A CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION OF NIGERIA'S HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES IN CLAY FORM

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in the thesis titled, **"A Conceptual Exploration of Nigeria's Historical Experiences in Clay Form"** was performed by me in the Ceramics Section, Department of Industrial Design, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, under the supervision of **Professor A.M. Ahuwan, Professor J. Jari and Professor C. V. Alkali**. The information derived from literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any university.

_____ _____

OKEWU Ebute Jonathan Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled: A CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION OF NIGERIA'S HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES IN CLAY FORM, meets the regulations governing the award of degree of PhD Industrial Design of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my “perfect coral” Deborah Jonathan for her all round support and forbearance.

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ABSTRACT

Ceramics is a field of study that has gained usefulness in vital areas of human tasks due to the special qualities of the earthy material (clay) that is usually employed. The sourcing, manipulation and firing of clay items result in ceramics of divergent nature which include, table wares, sanitary wares and conceptual ceramics. This study chose to dwell on the conceptual aspect of ceramics that has the capacity for social commentary through the "construction and deconstruction" of forms. Conceptual ceramics proclaims the modern era in a variety of ways. It produces works that speak about contemporary issues in day to day life, thus offering great conceptual framework upon which academic discussion could be generated. The emphasis on the utilitarian and industrial ceramics especially in Nigeria, no doubt is useful to the society for household and industrial applications, but it narrows the potentials inherent in ceramics, and lacks creative expression of ideas, techniques and style. A potter who engages in the production of tableware or sanitary wares may not require any high level of education to do this, and his works may not carry any subject matter that could trigger discussion or investigation, and as such cannot be a pedagogical tool that may promote learning in some related fields. The conceptual aspect of ceramics which is globally recognised for its interrogational strength in commenting on social, historical and political issues, has been taken for granted in Nigeria. Only a few ceramic artists have taken the style as a practice. These few artists adopt other forms of clay media to represent their research outcomes, however, none to the best of the researcher's knowledge has utilised the *construction and deconstruction* of wares in form of slabs to interrogate Nigeria's historical experiences in conceptual style. The aim of this study is to *construct and deconstruct* clay wares in form of slabs to render in a conceptual manner, some aspects of Nigeria's historical experiences in tactile form by adopting the frame work as exemplified in the works of renowned ceramic artists like Abbas Ahuwan, Chris Echeta and Ozioma Onuzulike. Their

style of ceramics is within the confines of conceptual ceramics which this research has adopted. Studio based research approach was adopted for convenience in the actualisation of the aim and objectives of this research through a concept of construction and deconstruction of clay forms. This study has shown that, the uniqueness of conceptual clay forms in this study lends a voice to a variety of historical issues where utilitarian ceramics cannot represent. This study has developed an alternative way of producing conceptual ceramic forms by the process of building baseless cylindrical forms on the potter's wheel, cutting open into slabs (constructing and deconstructing) before alteration. This study has also established that while the practice of ceramics such as tableware, sanitary ware and industrial ceramics are well favoured in the Nigeria context for the purposes of household and industrial usage, conceptual ceramics has the power to bring to limelight the creative prowess of a ceramist in commenting on issues of national societal debate.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Ceramics is a field of study that has gained usefulness in vital areas of human tasks due to the special qualities of the earthy material (clay) that is usually employed. The sourcing, manipulation and firing of clay items result in ceramics of divergent nature which include, table wares, sanitary wares and conceptual ceramics. All these have their unique places and functions and are globally recognised. Alkali (2009) describes conceptual ceramics as 'non–pot ceramics'. With bias for traditional (conventional) ceramics, Alkali enumerates the merits of conceptual ceramics to include a high level of intellectual content that brings about a rich confluence of inspirations and subject matters that become exciting sources of information to other aspects of learning. He further states that, this kind of ceramics proclaims the modern era in a variety of ways. It produces works that speak about contemporary issues in day to day life, thus offering great conceptual framework upon which academic discussion could be generated.

This study has chosen to dwell on the conceptual aspect of ceramics that has the capacity of social commentary through the "construction and deconstruction" of forms. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2017), construction is the style or method used in the building of something while deconstruction is breaking something down into smaller parts. This study has appropriated both words to mean throwing on the potter's wheel and altering what has been thrown to achieve conceptual ceramics that are interrogative.

For conceptual ceramics to be interrogative, it should be understood as addressing a particular issue or set of issues. According to Echeta (2013), forms in ceramics production give the clay it's power to draw attention to itself. An understanding is reached with the material (clay) as a result of handling, which facilitates a thought process. Until the thoughts are downloaded into the physical world, they remain the private and unshared property of the artist and in this case, the ceramic artist. Echeta further opines that for a ceramic artist to be able to make a mark, such artist must have gone 'crazy' with the medium of clay, and some times, in the company of other materials in order to achieve conceptual expressions. Ecoma (2011) observes that in ceramic art there are divergent directions, the traditional as well as the modern which constantly seek new forms and fusions. Ceramics comprises of objects which may be sculptural, decorative, functional or conceptual and may be intended for social use, private pleasure, domestic or public use.

