approach

to work, Gray and Malins (1993) actively encourage cross- cultural collaboration and favour anarchism over rationalism, in approaching art-based research. According to Leavy (2009), working with innovative methodologies often requires researchers to cross disciplinary boundaries. The author points out that, the best of arts–based practice, calls on scholars to work with professionals outside their disciplines, in order to maximize the aesthetic qualities and authenticity of work.

Contemporary African art practice seems to be in tune with the international direction on conceptualism, which appears to be a return to its traditional forms. Symbolic presentation of specially adorned objects, persons and masquerades, in performance, which appear to be types of contemporary installation art, seems to take its root from the traditional African art. Stokstad (2008) points out that, the most obvious change in traditional African art has been in the adaptation of modern materials to traditional forms. Presenting a closer view of the nature of the contemporary African art practice, Hassan in Stokstad (2008) posits that most contemporary works have apparent ties to traditional African folklore, belief systems, and imagery. Thus, installation appears to be a routine of work in African Traditional Religious observances like *Omabe*.

As formalism is over-looked in conceptual art, an approach or technique to work in installation art will have to do with critical observation, reconsideration, re- arrangement, and deconstruction of things, already in existence. So, the artist has to first of all, encounter the situation he/she is confronting in design. McNiff (2008) notes that, "art-based (research) tools and ways of knowing, take us out of our habitual responses to things", pointing out that "original knowledge occurs when ideas are placed in new relationships to one another....." Eisner (2008) observes that, in addressing what is subtle but significant, the arts develop dispositions and habits of mind that

reveal to the individual, a world he or she may not have noticed, but that is there to be seen, if only one knew how to look. According to the author, what artists seek, are new ways, with which to perceive and interpret the world; ways that make vivid, realities that would otherwise go unknown. "It is a matter.... of making the familiar strange and making the strange familiar."

Aestheticism, being a relative term, calls for special attention in art- based research. What is the nature of aesthetic appeal in the conceptual (installation) art practice? Eisner (2008) recommends enthronement of evocative quality over all other aesthetic qualities in rendering conceptual art forms. According to the author, the evocative has as its ambition, the provision of a set of qualities that create an empathic sense of life in those who encounter it, whether the work is visual or linguistic, choreographic or musical. Art in research, he emphasizes, puts a premium on evocation, even when it has sections or aspects of it that are descriptive in character; art is present in research only when its presence "enables one to participate vicariously in a situation."

What is created in conceptual art, according to Eisner, is the structural equivalent of emotions, recollected in tranquility but expressing powerfully, what an individual has undergone by virtue of the way forms of the work relate to each other. This process requires one to qualify quantities; to create qualitative relationships among component qualities, so that the expressive character of the total array of qualitative relationships actually helps reveal what the artist intended. According to Eisner (2008), art expresses not only the feelings and emotion which the artist has, but also the feelings which the artist knows, his insight into the nature of consciousness, his picture of vital experience. Leavy (2009) notes that, art- based research often evokes emotional responses intentionally from audiences, pointing out that, ascertaining information about audience response, may serve as validity check, as well as data sources. The author advises specifically, that,

researchers can engage in an internal dialogue, in which they monitor their emotional, psychological, carnal, and intellectual responses throughout the process.

On materiality in contemporary art practice, Stockstad (2008) observes that, conceptual art is based on the premise that if the idea is good, the art piece will also be good; implying that almost every object is a material in installation art. Eisner (2008), Weber (2008), and Norris (2011) agree that, artistically rendered forms of representation, can be created with virtually any material, especially an already existing image. To use different media to effectively disclose what one experienced emotionally however, the authors warn, requires the use of skills, knowledge of techniques, and familiarity with the materials themselves, with respect to the way in which they behave, when employed.

Perception or placement of an installation in order to be perceived and draw public attention, so as to elicit discourse, would require application of psychological concepts. Cherry (2014) provides useful information on the understanding of perception as follows: Perceptual selection is driven by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include: personality trait, motivation, and experience of the observer. External factors are the amount and quantity of size, intensity, contrast, motion, repetition, and novelty as well as familiarity in an object. He notes that after certain perceptions are selected, they can be organized differently according to: figure-ground, perceptual grouping, closure, proximity, similarity, perceptual constancy, and perceptual context. People's responses to their environment, according to him, can be understood by taking the perceptual process into account and organization of information is aided with sensory receptors – touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. Waddington (2008) infers however, that people do not perceive primarily with their senses, but with their minds; thus, to perceive is to conceive or understand. Greater attention will however, be paid to Cherry's (2014) perceptual process, in the

execution of installations in this research, so as to engage observers in less subjective manner but perception will be used interchangeably, to mean one and the same thing as conception, in the write-up.

2.3 Related Artworks

This unit considers the approach and effect of choice materials and techniques in widely acclaimed installation artworks, locally and internationally. In this regard, special attention is paid to works that are related to masquerade (and *Omabe* tradition) and works related to installation, as an approach.

2.3.1 Works Related to Masquerade and *Omabe* Tradition

Here, works that may not necessarily be direct expressions of *Omabe* but are reflective of masquerade and those other ones that may not portray masquerade but are adaptations of paraphernalia of masquerade tradition, are considered.



Figure 9: Ijele, Coloured Fabric, Metal, Wood and Plastic, 16-ft Ht, Kogulu Nweke, "IGBO ARTS COMMUNITY AND COSMOS," Organized by the Museum of Cultural History, 1984. Retrieved Online, November 28, 2012, from http://www.nairaland.com/1005808/igbo-architecture-ulo-ome-nigbo/5

Figure 9 is an Ijele-based Installation, domiciled at the lobby of Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge, Florida, USA. Rendered elegantly in colourful and readymade materials, it is an adaptation of traditional Igbo masquerade into modern static visual art. Neatly installed on a round concrete slab, it gives access to both exterior and interior interaction, a quality of good installation art. Ezeagu (2012) notes that it "is a masquerade, but it's so big that it can be considered architecture (like a tent/tipi)". Although the direct usage of readymade objects in the execution of work in Ijele, provides significant clue to the understanding of installation, its tendency to exactly copy the masquerade tilts it from, the direction of this research. Due to this high realistic tendency, the work is not symbolic and paradoxical, as to conceal and reveal at the same time; a feature that Beidelman (1993) notes, is central, in development of standard art form.



Figure 10: Tapper, Wood, 180cm (height), 1996, El Anatsui. Retrieved Online, May 6, 2015, from http://www.indyweek.com/artery/archives/2012/03/19/el-anatsuis-optimistic-objects

Tapper (Figure 10) is an assemblage of pieces of ancient wood into a figure, resembling the outfit of a traditional Nsukka palm wine tapper. It provides an insight in direct consideration of *Omabe* forms in installation sculpture. In the work, El Anatsui, renowned sculptor and lecturer in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, simply raised a dilapidated *Omabe* musical instrument, *Ogwe-al*, to stand by one of its two horizontal ends, and inserted fabric cap, halfway into the handle, at the other end, to symbolize the head. He also fixed pieces of similar wood, across the hollows, at the upper part of the structure, to suggest the collection of palm wine tapping implements and harvests, usually associated with the profession. Both the subject matter and materials used in the production of this piece are derived from *Omabe* tradition. Chic (2013) notes that, El Anatsui has spent most of his adult life working in Nigeria and that his sculptures are "experimental in their mix of media, form and tradition". Tapper further reveals the strength of inclusion, where "anything" goes, in terms of colour and size, and they are rather haphazardly processed and arranged, in installation sculpture.



Figure 11: In the World but Don't Know the World, Aluminum and Copper Wire, 560 X 1000 mm, 2009, El Anatsui. Retrieved May 18, 2015, from http://www.octobergallery.co.uk/artists/anatsui/

"In the World but Don't Know the World", is a huge wall hanging, composed of aluminum bottle tops, flattened and knitted together with copper wire. Although this piece is part of the *Kente* series, believed to showcase Ghana textile tradition, it is actually influenced by *Omabe* philosophy and associated items. The subject matter (title of the work), the gigantic nature and the contrasting effect of warm and cool, long and short, wide and narrow, in the stripes of aluminum bottle coverings, as used in the design, are all features of the duality principle in the expression of an *Omabe* form. Secondly, the magnitude of aluminum initial bottle tops employed in this work, can only come into effect by the accumulation resulting from *Omabe* festivities. Discussing a related piece of work, UN Education Outreach (2015) reveals that, "to create these cloths, Anatsui uses labels from local Nigerian brands of whiskey, rum, vodka, brandy and other potent libations with names such as Chairman, Dark Sailor, King Solomon, Makossa, 007, Top Squad and Ecomog". *Omabe* festivities are synonymous with plenty, with regards to the quantity of consumables used (Esogbue, 2011). In the World but Don't Know the World provokes deep spiritual sensitivity that, can lead to visualization of form, from expressions of, and about *Omabe*, and its consideration even in reliefs.



Figure 12: Insatiable Desire, Hut: Mud, Stick and Grass, 2003, Kelechi Ngwu, Sculpture Garden, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Retrieved Online, March 16, 2011, from http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-beybfU-x6V4/TWgZ58bbI0I/AAAAAAAAAFw/RTzOm3fQEns/s170/Hut.JPG

Insatiable Desire (Figure 12) is a hut adapted into a human head, with an opening mouth standing for entrance door, two opening windows suggesting the ears, and a blue thatched-roof representing a hat. It is a masquerade-like installation made of common mud-earth and dry grass. Through the work, Ngwu, a sculpture lecturer in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, tackles strange emerging issue, cannibalism in contemporary social relationships, with familiar objects. It is a demonstration of the position of installation art in which arrangement of familiar objects in unfamiliar position (unconventionality), as well as, integration of occupier space, is a favourable approach to work. In it, idea supersedes materiality and elements of flexibility and naivety are placed above meticulousness and sophistication. Its size, colour, contrast and location by the roadside (as visible), enhance its perception in the environment; drawing public attention and eliciting discourse of its subject matter. However, isolating a work of this nature, like Jerry

Buhari's Laundry (see Figure 16), will draw more attention than thronging it together with other artworks in a sculpture garden (work's location), where it competes for space and recognition.



Figure 13: (left to right), Doxa, Bockade and Zthero, Ceramic Installation, bailing wire, steel plate and neoprene casters, 2009,Annabeth Rosen. Retrieved Online, March 04, 2014 from http://www.artcritical.com/2010/10/18/gorgon-triffids-on-22nd-street-annabeth-rosen-at-meulensteen/

In **"**Doxa, Bockade and Zthero", Rosen knitted assorted ceramic utensils into masquerade-like forms. In the design, the sense of variety and dominance in the size, shape and colour of the components of a piece, holds attention and is worthy of emulation. Again, the kinetic nature of the work (rolling on legs-like wheels) makes each a moving masquerade and at the same time, gives a sensation of life force inside it. Like the story of *Omabe*, each piece appears to be loaded with fortune and fears of the people, to be administered onto them accordingly; another food for thought in the studio-work of this research. The work is installed at Meulensteen, Gorgon Triffids.



Figure 14: Stick-Hut-Sculptures, Sticks bundled together, 2011, Patrick Dougherty. Retrieved Online, September 21, 2012, from http://www.treehugger.com/culture/stick-hut-sculptures-build-volunteers-evoke-peace-and-simplicity.html

Masquerade-like huts with entrance doors and windows, Stick-Hut-Sculpture contains the essential elements of installation art – integration of the surrounding, provision of occupier's space and working in collaboration with the natives - in unique ways. According to Davies (2011) the huts, made from countless sticks bundled together, are a blend of carpentry and art, and evoke a rural, simplified life. He notes further that, Dougherty, lecturer at Oregon State University, USA, employed a team of volunteers who had never worked on this sort of project before, creating a sense of community as their skills developed along with the sculptures which cast an illusion of simplicity or of being with nature.

2.3.2 Works Related to Installation

This section pays particular attention to works connected to general religious conflict and indigenous knowledge-driven professionalism, which highlight different forms or types of installation.



Figure 15: *I Like America and America Likes Me, Thick Fabric, Stick and Live Dog, 1974,* Joseph Beuys. Retrieved Online, January 14, 2013, from http://fine290.blogspot.com/2010_11_01_archive.html

Figure 15 is a sensation of a figure, wrapped up hollow, with thick fabric, in which the artist is believed to be inside, projecting a walking stick from the chest position and interacting with a live dog (wolf). This piece is another representation of the ideals of conceptual (installation) art and giving form to the invisible, with physical object. According to Marcuse (2010), Beuys created the Theory of Social Sculpture thus: "My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture . . . or of art in general. They should provoke thoughts about what sculpture can be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone". The author notes further that, Beuys developed what he called:

Thinking Forms and Spoken Forms. Giving physical form to the invisible conception, like Beuys, is the focal point of this research.



Figure 16: Laundry 1 and 2, Stone and Fabric, River Gihon, Johnson VT.USA, 2005, Jerry Buhari, Retrieved Online, September 4, 2012, from http://www.aftershaveworkshop.org/jerry_inline.php

Rendered by juxtaposing pieces of stone in their natural environment and wrapping up a part in coloured fabric to create contrasting effect, Laundry 1 and 2 are site-specific sculptures. In the work, Buhari, painting lecturer in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, seems to have created an impression of spirituality and sensation that a living being from human origin is within a rather desolate area. It is a good representation of the installation art in which process and technique of work involves arrangement; where the strange is made familiar and the familiar made strange and the natural surrounding is made part of a piece. Production of this work in series gives credence to the belief that artistic language is created through concentrated exploration and its contrasting power from the site draws attention that can elicit discourse.



Figure 17: Stonewall, Arranged Stone Pieces, 40-foot h, 2010, Real Art Ways Gallery, Olu Oguibe, Retrieved Online, September 9, 2013, from http://ctartscene.blogspot.com/2010_10_01_archive.html

Stonewall is another piece which richly demonstrates the nature of installation sculpture with regards to issues of designating physical object, metaphorically and in collaboration, to induce the mind to give form to huge issues in perception. In this piece (produced by Nigeria born – Oluchukwu Oguibe, who is based in the United States of America), common stone pieces are used to consider an issue of international interest. Connecticut Art Scene (2010) notes:

> Conceptual artist Olu Oguibe brings a 40-foot New England stonewall into the Real Art Ways gallery to examine its role as an iconic amalgamation of geology, history, craft and metaphor. Working together with local masons and using area field stones, Oguibe has created a stonewall as a neo-minimalist gesture, where the natural and cultural histories of New England take form and become art. … By moving the stonewall into the gallery space, and making it part of the vocabulary of conceptual art, Oguibe hopes to generate a new, inclusive discourse that draws no line between aesthetic or formal concerns, on one hand, and environmental, cultural, or social discourses, on the other.

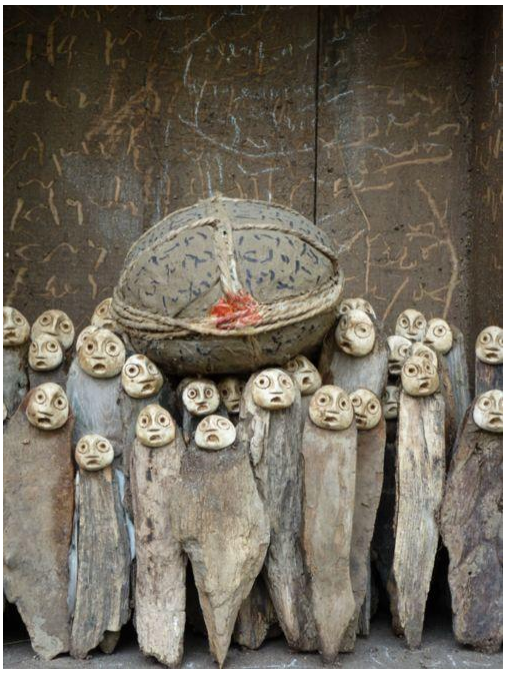

Figure 18: "the-forbidden-colors", Wood, Leaf, Cloth, Colour, and Rope, 2012, Jann July, Retrieved Online, March 05, 2014, from http://www.pinterest.com/pin/377246906257920745/

Figure 18 is an assemblage of relics of wood and fabrics. It is a physical representation of the traditional belief (perception) of the Japanese, on people's use of certain colours, being forbidden on some occasions. They believed that any person who violates it, faces the risk of being struck by the spiritual forces. In this design, the people have exposed the forbidden colours and are full of expectations for the strike of the spirits because, it is also believed that, survivors of such action would certainly become heroes. Eastern (Asian) art, like traditional African art, is rich in idealism; giving forms to perception in search of the life's essence. It is a good demonstration of the expressive use of forms, to evoke sense of naivety, calmness and innocence of the traditional past on the contemporary aggressive order. Like the Japan's "the-forbidden-colors", Nsukka's *Omabe* is being brought to academic light and the people are full of expectations. The exposure will certainly bring about change in the society, but what is not clear is the nature and effect of its consequence; some people believe it will be positive whereas others think the opposite.



Figure 19: Fam. Reunion, Ice lolly sticks, Folding rules, Led pencils, Galvanized sheet-metal, Nails, Spatulas, 25x150x15 cm,2008, Johan Jonsson. Retrieved Online, January 14, 2013, from http://www.artmetal.com/tags/junk_sculpture

Fam. Reunion is a line-up of figures, composed by folding up found metal sheets into distressed forms and supporting them with sticks and dousing them with patches of colours. Like Anatsui's Tapper (Figure 10), it reveals the nature of installation sculpture, in which naivety, simplicity and a degree of carelessness enhance creativity over meticulousness and sophistication. Again, dominance and other uniting principles are considered in multiplicity of forms. It also produces a sensation of dilapidated ritual objects, rearranged to create mood of spirituality. Although work in this research is not intend to be in metal, the numeric use of forms, the arrangement style and scanty application of colour, as well as the subject matter of Fam. Reunion, provide good insight into the execution of installation.



Figure 20: Remember, Heal and Hope (Hope in Brokenness), Bronze-coated Mixed Media, 2011, Forrest King

Sculpture unveiled during the International Day of Peace, marking the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre, USA, Hope in Brokenness, is a piece which further demonstrates the designation of multiple and readymade objects as installation art. The centerpiece of the memorial is a bronze-like arrangement of a Christian Cross, Jewish "Tallit (Prayer Shawl)" and an unbroken set of Muslim Prayer beads. “To me, as combined in this sculpture, these three symbols represent the unity of the 3 major Abrahamic Religions that must unite for peace” (Cheyenne Interfaith Council 2011). Atop the arrangement hangs a firefighter’s helmet, reminding us that brave men and women, from every major religious faith, died that terrible day, trying to save lives. There is a good insight on dealing with symbolism, including giving form to people’s perception, in this sculpture installation, especially as work in this research deals with divergent cultural conceptions. King (the artist, in Cheyenne Interfaith Council, 2011) notes:

> I tried to remember what each person told me about the objects they presented in bringing these pieces of the whole together. … I've tried to honor each part which now is connected to make a single piece of art. I look at this now as a single piece of art created from the diversity which together we have tried to honor and how to me these individual items fit together to make something meaningful …



Figure 21: Agbo Rago, Human Body (the Artist) as Ram, Cattle Market, Lagos, 2009, Jelili Atiku

Agbo Rago is an advanced kind of installation (performance) art, in which materials are eliminated completely in a design; rather, living things are directly employed to perform actions capable of drawing attention to deteriorating condition in the society. In this piece, Atiku, a graduate of Ahmadu Bello University and internationally known for installation-performance, designated himself as a ram (rago), tethered and chewing grass in a cattle market. He was later prized and sold out to be butchered like an animal highlighting the kind of value attached to human life in the present Nigerian society. It follows however, that all the rams, the artist himself, and their buyers and sellers, in this market, are together, the artwork; a good quality of installation, in which a piece is considered in relation to its surrounding. Like Agbo Rago, living beings will be considered, in the development of installation forms in this research.

2.4 Extracts from the Review

Through this review, insights are reached and inferences on this research, drawn as follows:

Material culture harbors forms of its user and although significant attributes of *Omabe* have been lost to Christianity, form revealing remnants of it could be found via its architecture, shrine, groove, costume and musical instruments, and its general characteristic features are traceable in the life experiences and inclinations of the descendants of its adherents.

Postmodernist installation can accommodate *Omabe* tradition because it is flexible and well related to African Traditional Religious observances; requiring reflective approach. When its attributes are well utilized, *Omabe* appreciation could be rekindled and professional direction found. This is possible because, locating *Omabe*-based installation strategically, would provoke its perception; infusing motivation to the installation, would hold attention to it; and reflecting innate experience through the installation, would promote its discourse. Again, concentrating productive activities in a particular area, would facilitate creative language.

