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EIGHT DECADES OF MODERN NIGERIAN ART: A HISTORICAL PANORAMA

An Inaugural LECTURE

By

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Wednesday 28th May, 2008

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To my friends and colleagues in the Department of Fine Arts and Industrial Design. I say thank you. To the Director General and staff of the National Gallery of Art Nigeria, my friends in the Art Historical Association of Nigeria and retired colleagues at home and abroad. God be with you.

Finally, I should like to appreciate my wife Dr. Mrs. Olufunke Babalola and our children for their love, prayers and encouragement.

Courtesies

The Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy-Vice Chancellors (Academic and Administration), Registrar and other Principal Officers of the University, Dean of Post Graduate School,
Dean of Environmental Design and other Deans,
Directors of Institutes and Centres,
Professors and other member of Senate,
Heads of Departments,
My Academic and Professional Colleagues,
Postgraduate and Undergraduate Students,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Introduction

Today, May 28th 2008 is the 31st inaugural lecture in the current organized lecture series in the Ahmadu Bello University. It marks the debut of the Faculty of Environmental Design, as well the first in the Department of Fine Arts. Since this lecture has come at the tail end of my career, it should serve as both inaugural and valedictory lecture.

I face a great challenge as the first inaugural lecturer from the Department of Fine Arts to successfully explain what Art is, that man is an artist, that art has made our nation to develop or grow and that for technological break through we need art. For our nation seeking total development, it should be known that; no

nation can truly develop without developing her art (Creech Jones 1948).

It is not assumed that Nigeria is well known to everyone, so it becomes another challenge to present coherently eight decades of modern Nigerian art with visuals and maps. Adam's *Art Across Time* (1999) concerning Images and Words explains that, "Artists express themselves through a visual language which has pictorial, and architectural rather than verbal elements. As a result, no amount of description can replace the direct experience of viewing art."

In this Art Historical lecture on Eight Decades of Modern Nigerian Art, we are going to view significant, innovative, expressive and creative works produced by modern Nigerian artists. Each of the art would be appreciated for its historical, philosophical, social, cultural, political or satirical meaning or combinations of these, as the case may be. A lot has happened in modern art during the eight decades which fall under the purview we are scrutinizing, that it will take a big volume to cover it. Hence, a panoramic view of it will help us to grasp the magnitude and aura of how modern Nigerian artists have used their artistic idiom to mirror and develop Nigeria.

Panorama: What is a Panorama?
Panorama is a picture or series of pictures of a landscape, historical events, etc, presented on a continuous service encircling the spectators; a picture unrolled before the spectators in such a way as to give the impression of a continuous view. It is an unlimited view in all directions.

1920s when Chief Aina Onabolu evolved what is today known as modern Nigerian art The mark of artists since then has culminated in about eight decades of vigorous artistic activity. Meanwhile, the beginning of the fourth decade of modern Nigerian art was marked by the starting of the Department of Fine Arts in 1953 at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology Ibadan Branch, from where it was moved to Zaria in 1955. Since graduates of the Department began to make their impacts felt to date represents another four decades. From 1955 till date, Zaria Art School has turned out several graduates whose impact and contributions to modern art in Nigeria remains immeasurable. The School has been a manpower base that has produced artists and art teachers who have set up other art schools in Nigeria. Modern Nigerian art has metamorphosed into a huge dynamic enterprise and Zaria Art School graduates are catalysts in that progress.

Until quite recently the history of the development of modem Nigerian art has been blurry. Blurry to such an extent that young modem artists and art historians need strong lenses and powerful binoculars to sharpen their vision and thereby enable them to bridge the great hiatus and the chacism that have existed between them and authentic history. The history of modem Nigerian art evolved with the pioneering effort of Chief Aina Onabolu in the 1920s.[1] This has enabled historians of art to date modem Nigerian art from that time. From then to this period there are eight decades as follows:

1. 1920-1930
2. 1931-1941
3. 1942-1952

4. 1953-1963
5. 1964-1974
6. 1975-1985
7. 1986-1996
8. 1997-2007

The development of modern Nigerian art could be better appreciated, evaluated and x-rayed when viewed against the backdrop of the catchment areas of the country from where the students came to Zaria. From the East, West, South and North of Nigeria, including the Western Cameroons they came. And they came with various cultural experiences of artistic, poetic oral history and literature to Zaria. Then in Zaria they were impacted with the rich but pulsating divergent culture of Northern Nigeria. In school they were exposed to various foreign influences, art materials and books. They drew, painted, and portrayed various stimulating scenes of the North, linear, decorative, fresh, colourful, warm and inviting dynamic environment of Zaria.



Graduates, Lecturers and their Wives (Total number of graduates from 1959-1965 is 86)



Graduates, Lecturers and their Wives



Zaria Art School Graduates (1960 – 1965)

They enjoyed the vibrancy of life within the city walls. But more importantly they recorded lasting, timeless, glorious impressions of their experiences. They were exposed not only to their immediate environment, sumptuously decorated houses and gaily adorned people. In short they imbibed the nuances of the vitality of Northern Nigerian culture, some of which were completely new to them. Owing to their lecturers coming from other parts of the world, they were also exposed to European art history and culture.



ABU: Art School Graduate at the June Convocation, 1963



ABU: Art School Graduates at the June Convocation, 1963

The acculturation was so strong that it almost shattered everyone then under the tutelage of the European lecturers. The history of Nigerian and European art was taught. In summary the art groups or movements presented as part of the European art history in chronological order were:

1845 Realism
1869 Impressionism
1884 Neo Impressionism
1885 Symbolism
1890 Expressionism
1890 Naïve Painting
1905 Fauvism
1907 Cubist Movement
1911 Non Figurative Art

1909 Futurism
1910 Synchronism & American Colour Abstraction
1925 Surrealism
1936 New Romanticism
1945 Social Realism
1950 Tachism

Argent (1963) eloquently asserts:

The Sun Shines in Africa
It is red it is yellow it is black
The Niger winds its way
a living line—a drawing (Geography)
The Owl flies in Africa as it flies it draws
Its eyes fierce intense orange—The Sun—Expressionism—
but the Owl flies by moonlight and as it alights
It makes an impression a mark—

"In this world there is a bird
Finer than any other—
Let the search for its Egg be your only concern."

An army of ants march in Africa
As they march they create order—clarity—plan—geometry—
pattern—mark—Classicism—(History)
The cactus grows in Africa—it repeats itself—a
thousand different views—the same form—Cubism.
Thunder—lightening—colour—mood—neurosis—exoticism—
horsemen—sickness—are found in Africa—Romanticism.
Touches of pure colour scientifically placed—the sun—
the light—the atmosphere are found in Africa—Impressionism
varied surfaces—look around—grass—gravel—rocks—the
marks on the lizard—the butterfly—the leaf—the bird
are found in Africa—Tachism.
The Image is found in Africa—The Symbol—in the
Symbol is seen the Present the Future and the Past—
the import—the portent. The Symbol destroys its Creator.
The Drum beats in Africa and the Sound is the mark—both are
True—each beat is a statement—each mark a challenge.

Charles Argent

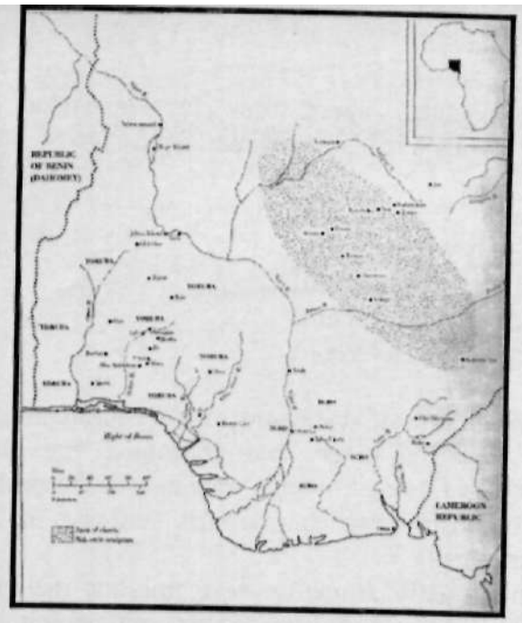
European music, apart from the knowledge of art history was enjoyed by everyone;

Charlie Walie Cha cha cha cha cha! or
It's only the beginning
Only the beginning of a love
That would never end
That would never end.

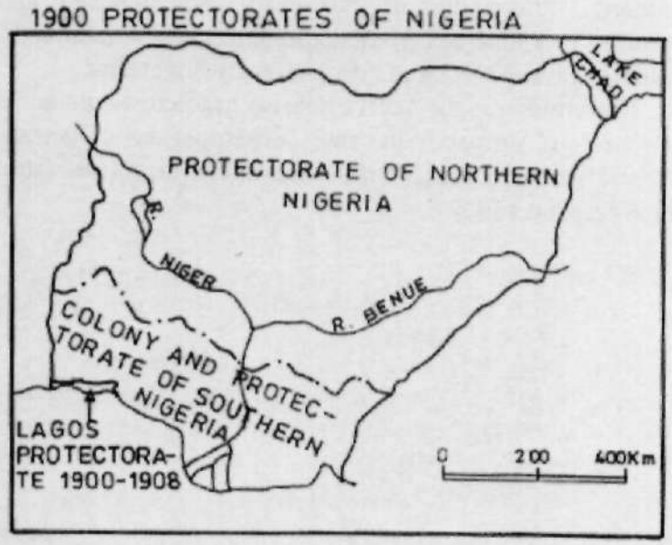
The above as well as several top European music and dance steps of those days, occupied the students weekend social life. Students were at every respect at par with their European counterparts studying in Europe and America.

Undoubtedly students were missing the classical Nigerian art and culture. This, unfortunately, the European lecturers could not adequately teach. The students' knowledge of European and Nigerian art resulted in a unique artistic experience. Consequently it could not be appreciated adequately by Nigerians.

Nonetheless, the early Zaria graduates made a tremendous impact on the contemporary Nigerian artistic scene so much that it has metamorphosed into an enterprise today.



