EXPLORING THE HEART-SHAPED YAM FOLIAGE

IN ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

BY

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MFA/ENV-DESIGN/43155/2012-2013

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS, FACULTY OF ENVIROMENTAL DESIGN, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS, FACULTY OF ENVIROMENTAL DESIGN, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

2014

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this project report entitled, "EXPLORING THE HEART-SHAPED YAM FOLIAGE IN ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM" is a record of my original research in the department of fine arts under the supervision of Prof. Mu' azu Mohammed Sani (Major Supervisor) and Prof. Jerry Buhari (Minor Supervisor). The information derived from literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of reference provided. No part of this project has been previously presented for another degree or diploma at any university.

SHAIBU JUMAH UMAR _____ _____

NAME OF STUDENT **Signature** **Date**

CERTIFICATION

This project entitled "EXPLORING THE HEART-SHAPED YAM FOLIAGE IN PAINTING" by Shaibu Jumah Umar meets the regulations governing the award of the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Degree in painting, Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The project is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

Prof. Mu'azu Mohammad Sani Chairman, Supervisory Committee	Date
Prof. Jerry Buhari Member, Supervisory Committee	Date
Dr. Kefas Danjuma Head of Department	Date
Prof. A.A Joshua Dean, Postgraduate School	Date

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my late father, Alhaji Umar Osuwa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher wishes to acknowledge the people that have immensely contributed to the success of this research through critical involvement, encouragement and financial assistance. My major supervisor, Prof. Mu'azu Mohammed Sani and my minor supervisor, Prof. Jerry Buhari, critically supervise my work. I also acknowledge Gushem P. O for his assistance. Dr. Kefas Danjuma, the Head of Department, Fine Arts and PG coordinator, Dr (Mrs) Nkom who gave advice towards the completion of this work. I will always remember late Prof. J. Z. Okwori for his immense contribution. My elder brother, Engr. Idris Umar, gave me the financial support I needed throughout this work. Finally, to my wife, Mrs. Nafisat Umar for her support.

ABSTRACT

This research explores the heart-Shaped yam foliage in painting. This study is based on the fact that several contemporary artists explore form in painting. Such forms include genre scenes, folklores, landscapes, portraits and still life with little or no attention towards experimenting in painting using Heart-Shaped Yam foliage. It is therefore the desire of the researcher to experiment with foliage that could create aesthetic awareness among the contemporary artist. The aim is to create forms in painting from the heart –shaped yam foliage; to explore the aesthetics quality of yam foliage in painting; to create paintings using the heart –shaped yam foliage beyond its natural form and to create source of inspiration in modern Nigerian art.

Three stages of heart-shaped yam foliage were explored in the research. The three stages include: the natural stage, the semi abstract stage and the abstract stage. The three stages arouse a visibility of lines, shapes, form and colours that could create a perception of realism to abstraction. It therefore, gives an insight of how the elements (line, shape, form and colour) that constitute foliage can be used to create aesthetics in painting. It is on this note that further research on this topic can be carried out because the study is limited to the exploration of the heart- shaped yam foliage in painting. Therefore, more researches on foliage should be taken into consideration to create new forms that will be visually inclined and having meanings that could challenge the 21st century in the history of painting.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Foliage is the major photosynthetic part of most plants. It is borne at the nodes of stem, usually below a bud. Most foliage are bifacial, having a definite adaxial and abaxial surfaces, but sometimes it is unifacial and lacks such differentiation. The foliage, known as "green algae", has a number of features, including the presence of photosynthetic pigment (chlorophyll)- storage of carbohydrates, usually in the form of starch, and the presence of two interior whip flash flashgella (often modified or sometimes lost) .Four definitions as enumerated by Fartex (2008) are as follows:

1. Foliage consists of leaves, especially tree leaves, considered as a whole.
2. It is an ornamental representation of leaves, stem and flowers, especially in architecture.
3. It is the green leaves of plants.
4. It consists of leaves that are together with the stem, twigs of branches that are attached together.

Foliage possesses characteristics (such as shape, margin, hair and so on) that are important for identifying plant species. These structures are part of what makes leaves determinant. Foliage grows and achieves a specific pattern and shape, then stop, while other plant parts like stems and roots are non- determinant and usually continue to grow as long as they have the resources to do so.

Aesthetically, foliage is grown in the field or cultivated for its ornamental leaves and flowers. They are flowers with gorgeous and attractive spray of leaves and they are brilliant with sparks of green shades in the sun. Foliage, as characterized by its colourful- shape and the presence of line on the leaves, intimates the other design elements present to make it look visually artistic.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the prehistoric era, according to art historians, the cave men painted on the walls of caves with colours made from leaves which served as ornament for painting among the early men. The ancient Egyptians also adopted leaves with flowers as motives on their flower vases. The flower vases form part of the importance of men that are still alive, known as 'the picture for the living' in the Egyptian history. As recorded by Zulganarin.com (2008), the researcher was also made to know that:

> Leaves in India, especially those of the pup eel tree, with heart- shaped, are seen to be important in the society. The Hindus were taught to worship and revere these particular leaves, believing that they would influence their own personal wealth and riches. The pup eel tree is an evergreen plant, so the Hindus regard it as a symbol of eternal life. It symbolizes long life and also represents the divine creator, Brahma. Therefore, the trees are grown in front of temples to show their significance.

Regional geography from encyclopedia Botanica, Vol. 3, states that almost 75% of the world's tropical regions are covered with foliage which includes: trees, grasses and flowers. Among this foliage, includes agricultural products. This is due to the necessity to cultivate food for human consumption. The study derived inspiration

from the interest for the natural green colours of leaves and other colours of leaves that have been intimated with the open landscape which, in some cases, create a beautiful scenario on the field. Walter *et al* (1999), remarks that, "The grim reality that biological diversity is rapidly being lost fueled by the exploration of the world's flora, yielding a torrent of remarkable discoveries, not just about what species exist on earth, but also about patterns of diversity across the landscape". Nunnally (1981) notes that "inspiration is said to be acquired when an artist encounters an object which gives him ideas for artistic creation". Linderman (1957) observes that "the world in which we live and our immediate environment provide tremendous sources of inspiration for creativity". The trees, flowering plants and other natural plants are no exception of the authors' notions.

1.2 The Statement of Problem

Aesthetically, the yam foliage has elements which include: lines, shapes, forms, texture, and colour that can possibly be brought together to create a unique form in painting. This study is based on the fact that several contemporary artists in Nigeria have explored in painting with form. Such form includes themes that are related to culture, genre scenes, folklores, landscapes, portraits and still life with little or no experimentation in painting using foliage. Therefore, the problem of this study is to create abstract expressionism in painting using heart-shaped yam foliage.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

I. To explore the aesthetic quality of yam foliage in painting.

II. To create paintings using the heart –shaped yam foliage beyond its natural form.

III. To create source of inspiration in modern Nigerian painting using the heart-shaped yam foliage.

1.4 Research Questions

The following is an attempt to figure out relevant research questions to be answered in the context of this research.