The artists, who worked earlier on installation, and traditional concepts and forms, tended to adopt physicalism and subjectivism in their approaches. They authoritatively, adapted cultural paraphernalia only, without considering the feelings of the people, whose philosophy they represented. Contemporary approaches to conceptualism and installation therefore, left a gap in indigenous knowledge-based art because, the purported cultural collaboration in it, is only physical and subjective in nature. This research is, therefore, targeted at achieving all-inclusive subjectivism and abstractionism in installation sculpture, not only by surveying people's opinion but also by giving form to their invisible perceptions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Introduction

For the purpose of this research, qualitative research method was adopted and the research design was specifically, based on practice-based research technique. The nature of the research problem: developing out of practice, involving re-examination of eroding tradition through interactive approach, and the expected outcome not being hypothetical, justified the adoption of the practice-based research. It is also tinted with elements of practice-led research. Practice-based/led research has greater advantage over all other types of research in studio-based aesthetic inquiry, because, apart from allowing subjective expression of creativity (Gray and Malins, 1993), it is also flexible and recognizes artistic products as complete research data upon which new knowledge could be based. As an evidence-based research, it provides sufficient mechanism through which an artist can be a researcher and studio practice, becomes research (Sullivan, 2010). Incidentally, earlier artist-researchers, including McMorran (2007), in Newcastle (Australia), Nimkulrat (2007), in India, and Whitehand (2009), also in Australia, employed practice-based and led research methods in their doctoral programmes, and the outcomes were considered successful. It had gradually, started coming into Nigeria too. Gbaden (2014) conducted a successful doctoral research in Zaria, through practice-based method.

This chapter therefore, presents practice-based research design and its specific approaches to work in this research, especially with regards to information generation, studio exploration, material and tools used. Being a visual research, images and pictures of some of the objects and processes of work are also presented as data.

3.2 (Practice-based) Research Design

A three way interactive research design, flowing between the artist-researcher, the research subjects, and academic moderators, made up of the research supervisors and the critics, was adopted in considering elements of work in this research. It is a kind of action research in which the artist-researcher first conceives a formation, verifies it on its bearers and presents it for critique, before documenting it. The outcome of this research became therefore, a product of collaboration between the artist-researcher, the *Omabe* form-concept bearers, and the designated art scholars; a design rooted in practice-based research method.

As practice-based research is relatively new, without a standard or universal definition and nomenclature, an operational description of its consideration in this research becomes imperative. Practice-based research is a kind of inquiry, developing out of qualitative research; involving art practice as both procedure and outcome from where new knowledge emerges. Sullivan (2010) notes that at its most basic, arts-based educational research is an example of practitioner-based inquiry, whose aim is to bridge perceived disconnects between quantitative and qualitative traditions of research, using the capacity of the arts to deal critically, socially, and creatively with problems facing education. As such, according to the author, problems and issues are investigated in arts-based research, using strategies of inquiry that are grounded in the arts, yet take their methodological cue from the social sciences. So, it encourages inclusive subjectivism envisaged in this research.

It seems emphasis is laid on the use of artistic forms in practice-based research. McNiff (2008) defines art-based research, as the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different terms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies. Often,

practice-based research is used interchangeably with practice-led research, but the differences between the two are becoming apparent. Candy (2006) notes that in practice-based research, creative artifact is the basis of contribution to knowledge; whereas in practice-led research, the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice; acknowledging however, that they share a lot in common, especially with regards to work contextualization.

Researchers, including Gray and Malins (1993), Baxter et al, (2008), and Sullivan (2010), outline phenomenology, empathy, evocation, epistemology, metaphor, multiple-approach, and flexibility, as qualities of practice-based research. Like an amoeba, practice-based research can assume different subjective dimensions, but as Gray and Malins (2004) point out, what is more useful in it is the notion of 'protocols', explicit 'rules of content,' specifically related to an individual's research project, allowing a clear understanding of procedure (transparency), but acknowledging that complete transferability is not achievable, nor desirable.

This flexibility nature of practice-based method enabled adaptation of multiple instruments and application of elements of quantification that diluted subjectivity as desired in this research. So, sets of statistical data, some of which were personally reflected by the researcher and others generated from the people, were artistically constituted, to form tangible evidence upon which, studio exploration was based.

3.3 Research Procedure

The procedure of work in this research could be classified into two: Data Generation and Development of Form. Methods or techniques used in generating information that shaped the outcome of this research are multiple. Apart from the revelations in review of related literature and artworks, data used in framing of form, were generated from: Reflection, on popular

statements (musical lyrical, oratory and song) of and about *Omabe*; Participatory observation, of *Omabe* activities; Interaction, with the key players; Conception simulation, involving metaphoric description of *Omabe* tradition by the natives; and Previous collections and documentation, of unusual developments around *Omabe* tradition. According to David Hume's philosophy of reality (Dukor, 1994), "memory as well as observation is required to justify our knowledge of constant conjunction between invents".

3.3.1 Reflection on Personal Experience

The role of practitioner-researcher, characteristic of art practice as research (Sullivan 2010), was given pre-eminence, at all stages of this research. Popular sayings of and about *Omabe*, were recalled and reflected upon, in the development of form in this research. Particularly, some *Omabe*'s idiomatic expressions (rhetoric), musical lyrics, and praise songs, were adapted. Although personal experience seems to convey a sensation of bias, as a part of the indigenous people, whose conceptions of *Omabe* tradition were considered for form development, prior experience of the artist-researcher, was considered essential part of the research. It served as a catalyst for appropriate stimulation of reactions for conception generation and form analysis in this research. According to World Bank Education Programme (2015), personal experience is necessary for proper coordination of indigenous knowledge-based practice.

Specifically, *Omabe*'s oratory or idiomatic expression (rhetoric) that were considered included a particular encounter, in the middle of night, sometime in 1982, in which *Udele Idenyi* (a kind of Ishi-maa) described itself as shaman (see Appendix A for the details). Similarly, form was reflected from *Omabe*'s regular musical lyrics. For instance, the degree of carefulness in the life style, under the influence of the tradition, was visible in a particular *Omabe* musical lyric, which

says that: *keke akpoleh ogwube-ngala neh keke obh angh aluakwa eshi ahua na- abo*; (meaning literally), any thorn which pierces chameleon, that thorn cannot regain its freshness in two years. It implies that life style under *Omabe* tradition is as careful as that of chameleon and anything that injures it must be at extreme state of disrepair.

Finally, a reflection on the praise song, used in 1986 by Umu-oka village group, in reporting the overwhelming performance of its masquerade, in a public display, generated forms considered in this research. In it, *Omabe* was described as *Enyimenyi* (Elephant on a mountain), *Okpe* ([male] Eagle on an iroko), *Ube* (Favourite fruit-plant that yielded bountifully), and *Mhnyi ukwu* (Heavy rain that penetrates hollows). Details of this praise song are provided in the Appendix B.

3.3.2 Participatory Observation

Being familiar with the operations of the subjects of this research, the researcher, in most cases, observed issues directly, as they occurred. On many occasions in the course of this research, grooves, shrines and houses of *Omabe*, were entered, enabling the researcher partake in its musicals, dance, and incantation; where he observed, and assimilated things. Through this way, the contemporary operations and operating icons of *Omabe*, were accessed and compared with the relics of the ancient order. Apart from direct assimilation of information, in this participatory observation, asking questions and receiving response flowed freely, in mutual trust and sense of solidarity. Identification of most manifestation items and transformation elements of the *Omabe*, in this research, came through this means.

Specifically, *Omabe*/*Odo* musicals and festivals were encountered in Ohodo, Opi, Ohebe, Ochima, Obollo-Afor, Leeke-Isi-Uzo, Enugwu-Ezike, Orba, Agbamere-Eharumona, Ishiakpu-

Nsukka, Obukpa and Lejja. Photographing of the musical performance was allowed only in few of these places as shown in figures 22-26.



Figure 22: *Odo* Musical*, Ula Odo* Festival, Umuazi-Ochima, 2011



Figure 23: Akatakpa Display, Onwa-Esaa Feast, Umuattama Ezema, Obollo Afor, 2013



Figure 24: *Omabe* Musical, Oje n'ikpogwu Feast, Umuile, Idi-Opi, 2012



Figure 25: *Omabe* Dance, Uda-*Omabe* Feast, Ogrutee-Enugwuezike, 2012



Figure 26: *Omabe* Musical, Oje n'ikpogwu Feast, Amojo-Ohodo, 2012

3.3.3 Interaction

Interaction is a kind of empathetic interview where the interviewer shares fully the world of the interviewee. In this case, the interviewer, first familiarizes with or encounters the state of the interviewee, to the extent that the interviewee sees the interviewer or the researcher, as part and parcel of him, in his course of action. Then, on the existence of such rapport, the interviewer simply interacts with the interviewee on the subject matter. Interaction interview is related to fictional interview and exploration recommended (McNiff, 2008) for art-based research.

Interaction was used extensively, in this research, to generate information from chief priest and agents of *Omabe* as well as church leaders and victims of the cultural clash (see figures 27 and 28). Through these people and this technique, detailed information on *Omabe* was gathered, its secret icons were accessed and ambiguities on its dispositions clarified.



Figure 27: Interaction Session with Onyishi, Ugwu Omeye, Amojo-Ohodo, 2012



Figure 28: Interaction Session with Onyishi, Ugwu-eg Egbo, after a Performance, Umueszikenwoke-Ohodo, 2012

Forms of *Omabe*: The following are names of different forms in which entertainment type of *Omabe* (Masquerade) appeared: *Ujamh-Ezugwoke*, *Okokoro*, *Koprh*, *Maa-Er-ro*, *Ne-maa*, *Mgbedike*, and *Okpacha*. Others include *Ugele*, *Edi Ogbene*, *Agbeji*, *Egbe Ochealh*, *Oth-nju*, *Oshagenyi*, *Ijiri*, *Adada*, *Obodike*, *Ojoba*, *Ekwe-Idi*, *Uroko*, *Ugwuoke Edi*, *Onye-kwur-onye*, and *Uhuaho*. For better appreciation of the forms, some of the masquerades are described.

Ujamh-Ezugwoke/Ugele/Echaricha (figure 29): The principal form of *Omabe* masquerade is the *Ujamh-Ezugwoke*, simply called *Ujamh*, *Echaricha* or *Ugele* in some quarters. *Ujamh* is believed to be expressing the concept of mystified beauty, divine radiance, ideal probity and immense wealth. Structurally, the head is covered with a hand woven fabric on which large feathers are stuck. These feathers are mainly from Eagle and "Awu" (red feathers from a rare, strange bird of the eagle family). Lines, which are actually threads sewn around the eye slits, radially extend to a

point at the back of the head where the convergence of the seeming rays appear to be knotted together. As Aniakor (1978) rightly observes, these linear radiations are meant to stimulate the facial stripes of a leopard. Covering the entire body are silver coated buttons skillfully knitted unto the fabric which is sewn to give the masker a tight fitting from the chest to the knees. Together, these buttons reflect the sun's radiance.

Other body prop include: *Aji* (belt), a narrow strip with either striated or chequered patterns. Sometimes this is made of leather or animal skin with furs and it is used around the waist to prevent the costume from sagging. *Oza Ebule* (Ram's manes) is usually worn around the elbows. It also signifies purity and probity. *Uma* (machete of) *Omabe* is mainly a wooden fabrication skillfully painted to simulate an actual knife. Strips of cloth of yellow, red and white colours are wound round the handle of the machete, leaving the rest of the strips to flow down as frills.



Figure 29 (A and B): Ujamh (also known as Echaricha and Ugele), Entertainment Masquerade, *Omabe*, Photograph, Ozor (2012)

As Nwoko (1989) observes, the content of the *Ugele* masquerade derives from the meaning attributed to its elemental forms. For example, the sun-burst motifs of the eye slits which

represent the rays of the sun are believed to depict power. Similarly, the eagle feathers on the head depict dignity, strength and beauty. The buttons, in addition to reflecting the luminance of the sun, symbolize wealth. The *Oza-Ebule* as said earlier, signifies purity. This explains why only men of proven moral probity are admitted to the cult of *Omabe* as makers.

Figures 30 (A and B) and 30 (A and B) are forms of *Mgbedike, Koprh, Oshagenyi* and *Ne-maa* (Ne-m-rh-oha) *Omabe* respectively; usually costumed in colourful wooden mask, fabric stripes, animal-hair-like strands and mirror. Whereas *Mgbedike* and *Koprh* demonstrate masculinity, *Oshagenyi* and *Ne-maa* inclined to femininity in their costume, and the style of dance and song or sound they provide.



Figure 30: (A); Mgbedike and (B); Koprh, Entertainment Masquerades, *Omabe*, Photograph, Researcher, 2012



Figure 31: (A); Oshagenyi and (B); Ne-maa (Ne-m-rh-oha), Entertainment Masquerades, *Omabe,* 2012

Law-Enforcement Types of *Omabe*: The following are the names of the forms in which the law-enforcement types of *Omabe* appear: *Oriokpa*, *Akatakpa*, *Ogiri*, *Ekewo*, *Ogede*, *Ekpere-Maa*, *Udele-Idenyi*, *Ewurh*, *Okpe*, *Nkele*, *Utobo*, *Uzoka-anyinya*, *Ozigbo*, and *Udele-Ugwu*. Some of these Masquerades are also referred to as *Ishi Omabe* (Head of *Omabe*). They walk around, physically masked in fabric, animal-skin, feather, and hair-like strands; frightening and adjudicating on matters. Many of them are also regarded as deities.

Oriokpa/Egbe-oche-alh (meaning: the kite that guards the land) is the most popular law enforcement type of *Omabe*. Although it can appear in simple mask with elaborate eye-openings, its elaborate type of headgear combines well with the intricately coloured costume arranged in horizontal bands. The headgear is composed of carved board and animal feathers which are skillfully rendered to dramatize contemporary experience. Organic arcs with highly decorative details support the sides of the headgear. The details include numerous arcs and circles in white, blue, red and yellow hues. Overflowing from the head backwards and sideward are apron-like fabrics having *a* pageantry of geometries in which the dynamisms of semi-circles, obliques,

triangles and horizontals are structurally and colourfully rendered for a full visual effect. Such motifs as sun, sometimes in its sun-burst form are adapted to form the principal design patterns on the body of this masked type. *Egbe-Oche-alh* (Akatakpa/Oth-nju/Oriokpa) masquerade (figure 32[A and B]), is the chief overseer of the land during and after the *Omabe* season; though its operations are underground in a non-*Omabe* year.



Figure 32 (A and B): Oriokpa, Law-enforcement Masquerade, *Omabe*, 2012

Agbeji/Udele (Ishi-Maa) plays both entertainment and law-enforcement roles in the *Omabe* hierarchy. Like the *Ugele*, *Agbeji* is associated with prestige, peace, elegance and wealth. At a glance, the headgear could be mistaken for *a* large dome of foliage, a moving orchard, measuring about six feet in diameter. Actually, it is composed of a cluster of large, colourful feathers fitted into a basket-like hat. The body-dress (sometimes hair-like strands) could be seen as a composite arrangement of geometric patterns which, on the face, shows horizontal strips of appliqué cloth and vertical lines in between two spherical bands. The vertical strip and spherical band stand for the nose and eyes respectively. Within the horizontal bands which run through the entire body, are

shapes of sun motifs. Some of these motifs bear vertical and horizontal lines which are designed to cross each other within the circle. These intricately ordered patterns are greatly enhanced with warm and attractive colours. The people readily relate these cosmic motifs to Agbeji whose essential character of friendliness and playfulness is fully supported by the graphic interpretation of the motifs as well as the expressive quality of warm hues. Although *Ishi-maa* (figure 33 [A, B and C]) entertain with great rhetoric and proverbial power, they also act as law enforcement agents, settling dispute and reconciling people to ancestral protection.



Figure 33: (A); Utobo, (B); Ozigbo, and (C); Udele-Idenyi, Kinds of Ishi-Maa/Ishi-*Omabe*, Photograph, Researcher, 2012

Manifestations of *Omabe*: The following deities, persons, animals, plants and objects are believed to possess special attributes in which *Omabe* manifests its super-natural powers. Through them, *Omabe* keeps watch and record of the activities of the people whether or not it is physically present. *Omabe* in forms of deities with masquerades, some of which have been

mentioned earlier, are: *Idenyi-Upata*, *Ezugwu-Oshimiri*, *Ojiy*i, *Ehurh*, *Egbiyi*, *Adaro*, *Iyiuzu*, *Adada*, *Api*, *Ebonyi*, *Uhere*, *Onumonu*, *Echeg*, *Eke*, *Aki-Nkwome*, *Ne M-rh-Igbo/Ndushi Alh-Igbo*, and *Numu-Nkwome*.

Humans: *Onyishi/Attama* (the Eldest Man/the Chief Priest), *Oha/Ozo/Oszioko* (Titled-man), *Ogbh-ishi/agh/atu/esfu* (Killer of human-enemy/lion/buffalo/cow), *Dibia* (Native Doctor/Shaman), *Diochi* (Palm-wine Tapper), *Ogbanukwu* (*Omabe* Escort), *Umh-Ada* (Titled Women), *Oyima* (Woman-Friend of *Omabe*), and *Ogbhyehmeh/Ogbh-ngwa* (Woman Spoiler of Enemy Camp/War Implement). Figures 36 and 37 are forms of special human agent of *Omabe*.

Animals: *Ude-g-de* (Spider/cob-web), *Uriom/Ekwa Okh-ko* (day-old chick/egg, used as ransom for collective sin), *Awu* (Reddish bird), *Udele* (Vulture), *Nkele* (a kind of bird), *Ugo* (Eagle), *Egbe* (Kite), *Ebhle* (Ram), *Agh* (Lion) *Edd*i (Hyena), Attu (Buffalo), *Ebbi* (Porcupine), and *Eke* (Python).

Plants: *Oji* (kola-nut), *Uroko/Ngwu/Inyi/Uvurh/Ube/Udara/Achi* (kinds of Iroko Tree, figure 35), and *Omh-Nkwu* (virgin palm leaf). *Omabe*'s hair-like strands are scraped from banana stem.

Objects: *Ite* (earthen pot for ablution), *Ojjih* (Metallic Rattle-staff), *Oho/Arua/Okpaneka/Odu-Atu* (Arc of Covenant), *Ekpoto* (Traditionally Woven Fabric), *Ola/Echi/Okachodu* (Currency in form of metallic bell and rod), *Obele/Agbhgba* (Gourd/Calabash ware), *Umma/Obejirh* (machete), and *Egedu/Okoko* (Metallic Hat). *Ezhza* (Broom), *Nth* (Firewood Ash), *Nzu* (Whitish Clay), and *Odo* (Extract of Cam-Wood) are also used.

Omabe **Musical Instruments:** *Ogele/Ivomh* (Gong), *Ekwe* (Xylophone), *Kporokpoto* (a kind of Drum made with Bamboo), *Abia/Okpiyi/Ogwe-alh* (Wooden Drum), *Nmgbrigba/Erroh* (Special Bell), *Ntti* (Special Stick for beating Ekwe and Drum), *Osu/Oph* (Flute), and *Osha*.



Figure 34 (A); Nmgbrigba, (B); Ogele/Ivomh, (C); Ekwe, (D); Omh and Arua-Ojjih of *Omabe* (Respectively)



Figure 35: Ancient Log Preserved as Enya (Eye of) *Omabe*, Otobo Amojo-Ohodo, Photograph, Researcher, 2012

All the stated items/objects were associated with *Omabe* and held in reverence as one would to *Omabe* itself. Thus, *Omabe* made use of them (the animals, plants and objects) or their attributes as special icons of its operation. For instance, skin/feather alone, represented any animal/bird it came from, in a spiritual (*Omabe*) configuration (see Utobo and Udele-idenyi, figure 33 [A and

C]). The Chief Priests, Native Doctors (Shamans), Titled Men/Women, and other people who manifested attributes of *Omabe,* also made use of these items in their daily intercession for the community on spiritual matters.

Again, at the final stage of cleansing the land with processional song, *Omabe* usually describes itself as *Uhere Ji-oso Enyi Ugwu* (Wind that Climbs the Mountain with Speed) and *Ok Ji-mgbe Ere Ulo* (Fire that Sluggishly Consumes a Building). The implication of these statements may also signify that *Omabe* is also manifesting in the forms of wind and fire. Contemporary regard for all these objects was also considered, to further gauge the gap in perceptions of *Omabe*.