Locations of Treasures of Ancient Nigeria





NOK Terracotta Head from Rafin Kura, 36cm high, 500BC – 200AD



NOK: The Jemaa Head. Terracotta: h. 25cm 500BC – 200AD



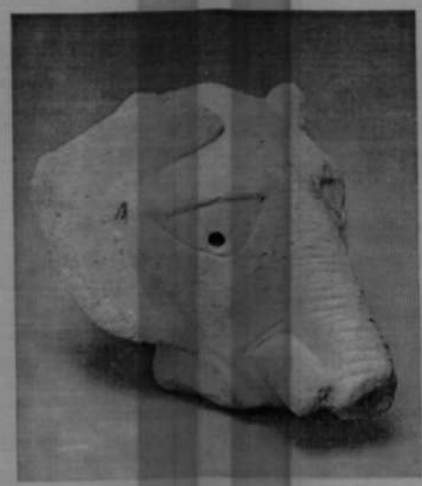
NOK: The Jemaa Head (side view), Terracotta; h. 25cm 500BC – 200AD



NOK: Terracotta; Kneeling Man from Bwuari, h. 10.6cm 500BC – 200AD



NOK: Terracotta human head from Kawu in Abuja Emirate; h. 24.5cm. 500BC – 200AD



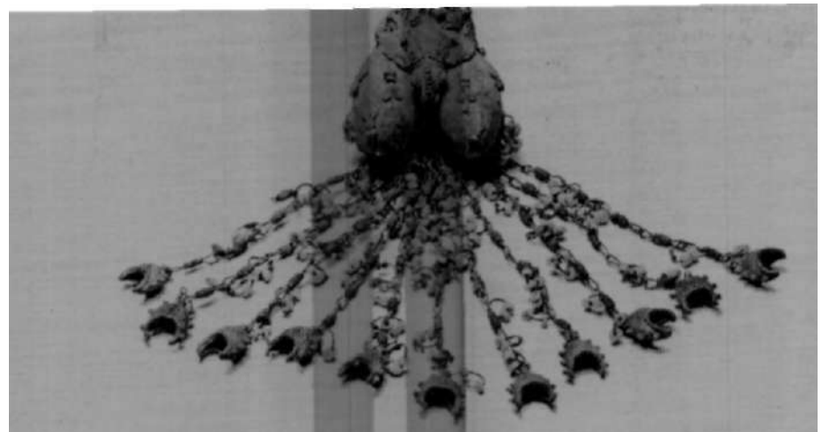
NOK: Terracotta Head of an Elephant Agwazomine, Odegi, H. 19cm. 500BC – 200AD



IGBO UKWU. Roped Pot on a Stand; Leaded Bronze; H. 32.3cm from Igbo Isaiah. 755AD – 940AD



IGBO UKWU. Bronze cresentic bowl, L. 13.9cm, W. 9.6cm from Igbo Isaiah. 755AD – 940AD



IGBO UKWU. Double Egg Pendant; Leaded Bronze, H. 21.6cm from Igbo Isaiah, Igbo-Ukwu. 755AD – 940AD



IGBO UKWU. Cylindrical Staff Ornament; Leaded Bronze, H. 16.3cm from Igbo Isaiah, Igbo-Ukwu. 755AD – 940AD



IFE. Crowned Head of an Oni, Zinc Brass: H. 24cm from Wunmonije Compaound, Ife. 12th – 15th C. AD.



IFE. Upper Half of a figure of an Oni, Zinc Brass; H. 37cm from Wunmonije Compaound, Ife. 12th – 15th C. AD.



IFE. Figure of an Oni, Zinc Brass; H. 47.1cm from Ita Yemoo, Ife. 12th – 15th C. AD.



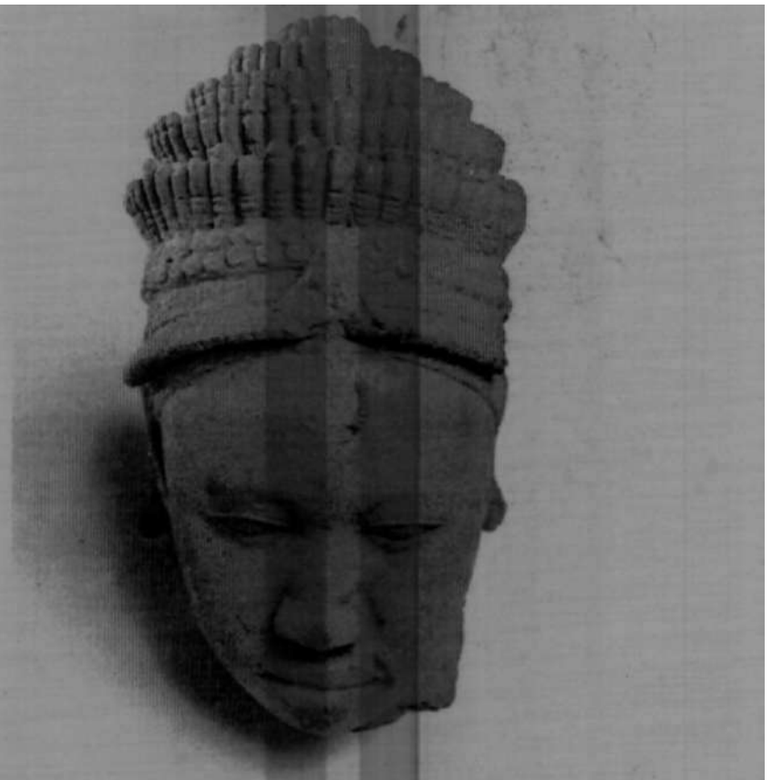
IFE. Bronze Figure Representing a King & Queen; H. 29.6cm from Ita Yemoo, Ife. 12th – 15th C. AD.



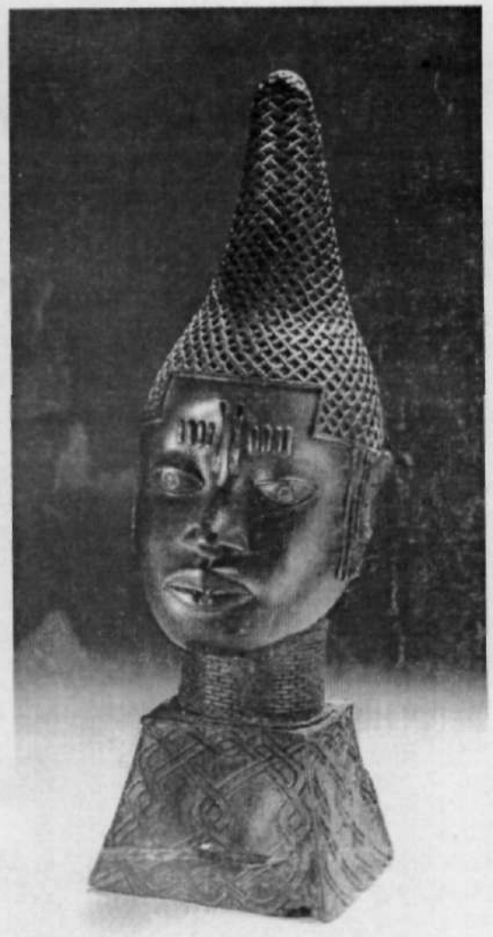
IFE. Head, Terracotta; H. 25cm from Iwinrin Grove, Ife. 12th – 15th C. AD.



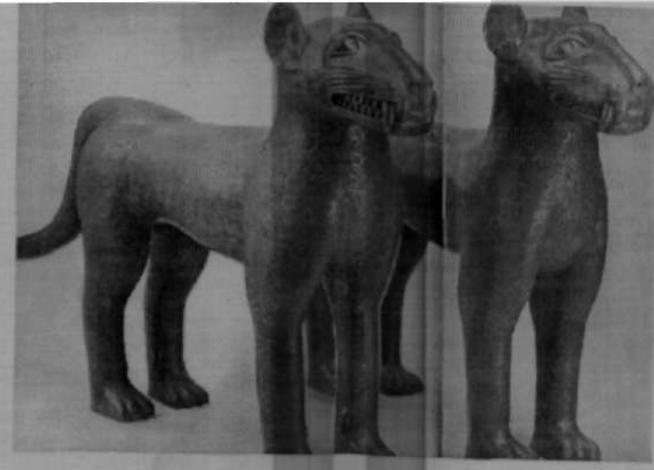
IFE. Head Representing Usurper Lajuwa. Terracotta; H. 32.8cm from Oni's Palace, Ife. 12th – 15th C. AD.



IFE. Head of a Queen. Terracotta; H. 25cm from Ita Yemoo, Ife.
12^{th} – 15^{th} C. AD.



BENIN. Queen Mother Head, Bronze; H. 51cm from Benin.
15th – 19th C. AD.



BENIN. Pair of Leopards, Bronze; L. 69cm from Benin. 15th – 19th C. AD.



BENIN. Plaque Showing two Musicians, Bronze; H. 48.5cm from Benin. 15th – 19th C. AD.



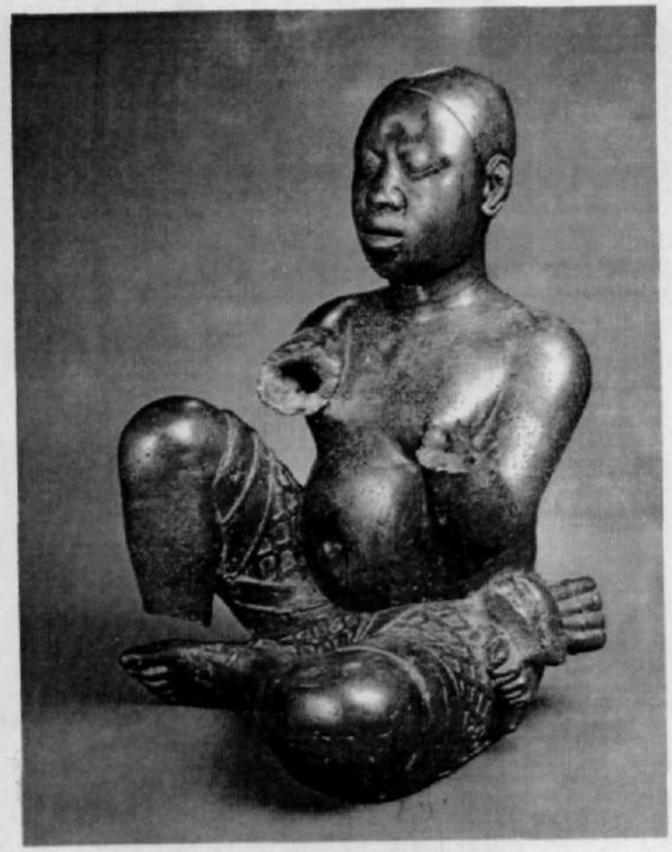
BENIN. Standing Figure of a Messenger, Bronze; H. 63.5cm from Benin. 15th – 19th C. AD.



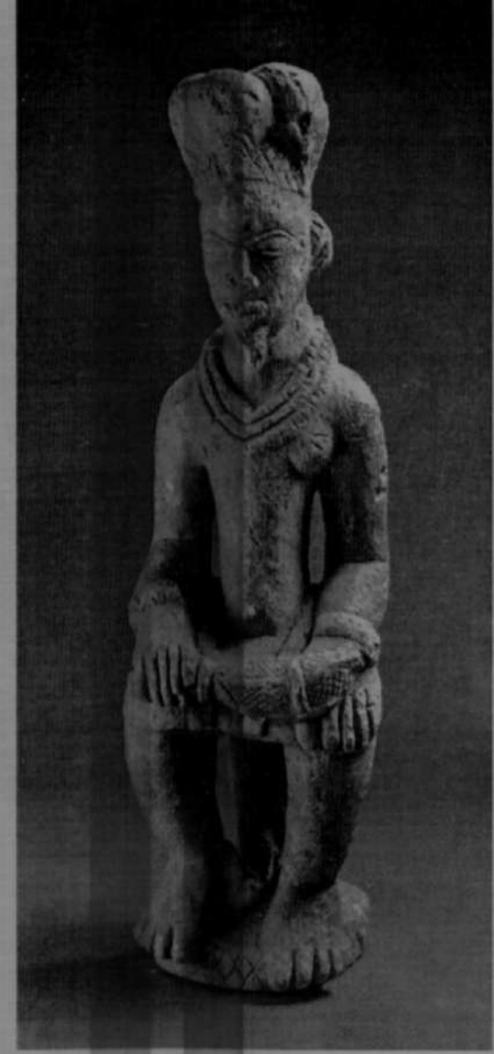
BENIN. Plaque Showing a Warrior & Attendants, Bronze; H. 53.5cm from Benin. 15th – 19th C. AD.



