CREATING FORMS IN SCULPTURE INSPIRED BY *ELEBO* MASKS

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled "Creating Forms in Sculpture Inspired by *Elebo Masks*" had been undertaken by me in the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria under the supervision of Dr. Ken Okoli and Dr. Lamidi Lasisi. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any institution.

_____ _____

Leche Anthony Date

CERTIFICATION

This Dissertation: "Creating Forms in Sculpture Inspired by *Elebo Masks.*" meets the regulation governing the award of the degree of Master of Fine Arts (Sculpture) of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my Late Mum Mrs Matilda Leche and to *Bassa Nge* community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My profound gratitude goes to my supervisors; Dr. Ken Okoli who's mentoring, careful observation and attention ensured that the right thing is done. I must also commend Dr. Lamidi Lasisi, member of my supervisory committee for his patience and attention to details, his good work is appreciated. I extend my unreserved gratitude to all the staffs of Advance Concepts Kaduna, for their encouragement in the course of this programme. The support of my parents Mr. Justus Leche and Late Mrs Matilda Leche my brothers Terry and Benjamin Leche, my sisters Zepporah, Christiana, Justina and Victoria Leche. I also extend my profound gratitude to Mr. Emmanuel Aichim for his support and encouragement. My uncle Mr. William Mopah for his financial support in my academy pursuit.To Mr. Mathew Aisa, Mr Victor Amguti, Mr Danlami Abu, Mallam Mohammed Adoji, Umar Nda Mohammad, and Mohammed Nasir Usman for being my research assistants. Mr. Amos Agaku, his constructive imputes are recognized and appreciated.Prof. Muazu Mohammed Sani for his moral support and encouragement, Dr. Muyideen Adio Jaji I remain thankful. Mr Kevin Damden, I appreciate your encouragement. I must also appreciate Dr. Emmanuel Wesley Okachi, Dr Giles Gambo Duniya, the Head of Department, for their guidance and words of encouragement. I also appreciate the former Head of Department, late Dr. Kefas Danjuma, and the Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator Prof. Philip Gushem, I appreciate their support. I appreciate warmly the moral support and love of Miss Elizabeth Ibrahim, to my classmates Daniel Afolayan and Musa Azaido for seeing the humour in difficult situations. Mallam Aminu Salihu, I thank you for the role you played in this academic journey. And finally, to GodAlmighty, the giver of life, wisdom and the source of

all inspiration, with whose kindness and protection this dream have seen the light of the day, unto him be all the praise and thanksgiving.

ABSTRACT

Sculpture, has evolved over time, and through the period of its development so many ideas from diverse sources have been discovered by sculptors. African maskshave been explored by foreign artists like, Amideo Modigliani and Pablo Picasso in their paintings and sculptures, this direction has influenced to a large extent the trend of contemporary western sculptures. The problem of this research however, is that the masks culture of *Bassa Nge* is gradually facing extinction due to the growing influence of western culture. The aim of this study is to create relief sculptures inspired by *Elebo* masks forms using mild steel, while the objectives are to; execute representational forms of the *Elebo* masks in sculpture, create stylised sculpture compositions as inspired by *Elebo* mask forms and to explore the *Elebo* masks in Geometrical forms in sculpture. The research method used was the exploratory Studio Practice-based research methodology, which involved visualization and practical observation of the *Elebo* mask forms. The analysis and conceptualisation of perceived forms formed the basis from which the works were executed. Eighteen sculptures were created. Several findings and observations were made in the process of this research, which are; that mild steel could be used to create representational forms of the *Elebo* masks in relief sculptures using the vibrant patterns, symbols and motifs in its execution. It also found out that the stylisation stage of this study has led to the discovery of shapes, pattern and symbols which could be used in graphic and textile designs. The researcher found that geometrical exploration of *Elebo* masks forms in sculpture could be beneficial to other discipline like architects, fabricators and designers whenincorporated intoother forms of contemporarysculpture.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Art is an integral element of human existence. This existing reality cannot be ignored but rather developed as a fundamental standard for the stimulation of a healthy society.This probably reflects why works of art are relatively used in measuring people's level of civilization, development and enlightenment. Bentor (1995) describes art as a sign that provides insight that aids the evaluation of human consciousness or tracking the given state of progress. Form in another hand,is a tool that gives an individual the insight of art vocabulary. Bell in Ola-bale (2014) observes that, "form is the essence of art." It has been used in various ways to explore ideas, and it appears that it was the earliest element employed to solve basic sculptural problems.According to Ocvrik, in Uzoji (2015) form is an element of art and the most basic in sculpture which consists of volume and shapes.Consequently, "art is an expression of culture of the people that produced it. It also embodies the historical and socio-economical development of their lives".This explains the homogeneity that is embedded in cultures like Egypt, Greek, Nok, Ife, Igbo-Ukwu and Bassa Nge art among others.

No matter how small a society is, it usually has its unique cultural practices that are constantly passed down from one generation to another. One of such ethnic groups is the *Bassa Nge*. The *Bassa Nge* speaking people are an extraction of *Bassa* Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. Commonto the *Bassa Nge* people is the annual cultural festival known as '*BassaNge*Day' held to commemorate the end of the previous yearand to usher in another year. Before the establishment of the *Bassa Nge*Day annual festival, it was only moon night

entertainment of the raining season. There was no any event bring the whole community together in one voice. Every community does its own events at will, some do not. This has left negative impact on the culture and tradition of the *Bassa Nge* people thereby leading to the neglect of their cultural values and causing disunity and segregation among the communities.

For the *Bassa Nge* communities to be hamonised in peace and unity there is need to create an avenue of unifying the people. So the *Bassa Nge*annual cultural festival known as *Bassa Nge*Day was established in the early 80s. Its aim was to foster unity and harmony among the *Bassa Nge* people both home and abroad thereby bringing them together to celebrate the rich cultural values, heritage and tradition of the people once in every end of the year.At the festival, different masks are worn by masqueradesduring performance showcasing the rich cultural values and heritage of the people. This is believed to serveimportant purpose in inculcating moral values and self-confidence in the lives of the people.

The *BassaNge* people inhabited the low lands river Niger and Benue with paddy soil and they were mostly farmers and fishermen. Others were good craftsmen in wood carvings and goldsmith in steel castings design similar to the Bida iron works. Habi (1987) further asserts that;

> The *Bassa Nge* originally inhabited Gbara in Nupe kingdom and later migrated from their mother land following a dynastic feud. The *BassaNge* is the longest of the *Nupe* group that scattered all over Nigeria. In an account of the *BassaNge*people, the ancestors were of *Nupe* descendant, which is borne out by a corrupt form of that language which their descendants speak, as well as evidence of local tradition. Their original homes were *Pada, Kuso-Gbagi* and towns of the *Nupe*, some also inhabiting the suburbs and Neighbours of *Egan and Kupa* on its western bank. The people's path of movement was through *Koro, Yagba, Bunu* down to Lokoja. Evident from fragments cultural adoption and oral history indicate that the emigrant settled in *Bunu* in the former *Kaba* Division of Nigeria. This group of *Nupe* emigrant settled in their own wards and later inter-mingled and inter-marriage with their hosts. It was in the course of

> these movements and settlements amongst the *Bunu*, their language, *Nupe*, became adulterated with adopted words of *Bunu* language. Example of which can be found in greetings *"Kwastse"* (Ekun-ise) for one at work; *"Kabo"* or (Ekunerun) for welcome and name like *"Legbam"* (*illegbami)*; *"Agbe-roke*(*Okunagbe*) for typical hard working farmers *"Ajeku"* for food leftovers. Because of this adulteration which language suffered, the *BassaNge* people speak a dialectisedNupe - which differs essentially in intonation. Habi, went further to say that the *BassaNge's* were migrant of *Nupes* who moved to Mount *Pati* of Lokoja, and then later crossed to the western side of the River Niger where they were called "*BassaNge*."

The *BassaNge*ethnic group of Kogi State Nigeria is of *Nupe* descent. Sanusi (2014) and Ndagi (2014) confirm that, *Bassa Nge* ethnic group known as the *Nupe*speaking people occupied a place called *Gbara*, a town of about 25km southwest of *Bida* in Niger State-North Central Nigeria. The migrated *Nupe* people are now known as *Bassa Nge* ethnic group they migrated due to dynastic dispute between brothers Jimada and Majiya which led to their migration in 1820.

Sanusi 2014 stated that;

> The family dispute over leadership continued to cause disintegration which resulted to the migration of some factions of the populace from Gbara in search of another land. Idrisu the son of late king Jimada flee with his father's followers southwards and later settled on the Mount Pati, a hill in the suburb of the present day Lokoja the Kogi State Capital. In Lokoja, these migrants, who were mainly farmers and hunters, continue to disperse in smaller family groups to settle in different part of the state. It is believed that some of these family groups ferried across the great Niger and Benue rivers to settle in the eastern part of Kogi State, their present home.

This has finally lead to their librationfrom the communities with whom they first settled before migrating to the eastern part of Lokoja across river Niger and Benue where they now own farm lands and better place for fishing, farming and hunting.

The *Bassa Nge* no doubt possesses lot of cultural masks that ranges from sacred to secular namely; *Eka, Amarya, Alage, Anogbonboro, Nna, Nna Atsoba, Egbunu, Afonoko, Ndako,Elebo Abure, Elebo Ekwuecici, Elebo Takete, Elebo Noni, Elebo Amda* and *Elebo Ecewu* to mention a few.Six out of these masksinspired this research they are as

follows;*Elebo Abure*(Fig. 4 p. 24), *Elebo Ekwuecici*(Fig. 5 p.25),*Elebo Takete*(Fig. 6 p.26), *Elebo Anogbonboro*(Fig. 7 p.26), *Elebo Nna* (Fig. 8 p.27), and *Elebo Amda* (Fig. 9 p.28). The researcher developed interest on these masks because they are the socio-cultural masks of the *Bassa Nge*people and is both secular and sacred masks with forms of sculptural interest like;shapes and forms, motifs, symbols and patterns which are found on these masks. The*Elebo*masks are believed to be the spirits of the ancestors. This is why masks in *Bassa Nge* culture are generally referred to as *'Akuci-Ndamzhi'*, meaning our ancestors (Sanusi 2014).

'*Elebo'* connotes peeping;peeping as specified by Encarta Dictionary (2009) is to look quickly or secretly, for example, through a small opening or from a hiding place. This is why the *Elebo* masks are also referred to as "the seer" because it was believed that they possess the power of seeing beyond the physical. The *Elebo* masks of *BassaNge* serve as a protective measure to the society because it is believed toforetell the future. Mathew (2015) maintains that, the *Elebo*masks are both a secular and sacred icon of day and night performances. He concluded that, the *Elebo*masks reflect many of the social qualities for which the *BassaNge* is known,for example, hospitality, gracefulness, physical strength, endurance and prosperity.

It is quite evident that the similarities that exist among the mask of the *Benin* kingdom, *Yoruba, Igala, Ebira, Nupe,* and*Idoma*influenced the*BassaNge*masks.The artof *Nupe, Igala, Ebira, Bassa-Komu, Yoruba,* and*Bunu* people with whom they first settled before moving to the western part of the River Niger and Benueinfluenced the *Bassa Nge* art. According to Matthew (2015) "the culture of *BassaNge* and the art produced in *Bassa Nge*Land are much diversified and originate from different sources, because of the contact with other cultures and the arts of neighbouring people."

Masks in Africa serve as intermediary between man and the spirit being. Labija (2003) observes that, masks in Africa are still instruments by which man's activities are favourably attached.To give more validity to the above assertion, Strickland (1992) opines that "the main artistic products of tropical Africa were wood carvings both mask and sculpture in the round" the author further opined that "mask were intentionally unrealistic when confronting a supernatural power and the idea was for the performer to conceal his true identity behind the artificial face.