I. How can the aesthetic quality be achieved using heart –shaped yam foliage in painting?

II. How can the heart –shaped yam foliage be used beyond its natural form in painting?

III. How will the research provide source of inspiration in modern Nigerian painting using the heart-shaped yam foliage in painting?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will bring to light the possibility of exploring in painting, using yam foliage and as an alternative approach of expression that differs from the optical realism that is commonly used in painting. It will also create the visibility of the inherent features associated with the yam foliage that can be of benefit to the modern Nigeria painters for the purpose of expression through careful observation and in long or short term provides an additional source of inspiration for the present generation of painters.

1.6 Justification of the Study

The justification of this study is the interest that the researcher has towards the aesthetic qualities of foliage. It is on this note that the researcher has chosen to explore in painting, the heart-shaped yam foliage.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study is concerned with exploring yam foliage as a source of inspiration in painting and in view of this; the research is evolved on the heart–shaped yam foliage (*discoria alata*) among other varieties.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND WORKS

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature and works of artists that have relatively explored in their painting using foliage.

2.1 Modification in Foliage

Leaves that have been distorted due to the effect of sunlight, wind and diseases caused by fungi and the drying nature of the leaves could cause leaf decolouration. In some parts of the world, during summer, leaves are turned blue, yellow, red, brown and purple. As reviewed by fotosearch.com (2009), it explains that:

> Autumn leaf colour is a phenomenon that affects the normally green leaves of many deciduous trees and shrub which they take on, during a few weeks in the autumn season, one or many colours that range from red to yellow. The phenomenon is commonly called fall colours and autumn colours, while the expression fall foliage usually connotes the viewing of a tree or forest whose leaves have undergone the change.

Launer (1979) notes that "natural colours of inanimate forms can change according to their surroundings. Even in the same light, the colours will differ". This notification, by Launer, paved way for the visibility of the aesthetic qualities in leaves that created further inspiration. Apart from the leaves' natural beauty on the landscape, the absorption of sunlight to manufacture food through photosynthesis has other roles it plays in the life of foliage. walter *et al* (ibid: 1999) observes that "in addition to the

leaves' obvious functions of photosynthesis and manufacturing of tuber, they may be modified for protection, climbing, and for capturing insects". The changes of leaf colour from green is due to the heat that the sunlight creates within its tissues during the process of photosynthesis and therefore, turning the leaf's colour from its original hue to other hues. Osborne (1970) notes that "the surface colour takes on the surface texture of an object, and provides a resident barrier beyond which the eye cannot penetrate". The inspiration of this study with which leaf's modification is part create varieties of colour that can be visible apart from its green nature of leaves. This observation, further paved way for the researcher as an eye opener to research on the heart- shaped yam foliage in painting.

2.2 The Yam Foliage

The yam's importance as one of the staple food inspired and brought the study to a conclusion to work on the heart-shaped yam foliage thereby increasing his experience to experiment in painting using foliages. The heart- shaped yam foliage, which absorbs sunlight to manufacture starch through the process of photosynthesis and produce its yam tuber (*discoria alata*) as end product and other *discoria* species, are common throughout the world's tropical region. From the Encyclopedia Britanica, it was stated that "any of several plant species of the genus *Dioscorea* (family *Dioscoreaceae*), is native plant to warmer regions of both hemispheres of the world. A number of species are cultivated for food in the tropics; in certain tropical cultures, notably of West Africa and New Guinea, the yam is the primary agricultural commodity and the focal point of elaborate ritual". The yam most commonly

cultivated in Africa must have come from Asia in the first century A.D. Yam is staple food throughout many African societies, but is particularly important in west Africa, where it is used to make 'fufu' and other 'fufu-like' staples.

The West, East, North, and Southern parts of Nigeria cultivate yam for commercial and subsistence purposes. In some states, special occasions are held to celebrate the arrival of the new yam. Ekiti is one of the famous states that call for cerebration. Annual festivals are held within one to fifteen days. It affords everybody the opportunity to display the new yam publicly. Early blessing are given to loved ones, especially from the male folks to the female adults who in one way or the other rendered a helping hand during the farming process. Yam is eaten to satisfaction, thus hunger is mocked and marked as taboo. At the end, other social events are marked to appease the malignant spirit to allow peace to reign in the years ahead. In the eastern states, as observed by a prolific writer, Achebe (1959), in his novel, '*Things Fall Apart*', the importance of yam in the traditional Igbo (or Ibo) society cannot be over emphasized. The writer described yam as "The King of Crops". He explaines how yam farms are weeded from dawn till dusk to protect the younger tendrils from earth heat. Yam, according to Achebe, stood as manliness in the Ibo society. He who could feed his family with yams from one harvest to another was a very great man, indeed. In the novel, the significance of yam was emphasized. He notes that "new yam festivals are held to honor the earth goddess and the ancestral spirit of the clan. Yam is roasted and soaked in red palm oil and eaten". He re -emphasized that "when the festival is getting nearer to that time of the year, every Igbo person will gather to

celebrate the *Iwa ji afo* (New Yam Festival) because, yam is the main agricultural crop of the *Igbos* and also the staple food of the people. The New Yam Festival, known as *Iwa-Ji* or *Iri-Ji*, is a celebration depicting the prominence of yam in the social-cultural life of the Igbo community". In the northern part of Nigeria, yam is cultivated for both subsistence and commercial uses that includes: the white yam, Irish potatoes, and the sweet type that is popularly known as the sweet potatoes. Yam in this region is pounded and eaten to celebrate wedding, naming, initiation, and other events.

2.3 Aesthetic Qualities in Yam Foliage

Based on the knowledge acquired by the researcher about the importance of yam in the Nigerian society, he focuses his artistic and creative mind towards experimenting in painting with the design element such as lines, texture, form and colour that are associated with the yam foliage. In this research, the researcher is concerned with exploring three stages to depict the heart-shaped yam foliage in painting. Marion (2008), a South African painter from Cape Town, notes that:

> When you are looking for inspiration for an abstract painting, you need to change the way you look at the world around you. You need to stop seeing the big pictures and looking for details. You should look at the shapes and patterns which occur, rather than focusing on the actual object.

The three stages that are explored in this research inspired the researcher to take into consideration lines, shapes, forms, textures, colours, and values that constitute the element of arts. Marion (2008) admits that "a visual artist should think thoroughly on

what he sees; what element the object is made of? What texture? What colour? And what shape? You need to train your eyes to see the world in a new form".

The study, also derive inspiration from artists' paintings within and outside Nigeria – who was inspired by nature. Landscape paintings of natural scenes that include the trees and flowers are reviewed. Also, still life, where foliage is painted to intimate other objects on the table, with the aim of achieving aesthetics, is taken into consideration as well. The reviews of artists' works who have explored in painting, using foliage are as follow.