BENIN. Plaque Showing Three Court Attendants, Bronze; H. 49cm from Benin. 15th – 19th C. AD.



SEATED FIGURE, Copper; H. 53.7cm from Tada



ESIE. Seated Figure with Sword, Soapstone; H. 78cm from Esie.



AFO. Headdress; Afo, Nigeria. British Museum, London. Here the chameleon surmounts the horns of the bush cow; this shows that the earth has power over the chief who is wise if he learns from the chameleon's understanding of the earth.

1. First Decade (1920-1930)

The first decade of modern Nigerian art was dominated by Aina Onabolu, father of modem Nigerian art. During the 19th century traditional art was so battered that no body among the people of Onabolu's time desired to be an artist. During the first decade of modern Nigerian art, Onabolu taught in Lagos secondary schools all the European science of painting. His style was to depict figures and objects to resemble their actual appearances that some art historians refer to them as being photographic realism. He also taught perspective, the expressive qualities of line, shape, as well as light and colour. Within five years of his return from Europe he had nurtured several students in art in Lagos secondary schools.[8]



Aina Onabolu. Madam Spencer Savage, water colour, (1906). Courtesy of Nigerisan Magazine

His efforts would later on manifest positively to support his plea to government that art teachers should be employed to carry on the work. The incredible perseverance of Onabolu resulted in government granting his petition to recruit Kenneth

C.I. Murray (1902-1972) to teach art in Nigeria in 1927. He taught his students to be spontaneous in their execution of art works based on local themes His students were: C.C. Ibeto, Uthman Ibrahim, D.L.K. Nnachi, A.P. Umana and Ben Enwonwu. This decade produced two schools of thought with regards to modem Nigerian artists' approach to style. Onabolu's style of photographic realism was practiced by many artists who desired to know all they could learn of the European Science of painting and drawing. Similarly some artists later emulated the style practiced by Murray. The positive effects of Onabolu and Murray's styles of teaching came during the second decade.[9]

Another artist of this decade is Idah Ovia a Bini, who was born in 1908. While he was serving as an Omada (a royal boy in waiting) at the palace of the Oba of Benin, at a young age of seven, he began his carving on coconut shells and calabash, and worked later in ivory and coral beads. In 1923, he left Benin City for Lagos where he started carving ebony. Later he was given an appointment as an art tutor in carving at the prestigious King's College Lagos. Finally he returned to Benin to carry on an independent career.[10]



Akinola Lasekan. Nigerian Soldier dunring colonial period, oil 42x55cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos

While Onabolu nick-named and called Mr. Perspective was making impressive gains in the schools where he taught in Lagos, Murray's students were busy preparing for their international exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery in London in 1937. The beginning of the second decade of Modem Nigerian Art still witnessed Aina Onabolu and Kenneth C. Murray training young men and women in secondary schools in southern Nigeria. Gradually there were young school leavers in Lagos, Ibadan, Uyo and Umuahia. Similarly, the products of Methodist College Uzoakoli. Hope Waddell Institute Calabar and Omu School were active in their respective locations. The teachers in these schools had one thing in common with Onabolu. They were self taught and later sought information from all sources including foreign literature some of which were by correspondence .Some of them attended Teacher Training Colleges following which they decided to be teachers. An example of artists in this category is Adam Joshua Udo Ema.[11] Udo Ema made a

solid impression on young school boys and girls wishing to be artists in Nigeria at a time when art was not on the curriculum of many schools in the country. An Ibibio from Eastern Nigeria, he trained as a painter, but devoted his life to teaching art and publishing of textbooks on how to teach art. His first book: An African Art Teachers' Handbook was published in 1951. The Teaching of Clay work in Schools came out in 1952 and the Art and Craft Teachers in 1962. He attended Methodist Teacher Training College Uzoakoli where his interest in art started. After graduation, he started teaching art in Eastern Nigeria in 1936. Another artist teacher is D.L.K. Nnachi who is an Igbo from Ohofia in Abia State of Nigeria. He was born in 1910 and like Ben Enwonwu became a foundation student of Kenneth C. Murray's School in Umuahia. After leaving Government College Umuahia. otherwise called Murray's School, he taught for a number of years at Ohofia. He was an instrumental pioneer teacher who developed art education in that part of Nigeria. Quite early in his life, he wrote folk tales and personally illustrated them. He however had no encouragement and this probably contributed to the reasons why he was little heard of. He did a three year work on body painting which was taken away by an unknown person.[12]



Akinola Lasekan. Poor Africa, courtesy of Ola Oloidi in Kojo

Ohofia Games and Ceremonies was a book written and illustrated by Nnachi who also carved in wood. Stylistically, his work is simple, brilliant and well conceived. His work was often linear. He favoured open composition with scenes from customs .Examples of such works are; Okwonkwo Onama Topa, Mbogo, Akakpa, Ukiaka and, Ite Odo.

Okwonkwo Ekpe is a composition of three figures- two men and an



J.D. Akeredolu. Mother and Child, wood (plaque) 45x59cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos.

Ekpe masquerade in solid opaque colour which is probably gouache. Figures are flattened out and arranged as individual entity and they face the same direction. His treatment of the hand ignores perspective so that it could be seen. Thus figures are placed in vertical perspective. In Akpaka, five figures of women dancing are shown in which the artist has used water colour competently to execute the picture. His general concept of placing the important figures centrally is significant. The legs seem to be evenly distributed. Six Men with Walking Sticks reveals the proportion of 1:4 or 1:3 aesthetics in African human representation which seems to reflect a metaphysical reality which is beyond the world of the senses. There is no use of perspective, though he overlaps his figures and his overlapping of the figures seems to improve the painting. In Mbogo, six men carrying branches of a tree are depicted, while in Igwaali, he depicts men carrying wood climbing a mountain. The students of Kenneth Murray were very active in the second decade of modem Nigerian art Ben Enwonwu, C.C. Ibeto, Uthman Ibrahim, D.L.K. Nnachi, and A.P. Umana had their first joint international art exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery in London in 1937. In 1938 when the Nigerian Arts and Crafts Exhibition was shown at the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow .the five Murray students' art works from the Zwemmer Gallery formed a part of the exhibition. Other Nigerian artists who were represented included Justus D. Akeredolu, Bolaji Bamigboye, H.I. Erhabor, Ovia Idah, Akinola Lasekan and Thomas Ona. The originator of thorn carving: J.D. Akeredolu from Owo started making carving as a young man which he continued to develop during the decade. Bolaji Bamigboye had his first art training under Chief Aina Onabolu. A product of an American Mission School in Lagos, Bamigboye later on attended the Wesley College Ibadan, where he graduated with a teacher training certificate. H.I. Erhabor was born near Benin at about 1898 and began his art life at a very early age carving

of the Oba of Benin. Erhabor was therefore privileged to learn his carving techniques from the royal artists in the palace. He left Benin for Lagos in 1927,where he carved on commission for individuals, corporate bodies, churches and similar groups. He taught art in five different Lagos schools and continued to be featured as an active participant in national and international exhibitions throughout this decade and beyond.[13]

3. Third Decade (1942-1952)



Ben Enwonwu Agbogbo Muo, oil 111 x 87 cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos.

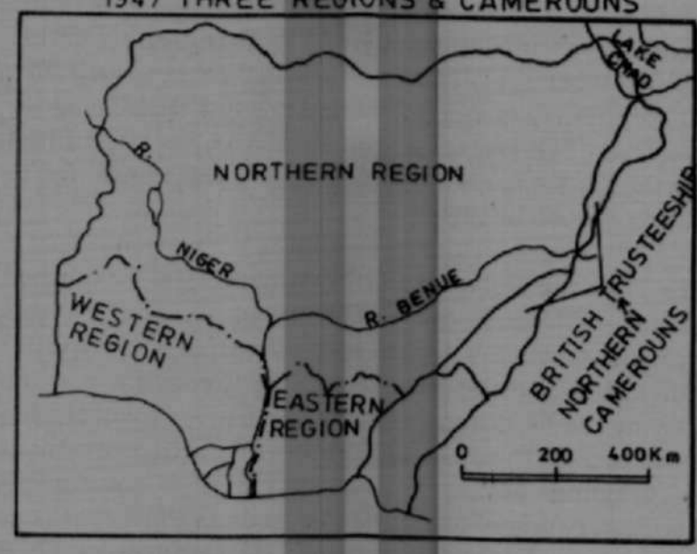
During the early 1940s, there was minimal teaching of art in Nigeria owing to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 which did not end until 1945. There were however important events like the first solo exhibition in Lagos by Ben Enwonwu, the most famous of the five Kenneth Murray's student. That exhibition probably under scored the need of a place to exhibit art works in Lagos. Therefore in 1943, the Exhibition Center along the Marina was established .In 1943; the Lagos Museum and the Department of Antiquities were also established. The origin of the famous Nigerian College of Arts and Technology may be said to date from the year 1943 when the Secretary of State for the Colonies appointed a commission under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Walter Elliot to consider higher education in West Africa. The Reports of that Commission were published in 1945 In the Minority Report the view was expressed that there was a need for the provision of facilities other than those coming within the scope of a university, for education beyond the school



Ben Enwonwu. Negritude, oil 98 x 76 cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos.

endorsed by a delegation from the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies which visited Nigeria in 1947 under the leadership of Sir William Hamilton Fyfe. The delegation advocated the establishment of Colleges on the general lines of the Polytechnics in the United Kingdom.[14]

1947 THREE REGIONS & CAMEROUNS



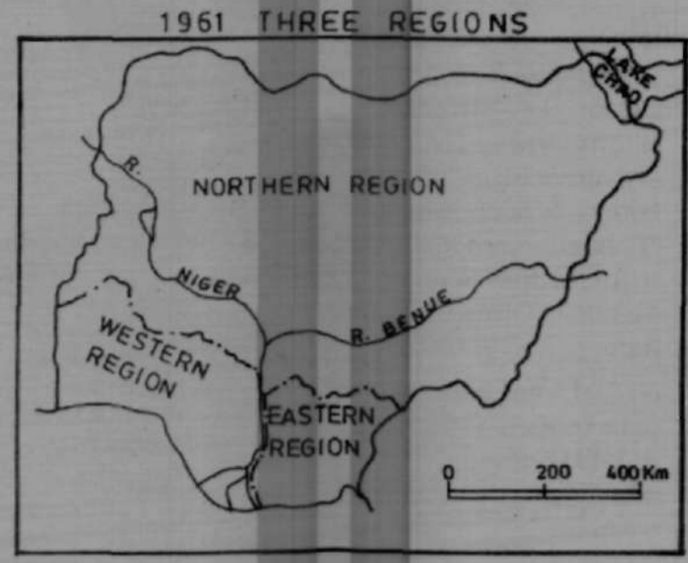
As a result of these aforementioned reports, a Working Committee consisting of Dr J.F. Harlow, M.B.E. Principal of the Chelsea Polytechnic, and Mr. W. H. Thorp, Chief Inspector of Technical Education in Nigeria, was set up to advise as to the need for and the organization and location of, a College or Colleges of Higher Technical Education in Nigeria