The early traces of the adaptation of masks in modern art is evident in the works of Henri Matisse in which he replaced the first version of naturalistically contoured facial features of a young sailor with more rigid abstract of a mask. Picasso completed his Gertrude stein, about the same time, finalising her face with a mask like style of the sculptural bust from his ancient region (Clausius, 2007). According to Uzoji (2015) "new generations of artists become dissatisfied with the path taken by their predecessors and strike out new directions." The author further states that, "throughout the frame of this time, artists have sought inspirations from classical African antiquity." Such artists arePablo Picasso (Cubist Face Fig.15),Constantine Brancussi, (DanaideCirca Fig. 16) andJoseph Ogunsulade, (African mask Fig. 10). Delved into new directions by a critical contemplation and appraisal of classical African sculpture".

The general idea about masks is associated with certain animals or plants which are honoured by the people. Ninian (2010) gives credence to the above assertion when he notes that, "masks are any animal, plant and object considered related to a kin group viewed as sacred." Artists over time have drawn inspirations from different sources, with culture playing a dominant role.

Some of the factors posing threat to the survival and practice of the *BassaNge* traditional masks are western cultures and traditions that continue to penetrate African societies. Sanusi (2014)avers that most Africans continue to change from their traditional ways of worship and existence,the spirit mask and other mask forms were either acultured or discarded and carted away due to the influence of early missionaries who viewed them as pagan practices.

It is in view of the aforementioned factors that the study intends to create forms in relief sculptures inspired by*Elebo* mask forms.

1.2Statement of the Problem

Research have been carried out, many of which are conducted on masks from various Nigerian cultures and traditions. However, the *Bassa Nge* ethnic group which is one among the minority groups in Nigeria does not have any visual documentation executed using the *Elebo* mask forms as inspiration in sculpture.It has been observed that even the local people in villages have now substituted the famous moonlight entertainment with watching films.As a result, the longing for *Elebo* masksperformance, and itsmemories continue to fade away from the minds of the people. It means therefore, that the masks of the *BassaNge* are gradually facing extinction due to the growing influence of western culture,hence,this study.

1.3Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to create relief sculptures inspired by*Elebo* Mask forms using mild steel, while the objectivesare to;

I. execute representational formsof the *Elebo* maskusing its aesthetical elements
II. createstylised sculpture compositions as inspired by*Elebo* mask forms.
III. explore the *Elebo* mask in Geometrical forms in sculpture.

1.4Research Questions

I. In what ways can theaesthetical elements of the *Elebo* mask forms be used to execute representational sculptures?

II. How can*Elebo* Mask forms be stylised into sculpture compositions?

IV. What are the possibilities of rendering the *Elebo* masks in geometrical forms in sculpture?

1.5 Scope of the Study

From the numbers of *Elebo*masksmentioned earlier of the *Bassa Nge*people (from *Bassa*Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria.)only six (6) *Elebo* masks out of 16 masks were used in this study as inspiration to create sculptures. These are; *EleboAmda, EleboAbure,EleboEkwuecici, EleboTakete, EleboAfonoko* and *Elebo Noni* of *Bassa Nge.* This is because they are the socio-cultural masks of the *Bassa Nge* peopleandtheyalso possess forms of sculptural interest. Mild steel, flat bars and found metal objects are the materials for execution.

1.6Justification of the Study

This study is justified by the need to document traditional and cultural beliefs and experiences which cannot be overemphasised; thus, the importance of creating and documenting the *Elebo* masks forms as one aspect of *Bassa Nge* culture in relief sculpture. This will aid in salvaging the masks from the threat of extinction, occasioned by religious stigmatisation of the art of masking. Furthermore, it will also make room for producing the

Elebo mask forms into relief sculptures for the public and for the re-awakening of interest in cultural relics as a source of inspiration for sculpture exploration.

1.7Significance of the Study

This study will help in promoting and projecting the rich cultural heritage of the *BassaNge*People.It will also contribute to the existing literature on modern and contemporary art practice by creating the *BassaNge* mask forms in relief sculpture. As a result, the research would produce a body of works that is hoped to be worthy of public appreciation and patronage.

1.8Conceptual Framework

Adaptation as a concept base on the study on Modigliani's idea of mask forms informed the conceptual framework of this study. Modigliani studied and made several sketches on Dogon masks from Mali, this he later adapted into series of sculptures. One of the products is titled the *"Head",* 1912. According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2014) Modigliani's idea of mask is characterised by asymmetrical composition and a simple but monumental use of lines. Picasso, in another hand,adapted geometrical form as techniques in creating works that were influenced by the mask head of Bakota and Dan people of Gabon and Ivory Coast which was later known ascubism.Example of his work is the "*Cubist Face",* 1973 (Fig 23)(Karmel,2003).In a similar vein, the researcher is inspired by the adaptation of Modigliani'smonumental use of lines and Picasso's geometrical techniques differently, to create relief sculptures using mild steel, rendering the composition in stylised and geometrical sculpture.

1.9Definition of Terms

Bassa: A local government in Kogi State Nigeria formally under *Kabba* Province. The name was coined by the colonial masters.

Nge: "As I was saying" is a phrase that is constantly used by the *BassaNge* people while speaking their dialect. Because of it constant used (*Nge*) was now adopted and attached to *Bassa*to differentiate from other *Bassa*in the *Kabba*province.

BassaNge:The name of a minority ethic group in Kogi State, Nigeria. They speak dialectised*Nupe.*

Nupe:The name of a majority ethnic group in Niger State, Nigeria they are also called *Tapa*by Yorubas.

Elebo: Refers to pepping, disguise or covering.

Akuci-Ndamzhi: TheAncestors of *Bassa Nge* people.

EleboTakete: Mask of oneness.

Ekuecici:Servant of the dead.

Igala:The name of a majority tribe in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Bunu: The name of another minority tribe in Kogi State, Nigeria.

EleboAbure: Mask of cutting.

EleboAmda: Mask of water pot.

Gboya: Mask of destruction.

Kwastse:Literary meanswell-done in *Bassa Nge* language.

Kabo:Welcome for someone coming back home.

Ajeku:Leftover food (dinner).

Ndako: Grandfather.

Ai'yem*:* Refersto the eye as an important part of the human body.

BagibeyNzagi:Refersto man and woman (that makes up a family).

Suzuweh:Looking uncomfortable in the company of others (shyness).

Lazhi:The early part of the day before noon.

Birni: Acity or urban area with many buildings where a large number of people live and Work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aesthetic differences in the mask traditions in Nigeria may not be attributed to artistic skills and creative powers, but rather based on significance and function. Labija (2003) observes that some masks are naturalistic in style while others are more abstract although the difference lies not only in their form but also in their significance and function.

This chapter deals with review of literature and artists whose works were influenced by African masks. It also gives a brief analysis of the selected works that have aesthetic connections with mask forms and its elements.

2.2 Masks and its Origin

The mask ideology is a product of human expressions. Wylie (1990) traces the origin of the word mask to the Arab word "maskhara", meaning "buffon" in Italy, and mask in English. He further states that, the word mask implies an inter-weave of artistic and psychological realities. Meaning that, the artistically created masks are often associated with special ceremonies, rituals and events in many cultures.Masks have existed from the origin of mankind. Ruttenberg, (1993) opines that "masks are known to have existed for 17,000 years appearing in infinite variety and in a wide range of societies and cultures throughout the world. Evidence of the prehistoric use of masks survives from the ancient civilization of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas." They have been fashioned out of both durable and ephemeral materials, including bones, terracotta, stones, ivory and wood, as well as leaves,

twigs, feathers, clothes, animals and vegetable materials. This means that there has been a conspicuous practice of masks form in Africa from its early ages of existence.

2.3Influence of African art on European Artist

Masks are one of the elements of great African art that evidently influenced European and Western art in general. In the 20th century, artistic movements such as Cubism, Fauvismand Expressionismhave often taken inspiration from the vast and diverse heritage of African masks. African art came to European notice when artists began to recognise the aesthetic values of African sculpture. According to Murrel(1991),artists like Picasso, Matisse, Vlaminck, Derain, and Modigliani were influenced by African art forms. Picasso was influenced by the mask head of Bakota and Dan people of Gabon and Ivory Coast in creating works that led to geometrical form of techniques known now as Cubism. Interest in the art of Africa has flourished, and many modern artists from the west have rediscovered the enduring qualities of African art.

Other artists that inspired this study also, include LasisiLamidi a sculptor who specialized in using metal, fabrics and found objects to execute his works. One of which is "*Teenager"* (2006)p. 13 fig. 1. Ken Okoli, who also engages in mild steel rods, metal sheets, copper and wire in executing his works using simplified technique one of which is titled "*We Are Still Watching" (2012)*p. 13fig. 2. Their works inspired this study in terms of material, concept and techniques in mild steel sculpture.

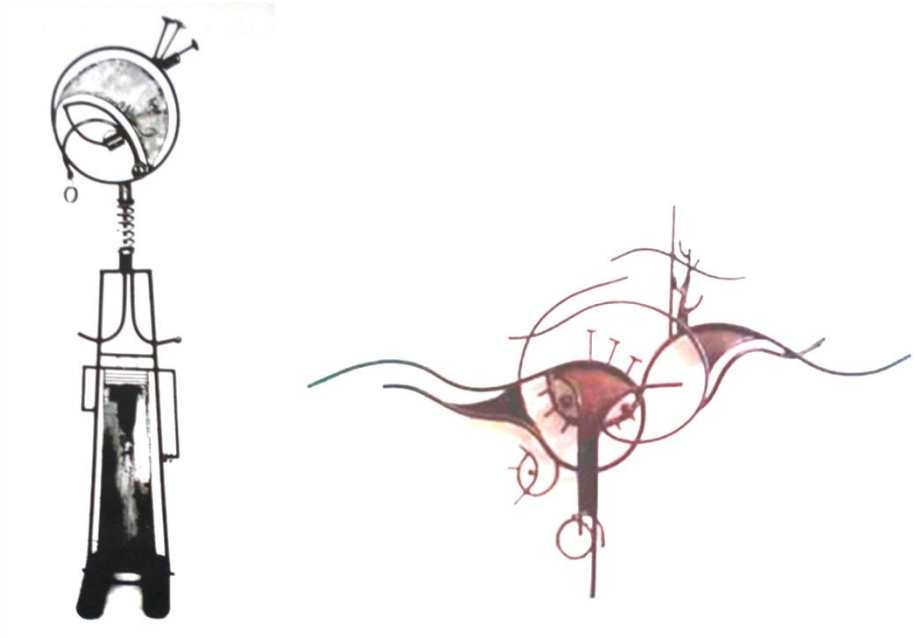


Fig. 1 *Teenager*, Lasisi Lamidi, Fig. 2 *We are still Watching*, Ken Okoli
Mild steel, 93.4cm x 29cm, 2006. Mild steel, 2012. 93.4cm x 29cm,
The Studio Journal, 2007.*50 Half of a Hundred Exhibition catalogue, 2014.*

2.4Importance of African Masks

Masks are used for disguise, concealment, social control, spirit manipulation, physical protection and entertainment; masks may be essential components of solemn religious observances or added to secular festivals. Ruttenberg, (1993) asserts that:

> Masks are found almost exclusively in performance and secular contexts, and in most African societies. Masking however, continues to play an essential role in the life of the community and provides a means of addressing universal human issues such as concern for order; the nature of reality; relationships with others; and coming to terms with death. The masked dancer is usually accepted as an incarnation of an ancestor or spirit being whose appearance energises the ritual, but the mask itself is only one element in an elaborate and complicated chain of events.

Artists over time have adapted inspirations from different sources, with culture playing a dominant role. Rasheed (2011) states that, the act of wearing mask during celebrations and religious rituals dates back to hundreds of years. Most African ethnic groups have their own unique style of mask. When a mask is created for ceremony, the face will either be in the

form of a human spirit, or a deceased ancestor or a mythical hero. He further states that, those African masks are clearly defined with image of animals such as birds, lions and crocodiles. They can also show a distorted human face, revealing disfigured eyes and mouth as well as showing wild hairdo to complete the look of a grimaced mask costume. When one wears the mask in celebration, or in religious rituals, the situation will always include music and dance to go along with the event. The author further states that, the customary mask is the tribal face mask, which are artistically designed and hand carved, such as the chiwara mask of Mali.