Figure 36: Odo Manifestation in Chief Priest, Eg-Udele, Leeke, Isi-uzo, 2013



Figure 37: Omabe Manifestation in Osu-Ogbanukwu, Ishiakph-Nsukka, 2012



Figure 38: Abia, Osha, Okpiyi, Ogwe-al, and Kporokpoto, Musical Instruments of *Omabe*

People's Names (in Relation to *Omabe* Tradition): Another area of life in which the traditional Nsukka people showed great attachment and form definitions to *Omabe* was in their names. The following are some of *Omabe* related names borne by the people. Male Names: Ugwoke, Otaka, Duhu, Maama, Udele, Nkpume, Odo, Okpe, Attama, Onyishi, Asogwa, *Omabe*-Oha, Eze, Esedu, Edoga, Ozo, Ikpogwu, Ogbobe, Ezema, Okwo, Ugwu, Al, Ogbuu, Ugwuanyi, Didi-Ugwu, Ngwu, Egbe, Omeke, Omeye, Onaa, Ogiri, Ajogwu, and Eze-Ugwu. Female Names: Oyima, Idenyi, Ogbhyehmeh, Ogbhebo, *Odo*bo, Owushi, Iyeanyi, Onoyima, Arua, Onyugwu, Obnoko, Ogbhngwa, Lolo, Oyerh, Nshinaa, and Oyinna. Adherence to these names in the present day Nsukka ideology was also checked in this research, name being an expression of people's perceptions, interpretations of which, revealed forms used in this research.



Figure 39: Onu (Shrine of) *Omabe*, Umueze-agiyi-Ohodo, Photograph, Researcher, 2012

Changes (Transformations) in Identity: *Omabe* is believed, by the informants, to have undergone the following noticeable transformations in its identity: Originally, *Omabe* was completely formless, communicating only super-naturally, through the chief priest. At a stage in its struggle with the Western civilization, however, *Omabe* shifted from manifesting on sacred objects and animals, in which it stayed to observe the affairs of the people quietly, to appearing physically in human structure, masked in some of those revered objects, like virgin palm leaf (Omh-Nkwu) and calabash (Agbhgba), to take direct action. At another stage, it started appearing in more human structures, putting on cloth made of special fabric used for divinations (Ekpoto), to enable it move faster and match action with action, in punishing offenders. These changes continued, until *Omabe* started dressing in every type of cloth, wearing shorts, putting on shoe, wrist watch and using machete, handset, and automatic rifle. Necklaces of Christian Cross and Catholic Chaplet are even becoming integral parts of *Omabe*'s costume (figure 41).

Operationally, *Omabe* started acting in strange ways: speaking foreign (English) Language, emerging from personal residential houses and enclaves other than its official house or groove, touching women, driving or being driven in vehicle, and fighting private instead of communal cases. *Omabe*'s secrets became divulged by its agents and initiates; women and *Ogbodu* started touching *Omabe*'s manifestation instruments, speaking language and singing song of *Omabe*. At a stage, people, including women, started confronting *Omabe* to a fight, beating it up, stripping it naked publicly, and getting it arrested and locked up in police station, owing to one abomination or the other, committed by it. Thus, *Omabe*'s paraphernalia were abandoned in many locations

On the cause of the unbecoming attributes of *Omabe*, Ugwueg (2012) points out that Christianity carried away the people and destroyed *Omabe*. That most of the people who tended to come back

to give support to *Omabe* were no more "pure minded"; rather, they were products of adulterated philosophy, who lacked the strength of unwavering loyalty, which *Omabe* tradition thrived upon. Thus, they committed all sorts of atrocities in the name of *Omabe*. According to him, *Omabe* is esoteric and restricts its understanding to only a chased few. Masses only trailed it with fear, respect and amazement because there must be fear for respect to be sustained. He notes that Christianity was feared and respected, similarly, at its inception in Nsukka, but in its struggle for dominance, it opened up *Omabe* and itself (their secrets) to all classes of people and as such, both lost the very pillar on which value attachment rests; fear. As *Omabe* did not accept such exposition, its nucleus died and *Ogbodu* (uninformed) carried its molts (Ukpokoro) to the Church, "a hiding place, with which identity is shaded, for abomination to be swallowed with chilled water". Thieves, murderers, and adulterers who ran away from the anger of *Omabe*, he clarifies, are now hiding in the Church, attacking the very tradition which they are obliged to.



Figure 40: Abandoned *Omabe* House, Umueszikenwoke-Ohodo, Photograph, Researcher, 2012



Figure 41: Oriokpa Dressed in Ordinary Cloth, Shoe and Catholic Chaplet, Obukpa, 2012

In a show of dual assimilation and loyalty, many Christians in this area bear two names; first name and second name, apart from their surnames. And in it, traditional (*Omabe* related) name, usually represented with the initial letter, is blended with foreign (Christian) name to give the bearer a sense of belonging to the two religions, so as to secure protection in a matter of uncertainty, whoever hold-sway; an indication that forms of *Omabe* are in the churches operated in the area. The following are some of the *Omabe* and Christianity blended names in Nsukka area, (surname withheld): Matthew Ezemagu, Robert Odoh, Anthony Ezugwu, Clement Duhu, Johnson

Ugwuoke, Blessing Oyima, Simon Otaka, Michael Duhu, Joseph Udele, Mary Onyugwu, Peter Ikpogwu, Francis Maa-ma, Andrew Odoh, Clementina Ogbuyama, Cletus Ajogwu, Simon Okiti, Rosemary Onoyima, Regina Idenyi, Philip Ogbuh, Peter Omabe, Simon Didiugwu, John Attama, Josephine Ogbungwa, Emmanuel Ayogu, Christiana Ogbuabor, Silvanus Onyishi, and Henry Obuluzor (Henry O). Some "Born-again" Christians who inherited *Omabe*-related surnames like *Odo* have however, adulterated them; *Odo* is adulterated to Odo-abu-chi (Odo is not god), in order not to glorify "the Devil".

Ironically, belief in the powers of fetish objects like Charm and Witchcraft is very high in this area, to the extent that accusations and counter-accusations and mutual suspicions of its attack, involving Christians, frequently come up. Here, most deaths and misfortunes are associated to diabolic or fetish means and as such, there is no remarkable distinction between Christians and Traditionalists in seeking protection from the under-cover forces; thereby making sorcery (Ivu Amuma) a lucrative business. It is mainly the suspicion that *Omabe* possesses harmful demonic and diabolic powers rather than mere avoidance of idol worship that appears to be responsible for its snub by the people. Offiah and Okike (2009) observe that, "now, you can hardly see any young man or woman who will like to be identified as an idol (Odo) worshipper. This does not mean that all the youth in Ikolo community are Christians, but because it is the order of the day, many are pretending to be Christians, just to belong." Asogwa (2012) points out that the intentions of people trooping to the church are not homogeneous because there are some who joined it to escape the inhuman acts and oppressions of *Omabe* tradition. Many people, she emphasizes, are in the church, not because they are convinced that it is better in spiritual up-lifting, but for social protection. Responding to the same issue, Omeye (2012), a prominent Christian-Women leader in

Ohodo, notes: “Enwer nd-Uka nwekwemeh nd-uuka n’ime ulo-Uka kita” (there are Christians and the Soured-[Christians] inside the church, nowadays).

Justifying some of these mixed practices, in Christianity, Ogara (2002), a Reverend Father with St Theresa’s Cathedral, Nsukka, points out that, the church in Nsukka area is responding to the call by the central leadership of the Catholic Church, for “inculturated evangelization.” The author points out that the Catholic Church noted that the gospel message of Jesus Christ is for all peoples in all cultures and adopted inculturation technique in its evangelization mission because Christ becoming a Jew among the Jews is the greatest example all missionaries should follow if they want their works to bear the desired fruits. According to the priest, there are many naturally good and true elements in every culture which church missions are encouraged to adopt into the church; thus valuable elements in Nsukka Culture are being effectively “inculturated” in churches in the area. Blending of opposing forms, therefore, became inevitable in this research.

In light of this development, all Nsukka natives, men and women, Christians and Traditionalists, were considered in their dispositions as ‘*Omabe*’ in this research. So, people’s name, architectural, agricultural, religious, and musical implements and performances as well as their clothing, became reference points from where many forms and materials were generated.

3.3.4 Conception Simulation

At a stage in the development of this research, individual perception was needed in making statements that could bear reliable testimony of their positions on the subject matter. So, the researcher was faced with the task of extracting the perceptions and conceptions of the general Nsukka people on *Omabe* tradition. Some specialists in related fields were therefore, consulted and collaborated with, as research assistants, to consolidate on their experiences and proximity to

distant areas of the research. Using the Department of Fine and Applied Arts of the University of Nigeria Nsukka (where one of the research assistants lectures sculpture) as a meeting ground, the group met severally and arrived at the decisions: that people's true attitude and perception could be better accessed on a kind of conception simulation, involving real icon of *Omabe;* and that the simulation should first be conducted together, by the group, at Nsukka Urban, before each member conducts same in his own location or side of the region. For the simulation, *Kporokpoto Omabe* (the most common musical instrument of *Omabe* [figure 43]) and *Ojjih Omabe* (metallic rattle-staff of authority of *Omabe* [figure 44]), were selected on the belief that, they bore enough symbolic elements that could evoke *Omabe* sensation instantly, in the mind of the people, on sighting them. So, *Kporokpoto Omabe* and *Ojjih Omabe* were gathered from shrines and houses of *Omabe* (some were bought in local market) and used for the conception simulation.

In the conception simulation exercise, people were first asked to identify the object, its use and the user (see figure 42). Those people who identified the objects correctly as symbolic icons of *Omabe* were asked to metaphorically describe it according to their perception or understanding of the whole of its tradition. According to Baxter et al (2008), metaphoric interpretation leads to conceptual blending, needed in the understanding of qualitative research. Lazzari and Schlesier (2008) also note that "artists can use metaphor and symbols to convey content".



Figure 42: Women Describing *Omabe* through Kporokpoto, Umu-owula, Ogbozara-Opi, 2012

At the end of the conception simulation, the results were collated and it was discovered that the form-descriptions fell into two basic groups: horrific form descriptions and glorious form-descriptions. Of all the responses (collected from communities, covering all the local government areas under Nsukka), most of them described *Omabe* and its tradition dreadfully or horrifically as Devil, Serpent, Viper, Vulture, Hawk and Hungry Lion; another group described it deceptively as Thief, Monkey, *Onye Awuwo* (Deceiver), Chameleon, and Spider; some described *Omabe* tradition rather humorously as *Amag-ama* (Strange Thing), *Ad-nmetah* (Insatiable), *Ad-ngbala* (Unavoidable), *Enwe-Ogbo* (No Comparison), and *Omego-nteli* (Un-compromising); whereas a few of them described it gloriously as *Eze-nna* (Caring father), *Nna-nna* or *Nna-m Ochie* (Forefather), *Ne-Mh-rh Oha* (Mother of all), *Enyanwu la-g-deh Ike-gwu Esfusfe* (When the Sun goes, Day becomes weak) and *Onyi-monyi* (Satisfier of the people).

These form definitions agreed with the ones contained in the collections/documentation, musical lyrics, oratory, praise songs, and names (of *Omabe* and human beings) captured earlier; in which *Omabe* was portrayed as shaman (healer), grandfather, chameleon, eagle, elephant, favourite-fruit-tree, terror, deceiver, co-protector, and saviour. Names like *Ugwuanyi* (our hill), *Ogbh-yeh-meh* (disperser of crowd), *Odo-abuchi* (Odo/Omabe is not a god), *Uroko* (Iroko) and *Kpakpande* (star) also portrayed *Omabe* in glorious and horrific forms. It was then realized that, generally, the implication of this outcome is that, *Omabe*'s form definition, as it is today, is a battleground between its protagonists who reflect its past glory (yesterday) and its antagonists who project that the science prone future (tomorrow) has no place for it; each, trying to commandeer it to its side.

3.3.5 Previous Collection and Documentation

Collection and documentation of elements of the subject matter – installation performance and *Omabe* tradition - at any occasion they occurred (physically and intuitively), since they started occupying the central position of the researcher's creative eye, was one of the major ways information was generated in this research. This documentation came in form of sketches, notes, audio tapes, video tapes, photographs, and collection of physical objects of *Omabe* tradition and its activities. In the studio exploration of the subject matter, these reserved documents were consulted and they provided a lot of information that guided the work.

Documentation in this research however, is continuous. Photographic documentation of stages in the developmental process of the studio exploration was also made and used in the evaluation and interpretation of the research outcome. According to Nimkulrat (2007), documentation helps the practitioner-researcher play the researcher's role and look back at the preceding artistic process. Specifically, plate I conveys a development, in 1988, when a woman was forced to operate

musical instrument of *Omabe* and she portrayed it as a terror. She cried, "I beat you to death in Jesus name". Plate II shows an occurrence, in 1990, where an Onyishi (chief priest) that abandoned *Omabe* tradition and joined Christianity, publicly warned *Omabe* to stay out of his life, portraying it as a deceiver and a huge disappointment. He told *Omabe*; "Stop calling me! I am no more with you. My name is no longer Ugwuoke; I am now Emmanuel". In plate III, a farmer tied *Omabe* implement and Christian-cross together, to guard her farm-produce; portraying *Omabe* as none sole but a co-defender and protector. Plate IV reflects an occasion, in 1998, in which some of the elders of Umuezikenwoke village of Ohodo, came out publicly and wept the demise of *Omabe* tradition in the dominance of Christianity; portraying *Omabe* as their saviour. They are extracts from the researcher's diary.



Plate I: Ovrh-uzo-Omabe's Encounter with Born-again Woman, Orie-Ohodo, Sketch, 1988, Researcher's Diary

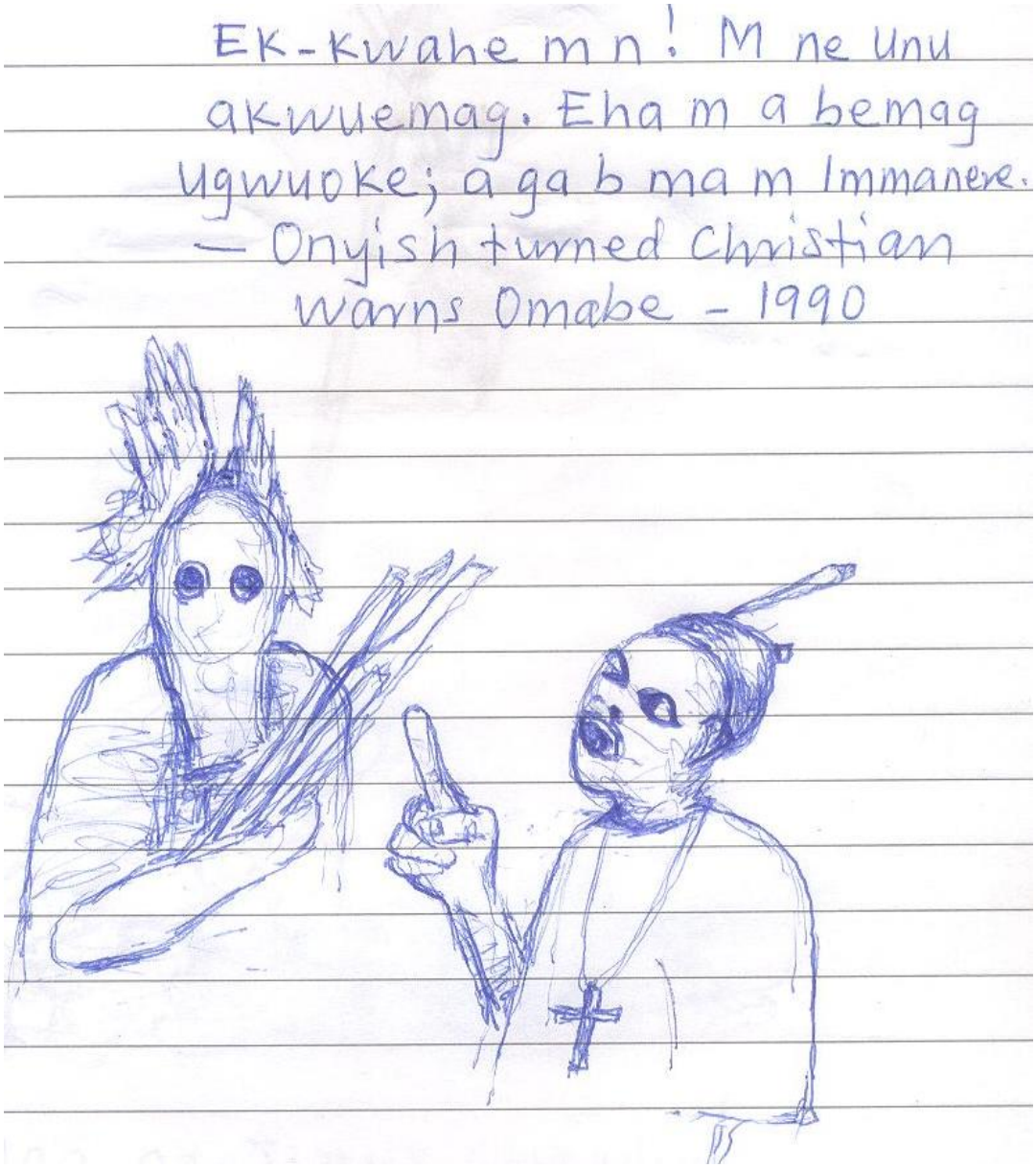

Plate II: Omabe's Encounter with an Onyish-Turned-Christian, Orh-k-uwelh, Ohodo, Sketch, 1990, Researcher's Diary

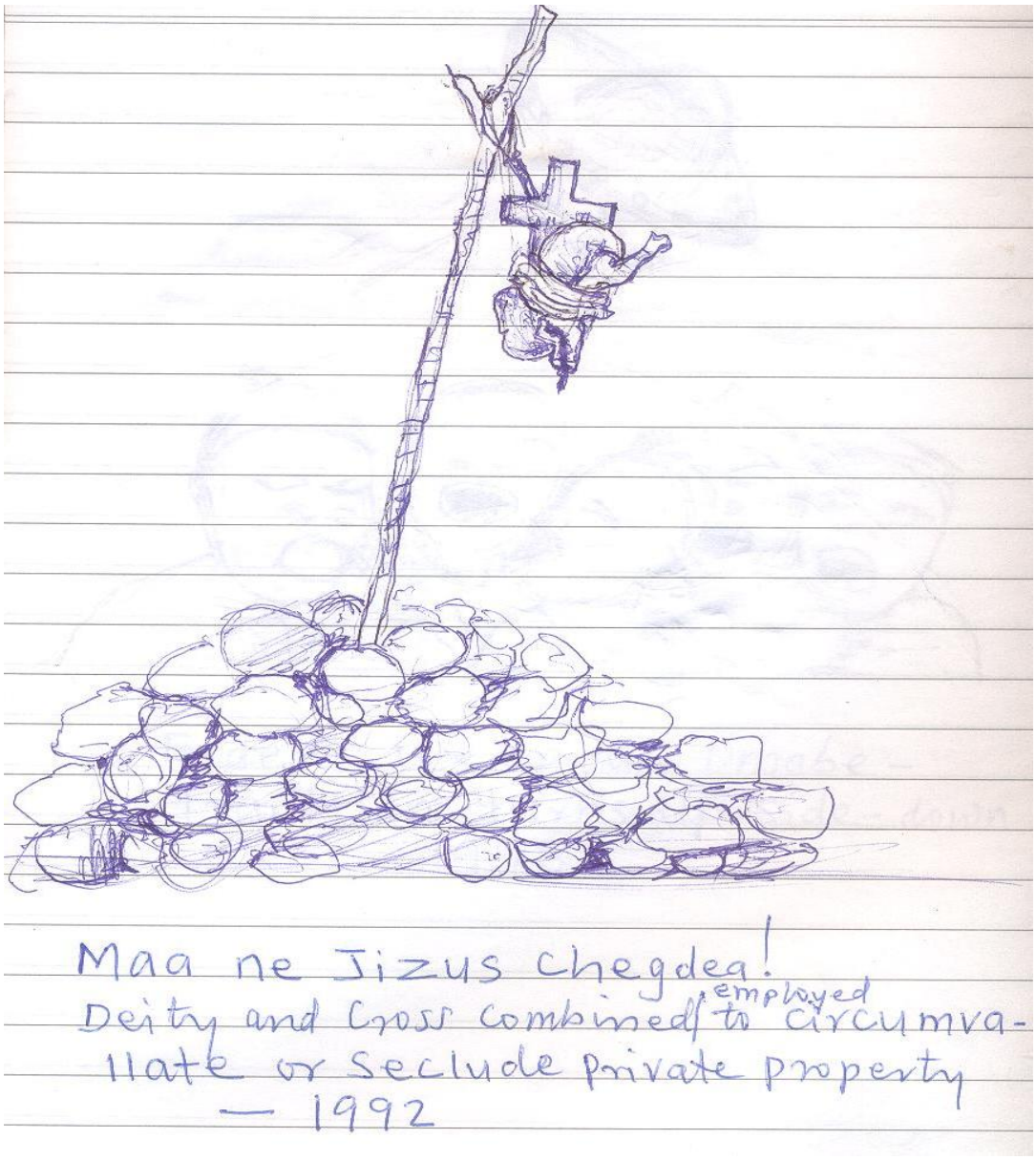

Plate III: Deity and Cross Combined in Safeguarding of Property, Ibekh-Opi, Sketch, 1992, Researcher's Diary