The findings of this Committee were published as Sessional Paper No. 11 of 1950, entitled "Report on a Technical College Organization for Nigeria". In this report the committee recommended the establishment

of a Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology; the College to be a Federal Institution with Branches at Enugu, Ibadan and Zaria. After referring to the Regional Governments, the Governor in Council approved in principle the proposals contained in the report. Mr. W.H. Thorp was appointed the first Principal of the College and work commenced at the Ibadan Branch in 1950. A provisional Committee of the College was appointed and held its first meeting on the 18th October 1951. The first Principal of the College Mr. Thorp retired in April 1954. He was succeeded by Dr C. A. Hart; The Department of Fine Arts was started first at the Ibadan Branch in 1953 before it was transferred to Zaria Branch in 1955.[15]

In 1948, the University College Ibadan was established as an affiliate of the University of London. At this period, Onabolu's legacy had started to yield fruitful dividends and the great lecture by Creech Jones while laying the foundation stone of the University of Ibadan was noteworthy: "No nation can truly progress without developing her art." In 1949, a new government secondary school was started in Kaduna which was later moved to Keffi and renamed Government College where art later thrived under the encouragement of Dennis Duerden. During this period, pupils from Omu School and several other schools in Northern Nigeria were admitted to Keffi and the result of their effort would start to manifest in the following decade. At this time the effort of Father Kevin Carroll of the Society of African Missions by establishing the Oye Ekiti Catholic workshop had started to yield fruitful results first for the Mission and second for Modem Nigerian Art. In 1948 two important events took place. First, was the first group exhibition of Nigerian artists organized by

Chukueggu, Akinola Lasekan, Eke Okaybulu, Geoffrey Okolo, A.O. Osula, and J.O. Ugoji? That same year Ben Enwonwu was appointed Art Adviser to the Nigerian government. At the close of this decade, Ulli Beier and Susanne Wenger came to the University College Ibadan in 1950, to start a project that would involve them with Modem Nigerian artists for the next few decades. Most of the reputable modern Nigerian artists that were to dictate the pace later were in their teen years having their post primary education in various parts of the country.[16]



4. Fourth Decade (1953-63)

The fourth decade of modem Nigerian art had several remarkable events that influenced the thrust of artistic practice forwards in Nigeria. Events such as the

establishment of the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology in Ibadan in 1953 and the transfer of the first art school to Zaria in 1955.[17] The establishment of the department of art and printing at the Technical Institute later called Yaba College of Technology which produced art students who were admitted to the Nigerian College Zaria as from 1956.[18]

Another school: Government Secondary School (Keffi) Kaduna, established in 1949 was moved to Keffi in this decade. The products of Omu School, that were admitted to Keffi joined the art club known as Dennis Duerden's Flame of the Forest School which produced renounced artists such as William Aremu Olaosebikan, Jimo Akolo, T.A. Jegede who later on came to Zaria in 1956, and 1957 respectively where they graduated.[19]



Clara Ugbodaga Ngu. Portrait of the head of Ona. Partinated in terracotta 35cm, National Gallery, Lagos.

first on old newspapers, and cement papers as well as mural painting. Earth colours were used and colours were improvised from local plants, flowers pods, leaves and roots. Chew sticks were used as brushes. Also animal hairs were used as improvised brushes while feathers were used freely since they were available from their poultry. Omu was a comprehensive elementary school in which pupils learnt from the scratch what was honourable, lovely, and creative in indigenous systems as well as the then current British standard literary practice. Pupils built their own houses called "Abule", farmed and planted crops of their own choice, barbed for one another, planted orchard, practiced mixed farming, learnt to tender pigs, cattle, sheep and goats as well as managed poultry.[20]



Solomon Irein Wangboje, Romance of the Headload II Lino Cut 55 x 34.5 cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos.

The art of wood carving which was vibrant in the environment was encouraged and the famous Bamigboye, wood carver from Odo Owa became the pupils' teacher. Omu School thrived as a school known and recognized in Nigeria and abroad until the late 1950s when it was upgraded to a secondary school. It

excelled not only in other areas of education but it also nurtured creative minds. Several of the pupils of Omu who went to Keffi were the nucleus of Dennis Duerden's Flame of the Forest School at Keffi. When these students' art works produced in their art club were exhibited at Jos museum, Cyprian Ekwensi referred to their art effort as "a New Movement in Art in Nigeria," after seeing their 150 paintings. Two hundred and fifty of the students' drawings were later exhibited in the United States at the Philadelphia Museum and were enthusiastically received. Some of the Duerden boys who later on became renowned artists after graduating from Zaria art school were: William Aremu Olaosebikan, the first graduate art teacher in the then Northern Region of Nigeria; Jimo Akolo, retired Professor of Art Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and Theophilus Ajayi, a graduate specializing in sculpture.[21]



Yusufu Adebayo Grillo, Mother and Child c.122x76.25 cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos.

Besides students coming to Zaria from Yaba, there were others from the Eastern Nigeria; and Government Secondary Schools in the middle belt region of Nigeria. Before independence in 1960, certainly art teaching was going on in various parts of the country with major centers in Lagos, Ibadan, Umuahia, Owerri, Omu School, Methodist College Uzoakoli, Ilorin, Egbe and other secondary school in the middle belt. The opening of the Jos Museum in 1952 as well as the National Museum Onikan, Lagos in 1957, had a positive effect on the development of modern art in Nigeria. Much as a lot of events culminated to influence the development of modern Nigerian art during the fourth decade, there is no other singular school that so brought a dramatic impact on art that has continued to unfold during consequent decades, as the Zaria Art School.



Jimo Akolo "Talking Drum", Oil on canvas c.38' x 20' 1962. Collection of Michael Crowder

By now, most people are aware that Zaria Art School in A.B.U., a citadel of excellence, had it's initial budding in the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology Ibadan branch in 1953, when a department of art was started to teach teachers going out to teach.. Two years later, the Zaria Art School was put in motion, when the Art department in Ibadan was moved to the Nigerian College of Arts and Science and Technology Zaria branch, and started to emphasize the teaching of fine arts

comprising of painting, sculpture, textiles, graphics and commercial design and ceramics.[22]

Much as the above is known, several nuances of that epoch-making movement and details of the settlement of the formal premier art institution in Zaria, Nigeria remain shrouded in speculation.[23] Speculations owing to inadequate exposure of details about the School existed. Details which had hitherto, in this writer's opinion, been lacking, will if supplied enrich our understanding of the evolution, growth and development of this citadel of learning in the arts. What contributed to making it so important need to be told in detail.[24] If for nothing else, this present generation needs to know the truth so that they will serve as ambassadors whose preoccupation will be to pass on the same unalloyed truth. More so, we are in a new millennium in which excellence is being emphasized.



Jimo Akolo, Tired Drummer

First, it aspires to present in graphic detail the Zaria of yester-years, the almost pure and inviting and stimulating environment.[25] The smiles that welcomed one to Zaria apart from the permanent centries on guard, in the form of the tall and lanky baobab trees as one approached Zaria by road or by rail. The markets that differed from those of the south, that displayed the

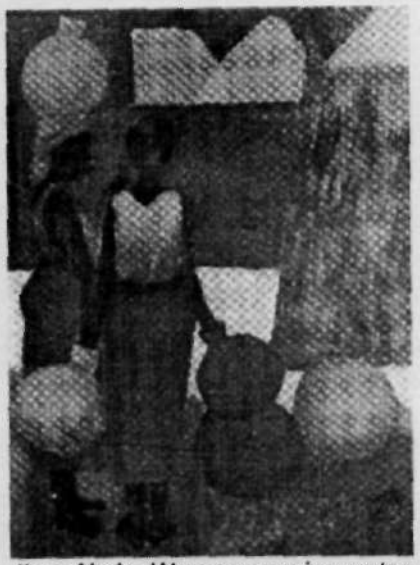
various traders with their wares including the slim Fulani women hawking their cheese and fura da nono. Often dressed in their best, they balanced their calabashes on their heads. Those calabashes have various traditional inscriptions and motifs which offer unique attraction to the totality of the Fulani female costume.

Again the cattle Fulani male, who also dressed in his best, had barely managed to take off a holiday from the management of his cattle, was a spectacle to behold. Donkeys heavily laden with goods and farm produce gently plodding their way to the market along the various pathways. The few available lorries then could not cope and had to be assisted by beasts of burden to carry marketers as well as bags and bags of grains to market. Or was it the Sallah, that usually displayed the dignitaries, commoners and chiefs dressed in their best attires seated waiting for the Emir to emerge, following which the durbar celebration would start in earnest? The horses dressed in their best saddles and bridles of various colours were ready to show their preparedness for the race.[26]



Uche Okeke. NZA , pen and ink on paper, 25x29.5cm.

The joy of winning the race and the agony of defeat for the horse and riders, brought home the adage that the fastest runner may not win the race. For the students, it usually reminded them of the studies of horses by Marino Marini. Whichever way one views it, the Samaru village of those days (the 50s and 60s) seemed to breath an air of freedom, beauty and stimulating calm that welcomed visitors.[27]



Jimo Akolo. Women carrying water pot, oil on canvas, c. 24" x 36". *University of Ibadan, Nigeria.*

How one was welcomed wherever one went, provided one was careful to observe the warning ba shiga sign which forbid anybody to enter into compounds or houses. But one was welcomed outside the door with enthusiasm and if it was the direction one was seeking for, immediate help was rendered.

Zaria city was alive with the traditional houses decorated to taste and the houses mostly with flat roofs allowed an almost unbroken aerial view.[28] The variety, simplicity, with the powerful rendering of calligraphic and Islamic inscriptions on the outside walls of building" were easily noticed. The sumptuous buildings carried the best designs and were ^ meant to display the wealth and nobility of such people of Zaria.[28] Old women and young men drawing water from wells for the daily needs of their families. During evenings

entertained people far into the night.[30]

Second, this essay aspires to present the campus life with the students drawn from around the country and the then British Cameroons. Lecturers in Fine Arts were drawn from all over the world. They came to Nigeria with enormous potential; to leave a mark of excellence in their various disciplines. Several of the lecturers were just as young as their students and the rapport, in most cases, was cordial.[31] The lecturers also found their new environment fascinating, and as they



Demas Nwoko, 'Folly'.

were aware of the role African art had played in the development of modem European art, went into action to record some of the glorious scenes of Zaria, Samaru and the environment. Some of these lecturers utilized their weekends to travel outside Zaria to places like Kano, Jos, Bauchi and Maiduguri. Others even ventured as far South as Ikot Ekpene in the East or Ibadan and Lagos in the West. They were equipped with their Cameras and Sketch books and they came back re-invigorated.[31(b)] They were often welcomed everywhere they went in Nigeria with "Oyinbo" or "Bature" meaning "white person". They often felt like Kings and Queens.