There are also body masks, which is part of a ceremonial costume that comes with a matching facial mask. Uzoji (2015) opines that the body masks are usually made of raffia or fabric and in some cases a combination of raffia and fabric. There are masks that cover the entire head area. These are often referred to as helmet masks, and they are carved from wood. Most face masks are made of wood by African wood carvers. Other materials used in crafting masks are brass, bronze, tin, fur and leather. However, wood is the most preferred because it is believed to hold a spiritual soul. Foster (2011) opines that, African masks have cultural and traditional existence. Several reasons have been attributed to the usage of masks throughout history. Some of these, as identified by Foster (2011) are as a form of disguise by an actor in a performance as part of a religious ceremony, as part of membership in a secret society and as punishment for a criminal or in celebrating of a holiday. The author further grouped the reasons for wearing masks under the following sub-headings as discussed below; ceremonies, funerals, secret societies and honour.

2.4.1 Celebration

Masks were worn among African cultures during the celebration of various events, including initiation into adulthood, the harvesting of crop and preparing for or marking the end of war. Sanusi (2014) avers that a dancer wore the mask either as a helmet, a device covering the entire head or as a crest. The mask often represented the spirit of an ancestor during these celebrations, and it was commonly believed that the spirit of the ancestor possessed the dancer wearing the mask.

A common mask in this category is the 'Punu' mask of the Gabon people. The mask represented the spirit of an ancestor and was painted white. The masks were worn during festivals and celebrations. These masks were also sometimes worn to represent the ancestors as part of a masquerade dance. (Thomas, 1981)

2.4.2 Ceremonies

During ritual ceremonies, the mask generally represents a deity, the spirit of an ancestor, a mythological being or an animal spirit. According to Thomas (1981) the dancer wearing the mask often went into a deep trance, during which he would communicate with the ancestors. He brought messages back to the people from the spirits. A common mask in this category is the 'Guro' mask, made and worn by ethnic people among the Ivory Coast. The mask represented the spirit of 'Gu', the wife of a supernatural being from the group's mythology, and was worn during gatherings, funerals, celebrations and other ceremonies.

2.4.3 Funerals

Some masks were worn during mourning and funeral ceremonies following the death of a tribal member (Eyo 1977). The *Bassa Nge*people of Nigeria had a face mask that was worn

during funeral processions and to frighten away sorcerers who might cause harm. These masks had a protruding forehead, large mouth, narrow eyes and horns.

2.4.4 Secret Societies

Masks wereoften worn by members of secret societies. Among the 'Fang' people, a group found among the Atlantic Coast, members of a male secret society wore the 'Ngil' mask during the initiation of new members. The masks were also worn by members of the secret society when they want to punish a sorcerer. These masks were elongated and featured a heart-shaped face with a long nose. (Parkinson, 2010)

2.5.6Honour

Some masks were made by ethnic societies of Africa to honour a particular king, chief or other authority. The pieces were thought to have great power and were displayed, though rarely worn, during rituals and ceremonies. The masks often included symbols to illustrate the greatness of the people they were created to honour. The masks might be displayed during the planting and harvesting of crops, at the opening of a hunt or before the people went to war. These masks were especially common among the 'Bamileke' tribe of the Western Grassland region of Cameroon. (Derek, 2003).

However, the spiritual components do not constitute a thrust for this study as the researcher is basically exploring the aesthetic component of the work. Derek (2003) averse that there are two main forces that influence the style of African masks; these are the traditional style that is dictated by the social and religious beliefs of the community, and the individual vision of the carver. African traditional artists do not try to create a perfect representation of their subjects. Although some realistic portraits are made, others celebrate more abstract qualities like nobility, beauty, courage and humour.

2.5 Composition

Composition which is a formal symmetrical arrangement of line, shape and forms is often observed in figures and masks as they evoke integrity and dignity. Whereas, texture, skilled craftsmanship, fine detail and quality of finishing are importance to the African tribal mask. Highly polished surface which represent youthful, healthy skin reflect the idea of beauty and virtue, while rough and dirty surfaces suggest fear and evil. Many African carvings portray the idealised human figure in its prime, filled with health, strength, and celebrating fertility. African mask is explored in many forms which include: oval, circular, rectangular, elongated, heart-shaped, animal or human or any combination of these (Foster, 2011).

2.6Simplification and Abstraction

Simplification and abstraction of visual elements in the art of African mask emphasises its expressive power. Therefore, it is to state that, during the early 1900, the aesthetic of traditional African sculpture became a powerful influence among the European artists who formed an avant-garde in the development of modern art. In France, Henry Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and their Paris school friends blended the highly stylized treatment of human figure with African sculpture masks in their painting style derived from the post-impressionist works of Cezanne and Ganguim. The resulting pictorial flatness, vivid colour palette, and fragmented Cubist shapes of their artworks helped to define early modernism art (Foster, 2011).

Masks usually reflect the cultural and belief of the Africans. According to Clarke (2003), the ritual and ceremonial masks of African societies are essential features of the traditional culture and art of the peoples ofAfrica. For instance, masks usually have a spiritual and

religious meaning and they are used in ritual dances, social and religious events, and a special status is attributed to the artists that create masks and to those that wear them in ceremonies. In most cases, mask-making is a kind of art that is passed on from father to son, along with the knowledge of the symbolic meanings conveyed by such masks.

In most traditional African cultures, the person who wears a ritual mask conceptually loses his or her human identity and turns into the spirit represented by the mask itself. Clarke (2003) further states that, this transformation of the mask wearer into a spirit usually relies on other practices such as specific types of music and dance, or ritual costumes that contribute to conceal the mask-wearer's human identity. The mask wearer thus, becomes a sort of medium that allows for a dialogue between the community and the spirits (usually those of the dead or nature-related spirits). Labija (2003) also confirms that masked dances are a part of most traditional African ceremonies related to weddings, funerals, initiations and rites. Some of the most complex rituals that have been studied by scholars are found in Nigerian cultures such as those of the Yoruba and Edopeople that bear some resemblance to the Western notion of theatre. Since every mask has a specific spiritual meaning, most traditions comprise of several different traditional masks. Clarke, (2003) submits that traditional religion of the 'Dogon' people of Mali, for example, comprises three main cults (the *Awa* or cult of the dead, the *Bini* or cult of the communication with the spirits, and the *Lebe* or cult of nature); each of these has its pantheon of spirits, corresponding to (78) different types of masks overall. The author further opines that, it is often the case that the artistic quality and complexity of a mask reflects the relative importance of the portrayed spirit in the systems of belief of a particular people; simpler masks such as the *kplekple* of the 'Baoulé' people of

Côte d'Ivoire (essentially a circle with minimal eyes, mouth and horns) are associated with minor spirits.

Most African masks are shaped after human and animal faces for spiritual purposes. According to Labija, (2003) African masks are usually shaped after a human face or some animal's muzzle, though sometimes rendered in a highly abstract form. The inherent lack of realism in African masks is justified by the fact that most African cultures clearly distinguish the essence of a subject from its looks, the former, rather than the latter, being the actual subject of artistically representation. The author further explains that, an example is the one given by *nwantantay* masks of the Bwa people of Burkina Faso (Fig. 1) which represent the flying spirits of the forest; since these spirits are deemed to be invisible, the corresponding masks are shaped after abstract, purely geometrical forms.



Fig. 3*Nwantantay* masks of the Bwa people (Burkina Faso)
wikipedia the free encyclopedia https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/

Animals are common subjects in African masks. Animal masks might actually represent the spirit of animals, so that the mask-wearer becomes a medium to speak to animals themselves. For example, Duerden, (2000) opines that, to ask wild beasts to stay away from the village; in many cases, nevertheless, an animal is also (sometimes mainly) a symbol of specific virtues.

Common animal subjects include the buffalo (usually representing strength, as in the 'Baoulé' culture), crocodile, hawk, hyena, warthog and antelope.



Fig. 4 Chiwara - wikipedia the free encyclopedia, 2015
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/

Antelopes have a fundamental role in many cultures (for example in 'Dogon' and 'Bambara' culture) as representatives of agriculture. According to Brain (1980) Dogon antelope masks are highly abstract, with a general rectangular shape and many horns as) a representation of abundant harvest. Bambara antelope masks (called *chiwara*) have long horns representing the thriving growth of millet, legs (representing roots), long ears representing the songs sang by the working women at harvest time.



Fig.5 Bambara African art museums
http//www.zyama/bambara

Another common subject of African masks is a woman's face, usually based on a specific culture's ideal of feminine beauty. According to Brain(1980) female masks of the 'Punu' people of Gabon, for example, have long curved eyelashes, almond-shaped eyes, thin chin, and traditional ornaments on their cheeks, as all these are considered good-looking traits. Feminine masks of the 'Baga' peopleNigeria have ornamental scars and breasts. In many cases, wearing masks that represent feminine beauty is strictly reserved for men. One of the well-known representations of female beauty is the *Idia* mask of Benin (Fig.13). It is believed to have been commissioned by a king of Benin in memory of his mother. To honour his dead mother, the king wore the mask on his hip during special ceremonies (Uzoji, 2015).

The general structure of a mask varies depending on the way it is intended to be achieved and worn. According to Murrel (2001), the most common type applies to the wearer's face, like most Western carnival masks. Others are worn like hats on the top of the wearer's head;

examples include those of the *BassaNge*, *Ekhoi* people of Nigeria and *Bwa* people of Burkina Faso, as well as the famous *chiwara* masks of the *Bambara* people.

2.7*Bassa Nge*

Bassa Nge ethnic group is one of the largest variations of the *Nupe* speaking language scattered all over Nigeria. Historically, *Bassa Nge* ethnic group known as the *Nupe* speaking people were of Nupe descendant.

The *BassaNge* people are a *Nupe* people. Ndagi (2014) states that;

> The origin or history of the *BassaNge* people must start on this premise, namely, that they left Central Kin-Nupe asNupe people relatively not long ago. So many people have migrated out of Kin-Nupe on exoduses and the BassaNge is most probably one of the last people to do so since they actually left Central Kin-Nupe in recent historical times. The *BassaNge* people begun to leave Central Kin-Nupe in the days of the bitter rivalry between EtsuJimada and EtsuMajiya when the Nupe kingdom broke into two rival kingdoms at the end of the 18th century. EtsuJimada was the EtsuNupe of the Eastern Nupe Kingdom with his palaces at Gbara and Zhima while EtsuMajiya was the EtsuNupe of the Western Nupe Kingdom with his palace at Zugurma. The rivalry between the two contending EtsuNupes led to incessant and continued internecine wars between the two Nupe kingdoms. These internecine civil wars led to population displacements within and outside Kin-Nupe one of which was the migration of the people who we today refer to as the *BassaNge*.

This family feud over leadership continued to cause disintegration which resulted to the migration of some factions of the populace from Gbara in search of another land.Habi(1987) opines that;

> However, the *Bassa Nge* people now occupy the eastern side of the confluence of the river Niger and Benue. Although some of them still live on the other side of the river at Lokoja. The *BassaNge* are distributed along the banks of the Niger from *Itobe* to Gbebe and from *Gbebe* to *Mozum* in the southern part of Benue, stretching but a few miles inland to *Odogbo*in*Bassa*province as well as on the other side of the river south of Lokoja in Kaba Province. The whole community constitutes a district called *Bassa Nge* district in Bassa Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. The district covers some 1000 square kilometers which is bound to the South by the river Benue and Mozum district, to the east by BassaKomu, DekinaBiraidu district and to the west by River Niger.