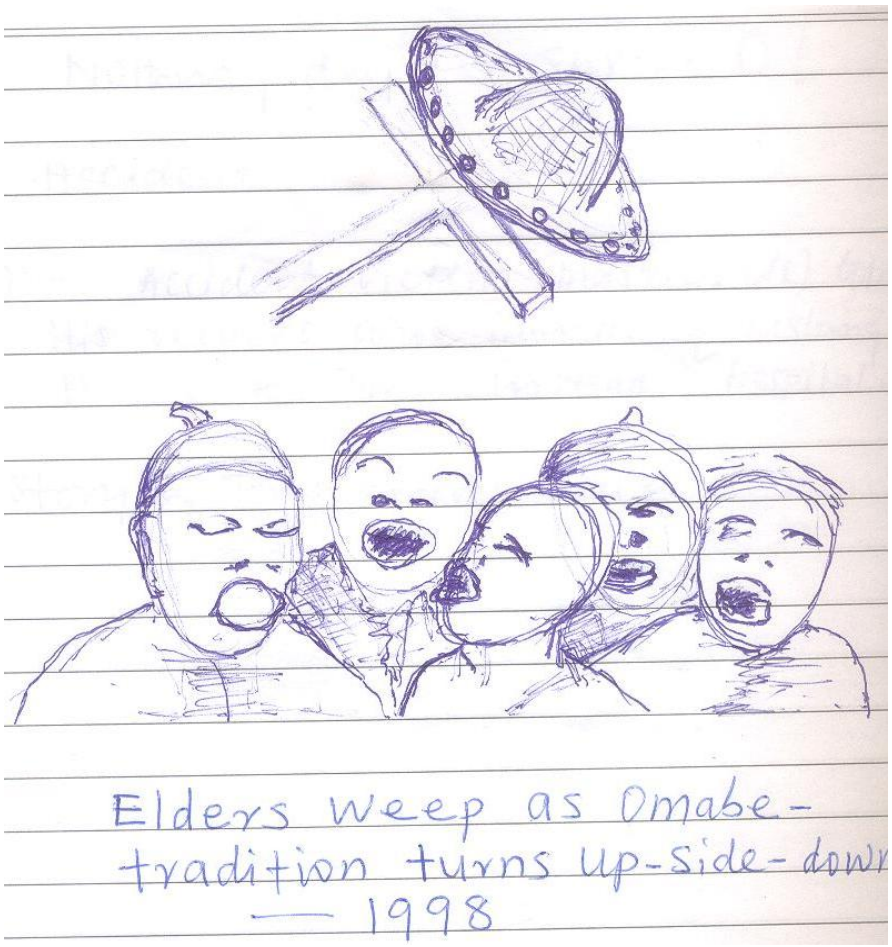

Plate IV: Elders Weep as *Omabe* Tradition Disintegrates, Umuezikenwoke, Ohodo, Sketch, 1998, Researcher's Diary

Through all the methods and processes stated above, contemporary perceptions and conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in the area were encountered, internalized, and physical forms of it conceived. Thus, the researcher moved into the studio, manifesting *Omabe* intuitively, in diverse ways.

3.4 Development of Form (Studio Exploration)

Some of the icons of *Omabe* tradition(see figure 43 and 44), were gathered as stated earlier, and conveyed from Nsukka area to the postgraduate sculpture studio of the Department of Fine Arts of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, where the actual artistic exploration started. In addition, some

other complementary materials were sourced from Zaria and other cities of Northern Nigeria. This section presents therefore, the approaches followed in exploring research data (forms) out of the materials.

It was realized that the status quo (today) was a battleground between the protagonists, who reflected and wished to drag its culture to the glorious past (yesterday) and the antagonists, who preempted and wished to accelerate its culture into more-science-promising future (tomorrow) in *Omabe*'s form definition. As each side's description was based on concrete evidence, in line with the concepts of anarchical representation in readymade designation, as adopted in this research, refractive gaze studio approach was developed and employed, to see what the protagonists and the antagonists saw and engage them in new environment, via installation. Thus, three approaches, or techniques of work tagged as "Reviewing Today"; "Predicting Yesterday"; and "Invoking Tomorrow", were adopted in the exploration exercise.



Figure 43: Kporokpoto Omabe Gathered for Artistic Exploration, Art Studio, ABU, Zaria, 2012



Figure 44: Ojjih Omabe Gathered for Artistic Exploration, Art Studio, ABU, Zaria, 2012

Refractive gaze studio research approach entails looking at an issue the opposite and unusual way, just like the refracted light. It was coined out of the electromagnetic theory of physics. Solymar and Walsh (1993) describe refractive light as wave reflected back; change in direction which occurs when a wave of energy such as light passes from one medium to another of a different density. It was adopted for the artistic exploration, not only because, understanding of *Omabe*'s pronouncements and performances thus takes one out of his usual ways of thinking but also because, deconstructive reflections of this nature, facilitates creative expression, based on assorted metaphysical experiences. In one of the occasions in which *Omabe* announced date for its festival observance, for instance, it made reference to *Anorh unya-asr-izukwe-tah* (Yesterday next-week today) and ordered that, "those (people) absent should inform those present"; and meaning was made, message was delivered, and the festival was unanimously performed. According to Nsukka proverb, he who does not act like an animal, cannot catch or experience the animal.

"Reviewing Today" is a "refractive gaze" approach, related to direct object exploration. As if today had already been concluded and its result hidden in the ashes of yesterday, contemporary perceptions of *Omabe* were reflected and refracted directly out of its operating icons, gathered for the research (see figure 45). According to Broad's philosophy of objective reality (Dukor 1994), "knowledge can be acquired by perception of a physical object by means of sensations which the object produces in the mind …" Being influenced by the contemporary perceptions, the researcher encountered (perceived) elements of the wishes and metaphoric descriptions of the people on the pieces of the gathered *Omabe*'s manifestation objects or icons. Then, the forms identified in each object were defined. Definition of form, in this particular exercise, was in form of extending further an already distressed part or by placement style. This process of form definition was facilitated by burning, cutting, stitching and attachment.



Figure 45: Defining Perceived Forms in Kporokpoto, Sculpture Studio, ABU, Zaria, 2012

Still on this direct refractive exploration technique, colours symbolizing the contemporary perceptions of *Omabe* were gazed out directly on some of the gathered *Omabe* icons (see figure 46). The perceived colours were thereafter developed out of each object. The aesthetic quality of coloured object was further enhanced by placement style.



Figure 46: Realizing Form Interpretations in Ojjih, Sculpture Studio, ABU, Zaria, 2012

Works produced in this direct exploration represent artistic understanding of the contemporary perceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo. It shows both the type and magnitude of wishes the people presently have, for the tradition. According to Eisner (2008), art expresses not only the feelings and emotions, which the artist has, but also those which he empathetically knows. It set the stage for further reflections that characterized the exploration of forms in this research.

"Predicting Yesterday" is a "refractive gaze" approach based on indirect material exploration, dealing with positive wishes. It was carried out by engaging the forms of *Omabe* from eyes of those who wished it came back to life. In this approach, those metaphoric interpretations and representations, as in the perception simulation, which symbolized the good wish for *Omabe* tradition were isolated, meditated upon and refracted in creation of forms. The process made some of the perceived forms to be reflected and refracted imaginarily out of certain objects, under certain arrangements. The desired materials were thereafter procured and the conceived forms manipulated (as in figure 47).



Figure 47: Exploration of *Omabe*-form in Local Basket, Open Compound Space, Ohodo, 2013

In the manipulation proper, the positive perceptions and wishes for *Omabe*, which bordered on the return to the good olden days (yesterday) and the possibilities of its survival in the contemporary heterogeneous society were considered. This process amounted to visualizing

yesterday, not in today, but in tomorrow, because as things stand today, restoring the dignity of *Omabe* appears impossible; but who knows, if the table would turn around by tomorrow? Although almost all the materials used in this particular exploration were related to *Omabe* objects, they were sourced from the studio environments and the open market places.

"Invoking Tomorrow" is, also a "refractive gaze" approach based on indirect material exploration, but it deals with negative wishes. Just like in "Predicting Yesterday", exploration technique of "Invoking Tomorrow" involves manipulation of the contemporary perceptions of *Omabe* on conceived materials. "Invoking Tomorrow" however, is a direct opposite of "Predicting Yesterday" in refractive gaze. It implies gauging of *Omabe* forms from the eyes of those who wished it did not see tomorrow. According to David Hume, in Dukor (1994), claims about causes and effects do not merely apply to the present and the remembered past, they also apply to the remote past and to the distant future.

In this approach, metaphoric interpretations and other representations, as in the perception simulation, considered to be negative, were exhumed and absorbed or internalized in the studio. The exercise generated conceptions of accelerated tomorrow; wishes that yesterday never was, and fear of elements of yesterday in today. In the perceived forms, fear of certain danger in *Omabe* tradition of yesterday, and uncertainty in the greater exclusion of *Omabe* as today unfolds its content, became apparent. In the expressions, those who did not wish it well, tended to skyrocket *Omabe* on a suicide mission, to a point of no return. In this perception, *Omabe* acquired so many strange elements that shifted its identity to the point where virtually "anything" could be regarded as it.



Figure 48: Refraction of *Omabe* in Stick, Open Compound Space, Ohodo, the Researcher, 2013

The approach to work, in this concept, is embedded in telling anything that "you too can be *Omabe*" and in letting it be so, without considering ethical issues of any kind, as is evident in the present cultural transformation. Conceived forms were manipulated onto objects (figure 48), animals, trees and persons that had less or completely no relationship with *Omabe* tradition. Manipulation of materials, in this work approach, was mainly by designation and composition; tying, stitching and placing related and unrelated objects together, in unusual positions.

Through all these refractive-gaze manipulative techniques, forms conceived from the encounter or interactions as reported earlier, were internalized, gazed out and given physical representation in household objects, trees, animals and humans. The sequence or process of work was: Assimilation, in which a given conceptual interpretation or form-description was pondered and internalized; Reflection, in which the physical characteristics of the form is considered; and

Refraction, in which that very form is related to features of a contrasting interpretation (Assimilation—Reflection---Refraction).

3.5 Work Contextualization

Application of the works produced, to meet the dictates of other stated research objectives, especially eliciting of public discourse, on *Omabe* tradition and developing personal artistic language, was pursued through two different approaches: strategic public location, and tree masquerading.

Strategic Public Location: One of the objectives of this research is to reach the stake holders, with the contemporary conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka area, for possible communal appreciation and reconciliation. In order to elicit public discourse on the subject matter (*Omabe* tradition), major installations were site-specifically executed in open spaces beside major roads in some high human populated communities in Nsukka and Samaru campus of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. People related directly with the works, without inhibition. Figures 49, and 50 show some installations executed in Nsukka area and people relating with them.

This public execution and display, provided useful opportunities, for reflection and contextualization of work, in an *Omabe* natural operating environment. Works were realized in consideration of the natural surroundings and reactions of the observers. Executing a work entailed several attempts at placing, gauging and discarding of parts until a configuration harmonized with the agora in realization of the desired form. So, execution of each piece of installation in its location, took two to three weeks of continuous work, split into four stages: putting up a configuration tentatively; watching and listening to people's conversation and

reactions on the work; reflecting over the work in relation to the initial ideas that informed it, observations made and the surrounding; and finally, making adjustment.

It is important to point out here that there is no finishing in the kind of work executed in this research. Apart from the usual artistic appeal, a work was suggestively made; just to help each observer reflect a particular side of *Omabe* or any related cultural practices and intrinsically complement it, with his or her own details. This way, different images of *Omabe* would tend to emerge from a particular work; depending on the angle, time and mood it was observed and as such, adjustment was continuous in all of the works. Consequently, it also became important that pursuance of this particular objective be continuous with adjustment and fresh execution of *Omabe*-based installation, in locations and occasions, that could facilitate proper reflection of various stories and images surrounding it. This continuous adjustment could not however, halt development of texts in this research, as preceding exercises, yielded tangible results that satisfied the requirements of the set-objective and aided the compilation of the thesis.



Figure 49: An Installation being executed in a Field near Catholic Church, Ohebe-dim, 2013



Figure 50: An Installation being executed by roadside, Unyasu-Opi, 2013

Tree Masquerading: As work in this research is also geared towards developing personal artistic language, tree relationship with *Omabe* forms and tradition, as perceived in this research (see chapter five), was exploited further and marked as future artistic direction. Of all the materials used in this research, tree was considered the most accessible. It was seen to be available in almost every cultural setting; occupying public spaces and assuming forms unconsciously expressed or rather inflicted by the spiritual, human, animal and weather forces. Among organic forms, trees tend to bear the most reliable testimony of a culture unconsciously expressed on their forms. Thus, different images of a people's philosophy and cultural practices like *Omabe*, are perceivable in their trees; living or dead. As reported earlier, trees are among the objects from which *Omabe* generated information about people's conduct, during the time of his absence in the land of the living.

Some *Omabe* forms and other characteristics, assimilated in this research, were therefore, gazed out directly in trees. A tree on which valid *Omabe* features were spotted was designated as *Omabe*-based installation sculpture. In the designation proper, major obstructions were eliminated and little *Omabe* manifesting paraphernalia were introduced on some areas to facilitate communal recognition and appreciation of the *Omabe*-masquerade features inherent in a tree (see designation effort in figure 51). Elimination of obstructing part of a tree was mainly by tentative tying, in order not to harm or injure it. In some cases however, sketches were first made to consider relationship of a particular *Omabe* manifestation object, in a given location or part of a tree. In this case, a suitable tree and specific *Omabe* manifesting objects were searched out, for physical realization of a drawing, considered interesting and valid, in the achievement of the desired goal. Plates V, VI, VII, and VIII are sketch considerations of *Omabe* features and attributes in different dispositions of tree:



Figure 51: Direct Reflection of *Omabe* in a Tree, Sculpture Garden, Postgraduate Studio Annex, Fine Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2014



Plate V: Tree and Ground Considered as *Omabe*-based Installation, Sketch, 2013



Plate VI: Full Tree Considered as *Omabe*-based Installation, Sketch, 2013



Plate VII: Tree-Trunk Considered as *Omabe*-based Installation, Sketch, 2012

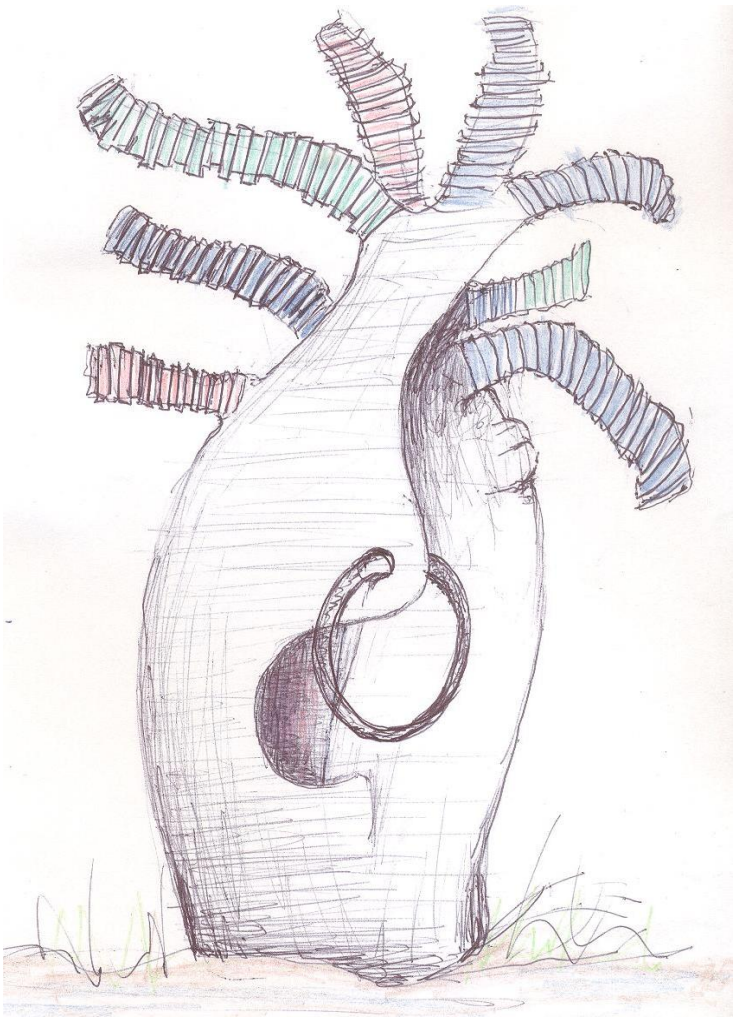

Plate VIII: Tree-Trunk with Branches as *Omabe*-based Installation, Sketch, 2012

3.6 Materials and Tools Used

In the course of the artistic (studio) exploration of this research, the following work materials were used: *Kporokpoto* (*Omabe*'s musical instrument); calabash; *Ojjih* (*Omabe*'s staff of authority); Jute; cloth, basket, *Igbegiri* (Stalk of Palm-frond), thread, metal rod and sheet, bolt and nut, nail, plastic; wood; stick, can, enamel and emulsion paints, varnish, glue and resin. Others were live human, tree and animal beings. Tools used in the work included saw, knife, needle, scissors, driller, grinder, burner, hammer, pliers, brush, welding machine and camera.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF WORKS

4.1 Introduction

This research explored physical forms of *Omabe* tradition from the contemporary conceptual interpretations of its mythology in Nsukka area and utilized such forms in creating installation sculptures. The outcome of the exercise is discussed in this chapter. In the discussion, works are grouped according to the research objectives, with reference to the techniques in which they were realized.

It is important to state that in the discussions, dimensions of many works are not provided in their legends; not only because quality of material, size and process of work are not considered necessary in conceptual art (Buhari 2015), but also because readymade instrumental designation approach, as adopted, made their determination difficult in most forms. In addition to title, medium, and year of production, domicile or location of a site-specific work is provided in its legend. It follows therefore, that any work without specified domicile or location, in its legend, is moveable in nature and in the collection of the artist. Dimensions of moveable works are however, provided in their legends.

It is also important to state that due to the uncertain nature of the outcome of exploration, works presented in this chapter are at study stages of *Omabe* forms and their installations. Thus, images shown here are flashpoints, susceptible to change. Detailed pictures of each work are provided only in chapter five. So, four works or installations were developed, presented and discussed in each of the five objective-based categories as follows:

4.2 Forms (Perceptions) of *Omabe*

The first objective of this research is to explore visible forms from the various perceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka area. Through "Reviewing Today", which is the first approach in the refractive gaze adopted in the studio exploration, physical forms were developed out of the metaphoric descriptions (conceptions) of *Omabe* tradition by the natives. As is evident in the *Ezumezu Akpaa* I and II (plates IX, and X), contemporarily, *Omabe* is basically conceived in both horrific and glorious forms. Horrifically, *Omabe* is conceived as hungry lion, cobra/viper, vulture, and dangerous lake and abyss; and gloriously, it is looked at as generous father, vibrant leopard, and radiator of beauty. Forms of these horrific and glorious, as well as, deceptive and humorous conceptions of *Omabe*, like strange being, doggedness and nothingness, were defined in bamboo, colour, calabash, metal rod, and fabric, used in its tradition.



Plate IX: *Ezumezu Akpaa* I; Bamboo, Steel and Copper-wire; 82cm X 159cm X 12cm; 2012

Ezumezu Akpaa I, is a composition of 18 pieces of distressed or worn-out musical instruments of *Omabe* (kporokpoto), each bearing forms of *Omabe* as conceived. Horrific, glorious, deceptive and vibrant forms of *Omabe* were burnt on the pieces of the bamboo and together, they represent an assemblage of the immortal ancestors (*Ezumezu Akpaa* I). Specifically, open and closed mouths, staring and blinking eyes, sharp teeth and loosed tongues, sobbing nose and relaxed nerves, strange ears and familiar types, as well as, strange and familiar attires, are scattered on the distressed bamboo, creating a sensation of strange and familiar figures in crying, weeping, smiling, laughing, inviting and scaring moods. *Omabe* is perceivable in all these forms and together, they symbolize the contemporary conceptions of its tradition in Nsukka-Igbo.