Some of the lecturers preached the doctrine of visitation



Jimo Akolo. Yoruba Dancers, oil on canvas. Lady Head's Collection.

to "your local arts". They emphasized research into the local arts,[32] but often buttressed their points by laying emphasis on what they knew best, which was European. Although that was an irony, they meant no harm, they taught what they knew best and they excelled. Students, as earlier said, came to Zaria from various ethnic groups of Nigeria with the majority coming from the south. They came to Zaria with the experiences of their various cultures.[33] In Zaria they met not only those scenes earlier on described, but other students coming from cultures and artistic backgrounds other than their own. There were cross fertilization of ideas and these ideas permeated their art and they soon realised that they had

addition to what they learnt from their diverse cultural awareness. The new awareness were elicited to form their unique compositions.[34]

The Diploma course of the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, was equated with those of Slade and Goldsmiths College, London University. Students who did not make the required standard were either asked to repeat the year or withdraw from the programme.[36]



Godfrey Aduku Okiki, Lagos Girl, wood cut. Courtesy of Nigeria Magazine.

They learnt to draw profusely. Everywhere they went during week-days, they carried along their sketch books. Creativity was emphasised and basic design was taught

as a course. Hence, Nigercol and Nigercolism were known for its precision and colour orchestration. Art history was also taught to all students and was examined at the end of the session. Students were admitted to the four-year diploma programme, with their five credits in School certificate. At the end of the first year, of the four-year course, students were expected to have passed art at advanced level General Certificate of Education. Students, who did not pass, were given an option to repeat the year. At the end of the second year, following a general exposure to all courses in the fine art programme, they were required to



Daniel Babalola. Tired student.

submit their course work for assessment. They also wrote an examination called the Intermediate Diploma *Examination for which no certificate was issued.*[35] The external moderators were initially from the Slade School of Art, London but later they came from the Goldsmiths *College of Art, London University.*

even when the Ahmadu Bello University started in 1961, and this was provided at minimal cost by the department. This was made possible as most students were placed on Scholarship such as Federal, Regional or Private, such as: Nigeria Tobacco Company, Shell Petroleum and others. The bodies that awarded the Scholarships paid the tuition and in addition gave students pocket money known then by students as "bulgaria."[37] Since the scholarships covered tuition, lodging and feeding, students meals including snacks were provided three times a day. Students' clothes were laundered and returned to them in their hostels every week, freely. It appeared that students were, so to say, well off than some of their lecturers. Some of them lived like Kings and Queens.[38]

The academic life was however, rigorous. Students utilized the day for attending lectures and sketching, while they spent their evenings and night, sometimes up to one o'clock in the morning, to do their private projects and works assigned to them. Several of them used this period to experiment with their own chosen topics. Uche Okeke's Almajiri, Demas Nwoko's Folly Jimo Akolo's Talking Drum and The Tired Drummer as well as Geoffrey Okiki's Ogongo Girl and Lagos Girl were produced during such periods.[39]

Students' progress reports were usually sent to the donors of the various scholarships, earlier referred to, and this ensured that students worked really hard. Any student who failed to work hard to make the required grades had his/her scholarship automatically withdrawn, except he was certified to have a chance of making it, if he was allowed to repeat.



Benjamin Olabode Oyadiran. The rape of democracy, oil on literate, Courtesy of the Artist.

The students privileges were so many and varied and there were, so to say, nothing, practically nothing, the students lacked or worried about except to make the required grades in their courses lest their scholarship privileges be withdrawn.[40]

It was with the above background prevailing, that students worked together to equal their counterparts in the U.K. and the U.S., and to formulate manifestoes and form groups. It was at a time like this that the idea of Natural Synthesis was hatched or born.

National Synthesis Theory

Although the original idea of Natural Synthesis should be ascribed to a cross section of graduates of 1959-1962, the major actor was Fasuyi who was the first graduate in painting in 1959. His other colleagues among whom Wangboje is note worthy hatched the idea. The idea was known to and practised by majority of Students in the Zaria Art School. So, artists like T.A. Fasuyi, S.I. Wangboje, Adeka, Erese, Oyewole, Thomas, Agbabiaka, Grillo, Olaosebikan as well as Talabi, Okolo, Akolo, Nwoko, Okeke, Onobrakpeya, T.A. Jegede,

Uhiara, Odita, Osadebe, Aguebor, Ajepe, Bot and Oso.[41] Others who were initiated as the practitioners of Natural Synthesis were graduates of 1963 and 1964. These were those who entered the School in 1959 and 1960, and no wonder they formed the creem of the pioneer founders of the society of Nigerian Arts in January 1964.



Benjamin Olabode Oyadiran. What we know when they came, Courtesy of the Artist.

Even before they completed their course, students of Zaria Art School were aware of the Natural Synthesis whether they practised it or not up to the next eight sets.[42] The background of art in Zaria then was full of the display of Students' knowledge of an awareness of their ethnic background as well as what they acquired from their new formal training in the arts, including art history. This is not to erode the earlier notion held by many that the members of the Zaria Art Society were the originators. The idea was common and practised by many throughout the Department then. And the detail of the story is far-reaching than what had been told.

But the members of the Zaria Art Society as they were later called, articulated the common idea of Natural Synthesis and projected it to the outside world. They have been honoured and they deserve it but this issue of the Natural Synthesis as hereby revisited and fine-tuned, should be clear once and for all, that majority of students in Zaria Art School were not asleep while only eleven or so of them were alive.[43]



Samuel Bodunde Faturoti. The bronze of Chief Akinyele, life size portrait. Courtesy of the Artist.



Samuel Bodunde Faturoti. Self Portrait, life size in bronze. Courtesy of the Artist.

It must be emphatically stated that art was agoing in Zaria in those early years up to 1970. It has been equally clearly stated, that while some of the pioneer graduates of fine arts worked in Ministries of Education and Information and Newspaper houses, only a few worked in Polytechnics and

Universities.

The time of the early years of political independence was noteworthy for Zaria graduates. First, the opening of Gallery Labac in Lagos under the auspices of the Nigerian Arts Council, and the Exhibition Center along the Marina, there were places to exhibit their art works. Having made an impressive debut with the independence exhibition, they were alert to anything that projected the arts.

In 1961, when the first Mbari Writers and Artists Club Workshop was held in Ibadan, several of the Zaria Art graduates attended. In 1961, Jimo Akolo won an honorary mention at Sao Paulo with his Women Carrying Water Pots.[45] Mbari Club continued to project young Nigerian artists while each of them continued to practise the Theory of Natural Synthesis in his art.

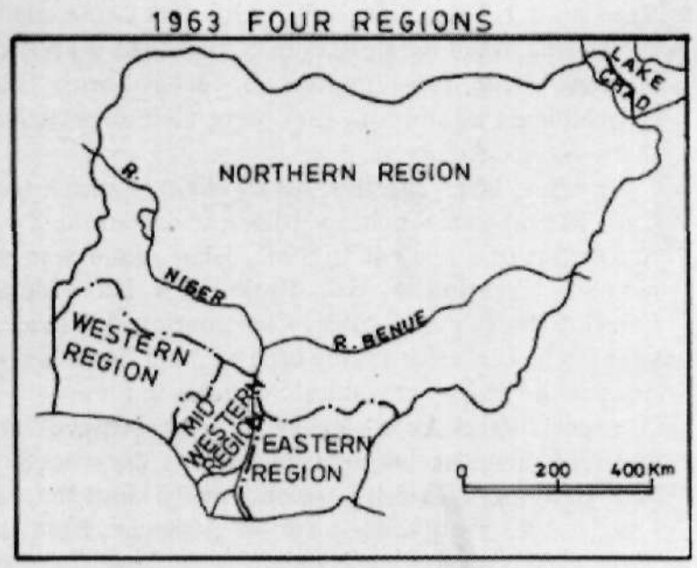
Several workshops which took place between 1961 and 1966 included the Mbari Mbayo five day workshop held in Osogbo in 1962, second Mbari workshop in Osogbo 1963 with antagonism on Zarianism from the Osogbo experiment by Ulli Beier.

In spite of this, graduates of Zaria art School decided to carry on the development of modern Nigeria Art even after their initial breakthrough, and the death of their mentor Aina Onabolu in 1963. Their cohesive activities led to the formation of the Society of Nigeria Artists in January 1964 with majority of them coming from Zaria.

One of the exponents of Natural Synthesis, Yusufu Grillo was elected President.[46] The challenge to this cohesive group continued unabated through the third Mbari Mbayo workshop in Osogbo during which artists not formally trained were aspiring to make their debut in 1964.

Before the end of this decade pioneer graduates of Zaria art school have pioneered the establishment of vibrant art departments in schools and colleges in

various parts of the country. The Department of Fine and Applied Arts in Obafemi Awolowo University and University of Nigeria Nsukka were inclusive.



5. Fifth Decade (1964 -1974)

Nonetheless, that same year, 1964, when Ru Van Rossem conducted a print making workshop in Osogbo several graduates of Zaria Art School attended. These included Uche Okeke, Bruce Onobrakpeya and Jimo Akolo. It was after this workshop that Onobrakpeya continued to develop his print making techniques for which he is now internationally famous.[47]



Kolade Oshinowo. Ensemble, oil 92x152cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos

Individually Zaria Art School graduates continued to make their impacts felt. For instance, Uche Okeke

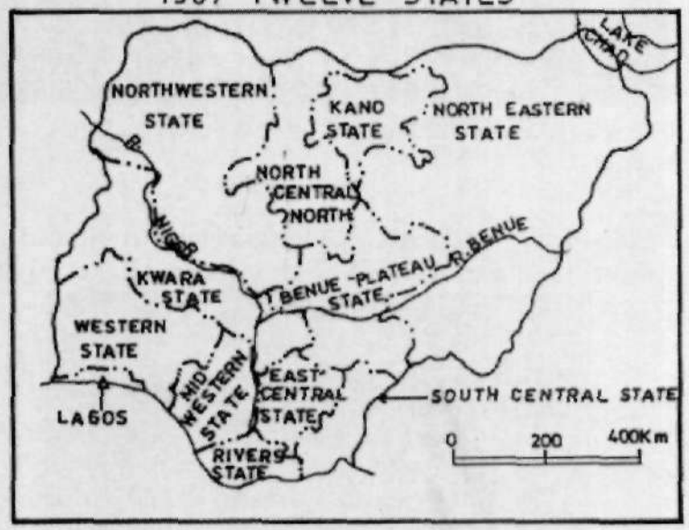


Kolade Oshinowo: Ritual Dance. Oil 92x122cm. National Art Gellery, Lagos

opened his Asele Art Gallery in Enugu in 1965, while the Goethe Institute continued to promote Contemporary Nigerian Art.[48]

With the World first Festival of Negro Arts taking place in Dakar Senegal, several artists, who were involved included Demas Nwoko and members of the Society of Nigerian artists.[49]

1967 TWELVE STATES



The Challenge to Natural Synthesis Theory

In spite of their individual and collective efforts to attend workshops and exhibit their art works, the Natural Synthesis theory was battered by the mid 1970s. The theory which was practised by Zaria Art graduates, each in his own way, was dangerously loosing its steam. Why? Primarily owing to the non-grasp of its essence by several latter graduates and owing to the manner art was practised. To some it had become old fashioned. The

kind of art practised attracted the Nigerian public's criticism and the Nigerian Magazine was very loud in projecting the public views.[50]

To compound the issue of direction, several artists who had made it, became the envy of the upcoming young art graduates. This trend if unchecked was considered dangerous and it became the lot of Prof. Wangboje to organize the first International Art Seminar in the Department of Fine Arts Zaria, in 1972.[51]



Dele Jegede, Sallah Day, oil 97x190cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos.