The migrated Nupes were called *Bassa Nge*after Bassa province; the other occupants were*Bassa Nkomu,*they were both named after their habitation (Habi 1987).Although there are *Bassa* people in some countries in West Africa who share similar culture and traditions, according to Attire (2012) historians have traced the *Bassa* origin back to Egypt nearly six thousand years ago. Due to their migration from Egypt to other parts of the continent such as Nigeria (*Bassa Nge* and *Bassa Komo*), the Democratic Republic of Congo(*Bassaa La Mpasu*), Togo (*Basa'r*), Senegal (*Bassa*-Ri) Cameroun (*Basaa Mpoo*) and Liberia. Sanusi (2014) opined that theart production in *Bassa Nge*land is very diversified and originated from different sources. In fact, many art works were produced by neighboring people whose art has influence on *Bassa Nge* art and culture through the course of history. The primary influence is that of the indigenous population such as the *Bassa Nkomu, Igala, Idoma, Ebira, Igbo, Yoruba* and the *Bini* people. (Wood House, 1964).

2.8*Elebo* Mask

The *Elebo* masks play a very significant role in inculcating moral values in the lives of the people in the community.Mohammed (2015) describes the *Elebo* masks as a "fusion of the human and spiritual world of fantasy." He further highlights that, these characters share common virtues as they seek to provide secular entertainment, education, addresses political issues and socialisation through the enactment of the past and contemporary events performed by humans using masks.Youths are initiated into mask cult in orderto build confidence in their mind in preparation for the challenges they will later face as they grow to become responsible men. The inductees are always trained to be strong and brave, trustworthy and upright in dealing with all matters, especially the ones that affect the generality of the people.

2.9*Elebo* Masks and its Significance

The *Bassa Nge* no doubt possesses a lot of masks of cultural values and interest;only six (6) are the existing socio-cultural masks being used today.Others are mainly for sacred activities. The six (6) *Elebo*masks are; *Elebo Amda, Elebo Abure, Elebo Ekwuecici, EleboTakete, Elebo Nna*and *Elebo Anogbongboro*of *Bassa Nge*. This is because;apart from being socio-cultural masks of the *Bassa Nge* people,they also possess forms of sculptural interestlike;shapes, form,patterns, motifs and symbols.



Fig. 6*EleboAbure* (Helment mask), artkhade.com/en/object/059040/09itk/a-bassa-nge-nigeria.

The *EleboAbure*(meaning cutter) is a helmet mask worn during rituals before going out for hunting.The essence of the ritual is to attract favour, guidance and protection from the ancestors. The mask dates back to the origin of the kingdom. (Sanisi 2014). *Elebo Abure*was created out of wood with a combination of human and animal feature. The lower segment

depicts an antelope which also consistof a long stretched surface from the two tinning eyes region. The upper part protruded to depict the human fore-headwith ears attached to the fore-headand with vertical patternsthat symbolises hairdo.



Fig. 7*EleboEkwuecici*,Wt36.6cm, x Ht 46cm.
Wood,Eyo (1977)

*EleboEkuecici*mask represents servant of the dead. Eyo, (1977) avers that themask is worn during mourning and funeral processions of a dead member in the *Bassa-Nge* community. Such ritual is performed during post-burial rite; it is also used for entertainment during funeral ceremony. The essence of the mask is to appease the gods and the repose of the deceasedrest in peace. The mask was created using wood with patterns all over the face. The mask is divided into two: the upper and the lower part. The upper part consists of a snake situated at the middle with a down ward connection to the nose separating each side. The snake symbolises spirit of the dead in which the dead transient. The lower part of the face consists of zigzag patterns covering from the eyes to the mouth region.The patterns were created to give contrast to the other patterns surrounding it.



Fig. 8*EleboTakete*,Wt 60cm x Ht120cm,Wood and raffia,
Photograph by Danlami Mohammed, 2015.

EleboTakete is worn almost every moon night of the rainy season. It announces its arrival by making significant sounds to a particular situation.It alerts the farmers on the period and when to start planting. Itserves as a protective measure in ensuring security, law and order. It is also used in punishingthe violators of societal norms such as theft, witchcraft, fighting, and adultery, among others. It also alerts the community in case of up coming danger (Sanusi, 2014). It was made from raffia and wood.



Fig. 9*Elebo Anogbongboro,* Ht 39.4cm x Wt 25cm, Wood,
Photograph by Danlami Mohammed, 2015.

*Elebo Anogbongboro*originated from *Bassa Nge*kingdom and it is said to possess a huge healing power. *Elebo Anogbongboro* means an elderly person custume. The head; a king of baboon, consisting a long streched face from the centre of which glossly protrudes the nasal point. Two small eye opening are emphasised by white chalk giving it stylised form. The mask is carved in wood, with a glossy black partina head gear in red partina symbolising authority.



Fig.10*Nno,*Ht36cm x Wt 35cm, Wood,
Photograph by Danlami Mohammed, 2015.

Nno(fig. 10) connote mother, it is a helmet mask worn during festivalto commemorate the womanhood, their importance and contribution to the family and the society at large. The essence of the mask is to appreciate the contribution of women (mothers) during farming season up to the season of harvest by keeping the house and also helping the man in the farm. During this festival the masquerader wears*Elebo Nno* in company of women both young and old dancing in appreciation for the recognition from their husbands and also toattract favour, guidance and protection from the ancestors(Mathew 2015). *Elebo Nno*was created out of wood in representational form. The mask depicts a *Bassa Nge*woman with tribal marks on

her chick. The face is coated in yellow ocher; the eyes and tooth are emphasised by white chalk giving it the impression of a contemporary woman's face.



Fig. 11*EleboAmda* Ht51cm xWt21cm.
Photograph by DanlamiMohammed, 2015.

Elebo Amda(fig. 11) is said to possess healing powers, it is symbolically called *Wuomo*meaning healthylife. It isa helmet mask carved with a brownish glitter and has double layers of square eyes opening with protruding line flowing in between the eyes down the mouth region represented with triangle. It is believed that the mask serves as protection to the kingdom and heals with invisible touch and all those he meets on his way (Sanisi 2014)

Masks are one of the elements of great African art that evidently influenced European and Western art in general. In the 20th century, artistic movements such as Cubism, Fauvismand Expressionism have often taken inspiration from the vast and diverse heritage of African masks (Sargent, 2011).

2.10EmpiricalReview of Related Works

This part reviews three dimensional sculptures of various artists that have represented masks and masquerades as subject matter from both foreign and Nigerian artists. They include, The *Observer* (2010) by Fall Meissa, *Our heritage* (1990) by IdowuAdeyanju, *Cubist Face* (1973) by Pablo Picasso, *Danaide Circa*, (1918) by Constantine Brancusi, *African mask*, (2014) by Joseph Ogunsulade, *Maiden Spirit* (1994) by Ken Okoli(2002), *Nwoko* (2009) by Cyril Nwokoli.



Fig.12. Fall Meissa, *The Observer*, 2010,
Scrap Metal (found objects),
Ht 57cm xWt 34.4cm, Saint Louis, Dakar, Senegal.

“The Observer” is a composition of found objects of metals composed to form a concept that is in another dimension. The sculpture depicts a man smoking pipe. This sculpture is executed using varying discarded metals, such as bicycle and motorcycle parts. About 10mm mild steel rod in a curved form is also used on both sides of the head to depict the ears. The same mild steel rod was also used for the mouth in proportion to the ear as for the lower and upper lips. A rod of about 12mm thickness with a nut at the rear protruding from its mouth depicts a smoking pipe. The nature of the found object adds aesthetical appeal to the work.

This work is connected to this research in terms of materiality. The clever use of motorcycle parts and steel rods in the sculptural piece forms part of the inspirationfor the making of abstracted masks in this study.



Fig.13.Unknown Artist, Concrete and Mild Steel,
Wt 489cmx Lt 221.8cm,
Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

The sculpture composition in is produced in concrete and mild steel rods. The composition shows different types of masks ranging from complex to simple forms. The composition is

arranged in a rhythmic manner which also generates movement. The lines were employed with the use of mild steel rods of various length and thickness which were used to connect and complement the masks emphasising togetherness. The rendition of the mask on the left side of the composition shows a more stylised form of human face with a downward extension from the head. The lower extension from the head carries a repetition of patterns probably to serve as ornamented decoration of African mask in a stylised form. However, the rendition of the mask in sculpture using mixed media has an affinity with the researcher's idea, in that; they are both inspired by African masks.



Fig.14. IdowuAdeyanju, *Ancestors,* 1990,
Metal, Lt300cm x Ht180cmAhmadu Bello University Zaria.

Ancestors shares similar character with (Fig.13), in the sense that they both derive their inspiration from the African mask. Except that, the work in (Fig. 13) was executed using mild steel rods,metal plates and found metal objects. The manipulation of forms and space which is seen in the work is relatively symbolic in form and content. The rendition of the mask in the metal sculpture using thin and thick mild steel rods and metal sheets were used to achieve the masks' composition. On this composition, series of mask forms were arranged

horizontally and interlocked to form a single rhythmic composition. Perhaps, the idea of the composition is to break away from regular materials in creating mask forms such as concrete, fibre glass resin, wood, to mention but a few.The above composition is not connected to any culture. It is a myriad of masks inspired from different cultures thereby setting this research apart for dealing with the *Elebo* masks of the *Bassa Nge*.



Fig.15.Mask of Queen Idia, Benin, Nigeria,
Ivory, AD 1472, 25cm, Art Fundamentals

"Mask of Queen Idia" is popularly referred to as the "Festac Mask". It is a classical example of aesthetic embodiment of compositions, in ornamentation and designs. Oral traditions have it that, this is a portrait of a queen mother in the ancient kingdom of Benin, the forms of human images adoring the top of the mask like royal coronet represents the colonial masters. A geometrical glance reveals two oval shapes, the smaller one embedded in the large. The arrangement of the facial features is formally balanced and emphasised so that it remains the

ultimate focal point in the relatively busy surrounding. The element of repetition in design is employed to achieve contrast of textural surfaces and harmonise the different rhythms.

The ornamental qualities of mask elements are reflected in the scaly textures of the forehead and linear forms above to the eye lids and the projections above and below both ears. However, the naturalistic rendition of the face mask is a manipulation of oval forms infusing cylindrical progressions. This will also be imbibed in this study.



Fig. 16.AgboghoMmuoNri-Awka,
Year - late 19th -20th century, Hardwood,
www.carlos.emory.edu/maiden spirit mask.

This is a maiden spirit mask representing the spirit of dead girls.Michael (1994) averse that the performance is always accompanied by musicians who sing and play tributes to both real and spirit maidens.The mask is elaborately embellished with decorative motifs and phallic forms that represent the hairdo. The mask has gold and brown patina. The profile view of the nose appears as a triangle and the eyes are indicated with two tiny forms located up close to the nose. On the head beneath the elongated hairdo is a network of spiral motifs which together form an elaborate hair styling, with unique features such as the

hairdo facial feature, the feminine elegant disposition of mask, which are similar to the *Elebo* mask.



Fig.17. Cubist Face, Pablo Picasso, painted terracotta,
1973. Wt 27 x Ht115cm x Wt 12cm
www.collection.comonlineaunctions.

"Cubist face" is a work comprising of two faces of the same height which are simplified and fused. The face is a composition of forms rendered in cylinders, squares, triangles and truncated spheres within a convex form for human facial features. The frontal view is more of an oval shape with the nose vertically positioned in a full view while complimenting the nose on the profile view. The eye on the frontal view is represented in white, black and brown colours.Asmall mouth is directly placed beneath the nose to portray a symmetrical balance. The facial features on the profile view looks more pronounced than the frontal view. The sculpture is painted in whitish pink and highlighted with red and black but with more emphasis on the eye, nose and mouth. While the hair is graphically rendered using yellow

colour and black. The cubist face relates to this study in geometrical rendition and composition.