Conceptual ceramics has its root in the modern pottery practices which date back to the 1950s. For the effective understanding of where modern ceramic art started from and where it is today, a brief narrative by Onuzulike (2009) reveals thus:

> The first well documented modern pottery in Nigeria is the Abuja Pottery Training Centre established in 1951 by the northern Nigerian government through the instrumentality of the British potter, Michael Cardew, and later Michael O'Brien. The Abuja Pottery Centre encouraged local potters being trained there to blend traditional pottery forms and techniques with foreign ones. It produced the famous Ladi Kwali who took advantage of the high-fired kilns and glazes to modernise her innovative traditional designs, a successful venture that has been appreciably studied by a number of writers, including the Nigerian ceramist and art historian John Agberia. This synthesis of local forms and techniques with those from outside for the enactment of modern ceramic works in the early 1950s marked an important precursor to events that took place later that decade at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology (NCAST), Zaria (now Ahmadu Bello University).

Modern ceramics in Nigeria has a history of developments from one style to another depending on the location and people involved. At the initial level of modern ceramics in Nigeria, efforts were geared towards the achievement of traditional identity reflecting on the wares. This is exemplified by notable ceramic pieces of Ladi Kwali and Abbas Ahuwan. These works can be found in galleries both in Nigeria and abroad. As time went on, the practise of modern ceramics in Nigeria began to take radical dimensions which transcended utilitarian and cultural identity. The likes of Abbas Ahuwan, Chris Echeta, and Ozioma Onuzulike for instance, have executed works through the conceptual approach with the inclusion of other materials and techniques which are not conventional. The inclusion of foreign materials lends more voice to conceptual ceramics and makes the practise more effective in its objective. This is because materials that are not necessarily earthy carry their own qualities which may be complimentary to clay.

Onuzulike (2008) posits that, the role of ceramics in the technological and economic development of many countries has always commanded attention. However, its role in socio-political development has often been taken for granted or ignored. A handful of ceramic artists in Nigeria have created a large body of work that reflects on Nigeria's tradition, socio-political and economic history. Echeta and Esege (2014) assert that, "it has become clear that a medium like clay, irrespective of the level of derision applied to it, can generate limitless vista of opportunities for social penetration. Clay yields to easy manipulation, but at the same time hardens under elevated heat levels into rock-like products for both functionality and aestheticism. Clay and its products provide answers to social history and documentation".

Oloidi (2011) points out that no civilised nation plays with, or disregards, the necessity for sculptural adornment, because apart from their appealing environmental aesthetics, such monumental works are a strong statement on the nations' political, cultural, socio-economic

and other historic achievements. Oloidi further reveals that Washington D.C. is a typical example of a city with great historic monuments, and this is why it is usually described as a city of monuments. Fine arts products all over civilized world are part of government, corporate or institutional structures. Nigeria has a history of events that cannot be forgotten overnight. Such histories are worthy of artistic interrogation especially in art forms. Ceramics is an area that can comfortably convey this representation in three dimensional conceptual form. It is commonly believed that history presents the glorious past of a country which is replete with unprecedented events and incidents that give the nation its own technological, economic and political identity. The history of Nigeria represents the remarkable incidents that changed and redefined the various aspects of the country. A look at opinions on some Nigeria's historical experiences availed this study the necessary synergy and inspiration for rendering the themes in sketches and in tactile conceptual ceramic formats.

From the onset, Nigeria had tried to be self-sufficient as an entity. This is evident in the words of Rodney (2009). He reveals that "before even the British came into relation with Nigerians, there existed local technologies, Nigerians were a developed people, having their own institutions and ideas about governance". As there were different ethnic groups in Nigeria, so the different interests as to what bothers on their welfare. This made the experiences for survival more tasking and of divers phases in Nigeria. Dike (2000) opines that incorporating several ethnic groups into a single political system means bringing together the basic problem of ethnic conflict as well. Nigeria's short life has been packed with successions of social changes. There has been the shift from regions to states, from rural to cities, and from agriculture to industries". The historical experiences of Nigeria are in different spheres and are numerous. They have been both gainful and painful. No wonder Joseph and Gillies (2010), observe that "nothing can be more tragic than the present season of uncertainty in which Nigeria has found itself. Indeed, in recent times, the country has

experienced an extraordinary and often surreal political drama seemingly scripted by a writer of fantasies".

Conscious attempt has been made to limit the historical experiences to themes this study deems achievable in tactile form and not the rhetoric. This is purely to give credence to conceptual clay forms that were produced and also to be able to achieve the objectives of this research. The historical themes considered for interrogation in conceptual ceramics are, Self-Sustenance (Pre Colonial Era), Foreign Rulership, Negotiation Into Slavery, Freedom From Oppressors, Agro-Economy, Crude Oil Monster, Forceful Leadership, They Said We are in Democracy, Egocentric Leaders, Societal Wreckages and Societal Uncertainty

Wilson (2007) expresses his notion about conceptual ceramic thus:

> I do regret that I could find no place in ceramics as I think, and this might sound arrogant, that ceramics would be a much richer place if the ceramic world not only included but welcomed and enjoyed artists like me who wish to take a broader view. To my mind there seems to be a self-imposed creative restriction that keeps ceramicists working within their comfort zone. The craft and skills involved in ceramics are vital and valid but I feel that the ceramic world is failing to take up the challenge to push beyond this level and use these amazing skills to explore the realms of thought, philosophy, spirituality, physicality, morality, ethnicity, and so much more. In other words, to bring ceramics towards the concerns of the fine artist where there is a wealth of academic criticism that pushes the artists to examine and expand their art. My contention is that ceramicists are working within a comfort zone and they hold a cosy attitude towards their work which not only limits but maintains their work, however skilful and beautiful, as 'little sister' to the grown-up artists. To my mind, what is needed here is a body of serious critical writing against which the ceramicists can sharpen their perceptions and push their thinking past skill and technique to a realm that will set them among the biggest and best in the entire art world. But where is this body of serious writing and is this an argument that is at last taking place in the public arena?