Plate X: *Ezumezu Akpaa* II; Bamboo, Steel and Copper-wire; 85cm X 161cm X 13cm; 2012

Ezumezu Akpaa II is part of a larger assemblage of distressed and coloured bamboo musical instruments of *Omabe*. Each piece represents form(s) of *Omabe* whereas the colours and the

weathered effects show the changes and transformations that take place in the aged tradition. *Omabe* is contemporarily conceived in different sizes, colours, shapes, values and significance. Thus, *Ezumezu Akpaa* II (Assemblage of the immortal ancestors II) is also an assemblage of *Omabe*.



Plate XI: *Ikpoh***;** Calabash and Rod; 73cm X 78cm X37cm; 2012

Ikpoh (Anthill), is a composition of two masquerade-like figures; each made of multiple pieces of calabash, strung onto a rod, welded to a stand. Scorch of fire, stains of soot and splash of colours which are scattered on the parts of each piece, create a sensation of old and new around the work. It shows *Omabe* form, conceived in simple and naive ancient order. Reflection of *Omabe* as a harmless and peaceful age-old tradition is still held by some persons in Nsukka and it manifested in this work. Like *Ikpoh* (anthill), *Omabe*, in the conceptions of its cultural protagonists, would stand the test of a long time.



Plate XII: *Ovrh-uzo*; Rod (Ojji Omabe), Steel and Binding-wire; 49cm X 84cm X 12cm; 2012

Like the earlier formations, *Ovrh-uzo* is a composition of manifestation instruments of *Omabe*. These ones however, are coloured pieces of rattle-staff of authority (Ojji Omabe), arranged in movement postures. Together, it represents a procession of *Ovrh-uzo* (the forerunner) in *Omabe* tradition; indicating the gap and value disunity among its members. Consideration of *Omabe* as an epitome of strength, which iron rod symbolizes, is still alive in Nsukka.

Going by the developments in the activities of "Reviewing Today", the first objective of this research, which sought to explore visible forms from the various perceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka, appears to have been attained. More form explorations were, however done, involving other paraphernalia of *Omabe*, in the realization of this particular objective.

4.3 Installation Sculptures based on Positive Perceptions of *Omabe*

The second objective of this research seeks to create installation sculptures based on group of related form-conceptions of *Omabe* tradition. On its part, "Predicting Yesterday", which is the second approach in the refractive gaze exercise, was employed. It combined related form conceptions, starting with those that signified good wish for *Omabe* tradition, in the metaphoric description exercise of the people and other encounters of the contemporary perceptions of *Omabe* in Nsukka, in developing installation sculptures. In its process, encountered forms were internalized and gazed out and defined in a mango tree, flame of the forest tree, baobab tree, assembled baskets, and hanged fabric stripes. In most of them, forms were defined by associating *Omabe* related items to the form-bearing trees and objects. Works that were composed in this category include *Ikpogwu-Maa, Oyima,* and *Onyiaa-Oha*.



Plate XIII: *Ikpogwu-Maa*; Metal-rod, Steel, Coloured Fabric-stripe;328cm X 145cm X 9cm; Frontage of a Ware-house, Fine Art (Postgraduate) Studio Annex, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2012

Ikpogwu-Maa (the final gathering of the spirits), is an installation of three totem poles (Arua) of *Omabe* in the frontage of a building. Each pole is embellished with several fabric stripes, representing families, clans, villages, communities, and quarters that hold stakes in the *Omabe* tradition. In this work, doggedness and all-embracing qualities of *Omabe*, as in the metal rod and assorted colours and sizes of fabric-stripes, are combined to depict it as a fair representative and custodian of the tradition of the people. Results of the conception simulation exercise indicated that, *Omabe* is still considered by a hand-full of people in Nsukka, as a good tradition, observed in the collective interest of the populace. Specifically, the reference made to *Omabe* as *Ugwu-anyi* (People's Hill or Lifter) in the people's names, came to memory in the development of this installation.



Plate XIV: *Oyima*; Baobab Tree, Fabric and Metal; Roadside to the Dam, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2013

A tall baobab tree, with paired scars at eye-positions, wrapped at the stem stalk or base, with coloured fabric stripes and black metal rings, *Oyima* suggests the head of a female figure. The elegance of the trunk, the calmly open-staring eyes and the unfolding fresh leaves along soft branches, resembling the hair-do of an African princess, convey a sensation of *Oyima* (friend of the spirit), a name held in high regard in the *Omabe* mythology. Coloured fabric and metallic neck-lace further enhance the vigour of the form, as *Oyima*. These special qualities were observed on the texture of the tree trunk and it was consequently designated as *Omabe* by placing its culture-compatible materials around it. Womanhood is held in high esteem in the *Omabe* tradition and a good number of women are still named *Oyima*. This position is reflected in the people's conceptions of it.



Plate XV: *Onyiaa-oha*; Mango-Tree, Jute-sack, Coloured-fabric-stripe, Bell, and the Ground, Green-area, behind Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2013

Onyiaa-oha, is an installation of *Omabe* related fabric, bell and forms on a live tree. In the configuration, a semblance of a human face is given by the eye-openings on the jute-mask, and the tree foliage signifies the rest of the head and the load it carries; whereas the spread of the fabric-stripes on the ground appears to be hanging on a mighty shoulder. Together, it represents the portrait of a huge masquerade, returning with loads of assorted goods on its head. In it, forms of *Onyiaa-oha* (satisfier of the public) and generous father, presented in the metaphoric descriptions of *Omabe*, were visualized on this mango tree. It appears to be struggling hard in the toss of the wind, rain and scorching of the sun, to keep intact its countless leaves, flowers, and fruits, so that the beings, which depended on it for food, could find their rations. It also re-echoes the praise-song, over a triumphant performance of an *Omabe*-making group (Appendix B): *Ube a-miaah nsho-g-nsho* (favourite fruit-tree has yielded bountifully). The hanging bell, which is also an *Omabe* implement, when tossed by wind, produces sound that draws attention to the structure. As it could be seen from the foregoing, development of form in this particular installation, emanated from preliminary sketch.



Plate XVI: *Omaba;* Basket, Currency Note and Metal; 196cm X 78cm X 53cm; Green Area, Catholic Church, Ohebe-dim; 2013

Omaba, (Treasury tear-er), is a composition of two conically shaped masquerade-like figures; each made of coloured baskets and cans of different sizes, strung onto a metallic stand, with multiple stripes of One Thousand Naira notes loosely hung, flying around it. The composition suggests a deliberate display of hard currency in baskets. Most Nsukka people perceive *Omabe* tradition and its ceremonies as demonstration of affluence; because only quality and costly items are used in its presentation and worship. As discussed in Aniakor (1978), they also believe that *Omabe* spirit is very active in wealth provision to the people. According to them, it tears open (O nh-amaba) the spiritual treasury and pours wealth to its adherents in surplus. So, its displays and celebrations are shows of abundance, as families, clans, and villages try to outdo one another; a mark of gratitude and worthiness of handling greater allocations. *Omabe* is therefore, *Omaba* (treasury tear-er).

4.4 Installation Sculptures based on Negative Perceptions of *Omabe*

Still in pursuance of the demands of this second objective of the research, the technique of "Invoking Tomorrow", in the refractive gaze studio approach, was also employed. It combined form-conceptions which signified bad wishes for *Omabe* tradition, wishes that tomorrow overrides yesterday in its affairs, and gazed them out in strange objects. The approach was simply by ascribing unrelated objects as '*Omabe*', and making it so, in developing installations. In it, stick, trunk, chicken (Plate XX), goat, and a little girl, became *Omabe* installations; realized basically by masking them with unrelated items like cellophane, and Jewish-like shawl. *Didigbo-digbo, Oyikogo*, and *Ewu neh Okhko* are among the installations developed in this category.



Plate XVII: *Didigbo-digbo*; Stick, Jute-sack, Coloured-fabric-stripe, and Tread; 232cm X 164cm X 32cm; Compound by roadside to village-square, Ohodo; 2013

Didigbo-digbo, is a three-figured-installation, composed of fabric head-masks suspended on sticks at the front of a private residential house. Each piece suggests a masked figure or masquerade, posed in action. Together, it represents a development (expressed in then metaphoric descriptions by the people) in which virtually everything appears as *Omabe*, creating confusion in its conception. Conceptions of emptiness and magic in the metaphoric descriptions of *Omabe* were combined in framing this work. There is an indication from the cultural antagonists' conceptions that *Omabe* is presently seen as worthless formulation, used only to deceive the masses; and in the contemporary realization of this motive, anybody and anything (Didigbo-digbo) can now disguise itself as an *Omabe*. Specifically, this worthless conception of *Omabe* is expressed in names like Odo-abuchi (Odo [Omabe] is not a god), which some people modified their inherited names to.



Plate XVIII: *Oyikogo*; Wood, Jute and Chaplet; 193cm X 118cm X 25cm; 2013

Oyikogo, is a composition of a cross-like wood, jute sack, and different sized and coloured chaplets; with animal-like masked head. It suggests a combination of *Omabe* masquerade and Chritianity icons in an unusual disposition. In the contemporary conceptions of this tradition, a lot of people believe that *Omabe* has over transformed from its original being. They described *Omabe* as a borrower and adopter of diverse and unrelated values, to the extent that it looked stange and could no longer be recognised by even its mother (Oyikogo olu neh-enyeh). The incident of a farmer tying the *Omabe* icon and the Cross together, to guard her farm produce, in which *Omabe* was portrayed as incapable of providing protection singlehandedly, ocupied the creative thinking, in the development of this installation.



Plate XIX: *Adh-nmeteh*; Trunk and Bondles of Currency Note; Parking-space, Opposite Glass Technology Section, Ahmadu Bello Universty, Zaria; 2014

Adh-nmeteh, is a hollowed trunk (flame of the forest), externaly surrounded by snaky roots, with bondles and parcels of Naira notes inserted into it. Together, the configuration suggests a wide-open mouth of a strange being, swallowing the people's wealth. There are lots of perceptions of *Omabe* as an insatiable monster (Adh-nmeteh) in the people's metaphoric descriptions of the tradition, collated earlier in this research. The predicament of the Onyishi (Chief priest) who abandoned *Omabe* tradition and joined Christianity, calling it a deceiver and big disappointment, was reflected or rather gazed out in this formation. Thus, this monster of a trunk is an *Omabe*.



Plate XX: *Ewu neh Okhko*; Chicken, cellophane and thread, 2013

Ewu neh Okhko, is an installation-performance comprised of a chicken, masked as a masquerade. There are also other shades of this installation made of a little girl, and a goat. Although each of these figures was enacted or performed in separate locations in Nsukka-urban, as can be seen in plate XX, their pictures were afterward installed together, as in Plate XLIV, to make a strong statement on the devaluation of *Omabe* and its tradition in this area. Goats and Chicken (*Ewu neh Okhko*) could simply lay claim or could be suspected to be *Omabe* in the contemporary Nsukka environment. There were much destructive conceptions in the metaphoric descriptions of *Omabe* tradition by the people, in the simulations conducted earlier in this research. The incidents in which a woman was forced to operate the musical implement of *Omabe,* and her declaration that, she had by the act, killed the tradition, coupled with the weeping of the elders publicly, over the demise of *Omabe* in its relation with Christianity, came to mind, in the development of this series of installations.

Again, configurations of the above forms, developed through refractive-gaze studio activities, involving "Predicting Yesterday" and "Invoking Tomorrow", are positive indications that the second objective of this research, which endeavours to employ the perceived forms in creating installation sculptures, based on related groups of perceptions of *Omabe* tradition, has been attained. These refractive-gaze approaches also facilitated the achievement of the rest of the objectives of this research.

4.5 Unification of Opposing Form-Conceptions in Installation Sculpture

This research also seeks, in its objectives, to develop installation sculptures which unify opposing perceptions of *Omabe* tradition. This is to help create a sense of accommodation and consideration of contrasting views in the minds of the people. In this category, form descriptions of the cultural protagonists and those of its antagonists were considered together, and gazed out, in mixtures of familiar and strange, harmful and comforting objects. *Ishi-Maa*, *Oluberh-Igbo*, *Ochi-eboh* and *Enya-maa*, are among the installations developed, based on the unification of opposing form-conceptions of the *Omabe* tradition.



Plate XXI: *Ishi-Maa*; Chair and palm-frond-stalk (Igbegiri); 204cm X 168cm X 169cm; Unyasu-Opi; 2013

Ishi-Maa (Head of the Spirit), is an installation of heavily tongued palm-frond-stalks (Igbegiri) and a colourful arm-chair. The palm-frond-stalks were pegged round into an oval or head shape (see figure 49), trapping the chair at the hollowed center-space. There are marks which create sensations of open-eye and neck, defining the head or portrait of a masquerade on the palm-frond-stalks. The chair is freely positioned, without any form of interference, in what can be described as heap of sharp tongues. The palm-frond-stalks-head relates the sensations that *Omabe* tradition is dangerous; whereas the colourful chair relates the notions that the tradition is rather a thing to be enjoyed. Together, this work posits that there is great happiness and relaxation in *Omabe* tradition but this status is surrounded by packs of hurdles and hitches that make it very difficult for people to attain.



Plate XXII: *Oluberh-Igbo*; Jute, Metal and thread; 166cm X 134cm X 23cm; 2013

Oluberh-Igbo (Confusion to the Nation), is a cross-like masqueraded figure in a standing position. There is also a strong indication in the people's conceptions and expressions that, the co-existence of *Omabe* and Christian traditions in Nsukka area has been a symbiotic relationship. Consequently, *Omabe* has adapted a lot of Christianity-originated materials into its operation and Christianity has equally appropriated many practices that came out of *Omabe* tradition into its mainstream value. People therefore, get confused over the outfit of a particular one (Oluberh-Igbo) and mistake it for the other. Like Oluberh-Igbo, which doubles for Cross and Masquerade, a lot of people ask or conceive in their minds, whether it is Christianity or Tradition (*Omabe*) that is behind most of the public events in contemporary Nsukka; because, attributes of both are always visible in them. Safeguarding of property with both Traditional and Christian icons by the people

(plate III), and the outfit of an *Oriokpa* with a Chaplet (figure 41), had a significant influence in the development of this installation and designating it as *Omabe*.



Plate XXIII: *Ochi-eboh*; Hollowed Trunk and Lad; Sculpture Garden, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2013

Ochi-eboh, (Collector of Double), is another installation-performance which shows a boy (lad) in a mouth-like hollow of a head-like trunk. This installation tends to send double or contrasting signals (*Ochi-eboh*). The issue in it is whether the boy is being swallowed or safeguarded by this *Omabe*-like being. *Omabe* tradition is full of performance and has been described as both devourer and protector by the people and as such, sensations of cannibalism and preservation, in its form conceptions, are unified in this installation. Again, attributes of shaman, wind, fire and

chameleon, which in its rhetoric and musical lyrics (presented in chapter three), *Omabe* described itself as, surfaced in the configuration.

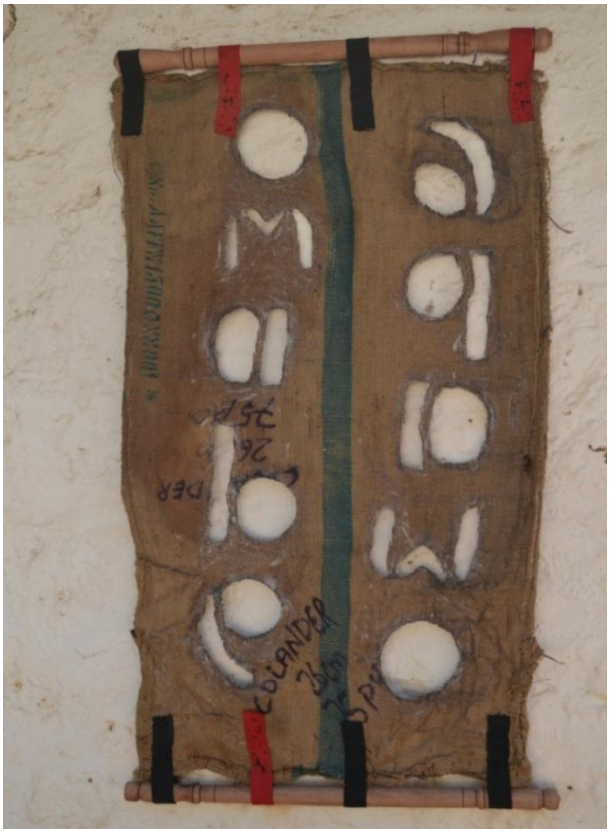

Plate XXIV: *Enya-maa*; Jute, wood and thread; 144cm X 76cm; 2014

Enya-maa (Masquerade-eye), is a hanging (installation), made of thick fabric (Jute) on which the word *Omabe* is vertically inscribed and cut open in two places; one in positive format and the other in reversed order. Through the spaces created by the impressions of the *Omabe*, the background of the hanging is clearly seen. The piece reveals the two main secrets in understanding or encountering the *Omabe* tradition: silent search and multi-directional assessment. Like the openings provided in this piece and the nature of its eye, *Omabe* is the

gateway through which the world is quietly mirrored. *Omabe* is what you see when you peep through a window; when you halt and ask yourself questions. It is about going out and coming in; it is about weeping and laughing; it is about white and it is about black; it is about life and it is about death, yes! *Omabe* is what you say it is; in the real sense of it. It is the epitome of the things happening around you and for you to appreciate things happening around you, you must consider them from more than one perspective. Occurrences should be considered from both positive and negative view-points (refractive gaze), for the right judgment to be made. The Nsukka would say; *a-kwug ofh-ebe ekhri maa* (masquerade performance is not accessed from one location). One should therefore, develop Masquerade-eye in order to see and judge properly.

4.6 Elicitation of Public Discourse

The fourth objective of this research is to execute some installation sculptures of the perceived forms of *Omabe* tradition in public places, so as to elicit public discourse on the tradition. It happened that, majority of the installations developed in this research, were executed site-specifically, in open spaces. In these locations, most of them generated heated arguments that led to repeated removal and replacement of their part-formations, by the observers. As stated earlier (see scope of the study), at least one *Omabe* related site-specific installation was developed in each of the local government areas that constituted Nsukka; and in most busy corners of the Ahmadu Bello University community. On the account of these installations, people started opening up their secret thoughts, relating their understandings of and positions on *Omabe* tradition. Figures 52, 53 and 54 show some natives instigated by the installations, exchanging views on Omabe tradition. As Candy (2006) notes, practice-based research "generates culturally

novel apprehensions that are not just novel to the creator or individual observers of the artifact" but also to the public.



Figure 52: Group Discussion and Interaction with an *Omabe*-based Installation, Ohodo, 2013

Figure 52 shows one of the three figures that constitute *Didigbo-digbo*, pushed down by one member of a group of youth discussing it; but it was almost immediately raised by another member of the group, in disagreement to his position. The work remained in this location for about six months, generating discussions on *Omabe*; before it finally weathered.



Figure 53: Natives interacting with the Installation at Ohebe-dim, 2013

Figure 53 shows some elders watching and discussing one of the installations (Omaba) in Nsukka. The installation stood in this location for about three months before the currency notes on it weathered. Remnants of it were still found after eight months.



Figure 54: Passersby Attracted to Installation Executed at Unyasu, Ibeku-Opi, 2013

Figure 54 shows passersby being attracted to one of the installations (Ishi-maa), located by the side of a popular road in Nsukka. This piece stood in this location for more than 13 months, provoking people to heated debate about *Omabe* tradition.



Figure 55: Performers interacting with Palm Tree as Installation; roadside, NUGA Gate, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2013

Figure 55 shows a group of young men, interacting with one of the installations, sited in a corner of a busy area, in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Although these people are considered part and parcel of the installation, the entire configuration connoting the presentation of *Omabe* in public performance, they can also double as observers because, their stay with it was temporal. Long after they had left the scene, however, the tree continued to create a sensation of masquerade to its observers, especially those people who witnessed this installation-performance involving it.

4.7 Art-Practice Direction

The fifth objective of this research is to create a personal artistic language or direction from the emergent forms of the *Omabe* tradition. This is to enable the researcher relocate his sculpture practice and academism to indigenous knowledge system. Given its repeated ability to yield varieties of unique forms in the course of this research, and its spirited connection to *Omabe* tradition, as earlier discussed in chapter three, tree-masquerading merits deeper exploration in building a career, based on this culture. Plates XXV, XXVI, XXVII and XXVIII are tree-masqueraded installations, conceived and designated, based on the contemporary conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo, as experienced in this research.