Fig. 18.Danaide Circa, Constantine Brancusi. 1918,
DACL, London, Bronze on Lime Stone, Ht27.9 x Wt 17.1cm,
Microsoft Encarta 2009. 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation.

For "Danaide Circa"the artist chose the egg as the dominant structure for his sculptures. Many of his creations, such as the numerous sculptures he made of Mademoiselle Pogany, share the egg's smooth, oblong shape and simplicity. The artist simplified his subject to its purest and most basic form. He is considered a forerunner of modern abstract sculpture because of his overriding interest in the inner form of his subject rather than its exterior appearance. The simplicity of the form is captivating and the oval shape of the head seems like the Fang tribal mask of the Gabon people. This sculpture is related to this research in that the forms are simplified and also a typical adaptation of tribal mask forms.



Fig. 19.Joseph Ogunsulade, *African Mask*, 2014,
Recycled Metal, Ht55 cm x 8cm x Wt 6cm
D.,Ghana, mnovica.com/itemdetail/?pid=52516

This mask was described by Lasca (2008) as the ceremonial mask common among the Akans in Ghana, the Youruba in Nigeria and Vogan in Togo. The artist utilised metal sheets, car parts and found objects, in the execution of this work,He finished the mask with clear vanish, skillfully contrasting the material's natural colour and textures. The mask is rendered in geometrical form with two sides. The eyes are represented with short cylindrical form which are encosed with wide rings. The nose is situated at the middle of the angle in between the two eyes which are a little above the mouth. Each eye is on either side of the angle, the mouth is also placed on the same angle and overlaped to both sides of the angles. When viewed from any side, it gives one the feel of angulated square. The influence of geometricalisation in this sculpture to this research has aided the manipulation of *Elebo* masks forms into geometrical shapes at the geometrical stage of this study.



Fig.20 Ken Okoli, *Maiden* Spirit, 1994,
Mild Steel, Ht112cm x Wt57.3cm, Artist collection

The Maiden Spirit has a representational appearance that is deliberately employed to depict the beauty of a traditional African masked dancer from the Eastern part of Nigeria. It is a relief work with interplay of space and forms. The form is further enhanced by the use of metal sheets. The elongation of the nose leaves little room to represent the mouth beneath it. At the top of the head is a representation of a head dress with three feathers, two at the back and one in front, the cap seems bigger than the head which signifies authority. The work is rendered in mild steel. The Maiden Spirit is tilted to the right showing a dance gesture, the face is turned to the left and stretching the right hand upward in a dance gesture and bending the left arm towards the right side of the chest giving it a kind of rhythmic movement. The right foot is above the ground slightly close to the left knee to achieve rhythm and balance in the totality of the composition. This work inspired this study in terms of material, concept and technique, also in the way of rendition.



Fig. 21 Cyril Nwokoli, Nwoko, Wood,
Ht180 x Wt 90cm, 1990, ARESUVA 2009 Catalogue.

Fig. 21 is Cyril Nwokoli's wood carving"Nwoko" was described by Gore (2008) thatit seems to be a composition with several elements. His works usually tries to tell a story. Here, one is confronted with a sequence of images depicting both male and female forms as a single unit. On the left is a mask that has masculine features, at the top of this mask is a form that suggests a feather while the neckline seems to be decorated with beads of angular lines. The other half of this mask is one that suggests a feminine figure, with circular shapes that suggest an elaborate hairdo and, despite the numerous components that make up this composition; it seems faultless how they are organised. However, the research at hand is related to this work in terms of the idea.

In summary, this review of works of artists shows different approaches to creation of masks forms in sculpture, which areinspired by materials, forms and composition of objects. These include; Mask of Queen Idia, Agbogho Muo Nri-Awka and Cyril Nwokoli's "Nwoko"are inspired by traditional Nigerian mask. Pablo Picasso's Cubist Face and Constantine Brancusi's "Danaide Circa"are related to this study especially in terms of exploration, inspiration and technique.While Fall Meissa's the "Observer," Idowu Adeyanju's "Ancestors," Joseph Ogunsulade's "Africa Mask" and Ken Okoli's "Maidan Spirit"are related to this study in terms of concepts, rendition and medium (mild steel). The artists as well, skillfully composed the forms while others used the mild steel in order to achieve their aims but none of them channel the use of mild steel towards the creation of sculptural forms with realistic and precise connections with forms inspired by *Elebo* mask.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methods used in this research. The researcher employed a studio practice-based methodology. Studio Practice-based Research is a form of research that aims at advancing knowledge by means of practice. The Chapter also reveals the method of data collection, studio research and the techniques used. Studio practice led research, according to Gray and Malins (2004), is an attempt to unite theory, practice, thought and action into a framework for inquiry. Thus, the researcher spent time observing and examining the *Elebo* masks forms and making studies that resulted to sketches for the purpose of this study. The sketches were used in the studio to produce the sculptural works.

Thus, as a studio practice-based research, it deals primarily with production of sculptures inspired by the *Elebo* masks form. The process of production employs direct modeling with mild steel rods, sheets, flat mild steel bars and metal found object which are carried out within the studio.These are materials that made the studio exploration achievable. Mild steel rods (5mm 8mm, 10mm and 12mm), binding wire, flat mild steel bars, metal sheets, found metal objects, auto paint, electrodes, nitrocellulose thinner, matt black paint, abrasive paper and brush. While the tools employed for this studio exploration are Arc welding machine, angle grander, measuring tape, drilling machine, hack saw, square, spraying machine, painting brushes, hand gloves, welding gurgle and pliers,

3.2 Instruments for data collection

Observation: Is a process whereby the researcher observes the mask on masquerades during performance.Variousphotographs of *Elebo* masks were taken on site during performance. Others were obtained from magazines, journals and the internet. These pictures served as references. The pictures were used to create sketches for the study in representational, stylised and geometrical forms. The sketches were used to create finished work.

Tools for Data Collection are;

a) Sketch pad: A4 sketch pads were used for the drawing of the mask and masquerade
b) Camera: A Sony digital camera was used to take photographs which were used as reference materials.
c) Video CD: Some still pictures were extracted from motion pictures from a recorded Compact disc.
d) Computer System: A computer system is used to play recorded video CD, and also enabled the extraction of still pictures out of motion pictures.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary source includes participatory observation of the *Elebo* masquerade performance at *BassaNge* Day at Gboloko, Bassa Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria, on December,26th 2014 and December, 26th2016 respectively.The researcher directly observed and examined the masks on the masquerade at close range. Photographs of the masks were taken on site which was transformed into sketches for the purpose of this study.

Secondary sources include photographs, videos, drawings, publications and internet.

Some data for the secondary sources are obtained from videos. The compact disc was ripped into the computer system, which was successfully extracted using video land player computing (VLC) video software. Several snap shots were taken directly from the video by pausing and capturing images.

The materials used were selected from already existing ones to achieve all the concepts. The study employed an exploratory studio-based research methodology, which involved visualisation from practical observation of the *Elebo*mask forms.

3.4 Procedures

The procedures adopted was direct method of construction using arc welding technique which involves metal sheet, flat bars, steel rods of various sizes and steel found objects which goes along with cutting, bending and welding the components. Exploratory illustrations were derived from the primary and secondary sources of data. This is achieved by series of sketches captured from the data. Dung (2016) assert the a sketch is a method used in solving artistic problems which also help the artist work out an idea for a finished composition (Encarta dictionary, 2016).

3.4.1 Sketches

Sketches were produced based on the data collected. Sketches help the artist work out an idea for a finished composition. Some selected sketches were used to produce/explore the works in the studio.TheSketches are in three (3) categories which are; Representational, Stylised and Geometrical categories. The outcome of these sketches constitutes the body of works for the entire categories.

3.4.2Representational Sketches

This category marks the commencement of the practical studio work for this research. Several sketches of *Elebo* masks forms were made from the various collections of the images from the primary and secondary sources. These sketches were transformed into the representational relief sculptures using direct method of construction using arc welding technique.

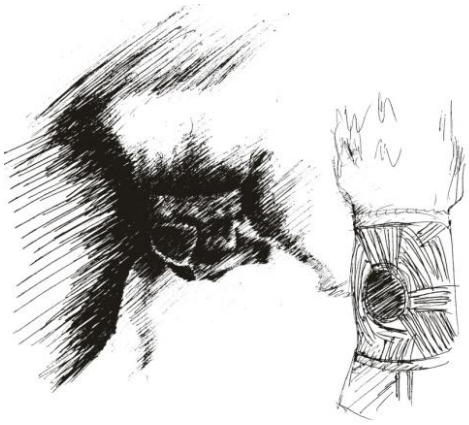


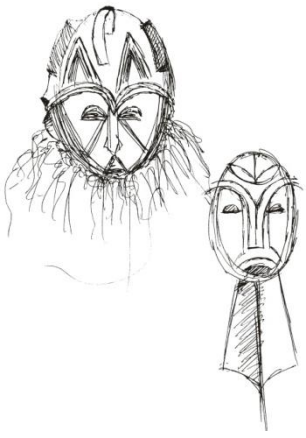
Plate I, Ancestral Mask, Leche Antony, Ink on Paper Wt10cm x Ht5cm,2015.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.



Plate II, My Heritage, Leche Antony,Pen on Paper Ht 9cm x Wt7.5cm,2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.



PlateIII, Ndako,Leche Antony,Inkon Paper.
Wt 12cm x Ht5cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.



PlatelV, Lemye, Leche Antony,Pen on Paper
Wt 9cm x Ht7.5cm,2015.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

4.4.3 Stylised Sketches

The works in this category are stylised*Elebo* masks forms derived from the first category as a result of simplifying the forms. The forms in this category do not posses obvious nearness to the real forms of the first category. The procedures were also with the first category.

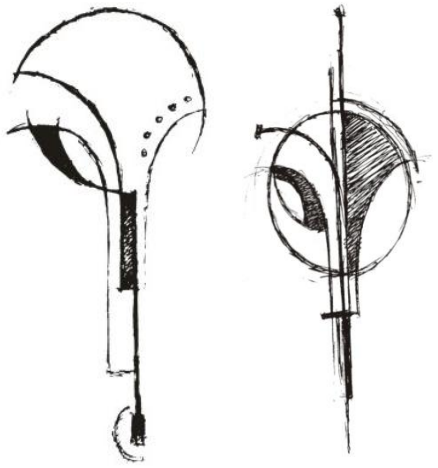


Plate V, Pain and pleasure, Leche Antony,Ink on Paper Ht13cm x Wt 7cm,2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

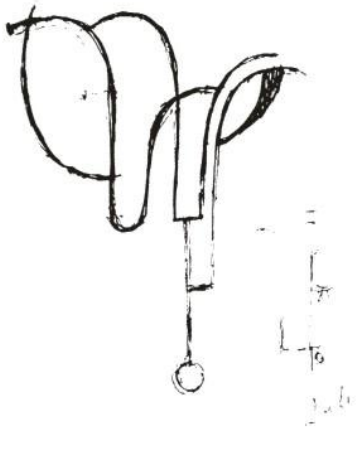


Plate VI, Oneness, Leche Antony,Ink on Paper Ht15.3cm x Wt5.5cm,2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

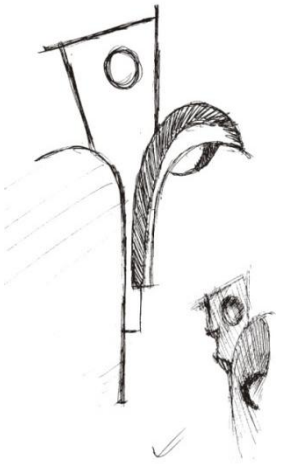


Plate VII. Heritage,Leche Antony, Pen on Paper, Ht10cmx Wt 4.7cm,2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Plate VIII. Silence,Leche AntonyInk on Paper Wt 16cm x Ht 8cm,2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

4.4.4 Geometrical Sketches

The *Elebo* masks forms in this category were broken down in plains of various shapes thereby eliminating some of its forms as a result of the breaking down. However, this categoryhadminimal forms of resemblancecompared to categories one and two because the forms were broken down to circles, squares, triangles, rectangles and so on which makes it less complicated.