The motivation to undertake this study is borne out of the likeminded concern that is been shared by Wilson (2007), which is the zeal to move out of the comfort zone of utilitarian and traditional ceramics to interactive form of ceramics that is conceptual and interrogative.

Marshall (2011) observes that critical matters of politics, communication, language, cultural identity, economy and power are volatile issues for many societies. Conceptual ceramics is a

powerful vehicle for bringing attention to these ideas. Ceramics is accepted to comprise both the design aspect and the conceptual aspect. There is therefore no gain giving less emphasis to the conceptual aspect of ceramics, knowing too well the vital role it is capable of playing in conveying meaning.

The exploit of Ahuwan (2014) with the Hunkuyi-Experiment in ceramic art further validates the idea of this research in the bid to be different. The Hunkuyi-Experiment came about through the quest for identity excellence and enthused by a deep seated passion to make an impact in ceramic art. Ahuwan states that he was challenged to do something outside the norms of contemporary design practise, which he was accustomed to - that is leaving the comfort zone of his standard studio and going to engage in traditional pottery at a village called 'Hunkuyi'. The essence was towards incorporating components of traditional processes into his designs. Ahuwan (2014) concludes that his skills had been enhanced by the Hunkuyi experience with a higher command of creativity, perception, self -confidence and vision in his practice. According to him the experience consolidated all the qualities required to succeed as a creative clay artist. The Hunkuyi-Experiment had a significant impact on the search for Nigerian ceramic identity. Onuzulike (2009) reveals that taking a critical look at the Department of Fine Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, it was in 1974 that ceramics caught up the 'rebel-effect syndrome' which brought about critical thinking into clay work.

Alkali and Ahuwan (2014) also reveals that works produced by Ahuwan seem to adopt the ideological posture of the conceptual artist which seeks to accommodate the co-existence of traditional ceramics with its heterogeneous cultural approach. This approach one believes is adopted to keep pace with the revival of cultural activities being projected through art. Alkali further states that Ahuwan's pots have a built-in intellectual content contrary to many ceramic artists whose works skew towards commercial and practical purposes. His works

have tremendously contributed creative thoughts of much depth and have established theoretical framework by which they can be examined.

Majority of ceramic institutions and ceramists in Nigeria, have more preference for utilitarian ceramics than conceptual ceramics. Philosophies of some ceramic schools in Nigeria like the Ceramics Section, Department of Industrial Design, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, also reflects this preference. Conceptual ceramics thus became alien even among professionals in the field. This attitude affects the presence of ceramics at different competitions and exhibitions available in Nigeria and globally. For conceptual ceramics to be interrogative, it should be portraying an issue. This study has chosen to take a look at Nigeria's historical experiences to be presented in conceptual tactile form, with clay as medium of execution.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The emphasis on the utilitarian and industrial ceramics especially in Nigeria, no doubt is gainful to the society for household and industrial usage, but it narrows the limitless nature of ceramics, and lacks creative expression of ideas, techniques and style. Akali (2009) opines that "a potter who engages in the production of tableware or sanitary wares may not require any high level of education to do this, and his works may not carry any subject matter that could trigger discussion or investigation, and as such cannot be a pedagogical tool that may promote learning in some related fields". It is generally considered that conceptual ceramics which is globally recognised for its interrogational strength in commenting on social, historical and political issues have been taken for granted in Nigeria. Only a few ceramic artists have taken the style as a practice. These few artists adopt other forms of clay media to represent their research focus, however, none to the best of the researcher's knowledge has

utilised the *construction and deconstruction* of wares in form of slabs to interrogate Nigeria's Historical experiences in conceptual style.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to produce conceptual clay forms that portray Nigeria's historical experiences.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are:

1. to capture the execution of the ceramic art works in the form of conceptual thumbnail sketches,
2. to construct and deconstruct by throwing and altering clay to produce forms that will possess the characteristics of different selected themes,
3. to create finishing variance in the appearance of wares for visual appeal
4. to make compositions that depict different thematic expressions of historical experiences of Nigeria,
5. to discover and achieve a personal style that will evoke knowledge and create an intellectual property.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. in what manner should the conceptual tactile works be at first captured ?
2. how can construction and deconstruction be used to actualise the works for this study?
3. how can visual appeal be created in the appearance of the works ?

4. how can works depict the different thematic expressions of historical experiences of Nigeria ?
5. why is it necessary to portray Nigeria's historical experiences in conceptual clay forms

1.6 Justification of the Study

Globally, ceramics has come to be accepted as a field of study that embodies design, concept and industry. Therefore, it might be inappropriate to intentionally or unintentionally streamline ceramics to just an aspect. Onuzulike (2009) opines that in spite of clay's inherent ability to convey loads of art ideas, its widespread use in the production of utilitarian vessels for domestic use appears to have drawn attention away from its expressive potentials and conceptual qualities. This is as true in Nigeria as it may be elsewhere. This is perhaps why many art historians and writers, until recently, have not paid adequate attention to such works in clay.