Plate XXV: *Ori-obrh*; Pine (Conifer) Tree, Fabric, Rod, Bell, Feather and Basket; Sculpture Garden, Postgraduate Studio Annex, Fine Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2014

Ori-obrh (Consumer of stake), is a pine tree on which coloured fabric stripes, bell and flat basket, bearing variety of feathers, are hung. Naturally, the conical formation of a pine tree, resembles the outfit of a masquerade but the addition of traditional materials, has clearly turned this particular one into *Ishi-Omabe*, even to the comprehension of non-artists. When tossed, the bell produces sound, which in turn, draws attention to this installation. The descriptions which *Omabe* gave to itself, especially those contained in its rhetoric, presented earlier in chapter three, came to memory in the designation of this tree as *Udele-Idenyi, Ishi-Omabe (Ori-obrh)*. In its composition, forms were gazed out and defined directly in this tree, without preliminary sketch.



Plate XXVI: *Ogbh-yeh-meh*; Flame of the forest, Metal and Plastic; roadside behind Department of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2013

Ogbh-yeh-meh, (Disperser of crowd) is a flame of the forest (tree) with twisted, curved, and hollowed trunk; of which the stalk is encircled with a variety of metallic strings and assorted tins, plastic and wooden pebbles, in forms of beads. The configuration creates a sensation of goddess or queen of beauty. The romantic effect of the twists of the stems and the branches, the vibrant and sparkling effect of the foliage, and the melodious tendency of the mouth-like hollow, all combine effectively to make it a symbol of outstanding beauty. The description of *Omabe*'s beauty as *enyanwu la-g-deh ikegwu esfusfe* (when the sun goes, the day weakens) and the naming of women of extraordinary beauty, usually possessed by *Omabe*, as *Ogbh-yeh-meh* (disperser of crowd) by the Nsukka, inspired the designation of this tree as such. It was recalled (as stated earlier in chapter three) that in *Omabe* tradition, *Ogbh-yeh-meh* women were used by the Nsukka to overcome their enemies, during tribal wars. Such a woman was simply pushed to the enemy camp and on sighting her, the people would be emotionally scattered and soon after, they would be lost in the lust. Similarly, a lot of conversations were halted and many precious possessions fell off hands, as passersby fed their eyes on this particular tree. Again, on realization of the level of attraction it commanded in the environment, bills were often posted on it; as can be seen even in this picture. Behold, an *Ogb-ye-meh*. It reiterates the importance of people's names in understanding the fundamentals of *Omabe* culture.



Plate XXVII: *Odo-shiere*; Palm tree, performers, gong, flute and rope; Roadside, NUGA-Gate road, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2013

Odo-shiere (the Biggest Masquerade), is a huge palm tree on which a long rope is tied and held firmly by one of the young men making music around it. The scene creates a sensation of a mighty masquerade being conveyed by its makers, to a village-square, for a performance. *Omabe* is associated with might, in size and action (see *Ozigbo* masquerade; figure 33B). The descriptions given to *Omabe* in praise-songs, especially the ones related earlier in chapter three (see Appendix B), influenced the designation of this tree as one. In the imaginations of most elders of the Nsukka, the ideal form of *Omabe* is super, extra-large, and all-intimidating. *Odo-shiere* is therefore, an *Omabe*; not only because of its form nomenclature but also because of its outstanding and super domineering effect in its environment.



Plate XXVIII: Caged-god; Masquerade tree, flag-pole, metallic fence, cable and building complex, First Bank Premises, Sokoto-road, Samaru, Zaria; 2013

Caged-god (Chi Eji-nji) is a mighty masquerade tree with a rattle-staff-like flag-pole, which is trapped in the midst of irons, wire cable, zinc, bricks, and concrete (Western related environment). It symbolizes nature in the hand of man. It therefore, represents the total developments around *Omabe* tradition. Reflection (and refraction) of all the conceptions and descriptions given to *Omabe*, both the positive and the negative sides of it, showed that it is a god, presently in the hands of men. Testimony of Ugwu-eg (2012) that *Ogbodu* (worthless men) have hijacked *Omabe* tradition and taken it hostage, came to memory in designating the dispositions of this tree as *Omabe*.

CHAPTER FIVE

CATALOGUE OF WORKS

5.1 Introduction

As is targeted in the aim and objectives of this research, contemporary conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo have been given physical forms. Additionally, these forms have been utilized in the creation of installation sculptures, located in places where they have engaged, and some are still engaging, many people in dialogue of what *Omabe* is or should be. Conventionally, this type of academic research terminates with an exhibition of works produced, in an oral examination; outcome of which is recorded in the thesis. This chapter presents a pictorial compilation of the outcome of the exercise, both as an artistic document for continued aesthetic and mental engagements of its readers, and exhibits or reference materials for the substantiation of the history of *Omabe* tradition.

It is important to state here that, due to their ephemeral and site-specific nature, only photographic images of most works are presented in the exhibition component of this research. According to Stokstad (2008), conceptual artists rely on photographic and video images, in the presentation and propagation of their works. Photographic images facilitated discussions of works in this research significantly. Before the presentation of the portfolio of the works however, artist's curatorial statement is made, so as to further relate contexts and suggest conditions that will possibly foster the encountering of their creative enigmas.

5.2 Curatorial Statement

All is *Omabe*! *Omabe* has been reflected and refracted from the eyes of both its proponents and opposers and forms have emerged; and they are nothing but *Omabe*. Evidently, it can therefore, be said that *Omabe* is white and *Omabe* is black; *Omabe* is fire and *Omabe* is water; *Omabe* is devilish and *Omabe* is godly; *Omabe* is in what its protagonists say and *Omabe* is also in what its

antagonists say it is. Furthermore, *Omabe* is somewhere between the two axes, and clearer to the third-eye; the 'I in you'.

It is about empathy and not sympathy. It is about 'I and I'; activating the sensation of 'I in you' and 'you in I'. It is a matter of evoking the *enya-maa* (spiritual character) in you; the eye that can see and conceal and the mouth that witnesses when others are mute. It is about seeing *Omabe* from the eye of the opponent; the protagonist seeing *Omabe* from the eye of the antagonist and the antagonist seeing *Omabe* from the eye of the protagonist; and what you see is *Omabe*.

So, all the installations developed in this research are forms of *Omabe* from the eyes of its cultural proponents, opposers and their empathizers. Each of the installations therefore, is an *Omabe* in its own right. Although the works here can also be said to symbolize both old and new conceptions of *Omabe*, in their presentation however, they are not categorized in any way. They are rather mixed up, because most of them are multidirectional in their symbolism. Elements of horror could be seen in forms which the protagonists conceived as glorious and attributes of glory are also perceivable in forms which the antagonists considered to be horrific. For instance, during the preliminary presentation, "*Ewu neh Okhko* III", a piece composed after the extreme abuse conceptions of the antagonists, was contrarily described by one of the spectators, as symbolizing a good concept of "*Egbe berh, Ugo berh*" (Live and Let Live) and another piece, "*Ogbh-yeh-meh*", conceived as epitome of beauty, was seen by another spectator as 'Killer'. As value unification is the long-term motive of this research, intermingling or anarchical presentation of the entries in this documentation, can enhance objective consideration of form-conceptions and in turn, pave way for proper value diffusion. Sullivan (2010) rightly notes that, the postmodern artistic view has features that evoke both optimistic and pessimistic responses.

As a portfolio of works produced in this research, some of the images presented here are appearing for the first time; whereas many others are detailed views and further picture-manipulated explorations of already developed installations. These views enable the appreciation of the dimensions and tactility of each work, especially as most of them are not physically exhibited. Again, in the context of making an elaborate statement on a form definition of an *Omabe*, a picture-manipulated installation is considered a separate piece of work, independent of its contributory forms.

Any work in this research is first of all *Omabe* before taking any other name as a specific mark of identity. *Omabe* is their surname. Title is therefore, given to a work, just to let the viewer, a bit, into the creative impulse of the artist; but it is not indispensable or obligatory in its critiquing. The works were evocatively created, so that a piece could be complemented with the innate experience of its observer. Thus, any position that an observer takes, concerning the title of a work here, is equally valid, provided that it is based on a reflection of true personal experience. It is with regards to these conditions, coupled with the determination to give the Nsukka a greater sense of belonging, that installations in this research are titled as *Oyima*, *Ishi-maa*, *Onyia-oha*, *Oyikogo*, *Ewu neh okhko*, and other marks of identity; in the Nsukka-Igbo dialect, English translations of which are provided mainly in their discussion.

As the Umu-oka performing group would say in a praise-song, after a triumphant outing of their *Omabe* (see Appendix B), *ube a-miaah nsho-g-nsho* (favourite fruit-tree has yielded bountifully) in the studio exploration of this research. Apart from being installations, the works are also sculptures, not only because they are three-dimensional pieces, but also because their producer and curator, is a sculptor at the threshold of a 'PhD' and has designated them as such. Have a fructifying perusal!

5.3 Work Portfolio



Plate XXIX (A): *Enya-Maa* (Masquerade-eye), Details (viewed against flat background), Jute, wood and thread; 144cm X 76cm; 2014



Plate XXIX (B): *Enya-Maa*; Details (viewed inside-out [from indoor against bright outside])



Plate XXIX (C): *Enya-Maa*; Details (viewed outside-in [from bright outside against dark room])



Plate XXX (A): *Ezumezu Akpaa* I (Assemblage of the Immortals I), Details (viewed against light-flat background); Bamboo, Steel and Copper-wire; 82cm X 159cm X 12cm; 2012



Plate XXX (B): *Ezumezu Akpaa* I; Details (left side);



Plate XXX (C): *Ezumezu Akpaa* I; Details (center area);



Plate XXX (D): *Ezumezu Akpaa* I; Details (right side);



Plate XXXI (A): *Oluberh-Igbo* (Confusion to the Nation); Details (viewed against dark-flat background); Jute, Metal and thread; 166cm X 134cm X 23cm; 2013



Plate XXXI (B): *Oluberh-Igbo*; Details (left side, viewed in a more open space);



Plate XXXI (C): *Oluberh-Igbo*; Details (upper-left side);



Plate XXXII (A): *Oyima* (Friend of the Spirit); Details; Baobab Tree, Fabric and Metal; roadside to the Dam, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2013



Plate XXXII (B): *Oyima*; Details (back view);



Plate XXXII (C): *Oyima*; Details (lower-front view);



Plate XXXIII (A): *Ovrh-uzo* (the Forerunner); Details (viewed against flat-dark background); Rod (Ojji *Omabe*), Steel and Binding-wire; 49cm X 84cm X 12cm; 2012



Plate XXXIII (B): *Ovrh-uzo*; Details (file-front view);



Plate XXXIII (C): *Ovrh-uzo*; Details (upper area);



Plate XXXIII (D): *Ovrh-uzo*; Details (lower part);



Plate XXXIV (A): *Ejoh obth bh ugwah* (Bad Neighbour is Cancerous), Okra plants, Jute bag, Stripe, and thread, Okra-Garden, Uwelh Ukehe, 2013.

One of the Okra plants growing together suddenly transformed to *Omabe*. As the Hausa would say in such situation, *Makwabcin mai akuya, ya sayi kura* (the neighbour to a goat-owner has bought [adapted] a hyena); a sign of orchestrated antagonism in an area.



Plate XXXIV (B): *Ejoh obth bh ugwah* (left-side-view)



Plate XXXIV (C): *Ejoh obth bh ugwah* (right-side-view)



Plate XXXV (A): *Adh-nmeteh* (the Insatiable); Details; Trunk and Bundles of Currency Note; Parking-space, Opposite Glass Technology Section, Ahnadu Bello University, Zaria; 2014



Plate XXXV (B): *Adh-nmeteh* (details, lower area);



Plate XXXVI (A): *Ezumezu Akpaa* II (Assemblage of the Immortals II); Details; (viewed against dark background); Bamboo, Steel and Copper-wire; 85cm X 161cm X 13cm; 2012



Plate XXXVI (B): *Ezumezu Akpaa* II (details, left side);

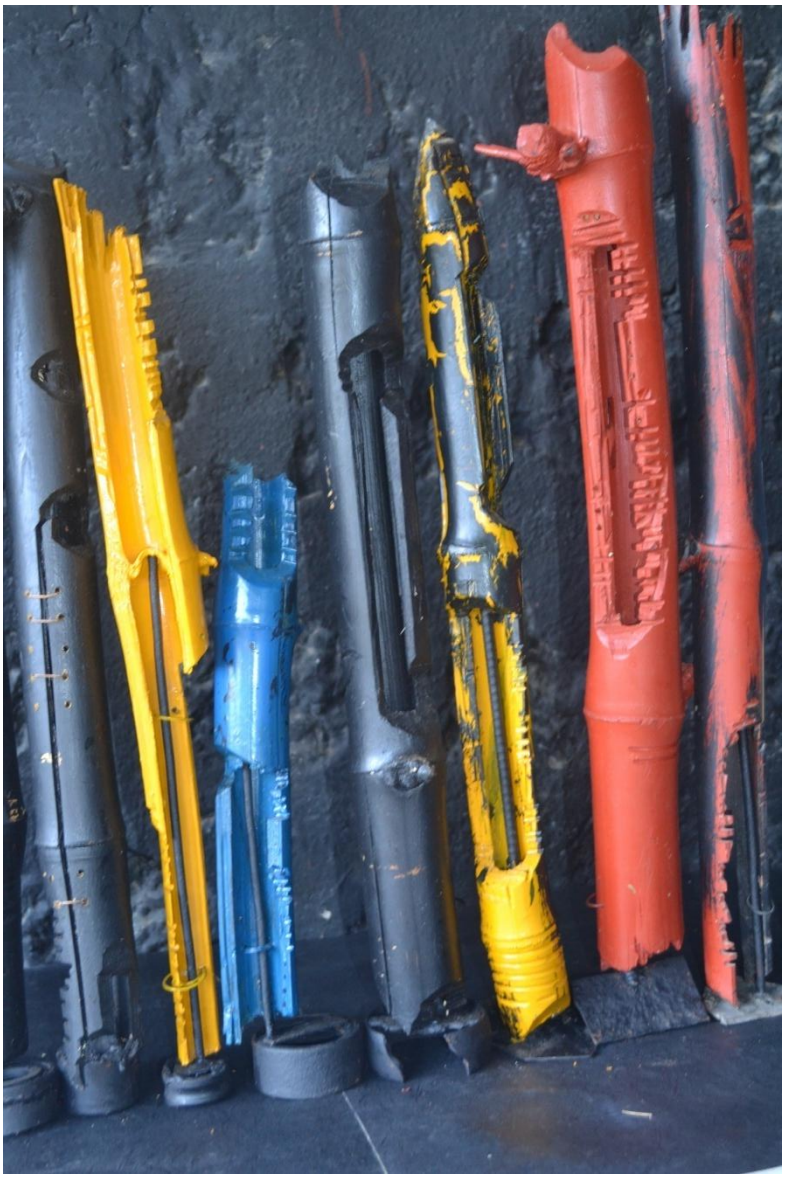

Plate XXXVI (C): *Ezumezu Akpaa* II (details, central area);

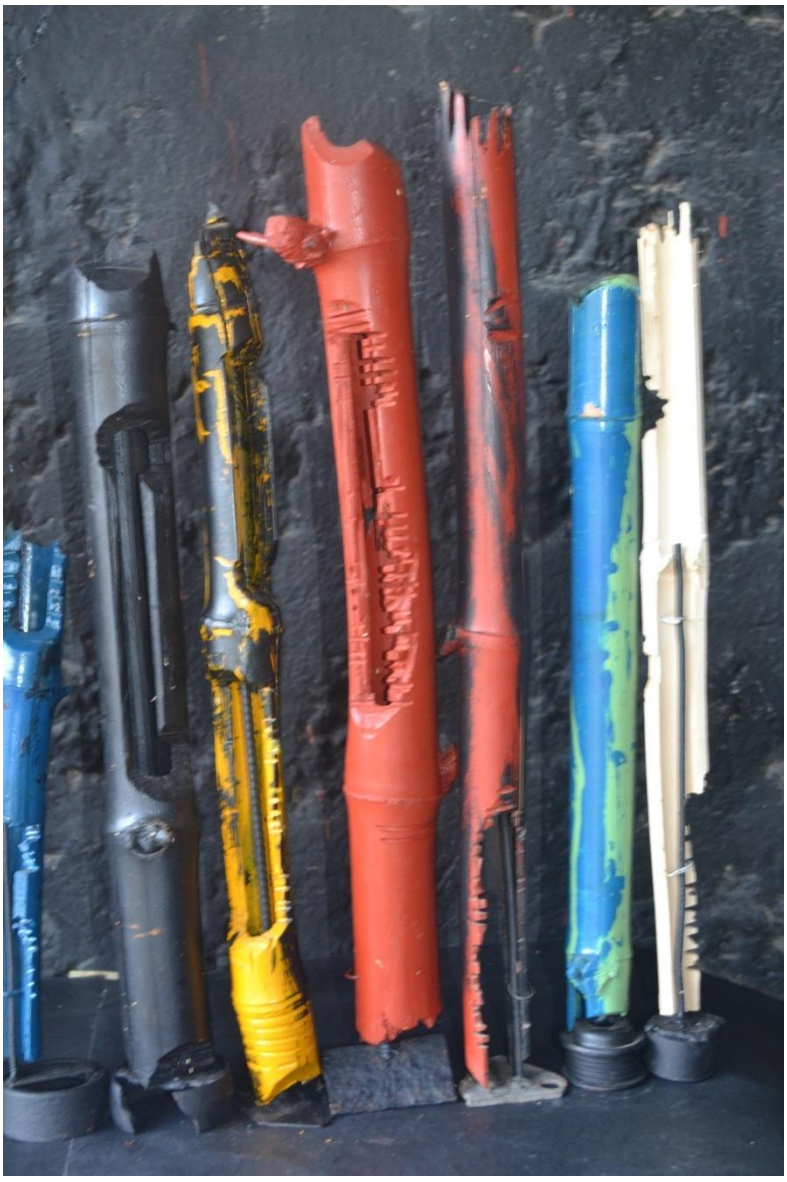

Plate XXXVI (D): *Ezumezu Akpaa* II (details, right side);



Plate XXXVII (A): *Ewu neh Okhko* (Goats and Chicken); Details; Chicken, cellophane and thread, 2013



Plate XXXVII (B): *Ewu neh Okhko* (details, front view);



Plate XXXVII (C): *Ewu neh Okhko* (details, side view);



Plate XXXVIII (A): *Onyiaa-oha* (Satisfier of the Public); Details; Mango-Tree, Jute-sack, Coloured-fabric-stripe, Bell, and the Ground, Green-area, behind Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2013



Plate XXXVIII (B): *Onyiaa-oha* (details, lower front view);



Plate XXXVIII (C): *Onyiaa-oha* (details, lower back view);



Plate XXXIX (A): *Ewu neh Okhko* II (Goats and Chicken II); Girl, Shawl and thread, 2013