2.4 Jean Baptiste Simean Chardin (1699-1779)

Batiste was one of the great French painters of his age. After a relatively short professional training, he began to paint still life for which he could find an immediate sale. "He was characterized by no imagination. He worked extremely slowly and spent a long time on each canvas. The great merit of his work is in the quality of his painting. His procession of tones, its range and accuracy of colours and also in the rich pigment, laboriously built up in countless small brush strokes". In one of his painting titled: 'Still life with loaf', in Plate I, a loaf of bread was situated in the midst of a covered saucer and a bottle of Champaign. On the table were apples and tomatoes with sliced bread. A bunch of leaves was immersed in the loaf, having its stalk buried into it. The leaves must have been painted by the artist to serve as a means of beautifying the still life. Its location also might have something to do with

its importance, yet the flowers on the leaves were brighter and easily noticeable, though effort was made to represent the leaves in their natural form.

The leaves in the Baptiste's still life painting look like those of a heart -shaped yam foliage. The inclusion of leaves in the painting embellish the other still life was part of what brought further inspiration in this research.



Plate I
STILL LIFE WITH LOAF (94cm x62cm)
Source- re- taken from a photograph
Oil on canvas (1761)
By Jean Baptiste simean Chardin

2.5 Edward Manet (1832-1883)

Edward Manet was a painter who believe that "works of arts should be taken from contemporary life and be capable of being painted from nature". In Manet's still life in Plate II titled: 'Vase of Peoniel' (1864), flowers were painted such that the surrounding leaves serve as the background. The greenery in the painting creates contrast between the background light and the shining flowers. The leaves were

treated and made to have an elongated and protruding peaks. In the painting, the mid rib and vein-lets of the leaves were not given much attention. His brush strokes in the painting helped to justify the visibility of line on the leaves just as the approach that was employed in this research. Manet's main concern in his painting was to meet the standard of light and shade to show an impressionistic approach to painting.



Plate II
VASE OF PEONIEL (84cm x 50cm
Source – a re- snaped photograph
Oil on canvas (1864)
By Edward Manet

2.6 Vincent Van Gogh (1853 – 1890)

Van Gogh was a Dutch painter that exemplified the ideas of artists as tortured geniuses. His paintings were characterized by thick brush strokes, brilliant colours and jagged lines, through which he expressed his emotional response to his subjects, rather than producing an accurate description of them. Philip (1990) observed that "colour to Van Gogh is said to be very important and is utilised to express a particular mood by a particular colour. The rhythms of his brush strokes appear restless and muscular". The painting, 'On the Bank of River the Oise', in Plate III which forms the little of one of his paintings, was a painting that trees and grasses occupied, leaving the whole scenery greenish and yellowish with patches. The painting comprises various types of foliage. The painting shows the impact of foliage and how colourful it could be when it forms scenery. The colour combination which includes the green hue, yellow, burnt umber, lemon yellow, and white gives a lively situation. The unplanned broad and tiny strokes of colour that characterized Van Gogh's paintings were to create unique approach to see beyond the natural scenes. In another of his paintings, titled 'A Flowering Shrub', in plate IV, he uses elements of design, which includes: lines, shapes, form, texture, colour, value, and the lays of strokes to signify foliage. He was able to guide his strokes that successfully represent leaves, flowers to form foliage on the picture plane.



Plate III
ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER OISE
(46, 5 X 61, 5 CM)
Source- re- taken from a photograph
Water Colour on paper (1890)
By Vincent Van Gogh

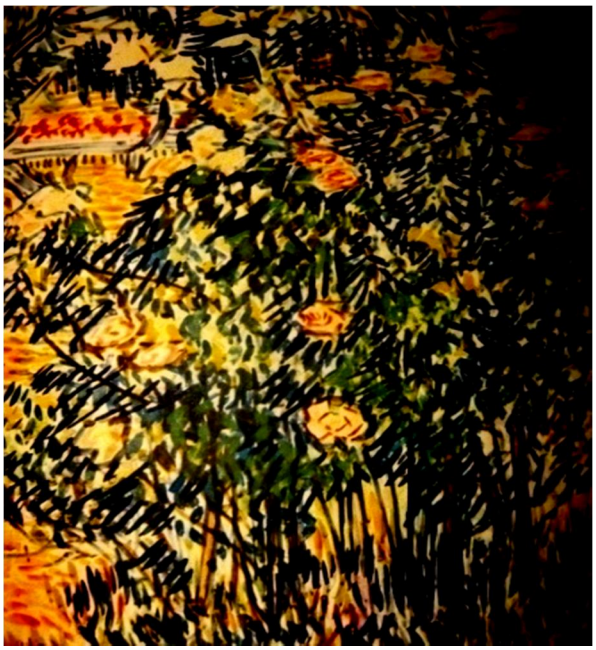


Plate IV
A FLOWERING SHRUB (58 X 45CM)
Source- a re- taken from photograph
Water Colour on paper (1889)
By Vincent Van Gogh

2.7 Paul Cezanne (1839-1906)

Paul Cezanne, who in his paintings, wanted to individualized the idea of impressionism, and tried to achieve something different with slight deviation from impressionism, caused a slow recognition of his works. “While the impressionist painters used colour to convey transitory effect of light, Cezanne wanted to return to a more traditional kind of painting”. In his landscape titled ‘The Aqueduct’, in Plate V, elongated trees were focused to be the dominant features in the painting. The painting forms a vegetation of trees with green and yellow leaves. Cezanne represented the foliage using an impressionistic style. His numerous brush strokes suggested life in the leaves due to its wavy and freeze nature as characterized in the painting. He used planes of colour and small brush strokes that build up to form complex fieldsTrees add aesthetic value to other foliage in landscape painting. The inspiration of this research was not farfetched from Cezanne’s interest in painting plant life as seen in his painting.



Plate V
THE EQUEDUCT (85cm x 59cm)
Source – re- taken from a photograph
Oil on canvas (1894)
By Paul Cezanne

2.8 Claude Monet (1840-1926)

Monet was an impressionist painter and a landscapist. His painting, titled 'Anemones', in Plate VI was a representation of foliage that includes flowers and leaves. The leaves were given less importance and thus, flowers became very brilliant and extremely large. He created in the painting an avenue for contrast. Patches of green hue with broad and tiny strokes were used to give effect to leaves against the background. His techniques and ideas to represent natural scenes contributed to his habit of unmixed colours before using them, therefore giving the landscape a natural impression



Plate VI
ANEMONES (75cm x 48cm)
Source – a re- taken from photograph

Oil on canvas (1904)
By Claude Monet

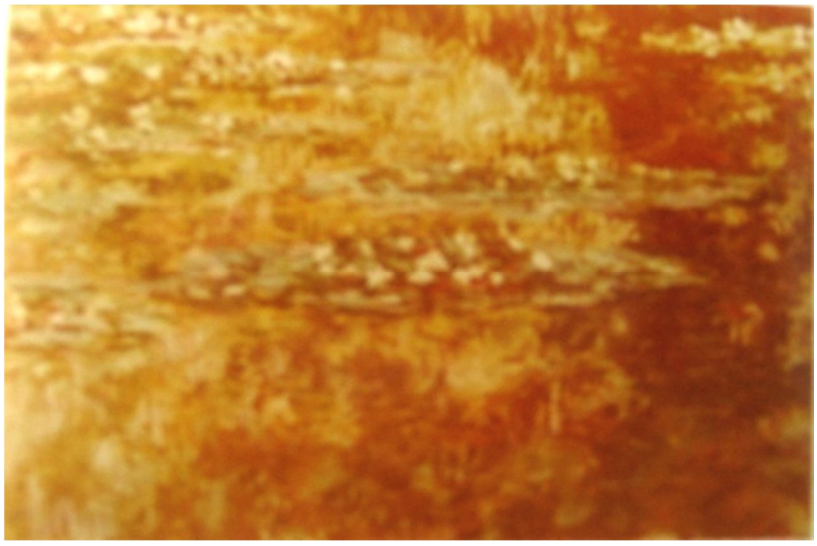


Plate VII
WATER LILIES (80cm x 55cm)
Source- a re- taken from photograph
Oil on canvas (1912)
By Claude Monet