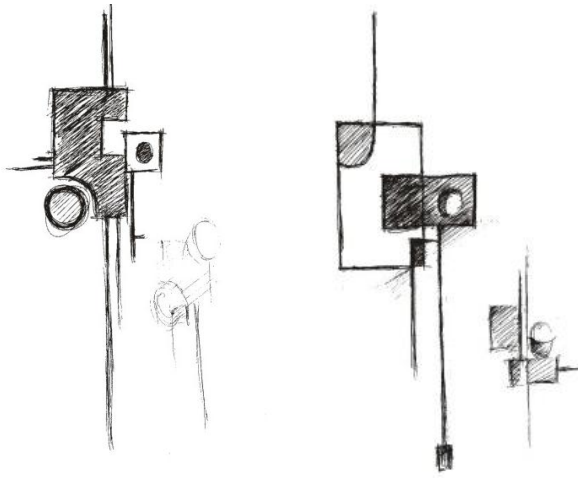


Plate IX, Unity, Leche Antony,Ink on Paper Ht10cm x Wt 4.7cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Plate X, Couple, Leche Antony,Ink on Paper Ht 8cm x Wt 4cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

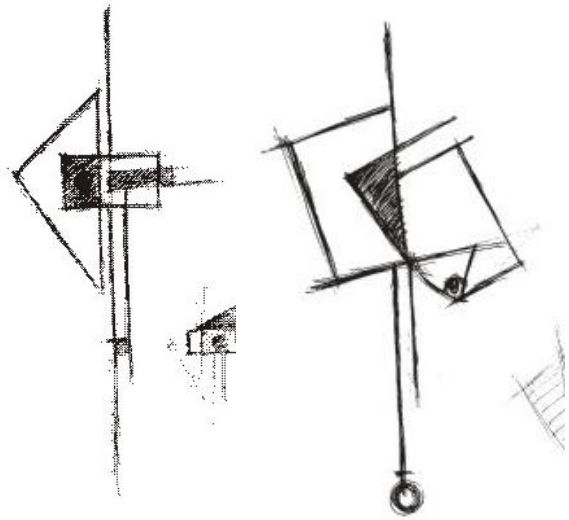


Plate XI, Direction, Leche Antony,Pen on Paper, Ht10cm x Wt 4.7cm, 2016Ht 8cm x Wt 4cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Plate X11, Family, Leche Antony,pen on Paper
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

The Steps employed to achieve the research work are as follows:

Step 1. Cutting and Bending:The researcher cut, beat and bent the steel rods into shapes with sledge hammer and achieved the composition by the use of an arc welding machine.

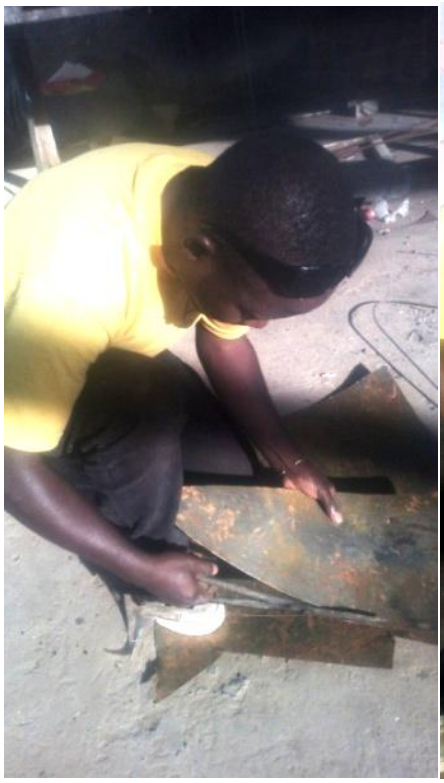


Plate XIII, Cutting of Metal Sheet.
Photograph: Afolayan Daniel, 2016.



Plate XIV, Bending of Mild Steel Rod
Photograph: Afolayan Daniel, 2016.

Step 2. The steel rods that have been beaten into various shapes were assembled with other materials like found steel objects to form the composition. This was achieved by the use of the arc welding machine.



Plate XV, materials and tools
Photograph: Afolayan Daniel, 2016.



Plate XVI, Welding the Mild Steel Rod
Photograph: Afolayan Daniel, 2016.

Step 3. After the welded composition, the researcher inspected the works to ascertain that it is not rigid and also ensured that the component are well joined together.

Stage 4. Finishing was achieved by filing of the welded joints with angle grinding machine and sand paper, before applying the desired patina.



Plate XVII, The first step of construction.Plate XVIII, *Ndako* IIunder construction.
Ht 79cm x Wt 48cm, 2016. Ht 74cm x Wt 32cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

3.5Exploration of Forms:

This is thetransformation of sketches into mask sculptures by direct construction using arc welding to join the individual components. This was achieved by proper observation of the sketches and careful translation of the forms into the medium of expression. The basic material used wasmetal and direct method of arc welding was used in the execution of all the sculptures as shown

3.6 Representational Stage

This first stage involves the production of several sketches of the *Elebo* masks sourced from images gathered from primary and secondary sources which include direct observation of the *Elebo* mask on the masquerades. Other sources were from books, magazines and internet. The sculptures produced at this stage have a near resemblance to the *Elebo* masks.



Plate XIX, DisguiseIIunder construction
Ht 56cm x Wt 46cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Plate XX, *'Aiyem'* under construction
Ht 65cm x Wt 33cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.





Plate XXI, *Ndako*under construction.
Ht 97cm x Wt 48cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Plate XXII. Owl under construction
Ht 87cm x Wt 36cm, 2016
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

3.7 Stylised Stage

This stage records the simplification of *Elebo* mask forms.Theforms in this stage are not having obvious nearness in resemblance to themask forms which were derived from series of sketches from the secondary and primary sources.The procedures of this stage were also similar to thefirst stage except that the works in this stage were executed in curvilinear rendition.For example (plate XXII to plate XXVII).



Plate XXIII, *Bagi Bey Nzagi*
Under construction.
Ht 157cm x Wt 82cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.



Plate XXIV Pain and Pleasure
Under construction
Ht 72cm x Wt 32cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

3.8 Geometrical Stage

This stage involves the breaking down of the *Elebo* masks forms into more simplified forms by reducing the mask form into geometrical planes and different shapes. Hence, the forms were further reduced leaving only the major features as an idea to be appreciated.



Plate XXV, Conception under construction
Ht 72cm x Wt 39cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.



Plate XXVI, Couple under construction.
Ht 87cm x Wt 46cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Direct modeling was used in achieving the sculptures with the aid of arc welding.

3.9 Finishing Process

In order to enhance the presentation the works were cleaned using wire brush, fine and rough abrasive paper and petrol before water, detergent and sponge was finally used to wash the entire work, before applying matt patina onsome of the works and highlighted in

brilliant patina to create contrast. Brine was applied on some of the works so as to create rusty effects, before coating with varnishso as to serve as fixative. Varnish is a liquid, glossy, transparent, hard, protective finish that is primarily used in finishing.

3.10 Summary

The research design used for this study is a studio practice-led methodology and the method used in the execution of this study was through observation of the *Elebo* masks forms which led to the production of sketches and the studio works. Data were collected through the primary and secondary sources. Primary source of data collection consisted mainly of observation of the *Elebo* masks forms which led to the production of sketches. While the secondary source of data collection comprised of the analyses of *Elebo*masks images from different sources such asphotographs, videos, internet, books, journals and articles. Data collected were analysed and grouped into three major categories which are; the Representational, Stylisedand Geometrical categories. The Representational Category marks the commencement of the practical studio work bytransforming several sketches into representational relief sculptures.The Stylised Category records the simplification of *Elebo* mask forms. While the Geometrical stage involves the breaking down of the *Elebo* masks forms into geometrical planes of different shapes. The studio explorations of these categories were achieved through direct method of construction using arc welding technique.

CHAPTER FOUR

CATALOGUE AND ANALYSIS OF WORKS

4.1 Introduction

At the end of the studio exploration of this research, a total of eighteenworks were produced, analysed and catalogued in this chapter. This chapter deals with results achieved in the course of this study. The details of individual work produced for this research are explained. All works executed are grouped into three categories.These three categories include; RepresentationalStage, Stylised Stageand Geometrical Stage. A total of six works were produced for Representational Stage, six works also for Stylised Stage and six works for Geometrical Stage. These adds up to eighteen works. Below is the catalogue and analyses of the works as executed within the studio.

4.2 Representational Stage:

At this stage, the researcher's interest was in capturing a near resemblance and the representation of the natural appearance of the *Elebo* mask forms. The forms were rendered in different styles and forms as portrayed in this category using mild steel.

4.3 "My Heritage"



Plate XXVII. 'My Heritage', Mild Steel, Ht 93cm x Wt 41cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This work is produced at the Representational Stage. The work is rendered in an oval shape using metal sheet, rods and mild steel flat bars. The composition comprises of two segments, the upper and the lower segment. The upper segment is inform of a cap which is in triangular shape vertically joined to the head; it is divided into three parts using flat steel bars. The division shows hierarchy in leadership and authority.The first segment of the cap from below represents the whole community that is why it is bigger. The second segment represents the ruling council while; the last segment which is the smallestrepresents the head which represents, the ruler of the community. Motorcycle chain was used as

decorative motif on the steps separating the segments. The lower part which is the face comprises of the eyes and the nose, below the face was a semi-circle which was rendered using lines and motifs of *EleboEkuecici*(Fig 5 p. 25). The composition as a whole was inspired by *EleboTakete*(Fig. 6 p.26)because it is an entertainment mask that is usually worn during festive season and also to introduce the coming of the new farming season.

4.4 *"Ndako"*



Plate XXVIII. 'Ndako I'Mild Steel, Ht 79cm x Wt 48cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This work belongs to theRepresentational stage it was executed with mild steel rods and sheet. The face was depicted in a cone like shape and in a vertical position with motifs on its forehead. The eyes are the only opening on this composition; however, the nose is rendered in an elongated triangle. The head consist of the cap that is worn by elders the

patterns on the cap are drawn from *BassaNge* culture and tradition. The patterns were created with 5mm rods, some parts were covered with metal sheets while some were left open to complement the solid parts thereby creating the feel of harmony in the composition. *Ndako* (meaning grandfather) was inspired by *Elebo Anogbonboro*(Fig. 7 p.26) because of its aesthetics and the role of the mask in the society.

4.5 *"Lemye"*



Plate XXIX. '*Lemye*', Mild Steel, Ht 90cm x Wt 33cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This composition is simplified using rods to create lines, forms, shapes and space. The face is created in an oval shape with 10mm mild steel while the inner oval shape is created with 5mm mild steel to create contrast. The eyes and the nose are interconnection of rods flowing from left and right, up and down with contrasting spaces. On its forehead is a plate

placed in contrast with the mouth and a continuation of it below the face. A mild steel rod of 12mm was used to create division on the metal sheet. *Lemye* (meaning look at me) was inspired by *EleboAbure*(Fig. 4 p. 24). The *EleboAbure*was created using wood. The *EleboAbure* is for sacred and secular purposes of the *BassaNge* people. It is a spirit mask that protects the community.The essence of the mask is to attract favour, guidance and protection from the ancestors. It iscreated in this study to serve artistically purpose of decoration.

4.6 *"Ndako II"*



Plate XXX. *NdakoII,* Mild Steel, Ht 74cm x Wt 32cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Ndako (Grandfather)-Grandfathers are seen as people who transit to become ancestors because they show affection to their grandchildren and also tell them stories about their origin and things of the past. This composition is rendered using mild steel with an elongated head. The upper part of the composition was projected above the face and was

adorned with motor cycle chain for aesthetic purpose. The face was depicted flat with inspiration from *EleboEcewu*(Fig 9, p. 28).The eyes were created out of cuts-off square pipes which were horizontally arranged, with another square pipe of about 30cm vertically placed in-between the eyes depicting the nose and also a motorcycle chain on it for adornment to compliment with the one at the top.