Ceramic art practice today can be all inclusive, and at the same time can negate the norm for a more radical approach. That is why Egonwa (2014) asserts that, the production of ceramic wares is beginning to assume a new dimension being influenced by some creative ideologies such as installations and other explorative means, free from the normal utilitarian objects. Oloidi (2011) states that, "works produced in the studio areas of fine arts can serve social, political, religious therapeutic, historical, educative and generally humanistic needs. Works of fine art have made history more historical or factual, alive and convincing through pictorial and sculptural documentation of events or historical as well as notable religious character".

Oloidi further observes that no serious minded society takes her history for granted. This is because history is what makes a nation. Several literary documentations have been made

concerning the history of Nigeria. Portraying the same in visual tactile format becomes more meaningful especially in conceptual ceramic format. Such works may be strong statements on the nation's political, cultural, socio-economic and historic achievements. This academic enterprise, therefore, becomes essential as it focused on defining new methodologies for conceptualising, articulating, designing, producing, and exhibiting ceramics within the context of modern and contemporary art practice in Nigeria.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The uniqueness of conceptual clay forms in this study lends a voice on a variety of Nigerian historical issues where utilitarian ceramics cannot operate such as; *Self-Sustenance (Pre Colonial Era), Foreign Rulership, Negotiation Into Slavery, Freedom From Oppressors, Agro-Economy, Crude Oil Monster, Forceful Leadership, They Said We are in Democracy, Egocentric Leaders, Societal Wreckages* and *Societal Uncertainty;*

it develops an alternative way of producing conceptual ceramics forms by the process of construction and deconstruction of hollow cylindrical forms to interrogate Nigeria's historical experiences;

it establishes that while the production of ceramics such as tableware, sanitary ware and industrial ceramics are well preferred in the Nigeria context for the purposes of household and industrial usage, conceptual ceramics has the power to bring to limelight the creative prowess of a ceramist in commenting on issues of national interest such as*; Negotiation Into Slavery, F reedom From Oppressors, Agro-Economy, Crude Oil Monster, Forceful Leadership, They Said We are in Democracy, Egocentric Leaders, Societal Wreckages* and *Societal Uncertainty* .

1.9 Scope of the Study

This research is concerned with conceptual ceramics as a tool for portraying Nigeria's historical experiences. Eleven of the historical struggles determine the themes or titles suitable for exploration within permissible conceptual limits. They are, *Self-Sustenance (Pre Colonial Era)*, *Foreign Rule*, *Negotiation Into Slavery*, *Freedom From Oppressors*, *Agro-Economy*, *Crude Oil Monster*, *Forceful rule*, *They Said We are in Democracy*, *Egocentric Leaders*, *Societal Wreckages* and *Societal Uncertainty*. These works were installed according to their historical chronology of occurrence in an exhibition space at the department of Fine arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

This research adopts the frame work as exemplified in the works of renown ceramic artists like Abbas Ahuwan, Chris Echeta and Ozioma Onuzulike due to the fact that the ceramic works of the trio are unique, interrogational, making social commentaries and contributing to issues that invoke national debate. Their style of ceramics is within the confines of conceptual ceramics which this research has adopted.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The first part of this chapter reviews the primary material (clay) which serves as "moto" to this study. It presents the importance of the material in terms of conceptual handling. Secondly, this chapter reviews conceptual art and how conceptual art and its relevance have influenced the field of ceramics. Thirdly, some international conceptual ceramic artists, their mode of practice, some of their works, and how their works are able to interrogate issues have been examined. This is to show that the practice of conceptual ceramics is widely accepted. Finally, a review of the few exponents of conceptual ceramics in Nigeria, their mode of practice and their works have been carried out in this chapter. This chapter helped in developing the conceptual framework and the path to follow in achieving the objective of this research.

2.2 Clay

Reason (2010) describes clay as a fascinating material. Clay differs from the inelastic earths and fine sand because of its ability, when wet with the proper amount of water, to form a cohesive mass and to retain its shape when moulded. This quality is known as plasticity of clay. When heated to high temperatures, clay also partially melts, resulting in the tight, hard rock-like substance known as ceramic material (Peterson, 2011). Clay has been classified according to its use or its geology and location. There are however, two main types of clay; primary clay and secondary clay. Primary clay refers to those clays found in site and have not been transported by natural agencies to another location, from their original sites (Mathias,

2015). Primary clays are extracted from the parent rock and obtained in a comparatively pure state. The clay tends to be large in particle size and low in plasticity. China clay or kaolin is an example of primary clay. It maintains its whiteness even after firing due to less or free impurities that are capable of giving the clay its colour. Secondary clays are those which have been removed from their original place of formation by natural agencies like water, ice and wind, and have gradually settled in places like estuaries, lakes or rivers. Secondary clays are subjected to abrasion, frost action, leaching and other weathering agencies. As they move they collide and break into finer particles. Most of them contain impurities which are responsible for plasticity and colour of the clay. Clay also has the ability of accepting non plastic material in considerable amount and still be workable on the potter's wheel.

In favour of conceptual practise in clay, Peterson and Peterson (2013) observe that;

> Clay can be handled conceptually. It does not have to be shaped, glazed, or fired in the traditional ceramic vocabulary, though these processes are also as valid as they have been for millennia. Exhibitions devoted solely to unfired clay art have occurred. Conceptual artists have worked with the ephemeral dust or dissolved the wet mud. Clay can be presented as art in its dry state, in chunk or powder form. There are galleries that show clay along with other forms of sculpture; and clay, not just ancient clay, is shown in museums. Nevertheless, an unfortunate distinction is still being made between functional and non-functional work, with the latter commanding much higher prices. Art produced in clay today is strong and valid, and is crossing the boundaries of other art forms and media. As definition of art expands, clay work is earning growing recognition.