2.9 Jerry Buhari

Jerry Buhari is a painter who represents the Gwari forms in his painting titled: Aspects of Gwari Life as Sources of Inspiration for Contemporary Nigerian Painters. His approaches towards the forms are mainly line drawings using varieties of colours. In his work, titled 'Groundnut' oil on canvas (1984), in Plate VIII, emphasis is laid on the formation of nuts that were in leaf- like shapes. The intersection of lines in the painting makes it an interesting composition. His sense of flexibility in the use of lines suggests his powerful approach to paintings. The numerous oval shapes that constitute the groundnut could be used to describe leaves. The yam foliage does have a similar character, especially when it grows and twists on the stalk that has been purposely provided to support and to reinforce the yam tendrils. In the long run, the stalk will grow to become a bunch of yam foliage till its maturity stage.

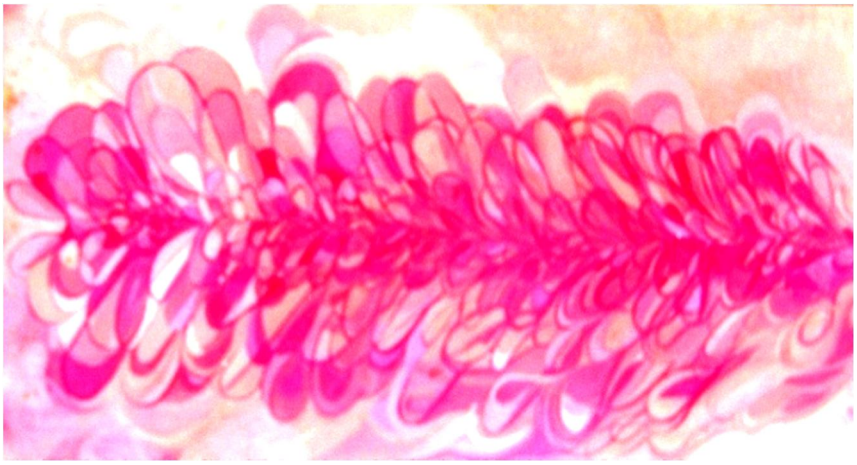


Plate VIII
THE GROUND NUT (160cm x 75cm)
Source- a retaken from a photograph
Oil on canvas (1984)
By Jerry Buhari

2.10 Philip Gushem

Gushem is a painter who brought to light as reflected in Plate IX the 'Aesthetics on the Landscape of the Savanna'.In the artist's painting, the juxtaposition of green hue gives the natural landscape vegetation and the colours used on the landscape conforms to those of the sky. His extensive use of hue to shade and tone work in his paintings, achieved light and shade. The reflection of green hue in the painting brought about a strong idea on how beautiful natural vegetation could be. The painting brought the study concept at which colours can be applied to a painting towards creating value and even juxtaposition of colours.



Plate IX
AREA 'A' SITE 2 (202cm x 76cm)
Source- a re- taken from a photograph
Oil on canvas (1990)
By Philips Gushem

2.11 Kefas Danjuma

Kefas is a painter who explores form using basic elements of design (line, shape, form, texture and colour) and the artist guided those elements with the art principles. Harmony, rhythm, proportion, space and balance that made up the principles of arts are used judiciously to infuse subject in the surrounding space in his paintings. In one his paintings, titled 'Synthesis' (1990), in Plate X is an impression of how a long extension of brush strokes can be used to create an aesthetic effect in painting is vividly created. The systematic laying of red, light yellow, yellow ochre, and dark strokes of colour in the painting gave a skillful approach towards painting. His long extension of brush strokes creates inspiration as seen in the approach used during the stage two (the skeletal stage) in this research.



Plate X
SYNTHESIS (120cm x 77cm)
Source- a re- taken from photograph
Oil on canvas (1990)
By Kefas Danjuma

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the method that is used in this research. Experimental method was employed by the researcher. The method discusses the information gathered, as well as the sources and the use of data that are collected. It also highlights the materials used during the research procedures and the roles of colours during the developmental stages in this research.

3.1 Sources of Data

The sources of data include pictures of yam foliage from magazines used during the preliminary study. In addition, photographs were resource from textbooks and direct observation from the yam field which serves as source among others.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

Various instruments that are used to collect data for this research includes: Line drawings, paintings and photography and prints from magazines.

3.2.1 Photography

A still camera was used to photograph images of various kinds of yam foliage from farm sites which further clarify the knowledge of the inherent features in the heart-shaped yam foliage.



Plate XI
A section of yam foliage
Showing change in leaf colour;
The veins are still green while the
other tissue are turning red.

3.2.2 Drawings

Drawing from photograph taken by the researcher are also used for further studies as seen in plate XII



Plate XII
Two of the sketches made during
the preliminary stages.

3.2.3 Sketches

Records of the heart-shaped yam foliage are made in the form of sketches. They are outlines of the heart-shaped yam foliage. The sketches made during the preliminary stage are as follow:

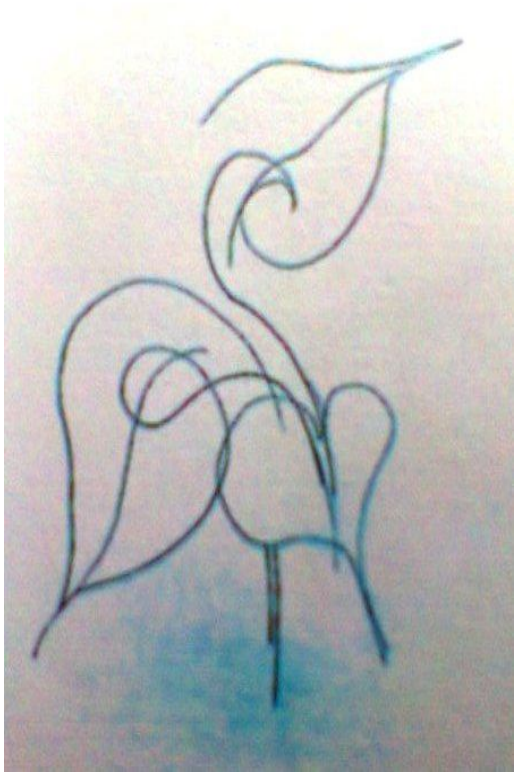


Plate XIII

A sketch draws from plate XII showing Outline of a yam foliage.