4.7 "Disguise"



Plate XXXI. 'Disguise', Mild Steel, Ht 53cm x Wt 9.5cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This work is rendered using flat mild steel bars only. The bars were arranged in a vertical order, in a manner in which the features on the face can be seen. For example, the impression on the face was as a result of vertical arrangement of flat steel bars withprojections which started from the top of the face depicting the fore-head and running

down to converge at the jaw which ends up as the face. The eyes were as a result of an impression created with diagonal line intercepted by vertical lines to create an impression of the eyes. The nose is a run-down of two flat steel bars from the top to the lower part of the face with a projection at the middle of the face depicting the nose. One of the significance of a mask is to conceal the wearer's face by disguising himself so as to be part of the community after a particular event. Some Nigerians live a life of pretence, claiming to love one another but neglect each other when in need.

4.8 *"Ai'yem"*



Plate XXXII. '*Aiyem*', Mild Steel, Ht 65cm x Wt 33cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This composition is in three stages namely, the head, face and lower part of the face. The composition was rendered in mild steel rods and mild flat bars. The upper part of the head was modeled using metal sheets and manipulated by cutting it in slices with shears, which automatically gets twisted when cutting to give raffia impression which is connected to the

face and neatly separated by a flat metal bar with an adornment of motorcycle chain. The second part of the composition is the face which consistsof only the eye. The eye is the only feature on the face and was rendered by creating a circle with 10mm rod and inserting it in a circle created with a flat metal bar followed by movement of vertical, diagonal and horizontal lines created with 5mm steel rods to form patterns. The patterns were derived from the pattern on *EleboAbure (*Fig. 4,P. 24) the emphasis on this composition is on the eye *Ai'yem* (meaning my eyes) signifies the importance of the eyes to humanity and living things in general because it means a lot to mankind. It was said in *BassaNge* dialect that *tsom-tsomnge tsigbeai'ye* (meaning protection is the best medicine for the eyes) (Matilda, 1997).

4.9 "Disguise II"



Plate XXXIII. 'Disguise II', Mild Steel, Ht 56cm x 46Wt, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

The work on p. 61 Plate XXXIII was executed using mild steel rods and metal sheets. The upper part of the composition was rendered using 5mm rod arranged vertically

in harmony with the shorter ones in-between the taller ones and were connected to the sliced metal plate which was achieved by the use of shears.It covers the face which serves as a disguise. Mild steel flat bar was used to cover the joining of the rods that forms the head and the sliced metal covering the face as a disguise. It is worn to celebrate harvest season. The composition was left without patina to show the rusty nature and also to depict the dying culture and the tradition of the art of masking in *BassaNge* culture.

4.10 Stylised Stage:

The studies in this category have very little reference to the perceived reality of *Elebo* mask forms but still embrace the full content of its subject matter. The forms were advanced, altered and simplified into the imposition of mild steel on top of one another to form stylised forms in relief sculpture.

4.11 *"BagibeyNzagi"*

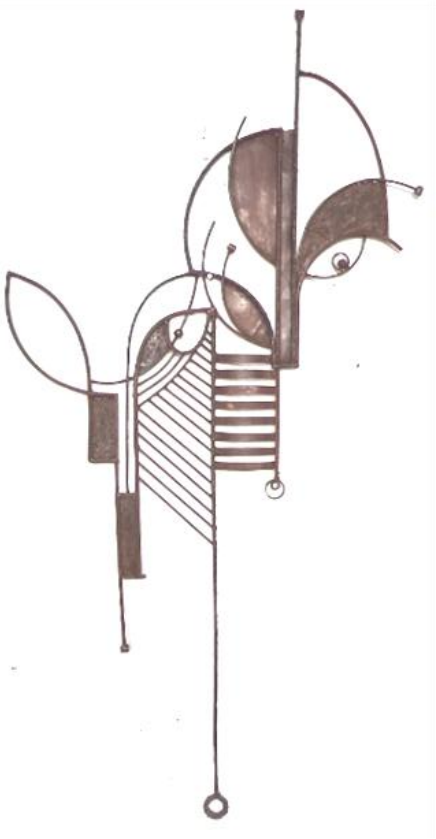


Plate XXXIV. '*BagibeyNzagi'*, Mild Steel, H 157cm x W 82, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This work is a fusion of multiple compositions under stylised exploration. The composition consists of curvy lines, diagonal lines, squares, rectangles and semi-circles. Mild steel bars, 12mm, 10mm, and 5mm rods and metal sheets were the materials used to achieve this composition. The composition was executed in three parts, the first part of the composition from the left consists of a semi-circle that form the eye and rectangles created below it. The second rectangle below the eye is slightly bigger than the one at the top. The second part of the composition comprises of 5mm rods which were used to create diagonal patterns connected to the first part of the composition, flat steel bars were cut, projected and arranged horizontally in a repeated manner with a 12mm rod in-between the patterns housed a 'U' shape in an opposite direction. The third part was juxtaposed on the second

part with a connection from the first part fusing them together as one. The third part consists of a rectangle, long and bigger than the ones on other parts. The third part was made of disjointed circles and curves. This composition portrays a man and a woman in traditional attire which is the symbol of our culture and heritage.

4.12 "My Heritage II"



Plate XXXV. 'My Heritage II', Mild Steel, Ht 204cm x Wt 45cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Our culture today isdecaying due to inherited cultures, norms and beliefs as a result ofacculturation, which can be attributed to the arrival of western civilisation especially in Nigeria and Africa at large. Many foreign ideas such as religion and foreign languages are

some of the factors responsible for the decline of our culture. The thrust here is to produce sculptures inspired by *Elebo* mask forms so as to have visual documentation of the masks forms, bearing the resemblance and elegance of the mask forms. To achieve this, the facial features are presented in chisel-cut rendition. The facial features such as the nose and mouth where deliberately omitted on the face so as to make it less busy and direct attention to the focal area of the work which in this case is the area which the mask Forms are visible.

4.13 *"Suzuwe"*



Plate XXXVI. *Suzuweh*, Mild Steel, Ht 88cm x Wt 34cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This composition was rendered in lines using mild steel of different shapes and sizes.The face was rendered in a circle and two rods separating each side. The left side of the face consists of the eye and the eye lash that was represented with a flat steel bar giving it a

slothful look. With negative space depicting a closed eye in contrast with the other eye on the left side. The composition depicts shyness in mankind.

4.14*"Lazhi"*

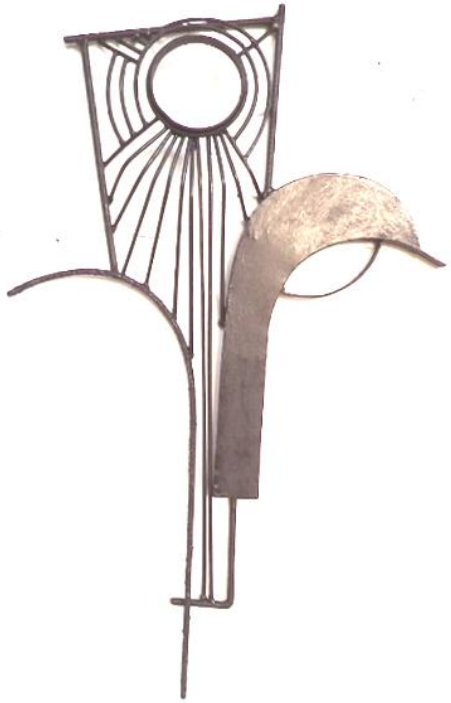


Plate XXXVII. *Lazhi*, Mild Steel, H 83cm x W 52cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

In this work, there is a "vertical juxtaposition of the facial forms just as it is with *EleboTakete*. However, the decorative motifs are manipulated using 5mm mild steel rods. *Lazhi* is a *BassaNge* word for morning, here; it is used in the context of growth. A new day is always an addition to the number of days one has. The elongated form with a round opening as it appears at the top of the composition form the eye. The forms are stylised and some components such as the mouth is deliberately omitted to conform to composition.

4.15 "Pain and Pleasure"



Plate XXXVIII 'Pain and Pleasure',Mild Steel, H72cm x W39cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

The inspiration for this composition is derived from breaking down of *EleboTakete* (Fig 6, p. 26) in a stylised form. The emphasis here is the simplicity. This composition has a simple ambiance with facial forms placed in a simpler manner. The face is rendered using curvy lines. The spaces in the composition were created to create contrast with the positive spaces covered using metal sheets. The composition consists of an eye jointly connected to a vertical rectangle depicting the nose with an over flow of rod toward the mouth region. The pain in this composition is the negative spaces because the spaces were left open which will attract negative things that might inflict pain to an individual. While pleasure is the positive spaces which were covered for protection.

4.16 "Ancestral Mask"

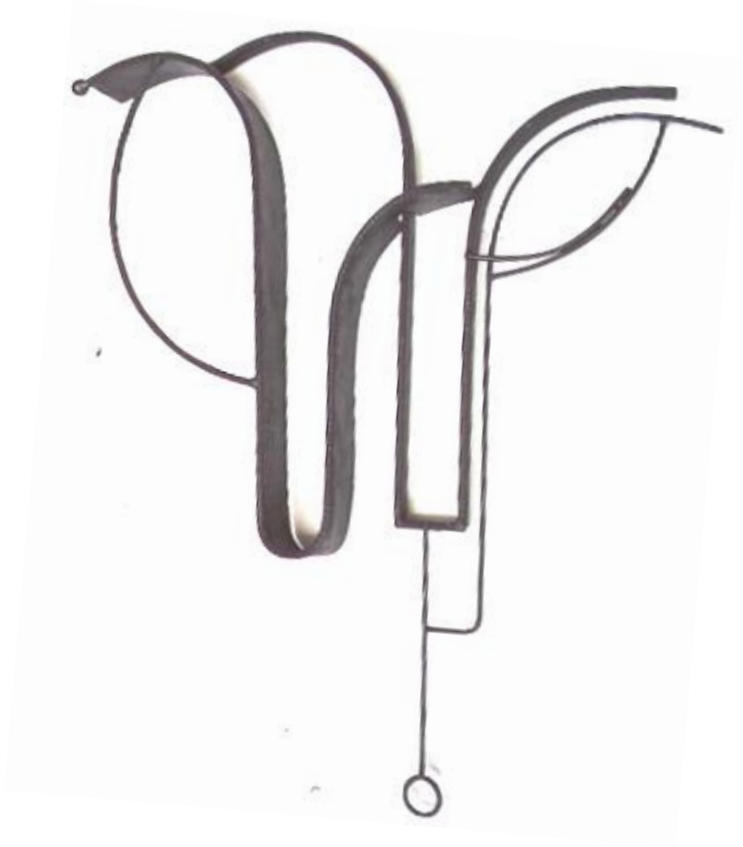


Plate XXXIX. Ancestral Mask, Mild Steel, Ht 72cm x Wt 39cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This work is an exploration of bold curvy-linear lines which where attempted to achieve boldness in the composition. The idea here is to create an authoritative look as the title suggests. The mask is symbolic just as an African mask is; however, the work has replication of circles and semi-circles which are used to create rhythm and visual movement. It is executed in mild steel, the patina is mat black paint and highlighted with a mixture of gold.