That Seminar was important as a landmark in the redirection of straying art practitioners. Several Nigerian artists of repute attended that Seminar and presented papers. The international dimension was provided by Prof. Eliot Eisner and others from participated in the plenary discussions.[52] At the end of this a communiqué ensued and the voice of Nigerian artists was heard, as reported by the prints media. It was not only the highlights of the proceedings that were reported but the document which was the first major communiqué on art.

6. Sixth Decade (1975-1985)

One of the demands of the artists during the fifth decade was that they be given commissions especially in the decoration and embellishment of public buildings. This demand was instrumental to the invitation accorded several artists in the decoration of the Murtala



Sina Yussuff, Royal welcome, oil on canvas, 122x183cm. National Art Gallery, Lagos.

Mohammed International Airport in Lagos with works by Grillo, Emokpae,

Onobrakpeya, Osunde, Nwoko, Uche Okeke,etc.[53;54] Secondly, artists were made members of the Committee which planned the Festac. Demas Nwoko, for instance, designed certain costume for the production of "Children of Paradise", one of Nigeria's entries in Festac 1977. With Nigeria's Cultural policy written by Fasuyi in 1973, approved by government before its submission to UNESCO, Nigerian artists were constantly invited to international competitions. From artists of these years emerged the idea that art has assumed a global village dimension.[55]



Dele Jegede, Better Women for Rural Life, oil on board, 80x111cm, National Art Gallery, Lagos.

The World as a Global Village

Several graduates of Zaria, starting from those of the mid-seventies to mid-eighties, were part of those who championed the idea of art assuming a natural role within the global village. First, was the issue of verbalization on art more than ever before, side by side with the artistic product. Participation in National and International exhibitions became a vogue. The glory of the youth, being their energy, was thrown head long at trying to make a mark that would surpass the Natural Synthesis phenomena.[56]



Gani Odutokun. Dialogue With Mona Lisa.



Ben Ekanem. Queen Amina, Fondou et fibreglass, life size

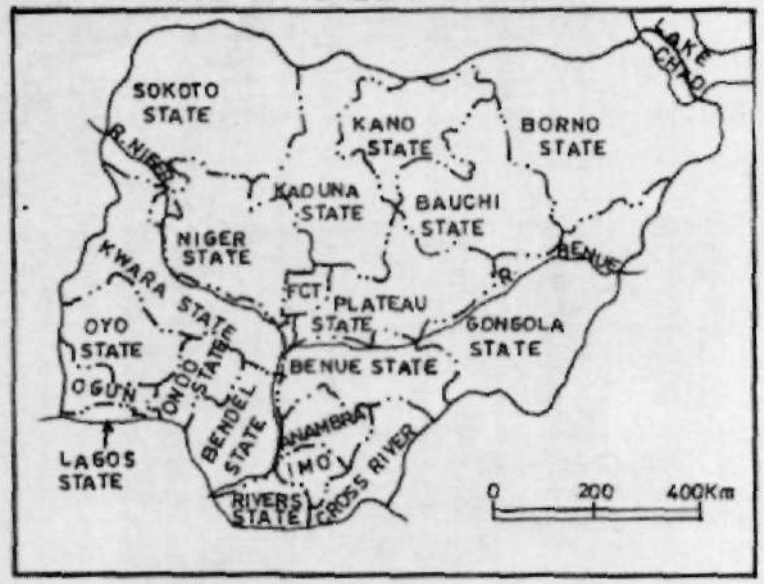


Jerry Buhari. Dialogue Between Heaven and Earth. Courtesy of the Artist.

It, however, appears that some of them could not divulge themselves from the theory of natural synthesis, they so much wish to expunge.

One good thing which however, came out of this epoch was the desire of Zaria graduates to mix with artists with International background from various countries of the world. In so doing, there were several gains, but certain fundamental losses. One was the loss of focus on the part of some artists of identity and the mad rush to acquire money at the expense of the client, the art

1976 NINETEEN STATES



patron.[57]
The rejection of the Natural Synthesis however allowed artists much more freedom to excel as individuals. Artists, who now began to send shock waves of excitement across the globe, that Zaria Art School has

contemporary force. For whereas before, we had only a few giants in art, the young graduates now widely exhibited in the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, and other places had debunked that. It allowed artists like Ekanem, Gani Oduntokun, Sina Yussuf, Dele Jegede, Nelson Cole, Joshua Akande, Kolade Oshinowo and others like Jerry Buhari, Tony Okpe. Muhammed Mu'azu Sani and Jacob Jari to whom they served as mentors to emerge. Some of them still lecture and live in Zaria and Nigeria.[58]



Jerry Buhari. Child on test tube, Mixed Media board, 100x725cm. Courtesy of the Artist



Jerry Buhari. The Global Village, Enamel and Acrylic on board, 1995, 62cm. Courtesy of the Artist.

7. Seventh Decade (1986-1996)

In 1986, when this decade opened, Kojo Fosu, then based in Zaria wrote what he knew of important artists shaping modern African art. He studied several modern Nigerian artists[59] as well as artists from various African

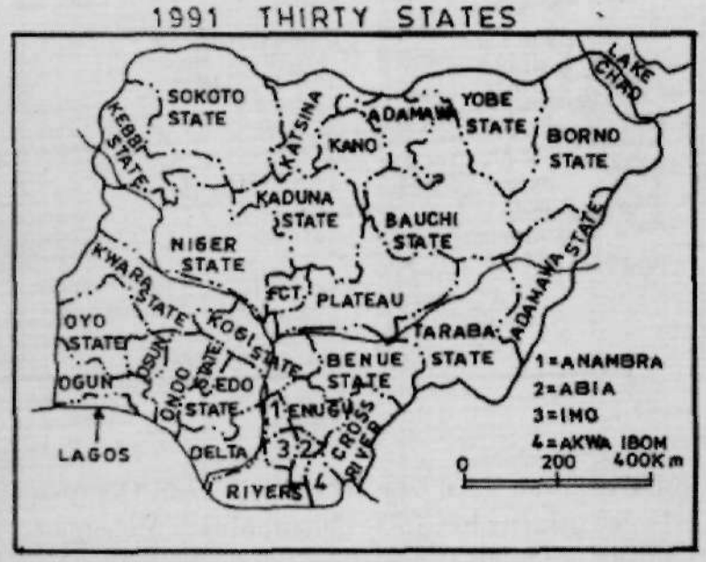
countries, men and women. The AKA Circle of Exhibiting artists, a group of thirteen artists from the east of Nigeria had its first exhibition in Enugu and Lagos in 1986. The artists obviously had members that ignited the touch that melted the wax which was used to mould them. What Elimo Njau did for the East African artists, especially the younger one Uche did for several artists who emulated his concept of Uli design. The artistic scene during this decade was very dynamic.



M. M. Sani, Jahi, Enamel on Board.

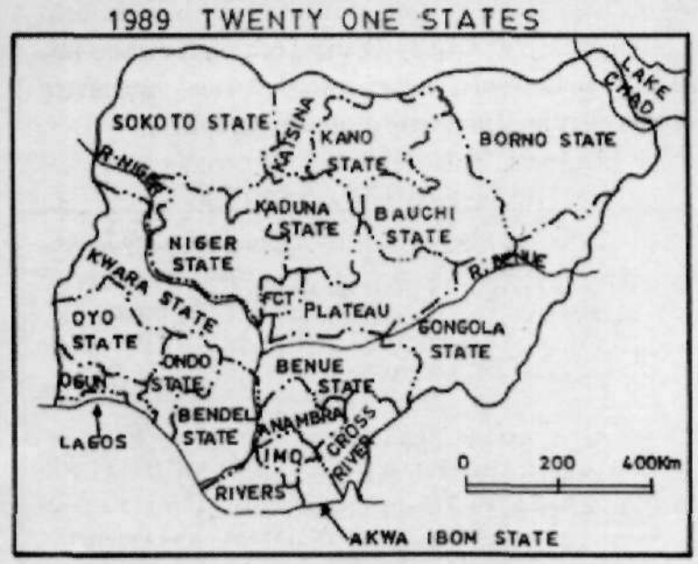
The Department of Fine Arts, University of Ife, Ile Ife held a ten year retrospective exhibition titled "The Ife Art School 1974 – 1984. The Silver Jubilee Art Exhibition celebrating Nigeria's 25th independence anniversary was held in Lagos, Kaduna and Owerri.

These cities became exhibition centres during this decade. In 1988, Yaba College of Technology the oldest post secondary art training institution in Nigeria held 40th anniversary in Lagos, "Yaba Tech Staff Art at 40". Bruce Onobrakpeya was awarded an honourary doctorate by the University of Ibadan in 1989.



The Society of Nigerian Artists celebrated its Silver Jubilee with an exhibition and symposium, the proceedings of which are produced Creative Dialogue SNA at 25. Around 1990 to 1996 several exhibitions were held, An Exhibition of Nigerian Women artists was held in Lagos organised by the National Council for Women Societies. Afi Ekong chaired the Council's Committee on Arts and Crafts. Ben Enwonwu was honoured with a 70th anniversary exhibition and

symposium. University of Nigeria Nsukka graduates held a thirty year remembrance exhibition.



In the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Gani Odutokun led some painters like Jerry Buhari, Muazu Mohammed Sani and Jacob Jari to experiment profusely with colour and technique. Jerry Buhari, in this decade exhibited his Floral Notes Series, Wasted Series and the Test Tube Baby.