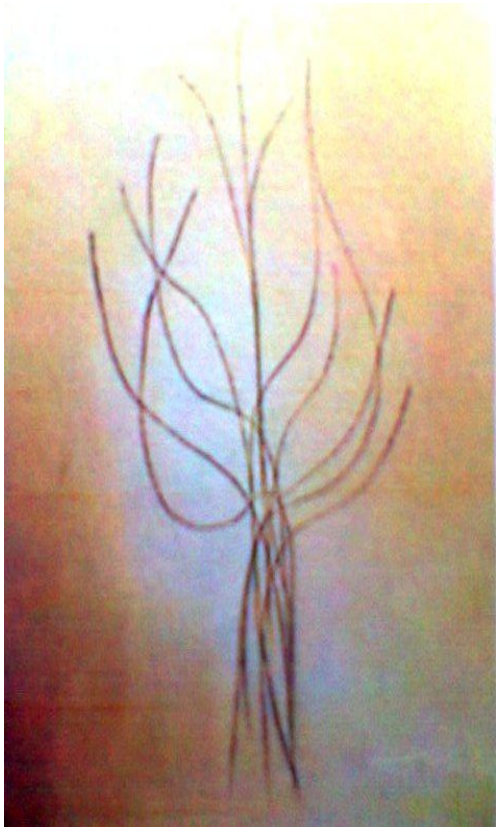


Plate XIV

A sketch showing vertical view of a yam foliage.

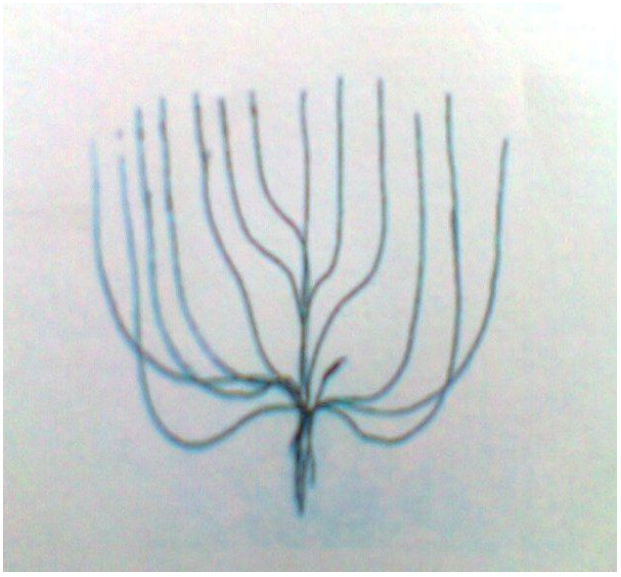


Plate XV

A closer sketch made from plate XIV.

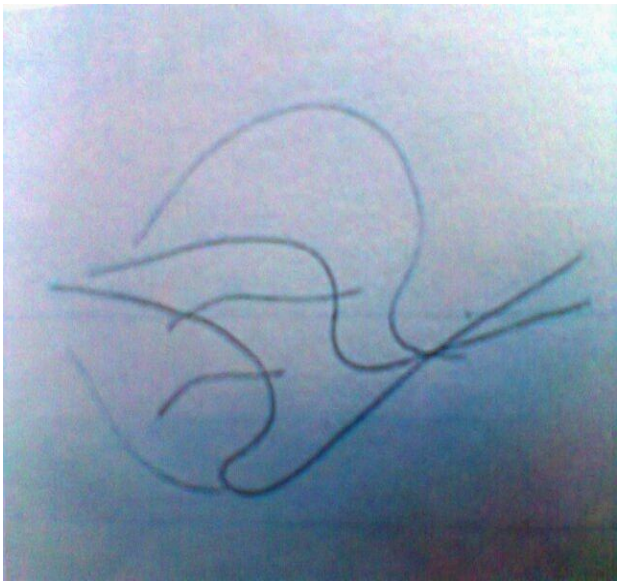


Plate XVI

A horizontal sketch showing outline of a foliage.

The sketches were made to explore the visibility of line in foliage. In plate XIV and plate XV shows veins and vein lets in distorted form to create aesthetic. The forth sketch as seen in plate XVI could suggest flight.

3.2.4 Painting

Series of paintings are made in gouaches which serve as studies towards the final execution of the painting. They are studies that further experiment the sketches in plate XIII, plate XIV, plate XV and plate XVI into hues of gauche. The gauche paintings during the preliminary stages are as follow:



Plate XVII

A vertical representation of yam foliage in gauche showing the veins.



Plate XVIII

A gauche study of the sketch in plate XIV.



Plate XIX

A gauche study from the sketch in Plate XIV showing a section of a yam foliage.

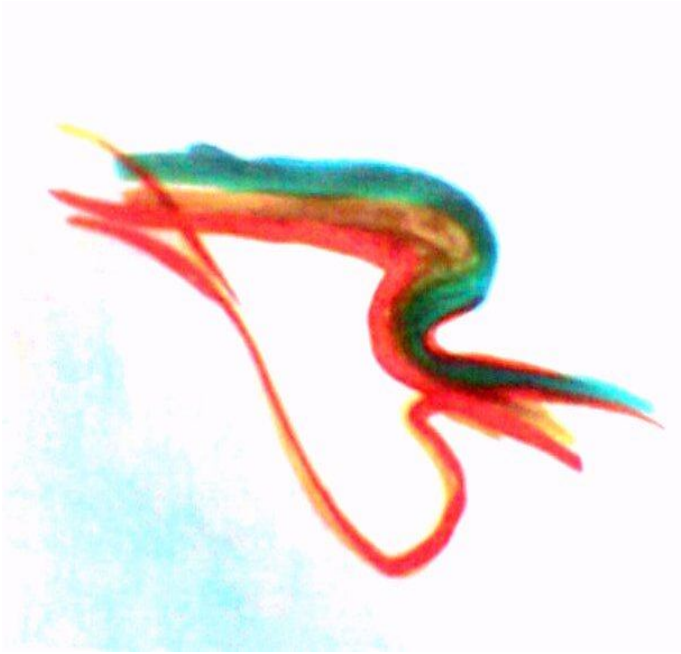


Plate XX

A horizontal representation of foliage suggesting flight as seen in plate XVI.

3.2.5 Through Observations

Through careful observation, aesthetics can be produced from the yam foliage that could be useful in painting. Buhari (1984) observes that "close up studies of landscapes can provide a stimulating experience, and also has certain qualities that can lead one through an artistic experience". The study is captivated by the inherent structures of the heart-shaped yam foliage, thereby giving him a wider inspiration on how the foliage could be transformed to attain aesthetic in the world of painting.

3.3 Methods of Data Analysis

Works are categorically explored to show the different stages from realism to semi-abstraction and from semi-abstraction to an abstract form.