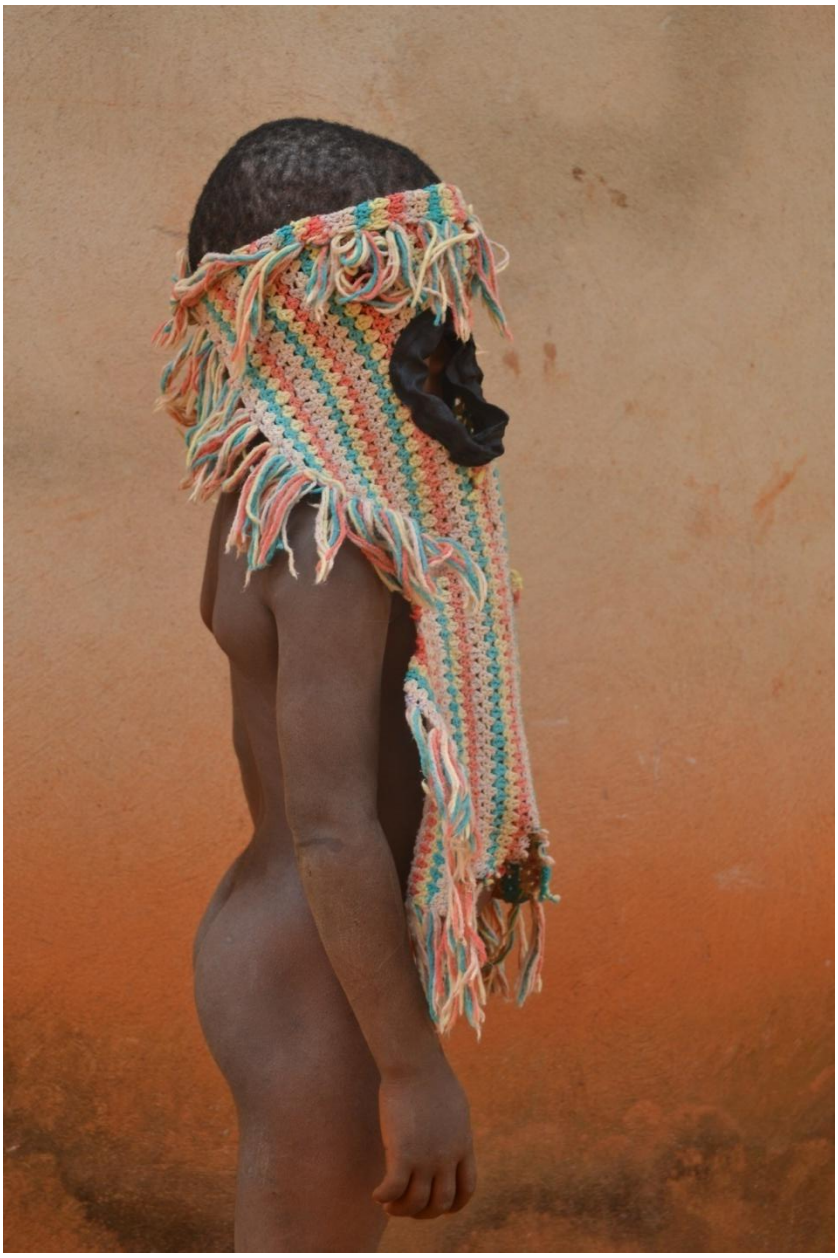

Plate XXXIX (B): *Ewu neh Okhko* II (details, side-view);



Plate XXXIX (C): *Ewu neh Okhko* II (details, back-view);



Plate XL: *Attama Nugwu neh* (Priest and Priestess); Hollowed Trunks, Picture-manipulated Installation, 2014



Plate XLI (A): *Ikpogwu-Maa* (the Final Gathering of the Spirits); Details; Metal-rod, Steel, Coloured Fabric-stripe; 328cm X 145cm X 9cm; Frontage of a Ware-house, Fine Art (Postgraduate) Studio Annex, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2012



Plate XLI (B): *Ikpogwu-Maa* (details, side view);



Plate XLI (C): *Ikpogwu-Maa* (details, upper area);



Plate XLII (A): Transformation, Wood, Jute, Chaplet, Metal and thread; 193cm X 134cm X 25cm; 2014



Plate XLII (B): Transformation (details, back view)



Plate XLII (C): Transformation (details, upper front view)



Plate XLIII (A): *Ori-obrh* (Consumer of Stake); Details; Pine (Conifer) Tree, Fabric, Rod, Bell, Feather and Basket; Sculpture Garden, Postgraduate Studio Annex, Fine Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2014



Plate XLIII (B): *Ori-obrh* (details, upper area);



Plate XLIII (C): *Ori-obrh* (details, lower area);



Plate XLIV: *Ewu neh Okhko* III (Goats and Chicken III); Chicken, Little Girl, Goat, Fabric-mask, Picture-manipulated Installation, 2014



Plate XLV (A): *Odo-shiere* (the Biggest Masquerade); Details; Palm tree, performers, gong, flute and rope; roadside, NUGA-Gate road, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2013



Plate XLV (B): *Odo-shiere* (details, right side);



Plate XLV (C): *Odo-shiere* (details, left side);



Plate XLVI (A): *Didigbo-digbo* (Everything); Details; Stick, Jute-sack, Coloured-fabric-stripe, and Tread; 232cm X 164cm X 32cm; Compound by roadside to village-square, Ohodo; 2013



Plate XLVI (B): *Didigbo-digbo* (details, upper area);



Plate XLVI (C): *Didigbo-digbo* (details, lower area);



Plate XLVII (A): *Ochi-eboh* (Collector of Double); Details; Hollowed Trunk and Lad; Sculpture Garden, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2013

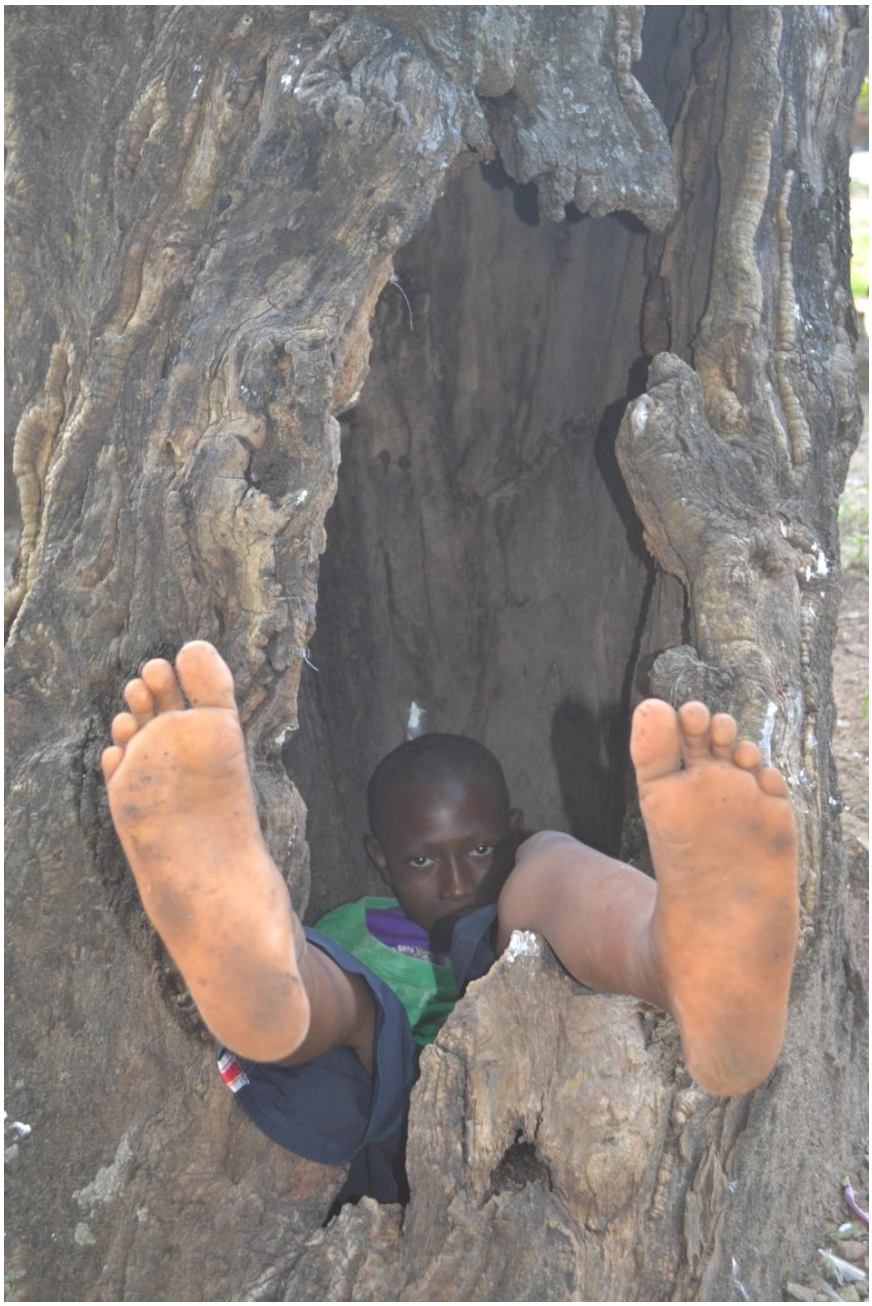

Plate XLVII (B): *Ochi-eboh* (details, central area);



Plate XLVIII (A): *Omaba* (Treasury Tear-er); Details; Basket, Currency Note and Metal; 196cm X 78cm X 53cm; Green Area, Catholic Church, Ohebe-dim; 2013



Plate XLVIII (B): *Omaba* (details, upper area);



Plate XLVIII (C): *Omaba* (details, lower area);



Plate XLIX (A): Caged-god (Chi Eji-nji); Details; Masquerade tree, flag-pole, metallic fence, cable and building complex, First Bank Premises, Sokoto-road, Samaru, Zaria; 2013



Plate XLIX (B): Caged-god (details, back view);



Plate XLIX (C): Caged-god (details, front view);



Plate L (A): *Oyikogo* (Adopter of Values); Details; Wood, Jute and Chaplet; 193cm X 118cm X 25cm; 2013



Plate L (B): *Oyikogo* (details, upper-central area);



Plate L (C): *Oyikogo* (details, back-upper area);



Plate LI (A): *Ishi-Maa* (Head of the Spirit); Details; Chair and palm-frond-stalk (Igbegiri); 204cm X 168cm X 169cm; Unyasu-Opi; 2013



Plate LI (B): *Ishi-Maa* (details, back view);



Plate LI (C): *Ishi-Maa* (details, side-upper area);



Plate LII (A): *Ikpoh* (Anthill); Details; Calabash and Rod; 73cm X 78cm X37cm; 2012



Plate LII (B): *Ikpoh* (details, upper area);



Plate LII (C): *Ikpoh* (details, lower area);



Plate LIII (A): *Ogbh-yeh-meh* (Disperser of Crowd); Details; Flame of the forest, Metal and Plastic; roadside behind Department of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; 2013



Plate LIII (B): *Ogbh-yeh-meh* (details, center half);



Plate LIII (C): *Ogbh-yeh-meh* (details, lower area);



Plate LIV: Complete Metamorphosis, Hollowed-Trunk, Lad, and Cloth, Picture-manipulated Installation, 2014

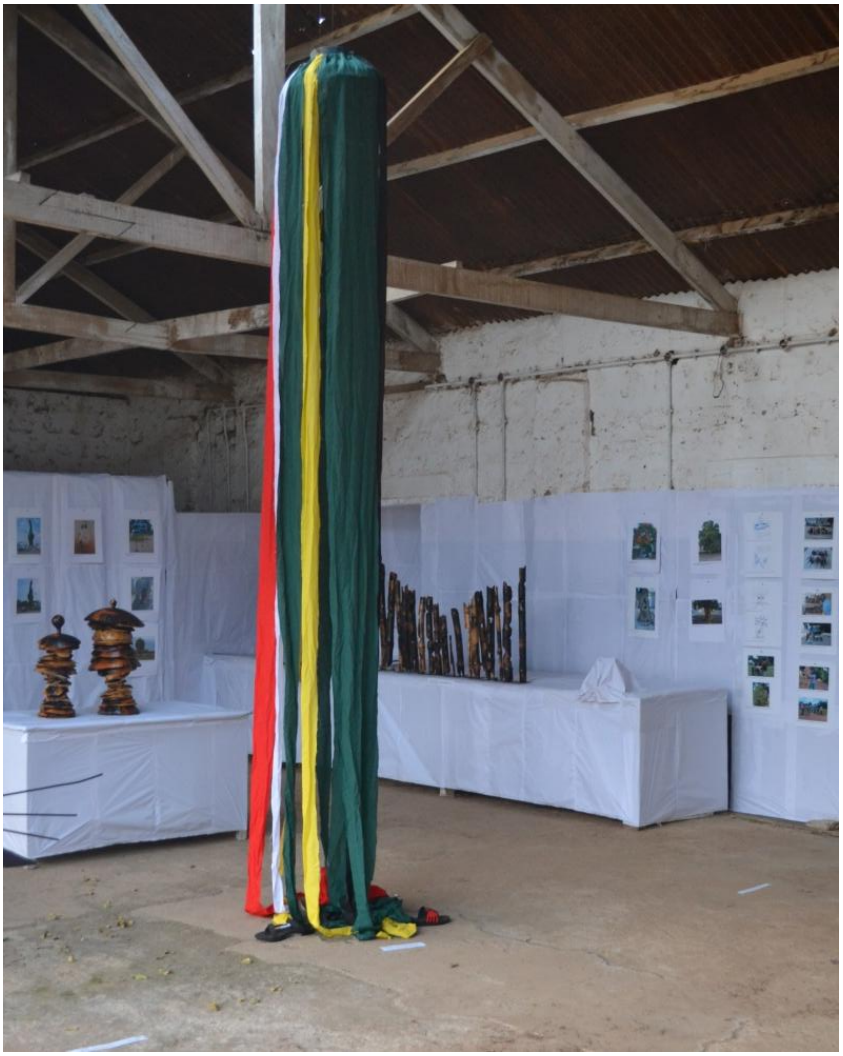

Plate LV (A): Something-Nothing; Fabric-stripe, metal, rope, and sandal; Adjustable height; 2014;

Something-Nothing (Ihe dh-Ihe adhg) is an installation of stripes of coloured fabric and buckled sandals. The supporting rope (fishing line) is hidden; and though the centre space is apparently void, the sporadic swing movement it makes, creates a sensation of intrinsic force around it. The basic controversy in the contemporary conceptions of *Omabe* tradition is if there is really a supernatural force in its form. As symbolized in this work, some people believe that there is something while others maintain that there is nothing in *Omabe*. And you, what do you see in the form as captured in plate LV; something or nothing?

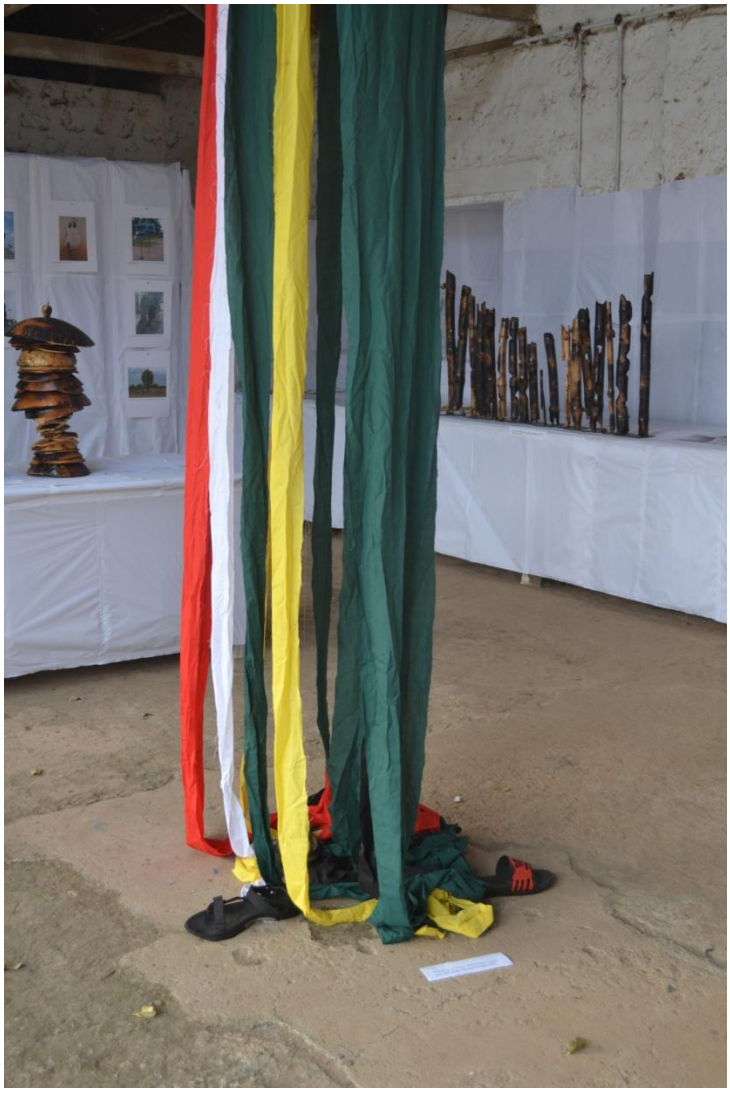

Plate LV (B): Something-Nothing; (details, lower area)



Plate LV (C): Something-Nothing; (details, lower back-area)

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the concluding notes of this research. In it, a summary of what transpired in the exercise is made; the findings of the research are highlighted; and conclusions are drawn there-from. Recommendations on maintaining the gains of this research are also made in this chapter.

6.2 Research Summary

Persistent quarrel over the interpretation of form nomenclatures of *Omabe* (Masquerade mythology) in Nsukka-Igbo necessitated creation of visible forms, in installation sculptures, from the various conceptions of it, for possible value reunification. Proceeding through practice-based research technique, involving previous collections and documentations of unusual developments around *Omabe* tradition; reflection on popular statements (musical lyrics, oratory, song, and names) of and about *Omabe*; participatory observation of *Omabe*-related activities; interaction with the key players in the affairs of *Omabe*; and conception simulation, involving metaphoric description of *Omabe* tradition by the natives, the contemporary form-conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo were extracted. The results were collated and it was discovered that generally, the descriptions or conceptions of *Omabe* fell into two main form-frames: horrific forms and glorious forms.

As all these form-descriptions were based on concrete evidence and wish, it became apparent that the present circumstance (today) happened to be a battleground between the cultural protagonists, who perceived *Omabe* based on its glorious past (yesterday), and the antagonists, who believed that, given the present advancement and sophistication in science and technology, *Omabe* tradition would have no place in the science-prone future (tomorrow). Thus, the form-descriptions, attitudes, inclinations and wishes of the protagonists were seen to be based on revising yesterday or dragging *Omabe* tradition back to its glorious yesteryears; whereas those of the antagonists were seen to be based on stripping *Omabe* of its glorious past and skyrocketing it to the scientific future (tomorrow's) oblivion. So, in line with the conceptual frame of anarchical representation in readymade designation, refractive gaze studio approach, which (like the refracted light in physics, and *Omabe*'s pronouncement) reflects concepts in opposite direction and unusual environment, was developed and used to correlate all the wishes or form-conceptions and relate them onto concrete materials, as installations.

Through the manipulative techniques of refractive gaze, assembled *kporokpoto, ojji,* and calabash became *Omabe*-forms; stem-masked mango tree, baskets embossed with Naira notes, and stalk-ornamented flame of the forest tree became *Omabe*-based installations; and sticks masked with *ekpoto* (jute), a girl masked with Jewish-like shawl, a goat masked with Jewish-like shawl, and a chicken masked with cellophane became *Omabe*-based installations too. Again, it was realized that, as the form-conceptions of both the protagonists and the antagonists were valid, what was needed was harmonious utilization of all of them in social interaction. So, the form-conceptions of the protagonists and those of the antagonists were combined: assimilated together and refracted or gazed out in familiar and unfamiliar materials. In it, a configuration of palm frond stalks and a

plastic chair; a hollowed trunk with a lad; and a barricaded masquerade-tree and a flag-pole, also became *Omabe*-based installations.

Most of the installations in the research were executed site-specifically in parks and popular roadsides, and it followed that in all their performances, presentations and domiciles, they provoked serious debates and discussions among the people on their conceptions of *Omabe* tradition. Diffusion of form-conceptions is still on-going in the domiciled places and it is determined to be sustained, rekindled, and even expanded periodically with fresh executions. As a people's character-bearing and readily available medium, which majorly facilitated form expressions in this research, 'tree-masquerading' is believed to be a fertile ground for a sustainable creative endeavour, in maintaining conception diffusion, for possible value reunification of the Nsukka-Igbo, on *Omabe* tradition.

6.3 Research Findings

Although this research adopted inclusive subjectivism, with elements of both quantitative and qualitative paradigms in its approach, as in the people's conception simulation and classification of the results thereof, it did not test hypothesis but had some research questions to answer. This unit therefore, provides the main information generated from the proceedings of this work, to answer the research questions set up at its inception; especially as the achievement of its set-objectives has been discussed in chapter four; but not without first highlighting the general antecedence to it.

Generally, it was discovered that: Like most other religious symbols, *Omabe* thrived in esotericism and incredibility; performing extra feats, in provision of wealth and wonder, to keep its worth and value supreme and above the understandings of the populace. In the traditional

African society, group communication and inter-tribal and cultural diffusion was minimal; but as special allies, *Omabe* makers (the initiates) safely travelled extra miles, to the places where the commoners would not dare go, the 'land of the dead', and borrowed materials, performances, and other ideas that were strange to their own tradition. Mirror and silver, for instance, looked highly strange to the traditional Nsukka, hence, their usage in the costume of *Omabe*. This way, *Omabe* was highly incredible in its inclinations: costume, musicals, sayings, and dance styles; claimed to have been brought from the spirit-world. As modern technology made communication easier, reducing the world to a global village, people mixed-up and familiarized themselves with the developments around the world. Developments therefore, rarely looked incredible to the modern man. This way, possessions of *Omabe* and the makers could no longer appear strange, incredible, and extra human to the modern Nsukka. Glorious form-conceptions of Omabe tradition, in this research, came mainly from the elders and the 'uneducated' whereas the horrific form-conceptions came mainly from the youth and the 'educated' or 'modern' people.