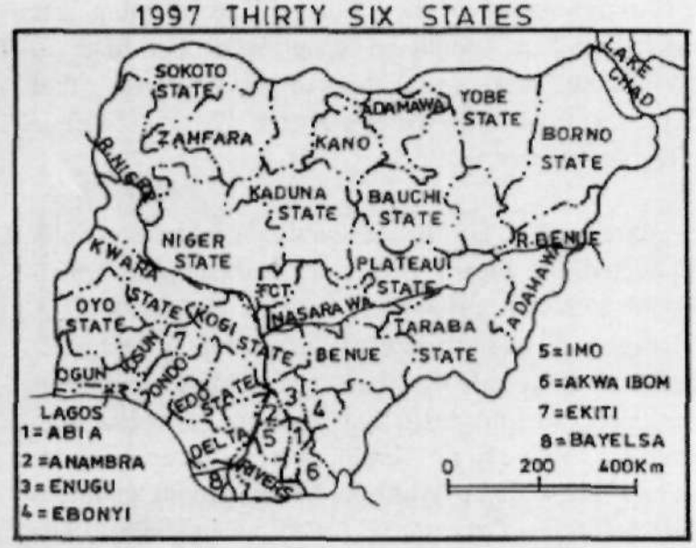
8. Eighth Decade (1997 – 2007)

The present decade continues with diverse activities, Graduates of Zaria Art School recorded several successes. Fasuyi continues to support artists as well as operate his Pre-Varsity Schools in Lagos, and Ilesa where he had trained several category of students. Bruce Onobrakpeya's Ovuomaroro Gallery is vibrant in the promotion of artists. Asele Institute established by Uche Okeke has celebrated forty years of artistic promotion and productivity. Demas Nwoko's New Culture Studio in Oremeji Ibadan, a successful experiment in cross fertilization between the visual and performing arts moved into its completed magnificent buildings in 1995. Uche Okeke was honoured together with other members of the Zaria Art Society for artistic excellence as revolutionaries, in 1998.

In March 2003, Dr. Bruce Onobrakpeya successfully conducted the fourth harmattan workshop in which several Nigerian artists participated. Professor C.O. Adepegba, of blessed memory, graduated several PhD students, some of who are non-holding important academic and administrative positions. For example: Professor R.O. Rom Kalilu, current Deputy Vice Chancellor, Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomoso and Associate Professor E.A. Akinwumi. Prof. Ola Oloidi pioneer head of the Art Historical Association of Nigeria now hosting the AHAN Conference in Nsukka, has produced several PhD graduates specialising in the history of modern Nigerian art. Prof. D.O. Babalola (the

Speaker) has graduated PhD students in art history in the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.[60]

The National Gallery of Art since 1996 has continued to document modern Nigerian art and artists. The current Director General, Mr. Joe Musa, a graduate of this University, has in July 2007 assembled all stakeholders on art together in Lagos. There they addressed matters of national importance affecting art and artists. The National Council for Art and Culture, the original custodian of Nigerian art, exhibits art and crafts annually in





M. M. Sani. Your Highness II, Enamel on canvas.



M. M. Sani. Wasobia, Enamel on Board.

selected cities in Nigeria. It is hereby suggested that all modern art works in the custody of the National Gallery of Art and the National Council for Art and Culture should be pulled together for effectiveness.

A Golden Jubilee of Zaria Art School in National Development celebration started in November 2006. It was the second International Conference/Seminar organised by the Department of Fine Arts and Industrial Design. More than 150 participants attended the academic celebration. It is still on-going and might end with a home-coming for all graduates from 1959-2009. The final segment of the art exhibition which started in Zaria in November 2006 will be shifted to Abuja in the second quarter of 2008. Towards the tail end of this decade, ThisDay Newspaper of Wednesday 20th June, 2007 page 4 caries a story entitled 'Art Courses Not Relevant to Us – Sylva Sam'. This is one of the major onslaughts by the then Governor of Bayelsa State.[61] The Society of Nigerian Artist swiftly replied:

> *Nigerian artists under the umbrella of the Society of Nigerian Artist (SNA) express our outright condemnation of the statement credited to you on the banning of art courses in your schools and the reference to artist and social scientist has not fit for your said relevant jobs. We reason that, that statement is very unfortunate, unnecessary, provocative and deliberately demeaning of the arts and social science community and we demand a revocation of your directive to close, merge or relocate the Faculty or the Institution, as well as tender an unreserved apology to all the well meaning professionals in the art sector who have contributed greatly to putting Nigeria's name on the world's map of scholarship and professionalism*

Seven years ago, Governor Bisi Akande tried it in Osun state. It kicked against it. The populace of the state did too. Everybody told him that, that approach would definitely work against him and the same development of the state which he claimed was his reason for such action. He refused. Today, we are already seeing the consequence in the level of development in the state. The same action cost Akande his bid to return for a second term. So, we wonder why this new man in Bayelsa thinks this can work for him. [62]

Conclusion

Eight Decades of Mothern Nigerian Art: A Historical Panorama has been highlighted. The problems which were noted in the introduction to this lecture continue to stare one in the face. In spite of these problems significant strides have been made. However our national development would be rapidly enhanced if creative people are encouraged in the society and everybody is availed of the opportunity to experience and imbibe art from childhood. "Can art help to make our Nation grow" (Babalola, 1983) has been reiterated times and again, especially throughout the past eight decades.

What should Nigeria do to attain rapid national development? It is hereby suggested once again that we must elicit from Japan, the United States, Britain, and other technological countries of the world the way they have creatively employed their artists, designers, craftsmen, art historians, art educators, artistes, etc., to develop creative people. We are concerned here with people who think imaginatively, who have original ideas and who welcome opportunities to put them into action. The impact of modern Nigerian art in National

development could have been more enhanced if art and society are synchronized as it was during the traditional era.

Our national development would be rapid if creative people are encouraged in society to work out a decisive plan of action to ensure that we make our nation grow. I therefore suggest an Aso Rock Conference on Arts Education to work out details of a plan of ACTION, that should involve all major art groups, art agencies, entreprenunures, artists, designers, law makers, administrators and the Presidency. The best way not to fail is to determine to succeed.

Notes and References

1. For literature on Aina Onabolu, refer to the following: Dapo Onabolu, "Aina Onabolu (Art Gallery Nigerian Magazine No. 79, Dec. 1963 pp. 295-298, Pat Oyelola "Aina Onabolu 1882-1963" Every Man's Guide to Nigerian Art, pp. 77-78.

2. The author has, for convenience, referred to the years 1920-1930 as the first decade. It therefore follows that 1931-1941 is the second decade.

3. The third decade (1942-52) was a period when the planning of higher education was made which led to the establishment of the Nigerian College of Arts Science and Technology.

4. The fourth decade (1953-1963) had the establishment of the Department of Fine Arts in Zaria, the Yaba Technical Institute, and other schools from where students were admitted to Zaria Art School. This is the decade when Zaria Art Society and Zaria graduates started to make their impacts felt.

5. The fifth decade (1964-1974) was a period when several Zaria graduates started their individual studios and galleries of art. It was a time of exhibitions, seminars and symposia. The Society of Nigerian Artists was formed in 1964.

6. The sixth decade (1975-1985) was a decade of progress that harnessed the gains of earlier decades. Young artists tried to write a new manifesto that rejected the natural synthesis.

7. The seventh decade (1986-1996) was a period when Zaria Art graduates who have studied abroad joined the Department.

8. Zaria Art School 1955-1990.

9. Those who imbibed Onabolu's style abound in Zaria Art School. They are also found in the first generation schools of art. Likewise others who took over the style Murray taught have yielded to the synthesis of old and new. The two styles abound still in modern Nigerian art.

10. Refer to Evelyn Brown. African Contemporary Art and Artists 1966. p. 70.

11. Very little had been written on A.J. Udo Ema, who has made a very strong impact on artists in the 1950s and 1960s. Refer also to Babalola 2003. The Nigerian Artists soon to be released from press.

12. D.L.K. Nnachi, a contemporary of Ben Enwonwu retired as an art teacher. His art works that survived are in the photographic archive of the Museum of Modern Art, Washington D.C., USA.

13. For more information on H.I. Erhabor refer to: Evelyn Brown, 1966, p. 69.

14. See The Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology Calendar 1959-1960, p.1.

15. Ibid. p.2.

16. This is inferred from the age range of most students' being 1930s-1940s.

17. Yaba Technical Institute (now Yaba College of Technology) established an art department and some of those who came to Zaria were in its first set of fine art students. Refer to Bernice M. Kelly (ed.). Chronology of Nigerian Art, 1920-1992, p. 14.

18. Geoffrey Okiki, a 1962 graduate of NCAST in Graphic and Commercial Design is one of such students.

19. Olaosebikan passed his West African School Certificate Examination successfully from Keffi in 1956 June and was admitted to NCAST Zaria for the 4-year Diploma course in October 1956. Jimo Akolo and T.A. Jegede joined him in Zaria in October 1957.

20. Omu School was an elementary boarding school which attained a high reputation of having pupils admitted to Keffi Government College to start form one after completing standard four in Omu.

21. William Aremu Olaosebikan became a renowned artist and art teacher in North Eastern Nigeria during the fifth, sixth and seventh decades. He trained many artists and retired as a Chief Inspector of Education, but died in 1993 following a brief illness. Jimo Akolo served in the Ahmadu Bello University as from 1967 and became a Professor of art education in 1983. He retired in 1995 and now lives in Egbe, Kogi State, Nigeria.

22. Evelyn Brown African Contemporary Art & Artists, Harmon Foundation, 1966. pp. 48-70; Marshall Ward Mount African Art: The Years since 1920 Indiana U.P. 1971.

23. Ola Oloidi's Article "Art criticism in Nigeria 1920-1996. The Development of Professionalism in the Media and the Academy" in Art Criticism and Africa pp. 41-49; conspicuously mentions nothing about the pioneering role of the Zaria Art School (Department of Fine Arts) on art criticism; it only attracted attention to the Zaria revolutionaries (Zaria Rebels). Similarly I.N.C. Aniebo's article "Daubers and Scribblers," Nigeria Magazine No. 86, Sept. 1965 pp.. 163-232 raised issues on painters' output as compared to writers. Speculatory though some of his ideas might seem, they warrant thorough explanation.

24. The recruitment of qualified students from all over the country and the Cameroons; the appointment of qualified lecturers from around the world and the operation of a dynamic four year art programme, made the department a model. The insistence on excellence in Scholarship at whatever cost, need to be told and retold. Finally the conducive environment of Zaria was profitable for learning to take place. Nigeria No. 113 Sept. 1974 pp. 32-40.

25. Egg. Head 1, 2, 3, 1962, 1963, 1964, A.B.U. Zaria; Alhaji A.K. Metteden "Cattle Trail" Nigeria No. 70, pp. 252-265; Exhibition "Zaria by Nkobi, lithograph" Nigeria No.80 March, 1964 p. 72; Kirk Greene, Anthony " A lavish example of the "embossed" art of mural decoration Houses in Zaria" Nigeria" Nigeria No.68 March, 1961 p.48.

26. Jimo Akolo's horse riders in the Lugard Hall Kaduna, mural, painted in 1962 was derived from Sallah subjects painted by most students between 1955 and 1975. Gani Odutokun's, "Durbar, the Race," in the National Gallery of Art, a great masterpiece, is an eye opener of the great observation of the Sallah. P.C. Lloyd "Sallah at Ilorin" Nigeria No. 70, 1961 pp. 266-278 also shows the colourful Sallah celebrations; Oshinowo, K. "Durbar", Nigeria Vo.115 - 116. 1975. p.51; 47; Yusuf, Shina. "The coming of the Emir", Nigeria No. 115 - 116, 1975, p.46; Akoko, Jimo "Fulani Herdsmen". Nigeria No. 115 - 116, 1975 p.42; Wangboje Irein. "Desert Journey", Nigeria ^0.19, December 1963, p.301.