2.3 Conceptual Art

Eze and Ugochukwu (2014) state that art practised after the modern period questioned the characteristics of art that is based on aesthetics. Conceptual art and other forms of art were adopted as the postmodernism mode of expression. Janson and Jason (2006) in Eze and Ugochukwu (2014) explain that conceptual art is a creative experience. The idea itself is a work of art which can exist without any visual object other than words. They hold that the object should be eliminated leaving only the idea or information as conceptual art. They

further posit that conceptual art can also include art that is entirely visual, the conceptual aspect is emphasized more than the aesthetics. Conceptualists regard the idea as supreme. Caroun (2014) opines that Conceptual Art" is a contemporary form of artistic representation, in which a specific concept or idea, often personal, complex and inclusive, takes shape in an abstract, nonconforming manner, based upon a negation of aesthetic principles. Caroun (2014) further states that in conceptual art, relationship between artist, artwork and viewer has been transformed. A work of "Conceptual Art" is not a mere narration of nature in its many forms; the artist, through personal inference, utilizes the available elements of expression to depict not only the nature of objects, but often political, social and technological subjects as well. In many cases the spectator, and at times the artist themselves are integral parts of a conceptual artwork and its basic concept.

2.4 Conceptualism in Ceramics

Ceramics has a long historical background and it followed a rugged path after the 19th century industrial revolution in Britain. Ceramic art is not only decorative and of plastic value anymore, it catches a conceptual language with the works of contemporary artists. Ceramic artists during the Postmodern period produced conceptual works by interpreting traditional and historical items. Ozer (2012) suggests that in the 20th century, ceramic art has been accepted as an artistic discipline. Conceptual art works were created by contemporary ceramic artists' interpretations. In ceramic art history, conceptual art has an important place because it enables ceramic art works that were opposed to the traditional and the modernist style. When we look at the relationship between conceptualism and ceramic art, we see that the structural features of ceramic material support conceptual expressions.

2.5 International Conceptual Ceramic Artists

The contemporary survey of ceramic development globally, shows a growing attempt by ceramists to make ceramic a highly individualistic art such as painting, sculpture and other forms of art that seek to express and convey shades of meaning both of the artist and the public (McCready in Alkali 2009). The international conceptual ceramic artists presented in this study used clay in collaboration with other materials to create aspects of their art works. At other instances they are involved in interrogating social transgression, principally in conceptually provocative contexts. The materials and methods of approach adapted to achieve their goals have been of influence on this research.

2.5.1 Bonnie Kemske

Bonnie Kemske comes to her sculptural work with a diverse arts background. As a young woman she trained in modern dance and ballet in New York City. This training and the sense of body awareness gained from it have been a consistent aesthetic influence throughout her life. Her undergraduate degree is in religion, her interest being in the expression of the spiritual in secular art. This led her to the Zen Buddhist art form of Chanoyu and Japanese tea ceremony, which she studied in Kyoto and London. Chanoyu is a highly developed and complex art form that centers on the preparation and drinking of thick green tea. The tea is served in a ceramic bowl, which the guest cradles with both hands as he or she drinks. The tactile qualities of the bowl are integral to its appreciation and the handling of the bowl creates an intimacy between host, bowl, and guest, inducing a self-reflective calm. This tactile moment, the moment of drinking tea from what is often an irregular and sometimes rough-surfaced bowl, has been the impetus for Bonnie's work throughout her professional studio career and in her PhD and post-doctoral research (Kemske, 2000).

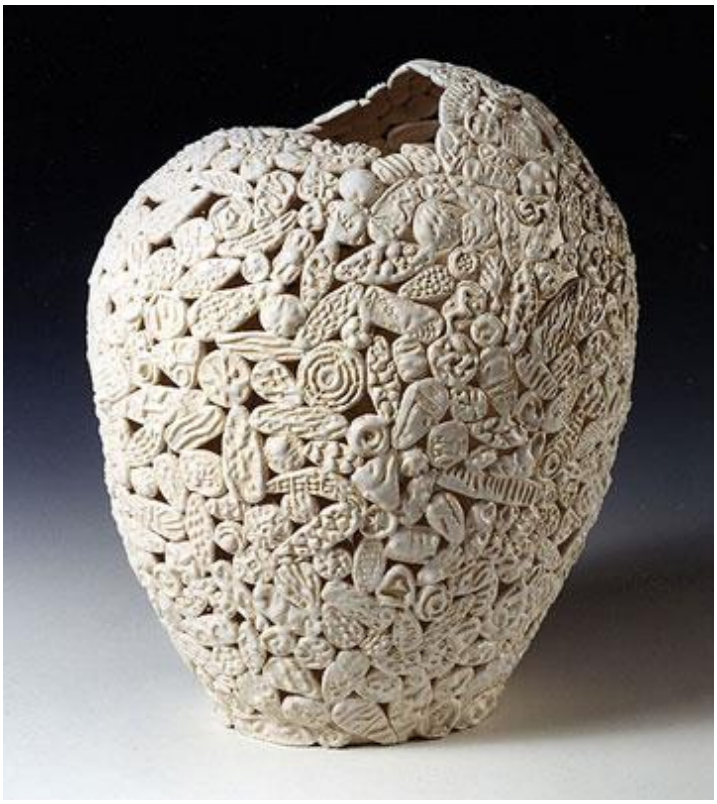


Figure 2.1: "White Light" by Kemske (2000)
Source: http://www.bonniekemske.com/portfolio_archive_encl_01.html