In their disorientation and enthronement of individualism over communalism however, the modern people have not found succor elsewhere, enough to completely leave the tradition. Rather, in their desperation, everything (humans of all classes, animals, plants and objects that are dry, empty and insect-infested) has turned to represent the masquerade (*Omabe*) and tends to chase them, as *Omabe* would have been doing. Shadows have turned to masquerades (*Omabe*) and modern people are being frightened by them. It is a good time therefore, to go real spiritual (invisible conceptual), in forging forms for *Omabe*, so that, the modern man could also be intrigued by it; not only because, postmodernism (conceptualism) has hitherto, remained awesome to many a modern man (Docx, 2011), but also because of the following:

1. Formless conception can be given physical representation and the invisible becomes visible in the artistic eye. As elaborated in chapter four, visible forms were developed from all the invisible conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo. Plates IX, X, XI, and XII are visible forms of *Omabe* tradition as conceived by the people.
2. Through empathetic consideration (refractive gaze), conflicting ideologies can be symbolized in (sculpture) installation and their forms can stand both separately and in combination. Plates XIII, XIV, XV, and XVI are installation sculptures developed from the glorious form-conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo; whereas plates XVII, XVIII, XIX, and XX are based on the horrific form-conceptions of the people.
3. Taking sculpture from and to the people, rather than dictating it to them, enhances communal appreciation of it; and this is what installation entails. In developing installation sculptures reflected in plates XXI, XXII, XXIII, and XXIV, people's conceptions (glorious and horrific form-conceptions) of *Omabe* tradition were combined; and figures 52, 53, and 54 capture attraction and elicitation of public discourse with them.
4. Every tree is a masquerade of sorts and can sustain professional practice based on the *Omabe* tradition. The overwhelming attention given to tree masquerading in the development of installations in this research, signals a creation of personal artistic language in its direction.

6.4 Conclusion

Contemporary conceptions of *Omabe* tradition in Nsukka-Igbo are running on two opposing fronts: horrific forms and glorious forms. This way, the very existence of *Omabe* tradition in this

area, is seriously threatened; but as a matter of conception, the difference between the two polar forces in *Omabe* definition, is resolvable through empathetic considerations, which installation art provides. Both the horrific and glorious form-conceptions of *Omabe* yielded installation sculptures, which instigated public discourse on its culture. The *Omabe* tradition can therefore, be revived, to live richly in physical forms, and conceptual forms; because, *Omabe* is rich in conceptual form and, there is form in formlessness.

6.5 Recommendations

In line with the findings of this research, it is recommended that, for sculpture in the modern time, including cultural installation-performances like *Omabe*, to play a role as a symbolic visual language, and serve as an instrument used to bind people together, as it did in the traditional African society, it has to be inclusive; and for it to be inclusive, it should be conceptual in nature, uncovering conceptions of social norms for possible unification. Collaboration in sculpture should not only be with people who would serve as the artists and the art, but should also include those whose way of life is being represented. As Lu Yan would say, in The Forbidden Kingdom (Lionsgate and Casey, 2008), the contemporary makers of sculpture, including *Omabe*, should "learn the form, but seek the formless" because, "formless, nameless, the true matter dwells within".

6.6 Contributions to Knowledge

The following are some of the outstanding ways this research has contributed to knowledge, especially the contemporary art practice. It established that:

1. Artistic collaboration can include conceptions. By direct collection and utilization of people's form conceptions of *Omabe* in the development of installation, inclusive subjectivism has shifted the frontiers of collaboration from harnessing of (multiple) hands to assimilation of conceptions, usually lacking in fine art.
2. Invisible (perception) can be given physical form. Application of metaphor in this research, has given insight on extraction of the invisible perceptions pictorially, providing alternative to physical materials in culture-based installation.
3. In installation art, form-framing can be facilitated by "refraction". Refractive gaze, as adapted in this research, has expanded the terminology and approach to reflective and reflexive memory-based studio research.
4. Tree masquerading is a (new) line of thought in installation art. Although tree has been widely utilized, in parts and whole, in making different kinds of art, consideration of every tree as a reliable cultural indicator, from which masquerade forms could be refracted, is relatively new, especially to human conception.

References

Achebe, C. (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. Ibadan, Nigeria; William Heinemann Ltd; P. 108

Aniakor, C. (1978). *Omabe* Festival. Nigeria Magazine. Lagos, Nigeria; Published by the Cultural Division of the Federal Ministry of Information; Pp 3 - 12

Asogwa, R. O. (2012). Church and Tradition in Nsukka-Igbo: Relationship. Oral Account Narrated in Her Compound, Umueszike-nwoke, Ohodo, Nsukka, Nigeria. November 14

Atadoga, I. (2012). *Omabe* Tradition of Nsukka-Igbo; Igalla Connection. Oral Account Narrated in His Compound, Egume, Kogi State; June 16

Baxter, K; Lopez, H.O; Serig, D. and Sullivan, G. (2008). The Necessity of Studio Art as a Site and Source for Dissertation Research. Malden, USA; NSEAD/Blackwell publishing Ltd. Pp. 8 – 14.

Beidelman, T. O. (1993). Secrecy and Society: the Paradox of Knowing and the Knowing of Paradox. Evanston, II: Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, Pp 6-7, Retrieved March 8, 2013 from http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4761530.0005.008

Biobaku, S. O (1976). The Living Culture of Nigeria. Lagos, Nigeria, Thomas Nelson & Sons; P 10

Bishop, C. (2010). Installation Art; A Critical History. Millbank, London; Tate Publishing; P.6

Buhari, J. (2015). (The) Visual Arts as Knowledge Production; Inaugural Lecture. The University Organised Lectures Committee, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Pp. 45-51

Candy, L. (2006). Practice-based Research; A Guide. Retrieved Online, July 20, 2012, from http://www.creativityandcognition.com

Chase, (2010). *Omabe Masquerade Performance*. Retrieved Online July 2, 2012, from http://wwwnsukkamasquerades-blogspot.com/

Cherry, K. (2014). Perception and the Perceptual Process; Retrieved Online, March 26, 2014 from http://psychology.about.com/od/sensationandperception/ss/perceptproc_8.htm

Cheyenne Interfaith Council (2011). *Sculpture Unveiled during International Day of Peace*. USA. Retrieved Online July 15, 2012, from www.interfaithchenne.org/interfaith-peace-sculpture

Chic, B. (2013), Gravity and Grace; Retrieved Online April 17, 2015 from http://www.binichic.com/blog/2013/04/gravity-and-grac/

Cole, A. L. and Knowles, J. G. (2008). Arts-Informed Research. In: Knowles, J. G and Cole, A. L. (Ed) *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research.* California, USA; Sage Publications, Inc.. Pp 59 - 62

Connecticut Art Scene (2010). Stonewall. Retrieved Online January 9, 2013 from http://ctartscene.blogspot.com/2010_10_01_archive.html

Davies, A. (2011). Living / Culture. Retrieved Online, September 21, 2012, from http://www.treehugger.com/culture/stick-hut-sculptures-build-volunteers-evoke-peace-and-simplicity.html

Dinjos, W. (2012). Ancient Masquerades versus Modern Masquerades. Retrieved Online, August 11, 2012 from http://walterdinjos.wordpress.com/

Docx, E. (2011). Postmodernism is Dead; Retrieved Online, July 14, 2014, from http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/features/postmodernism-is-dead-va-exhibition-age-of-authenticism

Dukor, M. F. (1994). Theistic Humanism; Philosophy of Scientific Africanism. Surulere, Lagos, Nigeria; Chimah & Sons Productions, Pp 91 - 106

Eisner, E. (2008). Art and knowledge. In: Knowles, J. G and Cole, A. L. (Ed) *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*. California, USA, Sage Publications, Inc. Pp 3 - 11

Elkins, J. (2009). *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art*. Washington, DC; New Academia Publishing, Pp 145 - 281

Ene, M. O. (2007). Kwenu: Oure Culture, Our Future; Retrieved Online, October 18, 2012, from http://www.kwenu.com/moe/2007/concept_umuada.htm

Enekwe, O. O. (1987). Igbo Masks: the Oneness of Ritual and Theatre. Nigeria Magazine. Lagos, Nigeria; Department of Culture, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, P56

Esogbue, E. (2011). A Short History of Obollo Towns and Communities in Enugu State, Nigeria. Retrieved Online, December 21, 2012, from http://www.nsukkaonline.net/Mmanwu.htm

Ettlin, M. (2000). Africa Ritual Beaded Doll from the Ovambo or Mwila People of Angola. Retrieved Online, March 05, 2014, from http://www.pinterest.com/pin/145522631681305060/

Eya, H. O. (2006). *The Concept of Mma in Enugu-Ezike*. Retrieved Online, December 21, 2012, from http://www.nsukkaonline.net/Mmanwu.htm

Eyo, E. (1990). Two Thousand Years of Nigerian Art. London, UK; Ethnographica; P. 186

Ezeagu, M. (2012). Igbo Architecture / Ulo Ome n'Igbo – Culture (5) – Nairaland. Retrieved Online, November 28, 2012, from http://www.nairaland.com/1005808/igbo-architecture-ulo-ome-nigbo/5

Gbaden, B. G. (2014). A Postmodernist Interrogation of Walls of Partition. Dissertation for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy; School of Postgraduate Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Pp 92 - 107

Gray, C. and Malins, J. (1993). Research Procedures/Methodology for Artists & Designers. Retrieved Online August 10, 2012 from http://openair.rgu.ac.uk Pp 3 - 12

---------- (2004). Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design. England, UK; Ashgate Publishing Ltd; Pp. 9 – 65

Haberkorn, C. (2007). *Transforming the Invisible: The Postmodernist Visual Artist as a Contemporary Mystic – A Review*. Retrieved Online, August 16, 2012, from http://www.cejournal.org/GRD/Invisible.pdf

Jari, J. (2014). Revealing Six Decades of Zaria Art School Treasures. An Inaugural Lecture Presented in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Pp 3 - 4

King, M. (2005). "Art and the Postsecular," *Journal of Visual Art Practice; Vol.* 4, no. 1 P. 10.

Lazzari, M. and Schlesier, D. (2008). *Exploring Art; a Global, Thematic Approach*; Third Edition. Belmont, USA; Thomson Higher Education; Pp 45 - 96

Leavy, P. (2009). *Method Meets Art: Arts – Based Research Practice*. New York, USA; The Guilford Press; Pp 1 – 24 & 215 - 238

Lionsgate and Casey, S. (2008). The Forbidden Kingdom; Mission Impossible. Boss Digital, Live Good, High Definition Movie. Lionsgate, The Weinstein Company; Casey Silver Productions

Mbah, G. A. and Uzodigwe, A. (2009). Onyohor Community. In The Portrait: History and Tradition of the People of Igbo-Etiti. Igbo-Etiti Writers' Club. Enugu, Nigeria; Joehills Production Services. Pp 224 – 242

Marcuse, H. (2010). Joseph Beuys. Retrieved Online, January 14, 2013, from http://fine290.blogspot.com/2010_11_01_archive.html

McEvilley, T. (1999). Sculpture in the Age of Doubt. New York, USA; Allworth Press. Pp 1 - 30

McMorran, S. M. (2007). *Interactive Painting: An Investigation of Interactive Art and its Introduction into a Traditional Art Practice*. A Thesis Submitted to the University of Northumbria at Newcastle for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

McNiff, S. (2008). Art-Based Research. In: Knowles, J. G and Cole, A. L. (Ed) *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research.* California, USA; Sage Publications, Inc. Pp 29 - 40

Nimkulrat, N. (2007). *The Role of Documentation in Practice-led Research*. Journal of Research Practice, 3(1), Article M6. Retrieved Online June 15, 2010, from http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/58/83

Norris, S. (2011). African Artists Address Environmental Struggles: Contemporary Art, Innovation and Design. Retrieved Online September 4, 2012 from http://artculture.com/international/african-contemporary-art/african-artists-address.environmenta-struggles

Nwoko, S. (1989), *Omabe Masking Tradition in Ibagwa-Aka; a Resource for Visual Communication Design*. MFA Thesis, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. PP 1-46

Nwoye, C. M. (2011). Igbo Cultural and Religious Worldview: An Insider's Perspective; International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Vol. 3(9), Pp. 304-317, Retrieved Online September 21, 2011 from http://www.academicjournals.org/IJSA

Obayi, D. A. and Ezugwu, C. (2009). Ohodo Town. In The Portrait: History and Tradition of the People of Igbo-Etiti. Igbo-Etiti Writers' Club. Enugu, Nigeria; Joehills Production Services. Pp 176 - 223

Offiah, J. U. and Okike, T. (2009). Ikolo Town. In The Portrait: History and Tradition of the People of Igbo-Etiti. Igbo-Etiti Writers' Club. Enugu, Nigeria; Joehills Production Services. Pp 118 - 143

Ogara, P. (2002). The Relevance of Inculturation in Mission. In The Shepherd; Social Communication, Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, Nigeria. Pp 52 - 53

Oloidi, O. (2009). Modern African Art: Yesterday and Today. In ARESUVA Exhibition Catalogue; National Gallery of Art, Abuja, Nigeria. Pp VII-XII

Omeye, M. (2012). Church and Tradition in Nsukka-Igbo: Relationship. Oral Account Narrated in Her Compound, Umueszike-nwoke, Ohodo, Nsukka, Nigeria. November 7

Onyeke, T. C. (2009). Ekwegbe Community. In The Portrait: History and Tradition of the People of Igbo-Etiti. Igbo-Etiti Writers' Club. Enugu, Nigeria; Joehills Production Services. Pp 58 -107

Osewa, O. (2012). *Masquerades in Igboland*; Nairaland. Retrieved Online July 5, 2012 from http://www.nairaland.com/583261/masquerades-igboland

Ozor, C. (2012). Abomination: Masquerade Rapes Undergraduate Nursing Mother; Retrieved Online, September 12, 2012 from http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/05/a-b-o-m-i-n-a-t-i-o-n-masquerade-rapes-undergraduate-nursing-mother/

Solymar, L. and Walsh, D. (1993). Lectures on the Electrical Properties of Material; Fifth Edition. New York, USA; Oxford University Press. Pp. 273-448

Stokstad, M. (2008). Art History; Third Edition. New Jersey, USA; Pearson Education Ltd. Pp. 17 – 1174

Sullivan, G. (2010). Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Arts. Second Edition. Los Angeles, USA; Sage Publications Inc. Pp. 62 – 79.

Suzuki, D. (1997). *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* ;St Leonards, NSW:Allen & Unwin Pty. Ltd., P. 188.

The Diary and Directory (2012). History of Nsukka Diocese. Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, Nigeria; The Shepherd Publication. Pp 10 - 12

Uchendu, K. (2011). *Masquerade Sacks Community, Kills 1, Burns 19 Houses*. Gbooza Internet News Community: News Blogs and Forums. Retrieved Online July 19, 2012, from http://www.gbooza.com/group/crime/forum/topics/masquerade-sacks-community#ixzz213oPl1Xt

Ugwu, C. (2011). Social Change and *Omabe*: A Critical Ethnography; *Nsukka Journal of the Humanities*, number 19, Retrieved Online, May 16, 2013 from https://.www.academia.edu/19873832/social_change_and_omabe_A_Critical_Ethnography Pp 112 – 119

Ugwu, H. C. (2012). *Igbo-Eze North Local Government; Culture and Tourism*. Retrieved Online December 12, 2012 from http://igboezenorth.com/tourism.php

Ugwueg, A. (2012). *Omabe* Tradition in Nsukka-Igbo; Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Oral Account Narrated in His Compound, Umueszike-nwoke, Ohodo, Nsukka, Nigeria. November 16

Ugwu-Nweze, O. (2012). *Omabe* Tradition; Origin and Development in Nsukka-Igbo. Oral Account Narrated in His Compound, Umueszike-nwoke, Ohodo, Nsukka, Nigeria. November 16

Ugwu-Omeye, E. (2012). *Omabe* Tradition; Origin and Development in Nsukka-Igbo. Oral Account Narrated in Otobo (*Omabe* Groove), Amojo, Ohodo, Nsukka, Nigeria. November 14

UN Education Outreach (2015). El Anatsui. In Unlearning Intolerance, Art Changing Attitudes Toward the Environment. Retrieve Online April 17, 2015 from http://www.un.org/en/unlearningintolerance/el.html

Waddington, T. (2008). Conception Leads Perception; Retrieved Online, March 27, 2014, from http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/smarts/200811/conception-leads-perception

Weber, S. (2008). Visual Images in Research. In: Knowles, J. G and Cole, A. L. (Ed) *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*. California, USA; Sage Publications, Inc. Pp. 41 – 50.

Widjaja, M. (2011). *Traditional Igbo Masquerades and Festivals*; Igbo Culture, Igbo Language and Enugu – Igboguide.org. Retrieved Online 22 May, 2012, from http://www.igboguide.org/HT-chapter9.htm

Whitehand, D. (2009). Evoking the Sacred: The Artist as Shaman. Exegesis for Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy; Arts Academy, University of Ballarat, Australia. Pp 40 – 104

World Bank Education Programme (2015). What is Indigenous Knowledge? Retrieved 17 April, 2015 from http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/basic.htm

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Rhetoric of Udele Idenyi

Someone who heard Him earlier had shouted: Udele Idenyi! Udele Idenyi!! O-o-ori obrh!!! Meaning: Vulture of Idenyi! Vulture of Idenyi!! Consumer of Stake!!! And He echoed:

Meh-meh, nwa maa! Meh-meh, nwa maa!!

Ejerh m beh onye ga-akwu-g amh; s-r-m kwube-nya amh; n wee dukwu a n, gbalig-deeh

Neh beh Ezugwu Omeke! Neh beh Ezugwu Omeke!!

Aa-chig oso ek-urua; neh urua nh-ruete ek-g-deeh

Me-neh onye s-r neh mh a bh-g ebia, ekele ahua na-aboh, n-nyidegeh o-nyilegeh

Translated literally as:

Well-done, son of the spirit! Well-done, son of the spirit!!

I went to the home of someone that bears no penis, who asked me to attach him with a penis; and I pegged it on him and have taken off

In the home of Ezugwu Omeke! In the home of Ezugwu Omeke!!

Sleep is not undertaken in a hurry; it is when sleep comes that it is undertaken

But anyone who says that I am not a shaman, next year – two years, I step down and he steps in

And the elders, from their respective homes, interjected, in lower tone: Onyee d-nh, Nna m-oche!

Meaning: Who dares that, My Forefather!

Appendix B: *Omabe* Praise-Song by Umuoka Masquerade-Makers

The song follows in pairs of stanzas; the first exclamation is made by the vocalist and second is by the chorus:

Gbaa! Nna mh, eze!
Nna mh eze, edoga osha oh!

Isuru a riaah!

Isuru ria-g-deh neh isuru ria-nwukoh!

Enyi-me-enyi enyirh ugwuh!
Enyi-me-enyi enyirh ugwu n'okaesfe oh!

Okpe eberh!
Okpe eberh n'uroko oh!

Ube a miaah!
Ube a miaa nshog-nsho oh!

Mhnyi ukwu ezueah!
Mhnyi ukwu zueah o-wulaa n'oto, meh ehnsha-ehnsha shaa okorh n'elh!

Oti-elechi a ma-eg nwa-ne-ehnyeh!
Oga-magorh nwa-ne-ehnyeh o tighde nwa-ne-ehnyeh?!

Literally translated, it reads:

Alert! My father, the king!
My father, the king, satisfier of the masses oh!

The owl has cried!
If the owl cries, the owl is crying for good oh!

The elephant has mounted the hill!
The elephant has mounted the hill in the middle of the day (broad-day-light) oh!

The (male) eagle has landed!
The (male) eagle has landed on iroko oh!

Favourite fruit-plant (Ube) has yielded!
Favourite fruit-plant (Ube) has yielded bountifully oh!

Heavy rain has poured!
If heavy rain pours, it penetrates hollows but if dew sprinkles, it hangs on top oh!

Crowd managing-masquerade (Oti-elechi) could not recognize his mother's child!
Did he recognize his mother's child and started beating his mother's child?!