27. There has been an explosion of population in Samaru ever since the 1970's.

28. Anthony Kirk Greene "Decorated Home in Zaria". Nigeria No.68, March 1961, pp. 52-78.

29. Ibid. pp. 52-78.

30. Nigeria Nos. 128-129, 1979 p. 116.

31(i) Zaria Art School alumni retrospective exhibition 1955-1990.

(ii) Vincent Butler's article "Cement Funeral Sculptures" Nigeria No. 77 March 1963 pp. 117-124, is an example.

32. Nigeria No. 80 March 1964 pp.3 and 80; Butfer, Vincent F. "Cement funeral sculptures" letter to the Editor. Nigeria No. 80 March, 1964 p. 3; 80.

33. D. Babalola, "Four Decades of Contemporary Nigerian Art: Zaria Art School's Contribution to its Development" pp. 1-6.

34. Nigeria No. 72, March 1962. p. 71: Nigeria No. 75, Dec. 1962. pp. 82-3.

35. The intermediate examination was to examine candidates' general grounding in the arts, before they specialise in one specific area.

36. This practice was in force until the first few years of the Ahmadu Bello University.

37. How the term "Bulgaria" was coined for students' pocket money is not known. However, the term was widely used and understood by the generality of students.

38. The story of students' welfare in those early days is now like a fairy tale. But such welfare was possible owing to the few number of students who were mature and comported themselves as adults - maturely. T.A. Fasuyi UNESCO Cultural Policy in Nigeria 1973. pp. 31-34.

39. Nigeria No. 68, March 1961 pp. 43-47; Exhibitions "Lagos Girl" by G. Okiki, wood cut. Nigeria No. 80, March 1964 p.71; Geoffrey Okiki "Ogongo Girl" Nigeria No. 93, June 1967 p. 124; Uche Okeke, "Almajiri" Nigeria No.68. p.43. March, 1961; Y. Grillo "Two Yoruba Women" Nigeria No.68. p.43. March 1961; Nwoko, Demas "Folly" Nigeria1 ^ o.6S March 1961 p.45; Onabrakpeya, Bruce "Ahwaire the Tortoise and the wonderful Bird" Nigeria No.68, March 1961. p.45; Akolo Jimo. "Talking Drum" Nigeria No.68, March 1961 p.46; Akolo Jimo, "Tired Drummer" Nigeria No.68 March, 1961. p.47; Akolo "Art Galley" Nigeria No.74, Sept., 1962, p.91; Nwoko Demas, "Mural at Tedder Hall U.C.I. Ibadan". Nigeria No.74, Sept., 1962, p.95; Akolo Jimo, "Yoruba Dancers" Painting, Lady Heads Collection Nigeria No.74, Sept., 1962, p.93; Akolo Jimo, "Women with Water Pots", Nigeria No.72, march 1962 p.7; Nwoko Demas "Life Size Carving of Adam and Eve", Nigeria No. 115 - 116, 1975. p.525.

40. Note 38.

41. The Zaria Art group was made up of painters, sculptors, graphic artists, Ceramicists & others in the Department. Some decided not to join officially owing to disagreement in operational guidelines of the group.

42. Students were often drawn to the latest creations by their peers and right to the dinning hall, discussions often ensued, and sometimes sharp arguments.

43. Geoffrey Okiki, who at that time was a third year student in Graphic and Commercial. Design painted several idealistic pictures with the synthesis theory. His examples are: "Lagos girl" and "Ogongo girl". Nigeria No. 80, March 1964 p. 71; Nigeria No. 93, June 1967, p. 124.

44. Where the Zaria graduates worked either exposed them to the media or not. Those exposed were motivated and consequently patronized. Nigeria Nos. 110-112.

45. Nigeria No. 72 March 1962. p.71.

46. Nigeria No. 68 March 1961 pp. 33-49 discusses Demas Nwoko, Uche Okeke, Bruce Onobrakpeya and shows "Almajiri" by Uche Okeke "Two Yoruba women" by Y. Grillo, "Ahwaire The tortoise "by Bruce Onobrakpaya, "Folly" by Demas Nwoko, "Talking Drum", and me "Tired Drummer" by Jimo Akolo and "Nigeria in 1959" by Demas Nwoko.

47. Evelyn Brown (1966): pp.48-70; Mount 1973: 72, 132-143; Bruce Onobrakpeya Master Printer Maker: The best of Africa Toronto Canada, 1979; Sabbatical Experiments 1978-83. Symbols of Ancestral Groves 1978-85 and Sahelian Masquerades 1985-1988.

48,49. It became more or less a competition among early graduates of Zaria art School. Uche Okeke opened his gallery, Asele in 1965 (later Asele Institute in 1967) Demas Nwoko: New Culture Studio 1968. Ovuomaroro Gallery also opened in the 1970s, as well as T.A. Fasuyi's TAFAS HOUSE in Ikeja, Lagos.

50. Nigeria No. 68 Sept. 1965 pp. 163-232.

51. The first International Art Seminar took place in the Department of Fine Arts, ABU Zaria from March 23rd-26th, 1972.

52. Ibid; Department of Fine Arts "ART SEMINAR" organised by the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Main Campus. March 23rd to 26th, 1972 pp. 1-20.

53. Culture: A Review of Contemporary African Arts Vol. 1 No. 4, March 1979 pp. 35 -36.

54. Just before that, in 1976, Uche Okeke organised the well publicized international conference to address the issues of direction for contemporary Nigerian art. Nigerian artists were conscious of the need to make contemporary Nigerian art vibrant.

55. Those found in this group include Sina Yussuff, Dele Jegede, Nelson Cole, Joshua Akande, Kolade Oshinowo, Gani Odutokun, Ben Ekanem and later Jerry Buhari, Tonie Okpe, Mohammed Muazu Sani, and their group.

56. Younger artists like Jerry Buhari, Tonie Okpe, Moh. Muazu Sani, Jacob Jari decided to make their impacts felt abroad through international exhibitions in the U.K, U.S and Germany, having been shown the way by Gani Odutokun before his untimely death.

57. The trend possibly affected the patronage of art in Zaria in the mid 90's until the trend is now being gradually reversed.

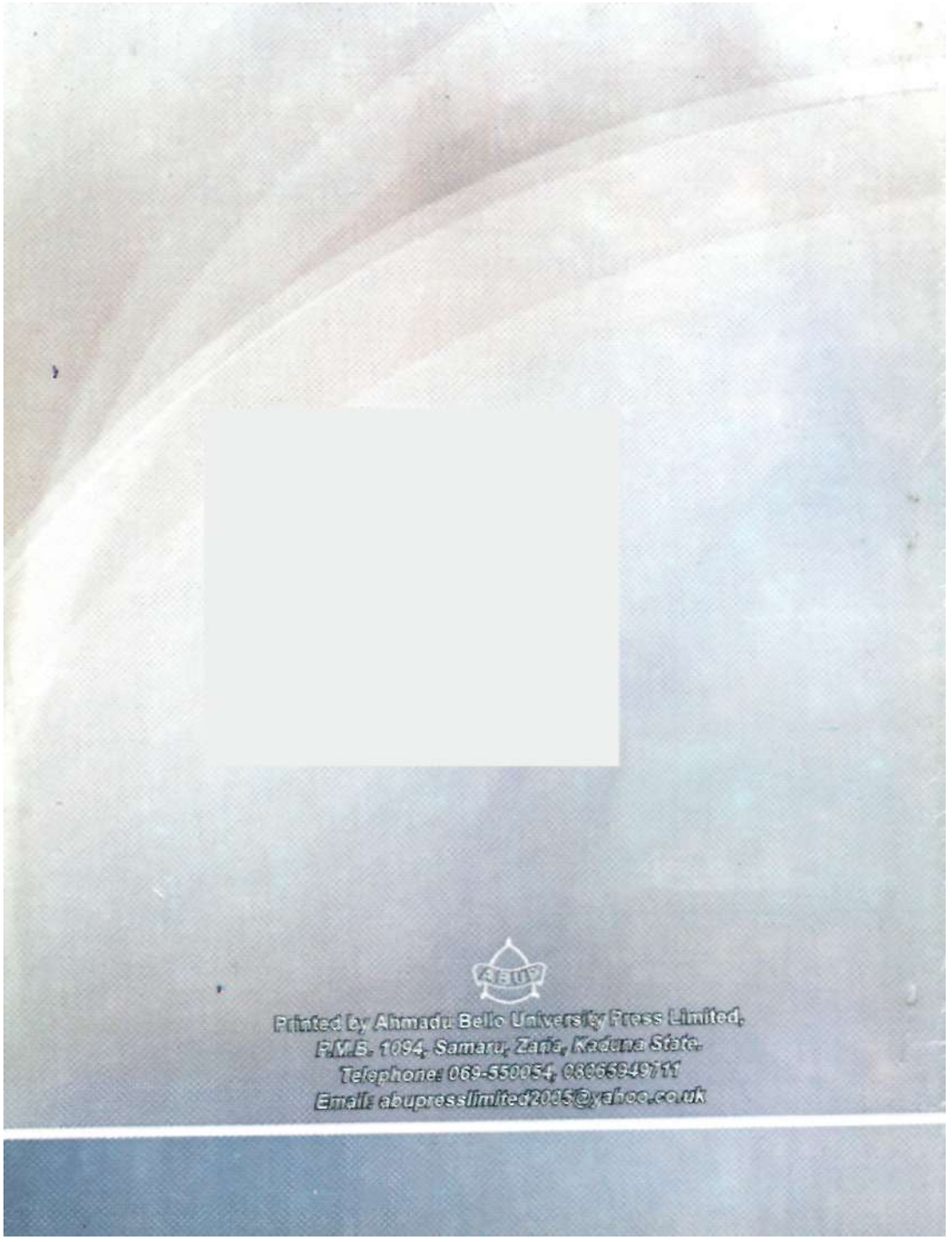
58. Those of Zaria graduates who still live and work in Zaria include Bashir Olorukooba, A. Akodu, Jerry Buhari, Tonie Okpe, Mohammed Muazu Sani, Matthew Ehizele, Philip Gushem, Kefas Danjuma, Muyideen Taji, Jacob Jari and Tunde Babalola.

59. Fosu's notion of Zaria Rebels had been finally nailed. There was no rebellion as students merely brought a revolution in the artistic practice of modern Nigerian art.

60. Those who now work and live in the U.S are: Rowland Abiodun, Okechukwu Odita, Babatunde Lawal, Ekpo Eyo, Dele Jegede. They are all Professors in Art History.

61. The art exhibition marking the Golden Jubilee of Zaria Art School had to incorporate se0veral modern Nigerian artists' works in the custody of the National Council of Arts and Culture.

62. For detail, refer to ThisDay Newspaper of Wednesday June 20, 2007, p.4. Nigerian artist (SNA) reacted by condemning Sylva Sam's statement. I guess that the statement had been withdrawn


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