3.3.1 Stage one (natural features)

In the analysis of data as shown in chapter four in this research, the stage is primarily based on the natural representation of the yam foliage. Therefore, the researcher focuses on the realistic structure of the heart-shaped yam foliage. Details and close up paintings are made to show the foliage's natural features. The external characteristics (such as shapes, margin, and lobes) are taken into consideration which can be seen in plate XXVI among others. This effort is made to visually identify the type of foliage (heart-shaped) the study seek to experiment on.

3.3.2 Stage two (the skeletal stage)

The skeletal stage is a gradual change from the natural features that results to lines. The interplay of lines is achieved during this stage of transformation thereby giving it a skeletal look. The tiny lines that formed the midrib, the vein and the vein lets are visibly shown during this stage. Strokes of lines are primarily dominant in the stage to represent the foliage in a skeletal form as shown in plate XXXVI among others. The veins and the vein lets are shown and exaggerated to achieve artistic perception. The use of lines in this stage suggests deviation from the natural features of the foliage and focuses on patterns on the foliage. This effort is made to achieve a new form, using the different types of lines that includes (horizontal, vertical, bold, tiny and curve lines).

3.3.3 Stage Three (Formation)

During the final stage as shown in the analysis of data, lines at this point are intersected to provide the visibility of shapes. The structure of the heart –shaped yam foliage became more of shapes rather than lines to depict formation. The idea at this stage provided the propelling goals the study aim to achieve. The painting in plate XLVII explains the final stage that emerges through transformation processes.

3.3.4 Synthesis on the Three Stages

Three different stages are explored in the course of transforming the heart-shaped yam foliage into a new form in painting. The researcher uses distortion techniques to attain varieties that are artistically visual from the inherent structure of the heart-shaped yam foliage. This achievement is through a gradual development of the design elements such as line, shape that are visible on the yam foliage to a complex form. The sequence in the three stages that is explored in this research shows the chronological order in which lines, shapes, form is achieved. The sequence creates perception from realism to abstraction. It therefore, creates an insight of how the elements (line, shape, form and colour) that constitutes foliage can be used to create aesthetics in painting

3.4 The Role of Colours

Colours play a predominant role in the course of this study. The study is exposed to choice of colours as seen among foliage when the changes colour from its original hue (green). Colours like yellow, blue, purple, brown, burnt umber, red and other shades of hues are used.

3.5 The Material Used

The materials such as the artist oil colour, enamel paint, canvas, coloured papers, pastels and pencil constitutes the medium used to explore the paintings in this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

The result of data analysed has been categorized from realistic stage to semi-abstract stage and finally the abstract stage. The works presented are discussed as plates in different developmental stages.

4.1 The habitat 1

The idea behind the painting is to show the co-existence of foliage within particular vegetation. The painting comprises foliage, both simple and complex leaves. The yam foliage, as depicted in the painting, spreads itself in reaching the sunlight. The dark hue that is used within the foliage suggests that the foliage were in an enclosure of a rain forest.



Plate XXI
THE HABITAT
75cm x 85cm
Oil on canvas

4.2 Survival

The painting is to show the relationship between foliage and sunlight. The title, 'survival' helps to explain the nature of leaves apex toward the sunlight especially in a habitat as suggested in plate XXI. In the painting, the yellow and the yellow used at the middle of the picture plane suggests the brilliant ray of the sun. The surrounding colours are cool colours that are mainly blue and dark purple except for the patches of red at the extreme ends of the canvas. In the middle of the picture plane is a circle of white with a red curved stripes that almost encircle the sun. Although, in the painting, there was little attempt made to visibly show the leaves vein and vein lets. The artistic approach here was to show how the sun ray could overshadow the inherent structure on foliage and except for a closer view; there will be no visibility of line from a far.



Plate XXII
SURVIVAL
90cm x 85cm
Oil on canvas

4.3 Habitat 2

The painting, habitat 2 also suggest a habitat and different medium is use to convey the effect of light and shade from that of plate XXI and plate XXII. The chipboard and oil pastel with charcoal plays vital roles in the painting. The charcoal creates a darker background, therefore contrasting the brilliant foliage that are coloured in light green, reddish purple, yellow ochre all in oil pastels. The painting shows the characteristic of the foliage within particular vegetation.



Plate XXIII
HABITAT 2
85cm x 60cm
Charcoal & oil pastel on chipboard

4.4 Wind Effect

The idea behind the 'Wind effect' is to show how wind could put an end to immature leaves especially when there is wind across a particular field of foliage. Thus, it causes a severe damage to the foliage from its parent plant. In the painting, two withered leaves that have been disintegrated by wind from their parent plants are found lying on the ground among grasses. The researcher takes note of the foliage and employed it into painting. The leaves are found around the base of a tree, the larger one was lying under the tree shade and the smaller one was out of shade. What interested the researcher is that the leaf under the shade looks greener than the one in the sun. The two, altogether, create an impression of light and shade as viewed by the researcher. The light and dark use of hue in the painting suggests the situation in which the researcher met the two withered leaves.



Plate XXIV
WIND EFFECT
85cm x 60cm
Oil on Chipboard

4.5 The Heart 1

The painting suggests heart-shaped yam foliage and they are distinctly painted without other foliage. The painting that was executed in collage (The collections of various coloured paper cut in pieces and coupled together to form a whole). The collage work connotes the level to which a heart-shaped yam has grown and stretches for a support. The textures on the surface of the leaves added more creative meanings as the eyes perceive it. The use of yellow ochre, red and green is an approach intended to create aesthetics.



Plate XXV
THE HEART 1
85cm x 60cm
Collage on Chipboard

4.6 The heart 2 (a closer study)

The researcher decided to paint a single leaf of the foliage to show vividly the inherent structure that can be found on its surface. It is an idea that occurs to the researcher towards the completion of the painting in plate XXV. In the painting, the mid-rib and the vein let are shown. The background of the painting consists of red and yellow strokes that look warmth. The painted yam foliage looks like the heart-shaped and it can be identified as a symbol of love. The role of colours in this painting is the researcher's aesthetic representation of greenery. The yellow patches of colour on the leaf surface suggested reflection from its warm environment.



Plate XXVI
THE HEART 2
120cm x 35cm
Oil on canvas

4.7 Simple leaves

The idea of semi abstract starts to emanate as distortion is created further explore the painting in plate XXV so as to convey a more complex approach using strong strokes. The impressionistic use of strokes to represent the midribs, the vein and the vein lets are done to create aesthetics. The painting is more or less a monochrome except for the white brush strokes; and in the interior dark, hue was used to create shades in the painting.



Plate XXVII
SIMPLE LEAVES
95cm x 80cm
Oil on canvas

4.8 Habitat 3

In the course of creating aesthetic from habitat 1 and habitat 2 as seen in plate XXI and XXIII respectively the researcher arrive at this painting, habitat 3. Shrubs are represented among other foliage. The painting is more of abstract, showing varieties of shrubs and foliage within a particular field. The display of colour in the painting gives a brilliant background. The painting is executed on chipboard with oil pastel. The use of ultramarine blue, red hue and green at the central part of the picture plane suggests life. Long strokes of dark oil pastel are used to outline the edges of the foliage and researcher to protrude the long peaks of the foliage upward to create aesthetic. There is intersection of line which allows transparency in the painting.