Figure 2.2: "The Audience" by Kemske (2000)
Sorce: http://www.bonniekemske.com/portfolio_archive_roul2.html

2.5.2 Richard Notkins

American ceramist Richard Notkin born 1948, studied at the Kansas City Art Institute, earning a Bachelor of Fine and Arts in 1970. He is well known for his socio-critical tile mural 'The Gift' and his sculptural re-interpretations of the Yixing teapot, for example his 'Curbside Teapot' of 1986. He has won several awards, including National Endowment for the Visual Arts Fellowships in 1981 and 1988, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award in 1991 and a Jerry Metcalf Foundation Artist Fellowship in 1999 (Ceramics today, 2015). Richard Notkin, is one of the pioneer artists of contemporary ceramic art that create conceptual works. According to Ozer (2012), Richard Notkins interprets the danger of nuclear war in his work "Passages" (see figure 2.3). Passages compose of two works called The Gift and Legacy. The Gift was produced by the 4x4 cm sized saggar method and coloured by obtaining black, gray and white tones. It composes of 1700 ceramic tiles. An image of mushroom cloud emerges when it is seen from a distance. However, when it is examined closely, images of war symbols are seen on each tile.



Figure 2.3: "Passages", by Richard Notkin (2004)
Source: http://www.ceramicstoday.com/potw/notkin.htm

2.5.3 Mutlu Başkaya Yağcı

Mutlu Başkaya Yağcı was born in Aydın in 1962. She studied ceramic and graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Hacettepe University Ankara, Turkey in 1992. She completed her masters degree at her alma mater in 1997. Başkaya Yağcı has had three solo exhibitions and participated in national and international group exhibitions. Her works can be seen in several public and private collections such as the collection of Şeker Bank in Ankara, the collection of Rafina Municipality in Greece and the collection of Alberto Ruiz in Spain. Başkaya Yağcı continues to teach at Hacettepe University (Yagci, 2015). In Turkey, Mutlu Başkaya is one of the young generation ceramic artists that add conceptual expressions into their works. Ozer (2012) explains that Mutlu Baskaya introduces a different aspect to Turkish ceramic art with

her criticisms and satires, her serial called ‘Umut’ (hope) (see figure 2.4) combines form and concept. “The work explains unhappiness that is caused by daily politics over people,that may turn into hope with little dreams when thought optimistically. In the forms created with this thought, ladder is the symbol of hope; however; when we feel pessimistic it talks about ambiguity and symbolizes the way from light to dark”.



Figure 2.4: ‘Umut’(hope) by Mutlu Başkaya (2007)
Source:
http://www.turkishpaintings.com/index.php?p=34&l=1&modPainters_artistDetailID=2528

A review of some conceptual ceramic artists shows that the practise is recognised and practised worldwide without prejudice. The manner of approach as reflected in the works of the artists suggests that conceptual ceramics, has no rule that confines it. It is a freelance practise and subject to the philosophy of the artist. Some ceramic artists in Nigeria have also welcomed the idea of conceptual ceramics and have explored it and made social impact out of it.

2.6 Nigerian Conceptual Ceramic Artists

Alkali (2009) reveals the genesis of conceptual ceramics in Nigeria thus:

> The contemporary ceramic practitioners in Nigeria came out of their individual shells and formed two professional bodies, namely, the Ceramic Association of Nigeria (CERAN) and the Craft Potters Association of Nigeria (CEPAN). Informed by the objectives of the association which to promote the advancement of ceramics and allied sciences as well as promote and maintain cordial relationship among its members, these associations went on to plan the first national ceramic exhibition which was held at the British Council under the umbrella of the Craft Potters Association of Nigeria with membership drawn from all over Nigeria and Britain. The exhibition was historic in several ways. First it was going to chart the way forward for all practising potters in Nigeria. It was going to determine the direction most potters were going to follow in their productive endeavours. It was informative, corrective, inspiring and revealing. As it is common with all exhibitions, one of the aims was to showcase their works and make quick business through the sale of their works. Works featured in this exhibition could be classified in two; Traditional (conventional) ceramics and the post-modernist ceramics from which the non-pot ceramics concept evolved.

The ceramic artists featured below are Nigerians. The manner of their ceramic art works are mostly installations. They use their ceramic forms to illustrate succinct messages for humanity. According to Okpe (2007), it is important to mention outstanding ceramic artists like Abbas Ahuwan, Christ Echeta, Tony Umunna and Ozioma Onuzulike who are working outside of pottery's rooted tradition of creating mere utilitarian objects. For the purpose of this study, some conceptual ceramic works of Abbas Ahuwan, Chris Echeta and Ozioma Onuzulike have been reviewed for discussion as conceptual ceramic works. To be able to do justice to the discussion of their works, it will be pertinent to have some basic information about them.