4.17 "Face"

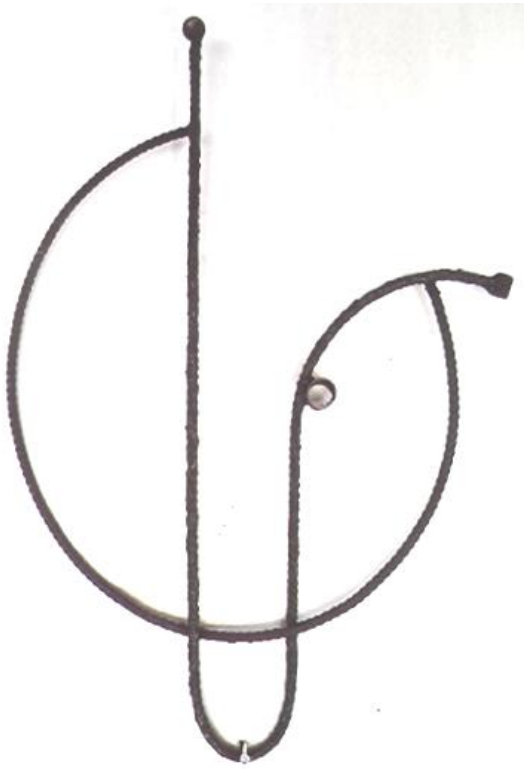


Plate XL. 'Face', Mild Steel, Ht 72cm x Wt 39cm, Year 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This work is rendered in a very simplified manner with a minimal use of material, and a little suggestion of facial features. The face is not laboured with motifs instead with homogenous rough texture that runs across the surface and to complement the look of the sculpture.

4.18 Geometrical Stage:

The works in this stage are purposeful intermediates between the representational and the stylised stage. These involve a dissection of the mask forms and a shift from precise detailing of the whole forms into segments of various shapes such as: square, circle, triangle, rectangle to mention a few.

4.19 "Unity"



Plate XLI. 'Unity',Mild Steel, Ht 72cm x Wt 39cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This is a composition of squares and circles; it was composed of mild steel rods and metal sheet. The main body of the composition in letter 'F' shape is completely covered with metal sheets leaving a square space for restfulness of the eyes. A 12mm rod flows from the top of the composition to the bottom thereby creating an impression of balance. Below the

left corner of the composition is a circle in proportion to the smaller circle in the square slightly above the bigger circle below. The smaller square housing the circle is attached to the main body of the composition at the edge of the opening of the letter 'F' shape with a rod attached to it flowing downward. One of the principles of art is unity. Unity is the arranging of separate components in an artistic work to create an overall aesthetic impression which is also synonymous to mankind despite our tribal, religion and ethnic differences we can live in unity with one another by knowing and tolerating our differences.

4.20 "Conception"

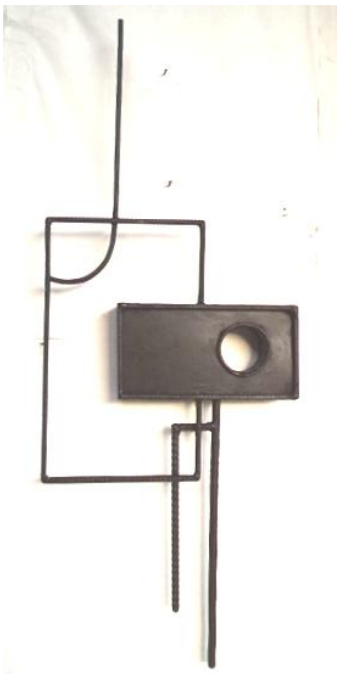


Plate XLII. 'Conception', Mild Steel, Ht 72cm x Wt 39cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

The perception of this composition(plate XLII page 71) visualises the negative spaces as virtual forms that are in contrast and in balance with the forms and features of the theme of the work.This composition was done in the geometrical stage of this research; it was

rendered using mild steel and metal sheets. It consists of three 3 rectangles arranged in harmony with the composition. The biggest rectangle at the background was vertically composed with a side cut at the top corner of the rectangle. The opening at the top left corner of the rectangle depicts the breast of an expecting mother. The second rectangle was juxtaposed horizontally on the bigger rectangle overlapping outside the angle toward the right side of the angle. It was covered with a metal sheet with an opening on the right side of it to create contrast and balance to the opening at the top left corner of the rectangle and at the background. A mild steel rod runs down as an extension of the legs. The smallest rectangle below was achieved as a result of the inter connectivity of angles and was covered with metal sheet so as to create contrast.

This work was conceptually created to depict a pregnant mother. The bigger rectangle represents the trunk including the breast at the top left corner of the angle. The horizontally placed rectangle flowing across represents what she is carrying; it could be ideas, innovation and a child. The two rods that run downward are the representation of the legs.

4.21 “Couple”



Plate XLIII. 'Couple',Mild Steel, Ht 87cm x Wt 46cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This is a geometrical composition inspired by *EleboEcewu* (Fig. 9, p. 27). The composition consists of two parts rendered in a simplified form using the basic elements of art like: lines, shapes and forms. The composition has been simplified into lines which have been used to create shapes and forms depicting a couple. The diagonal rectangle at the right is the male fussing into the vertical rectangle at the left which is the female. The triangle in between them covered with metal sheet is the bond holding them together and the single eye means that they need each other in making decision and planning for the family.

4.22 *Birni*

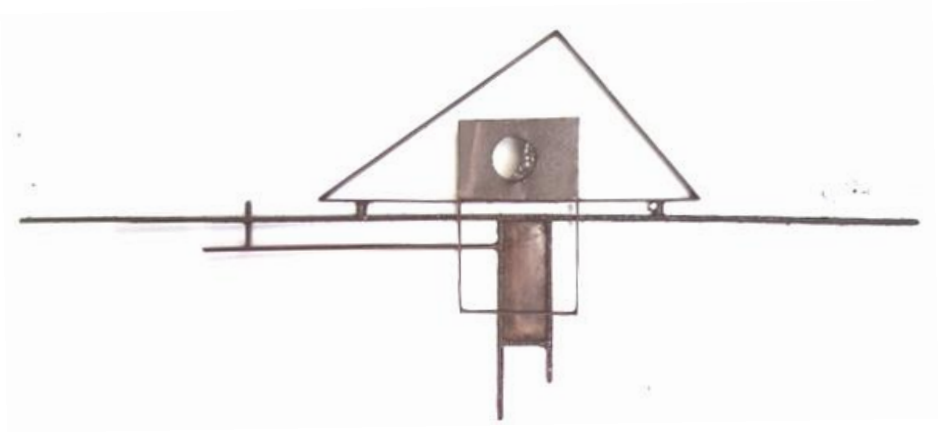


Plate XLIV. 'Birni', Mild Steel, Wt 87cm x Ht 46cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

Birni is a*Hausa* name for a city. City is an urban area with many buildings where a large number of people live and work. However, every town has a city which is like the center of civilisation for the town. This work is comprised of geometrical shapes and forms executed using mild steel. The triangle atop was rendered using a mild steel bar joined to a 12mm horizontal rod which serves as the eye level in landscape, with a connection of 10mm rod to a down flow of a rectangle constructed with metal sheet and rod which is below the eye level. The work also contains a juxtaposed rectangle with a square and a round opening inside the triangle atop, the round opening is to compliment the space in the triangle and the covering of the square also is to compliment the downward flow of the covered rectangle which is below the eye level. The work is left in its inherent patina, giving it a rusty effect. It was coated with lacer for long lasting preservation.

4.23 "Seer"



Plate XLV. 'Seer',Mild Steel, Ht 87cm x Wt 36cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This is one of the early works done under geometrical exploration. It is a face mask rendered in triangular form depicting the face of an owl. The owl is traditionally described as wise bird perhaps because of its human-looking face and fixed gaze, as if it were considering something carefully.

The eyes were rendered in circles with flat steel bars with a downward flow of a rectangle situated in-between the eyes representing the nose. The top of the composition carries strings of mild steel rods arranged in a harmonious pattern; the middle rod stood at angle ninety (90^{o}) while the three at the left and right were arranged diagonally after each other to create rhythm in the composition, this work symbolises security.

4.24 "Tribute"

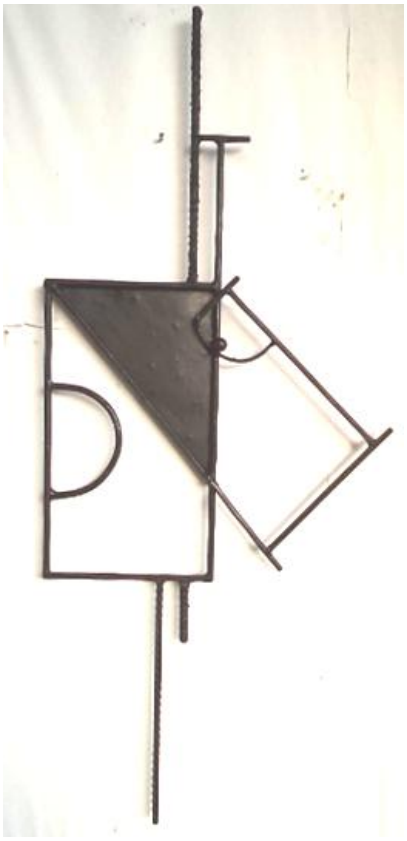


Plate XLVI. 'Tribute',Mild Steel, Ht 87cm x Wt 36cm, 2016.
Photograph: Leche Anthony, 2016.

This work depicts a two-faced mask sculpture with exaggerated but simplified forms. Vast areas are left without motifs as common in the preceding sculptures. The emphasis here is simplicity. The work has a restful ambience with facial forms directly opposite each other thereby rendering the work to have "two front views", these views are connected with lines."Here and there" is a philosophical interrogation of the choice, the challenges laced with everyday choices in life, how difficult and yet how simple it might be to make a choice, and at another level the consequence of deciding to make a choice or not to make a choice. The work is rendered in mild steel and finished in shades of black.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the summary of this study, as well as highlighting findings and conclusion of this research.

5.1 Summary

This research aimed at the possibilities of exploring the *Elebo* mask forms as inspiration in creating relief sculptures using mild steel.Relevant art works and literature were reviewed in the course of this research. A total number of twenty works were produced; these were catalogued and analysed. The works ranged from representational, stylised to geometrical forms in sculpture.

5.2 Findings

The findings that were advanced in the course of this research are as follows:

I. The research found out that the skillful use of thevibrant patterns, shapes, forms, symbols and motifs found on the *Elebo* masks enhanced the works created at the representational stage of the study.

II. It has also found out that the stylisation stage of this study has led to the discovery of shapes, pattern and symbols which could be usedin graphicsdesign andtextile designs.For example, plate XXXIV p. 63 and plate XXXVI p. 65

III. The researcher found that geometrical exploration of *Elebo* masks forms in sculpture could be beneficial to other discipline like architects, fabricators and designers when incorporated into out door projects like, gates, door panels, windows, fence, pillars to mention a few. For example, plate XLI p. 70 and plate XLII p.71.

5.3 Recommendations

From the pre-historic era down to the present time(this study inclusive), the diverse artistic explorations have not exhausted the art of mask and the abundant potentials in it. Therefore, artists and sculptors are encouraged to exploremasks in diverse ways such as wood carving and installation in order to address issues in art.It is recommended that further studies on the relationship between the human forms and other forms in nature especially other living and non-living creatures be carried out in mild steel as these could open up more artistic possibilities. The result of this study can be used as decorative pieces for both interior and exterior settings like games reserve, homes, recreation centres and museums.

5.4 Conclusion

There appears to be no documented evidence of sculptural research of the *Elebo*masks of the *Bassa Nge*. However, this research offers a considerable view of the unique components of these masks such as the expressive lines and simplified forms. As a result, it is the opinion of the researcher that cultural tradition and material culture are sources of artistic inspiration; hence sculptors should search this area for inspiration. Sculptors and other researchers in art should search for inspiration in different aspects of culture, as this will strengthen the seamless relationship between art and culture by exploring other masks from other cultures.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The studio exploration established the following that:

1. The studyhas uncovered the natural representation ofthe qualities of the *Elebo* mask forms andits visual nature with the three-dimensional space.
2. Thestudy has also uncoversthe *Elebo*mask forms as decorative element and motifs that can beincorporated into other discipline like architecture, fabricators and designers.

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