Plate XXVIII
HABITAT 3
125cm x 85cm
Oil pastel on Chipboard

4.9 Overlap 1

In the painting, heart-shaped yam foliage is painted, overlapping each other to create aesthetics. It is a study made to see the visibility of lines that could create further expression. The veins and the vein lets are showed for clearer visibility. At the point of overlapping, outlines are made to create boundaries in-between. The use of green hue in one of the foliage suggests its natural greenery. On the background of the painting, lines are used to bring out the leaves' structure.



Plate XXIX
OVERLAP 1
85cm x 65cm
Enamel on Canvas

4.10 Overlap 2

The painting is display of enamel on canvas. It is made to achieve an abstract form of the painting, ‘overlap 1’ in plate XXIX. Colours are used in series starting from the left hand side of the canvas that includes; dark red, yellow, white and blue accordingly. Other strokes of lines were made to visibly show the midribs, veins, vein lets and on the edges of each hue to create boundary.



Plate XXX
OVERLAP 2
95cm x 75cm
Enamel on canvas

4.11 Butterfly

Butterfly is a painting done using enamel on canvas. The approach used in the painting is pouring technique. There is no effort made to control the free flow of the liquid paint on the canvas. The researcher's intension is to pour the enamel on the middle of the canvas to see what will be the result. The researcher achieves two parallel lines by standing the canvas in an upright position. The effort, therefore, created more meaning that is accidentally achieved. The parallel lines look like the tentacle of a butterfly. The body of the painting form wings of a butterfly. The intersection of the free flow of enamel within the wings created lines that looks like the veins and vein lets of foliage within the two wings. The accidental painting suggests the relationship between a butterfly and foliage within a particular habitat.



Plate XXXI
BUTTERFLY
105cm x 75cm
Enamel on Canvas

4.12 Eyelet

The eyelet marks the beginning of the second stage in this research. The choice to use lines to cover the space in the canvas comes as a result of the painting in plate XXVII, plate XXIX and XXX. Lines such as curve, straight, vertical, horizontal and so on plays dominant role to show the visibility of the inherent structure that could be found on foliage plants.



Plate XXXII
EYE LET
100cm x 80cm
Oil on Canvas

4.13 Alice 1 (the sleeping Alice)

The sited female figure that has her head down to the donkey bench is painted in a flat form. The painting is an adaptation of brush strokes used in plate XXXII. Both tiny and broad use of brush strokes is to achieve the figure and the surrounding. The colour that is used in the painting comes as a result of achieving contrast to show human form in the painting. The dark on the face and the hands are to create contrast between the figure and the surrounding colours. A stroke of lighter blue that looks like the shape of the yam foliage is outlined around the sleeping figure.



Plate XXXIII
ALICE 1 (The Sleeping Alice)
90cm x 90cm
Oil on Canvas

4.14 Alice 2 (the face of Alice)

In the painting, similar approach that is used in 'Alice 1', plate XXXIII is also employed. The sited figure is painted in the day light. This painting draws the attention of the researcher of the effect of light on foliage. The painting is done on a bright day as the ray of the sun brightened the MFA studio through the opened windows. The female figure sits in an upright position facing the source of light. The strokes of colours are used to depict the figure. The clothing and the head tie are treated with brilliant yellow shades. The colour on the face portrays the beauty of Alice.



Plate XXXIV
ALICE 2 (TheFace of Alice)
75cm x 75cm
Oil on Canvas

4.15 Dialogue with the sun 1

'Dialogue with the sun' takes the colour scheme used in plate XXXIV as intended by the researcher. Yellow and patches of white are used to indicate the lighter part that suggests the sun. The interplay of red and yellow pigment in the painting is to achieve aesthetics. The point at which the red and yellow hues intersect each other shows the boundary between the dark and the light hue.



Plate XXXV
DAILOQUE WITH THE SUN 1
135cm x 90cm
Oil on Canvas

4.16 The skeletal 1

After several painting using line as seen in plate XXXII, plate XXXIII, plate XXXIV and plate XXXV the researcher decides to use the same approach on single foliage. It is a distortion of the painting in plate XXVI. The adaptation is made to create aesthetic with the heart-shaped yam foliage to a skeletal form. The researcher achieves his visual perception to structure out the shape of the yam foliage in lines. In the painting, lines of broad strokes are systematically arranged in an upright direction. The mid rib, the veins and vein lets were treated with dark hue and other shades of colours. The artistic use of dark and brilliant coloured strokes was to achieve illusion beyond what the eye can see. At the background, two upright vertical lines of red and white pigment are created.



Plate XXXVI
SKELETAL 1
110cm x 65cm
Oil on Canvas

4.17 Skeletal 2 (a closer study)

Closer study of yam foliage is shown in the painting. The researcher thus magnifies the painting 'skeletal 1' in plate XXXVI in order to produce a meaningful form that could further enhance the research. As observed in the painting, primarily, strokes of broad line are made to represent the middle part of the yam foliage. The colours that are used are relatively extracted from the parent structure in the painting 'skeletal 1'. Hues of blue and shades of brown with maroon red were used. Dark colours also play a very important role in the juxtaposing of lines within the picture plane.



Plate XXXVII
SKELETAL 2 (closer study)
100cm x 75cm
Oil on Canvas

4.18 Low action ‘a’

The low action ‘a’ characterised the foliage features. The painting comprises of yellow, green, white and dark hue to suggest loss of strength and a magnified study from ‘skeletal 2’ in plate XXXVII.



Plate XXXVIII
LOW ACTION (a)
85cm x 65cm
Oil on Canvas

4.19 Low action 'b'

In the low reaction 'b', patches of white are made to suggest the foliage low strength. The researcher has actually produced the two paintings, Low action 'a' in plate XXVIII and Low action 'b' to show how foliage can be manipulated to a meaningful form in painting.



Plate XXXIX
LOW ACTION (b)
85cm x 65cm
Oil on Canvas

4.20 Dialogue with the Sun 2

This painting is under the category of the second stage and titled Dialogue with the sun 2. It is a further approach from the painting, 'Dialogue with the sun 1' in plate XXXIX. Lines begin to have lesser roles in the painting. Shape emerges within the picture plane. The idea behind the painting shows how foliage usually folds when the sunlight is getting out of reach as suggested with deep blue, light blue and dark colour against the white to arrive at shape. The researcher, at this point, begins to search for the possibility of creating form from the painting. The use of horizontal and vertical lines in the painting begins the process to transformation.



Plate XL
DAILOQUE WITH THE SUN 2
135cm x 90cm
Oil on Canvas

4.21 Dialogue with the sun 3

Dialogue with sun 3 becomes more of abstract painting as the researcher derived a further exploration from the painting, titled: 'dialogue with the sun 2' in plate XL. The researcher logically creates shape into two by cutting off the long stroke that is attached to the curved shape to create aesthetic. The painting consists of light yellow hue, yellow ochre and dark hue of blue.