2.6.1 Abbas Magaji Ahuwan

Ahuwan, presented by Jari (2014) as one of three treasures in the Zaria Art School, was born in 1947 to Magaji Ahuwan at Sakwak Bajju, Kamrun District, Zango Kataf Local Government, Kaduna State, Nigeria. His carreer was kick started at the Sudan Interior Mission (S.I.M) School, Madakiya in 1955. Subsiquently he transfered to practising School, Kagoro, before going to the S.I.M Senior Primary (Adachip) Kagoro in 1961 (Azi et'al, 2015). According to Onuzulike (2010), Professor Abbas Ahuwan is a ceramics lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University who has created an impressive body of work in the traditional mode, which he calls "Hunkuyi" experiment – a tribute to the Hunkuyi traditional pottery community where he worked closely with one of the master potters called Mallam Idi Hunkuyi (now late). Ahuwan had his Higher School Certificate at Abingdon, Berkshire, United kingdom. After the completion of his HSC, Ahuwan was given a sponsorship by Michael O'Brien to West Surrey College of Art and Design, where he specialised in ceramics and graduated with a 2:1 honours degree in June, 1972. He also obtained a Masters degree in ceramics from the United States and was introduced to American ceramics. Ahuwan was confronted with a pallet of mixed cultures with a high degree of freedom. It became clear to Ahuwan that having been trained in two alien cultures, he needed to develop a philosophy which relates to his own cultural background in order to avoid any contradiction on the way forward and this background formed the theoretical framework of the Hunkuyi-experiment (Ahuwan, 2014). He was the president of Ceramics Researchers Association of Nigeria from 2001-2010 and the current editor in chief of the Ashakwu journal of Ceramics.

Jari (2014) states that "the works of Ahuwan are fully constituted by indigenous content. He uses the hand-building technique and fires his wares using the open-firing technique where cornhusk, cornstalk, cow dung, firewood or sawdust is used as fuel. Jari states that Mallam

Mohammed Idi, a Hunkuyi potter, taught Ahuwan how to employ these Nigerian Pottery techniques".

In analysing Ahuwan's works, Jari (2016) reveals thus:

> that the *Kim Kim* in fig. 2.7 page 23, is the most fascinating ceramic art form Ahuwan had ever produced. The work is richly embellished with a variety of elements taken from traditional Nigerian pottery. The *Kim Kim* is provided with three stands as if to emphasize the point that it was meant to be on display. Some of the traditional elements adopted by Ahuwan are the several studs that form part of the decoration. The arrows on the *Kim Kim* were actually the shape of the windows which Ahuwan saw on the Abuja Pottery House. The overall effect of all these elements is the ambiance the *Kim Kim* possesses as an antique. The sculptural-ceramic forms of Ahuwan share a few elements with the Kim Kim. They are created and fired under the same methods. The differences between them however, are many. They do not necessarily assum the shape of gourds or pots and they do not have utilitarian value, except aesthetical value. They take different shapes inspired by a variety of things including animals like tortoises or decorated gowns. Their surface treatment is intended to fascinate the viewer through the intricate display of textural motifs, tones and hues. Jari also describes the work in fig. 2.6 as a creature with two heads upon which three antennas each have grown. It rests on three studs suggestive of its limbs. There are also two projections, which could suggest the tail of this strange creature. The linear inscisions are in some areas short slashes while in the other areas, they appear to be crosses encased in circles. The form may look alive but weird. The variety in Ahuwan's works, captures the essence of his creativity.



Figure 2.5: Abbas Ahuwan at work in his local studio at Hunkuyi Village, Zaria
Source: The Researcher



Figure 2.6: Work by Abbas Ahuwan (1998)
Source: The Researcher



Figure 2.7: "Kimkim" by Ahuwan A. (1989)
Source: http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/503370?=&imgno=1&tabname=object-information

2.6.2 Chris Echeta

Born in 1954, Echeta graduated in Fine and Applied Arts, (B.A. Hons), majoring in ceramics at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1979. He specialized in the same area in his M.F.A. in 2001. He proceeded to do a Ph.D in Art History and graduated in 2011 from University of Nigeria Nnsuka. After his first degree, Echeta taught ceramics at the Auchi Polytechnic from 1980 and until 1985 when he resigned to go into private ceramic studio practice. Echeta practised ceramics for approximately two decades before he decided to get back to academics in 2003 with the Cross River University of Technology where he lectured at the Department of Visual Arts and Technology. He worked there for nine and half years before joining Federal University Lafia where he is currently an Associate Professor. He takes advantage of morphology of forms which he achieves through slab method of production. He achieves his surface quality with the imprint of jute bag material by rolling the slabs on the surface of the material. He goes further to enrich the body of his works by employing engobe designs. Echeta's works are mostly installational conceptual ceramics. Onuzulike (2008) reveals that over the last two decades, Chris Echeta has produced a large corpus of works, most of them pursuing social themes and satirizing poor leadership and the consequent suffering of the common man. Echeta's thematic concerns can be traced to his experiences of the brutal Civil War (which brought his early education to a halt from 1967 to 1970). The work of art, the “Sacking of a Generation” (Figure 2.8) dares to challenge both the 'shallowness' of policy formulation and the glaring lack of commitment at the implementation level. Were it not so, this string of humanity would not have been forcibly uprooted from their ancestral inheritance forever. The metaphorical images draw attention to the artist and his art as well as the social relevance of his works (Echeta, 2013).