Plate XLI
Dialogue with the sun 3
85cm x 75cm
Oil on canvas

4.22 Reaction 1

Reaction 1 is adapted from the painting 'Low action (a)' in plate XXXVIII. The dark red and the choice of yellow hue in the painting portray brilliancy in foliage. The recognition of lines that suggested veins is still visible in this painting. The flow of lines which includes: green, pink, white and black is painted parallel in the painting to create aesthetic.



Plate XLII
REACTION 1
100cm x 75cm
Oil on canvas

4.23 Reaction 2

'Reaction 2' begins the third stage in the transformation process of the yam foliage. it is a further study made from the painting, 'Reaction 1' in plate XLII. At this stage, long stripes of strokes became invisible as suggested with dark hue in the painting, except for the broad lines that suggested veins. The warm colour that is used is to portray the warm nature of foliage. The neutral use of white is to achieve aesthetics in painting.



Plate XLIII
REACTION 2
90cm x 65cm
Oil on Canvas

4.24 Reaction 3

The 'Reaction 3' is more of experimental painting. It is a painting that further explores 'Reaction 1' in plate XLIII. The painting is created to show how coloured cardboard papers could be used to form a flat painting on a particular surface. Coloured cardboard of red, blue, yellow and ochre hue was cut into desired shapes and pasted on chipboard which serves as support. The use of brighter hue in the painting suggested the action of light on foliage as seen in the painting, 'reaction 1'



Plate XLIV
REACTION 3
125cm x 85cm
Coloured cardboard on chipboard

4.25 Flight

Flight is an attempt by the researcher to achieve more abstract from the previous paintings in plate XLII, plate XLIII and plate XLIV. The painting, 'flight' looks more like a flying object. The researcher also derives idea from the preliminary studies in plate XVI and plate XX. The dark colour that was used indicated a form that looks like flight. Other hues that are used such as yellowish red, lighter yellow, dark yellow ochre and darker blue hues are to create aesthetic. The title: 'flight', explains the swing nature of foliage on the field when the wind blows. They usually swing in a back and forth or from side to side as the case may be, therefore, creating a visual interest through careful observation.

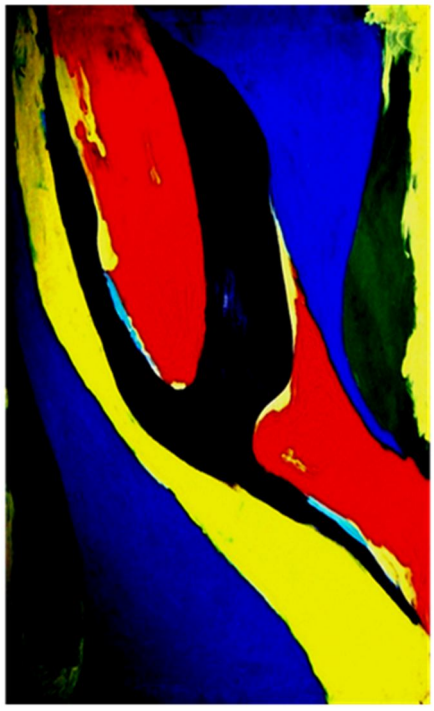


Plate XLVI
FLIGHT
85cm x 75cm
Oil on Canvas

4.26 Formation

This painting is a further abstraction from the painting, 'Flight' in plate XLVI. In this painting, line flows downward the canvas and creating a different size of shapes. The shapes are in dark blue, yellow, dark green, light green as seen from left to right in the painting.

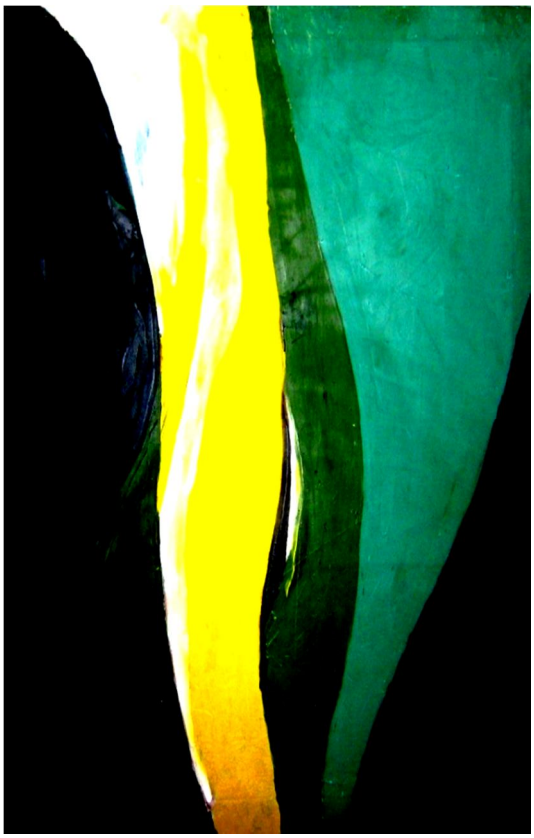


Plate XLVII
FORMATION
85cm x 75cm
Oil on canvas

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter consists of the summaries of all the chapters in this research. It also includes: concludes and recommendations for further study.

5.2 Summary

Aesthetically, the yam foliage has elements which include: lines, shapes, forms, texture, and colour that can possibly be brought together to create a unique form in painting. This study is based on the fact that several contemporary artists in Nigeria have explored in painting with form. Such form includes themes that are related to culture, genre scenes, folklores, landscapes, portraits and still life with little or no experimentation in painting using foliage. It is on this note that the researcher has chosen to experiment in painting using the heart-shaped yam foliage as a mean for abstract expressionism in painting. It is on this note that the following objectives are derived.

I. To explore the aesthetics quality of yam foliage in painting.

II. To create paintings using the heart –shaped yam foliage beyond its natural form.

III. To create source of inspiration in modern Nigerian painting using the heart-shaped yam foliage.

5.3 Findings

- The researcher sees colours beyond the mono hue of foliage in the process of exploration.
- Various materials were discovered most especially the use of enamel paint, coloured cardboard paper and chipboard than the usual canvas that is used as support and the usual artist's colours as medium for artistic expression.

5.4 Conclusion

In this research, (56) works are produced out of which (34) are catalogued. The cataloguing is made sequentially to chronologically meet the essence in the gradual development of heart-shaped yam foliage from realism to abstraction. The reason for these paintings is to inspire the contemporary artists to further explore the visibility of the inherent features in foliage to achieve:

- Aesthetic that can be created in painting.
- Drawing and painting from the structures in foliage through analytical approach.

5.5 Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn above, the following recommendations are made.

1. Painters who want to explore further on foliage, should see colours beyond the mono hue of foliage and picture out things using the design elements that are inherent in the foliage.

2. Further research on this study can be carried out because the study is delimited to the exploration of the heart- shaped yam foliage among other foliage that are numerous.

3. The researcher recommends that a future painter who wants to research using foliage should have a mindset that there is an abundant material that could be used as improvisation for further study without being scared for material cost.

4. Finally, a research of this kind should be adequately documented and published to create awareness among future artist of the inherency in foliage that could pave way for analytical approach in painting.

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