Figure 2.8:"Sacking of a Generation" Terracotta with engobe designs, metal/wire, plastic
Chris Echeta (2006-2012)



Figure 2.9: "Aso Rock: One Question Each for the President"
Chris Echeta (2007)



Figure 2.10: "We Have Come to the Village Square for Peace"
Chris Echeta (2007)

2.6.3 Ozioma Onuzilike

Ozioma Onuzilike was born on 17th February 1972. He hails from Achi in Enugu State, Nigeria. He is a Professor of Ceramics and Art History, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. With a BA in Fine and Applied Arts (ceramics major), an MFA in ceramic art and a Ph.D. in the history of contemporary African art, Onuzulike teaches studio art, theory and criticism. Over the years, he has engaged himself not only in studio practice but also in the history, theory, and criticism of visual art production and presentation. His studio practice has been concerned with the production of new table ware designs and the use of ceramic elements in conceptual mixed-media sculptures that interrogate issues of armed conflicts, political violence (including imperialism) and human vulnerability. Onuzulike has also applied his skills in poetry. His current art historical project

is a book on the history of modern ceramics in West Africa in the 20th Century (with a focus on Nigeria and Ghana).

As a clay artist, Onuzulike discovered that the many ways to work in clay relate very much to violent acts and to the troubles in many parts of the world. What is important for him in his work is to make it arrest people's attention and convey his repulsion for violence and man's inhumanity to man. According to Okoli (2014), works from Onuzulike's suyascape Project were first exhibited in 2003 at the French cultural Center in Lagos and reached their peak in 2008, when it was exhibited at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine USA. Onuzulike's studio research dwells on wheel-throwing and hand-modelling abilities, especially as a means of generating forms that are then experimentally altered to arrive at new ceramic designs which include innovative use of designing as a strategy for optimum kiln-space management and fuel economy, decoration of ceramic forms using improvised turning and scraping tools for new aesthetic looks especially in table wares and expansion of the conceptual possibilities in ceramic art through mixed media strategies. Ikwuemesi (2001) asserts that unlike most other younger artists who would easily fizzle out at glowing accolades, Onuzulike has held on tenaciously to his vocation, as he continues to search for new idioms to enrich his vocabulary in the perpetual dialogue with life, which art represents.

Okpe (2007) further reveals the philosophy behind Onuzulike' works:

> The dehumanization of the human being through global events of armed conflict, natural disasters, genocide, etc, forms the pivot through which Ozioma's works swing, working mainly in clay and mixed media in series making social commentaries. Even in the mixed media experimentation there is a diversity of composition of figurines in terms of number and positioning within the group, and it is close to conceptual art in terms of material, temporality, and specificity of siting. His global subject matter includes works such as *Tsunami Yam Bodies*, *Casualties, Refugees*, and *Genocide*. Ozioma discusses the influences that have shaped his current studio practice and relates his titles to the turmoil around the world and to the

ceramic processes of firing, burning and roasting. However Onuzulike sees these as the beginning of his exploration of ceramics without borders.



Figure 2.11: "National Cake I", terracotta, metal and wood by Onuzulike
Source: Ozioma Onuzulike (2003)



Figure 2.12: "Suyascape", terracotta, metal and wood, by Onuzulike
Source: Ozioma Onuzulike (2003)



Figure 2.13: "Casualties:*Victims of Social Unrest I"*, Terracotta, Cpper Wire, Aluminium, Binding Rope, by Onuzulike O. (2000)
Source: http://www.interpretingceramics.com/issue008/articles/18.htm



Figure 2.14: "Bleeding Head", ceramic, by Onuzulike O. (2003)

The conceptual work of art *"Suyascape"* (Figure 2.12) looks beyond the aesthetics of the formal qualities of a 'suyascape'. It holds a strong metaphor for human dignity. When people gather at barbecues to buy and eat grilled meat, it is a metaphorical gathering for the celebration of human dignity – a silent recognition that animals should rather be killed, hacked, sliced and roasted in fire and not human beings. This is a direct reaction to the fact that we have witnessed gory sights in many parts of Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world when people committed genocide or pogrom against others or engaged in wars and violent conflicts. "Casualties: *Victims of Social Unrest I* " (Figure 2.13) looks beyond physical wars and terrorism. Onuzulike also began to see the idea of casualties in a new light. According to Onuzulike, the bad roads across Africa generate lots of uncounted casualties on daily bases. Victims or casualties usually end up in mass graves or some ill-equipped orthopaedic hospitals. There are also lots of political casualties-those who are rigged out of elections or eliminated entirely by assassination.

Okpe (2007) states that the constant experimentation and consequent further development of contemporary ceramic art in Nigeria, which now interrogates sculpture, continues alongside the production of traditional pottery typified by utilitarian wares produced, and indeed needed, purely for domestic use in daily life in rural areas. Traditional handcrafted pottery rooted in the functional, therefore, seems to provide the impetus to artists in their search for new intricacies in the manipulation of the primary material of clay to achieve heightened aesthetic appeal and further interpretations. The works of Nigerian ceramic artists as reviewed has given this study the necessary premise on which to operate. Though the works of the artists differ in what they profess, they are all ceramic art at a stage and conceptual at another. The conceptual ceramics of these exponents are mostly installations. Speight and Toki (2014) reveal that installation continues to intrigue ceramic artists today, as well as offer

them a wider opportunity for self-expression than single pieces. Installation has the ability to move ceramics out of the kitchen and into the art world.

Onuzulike's conceptual works are inspired by his experience of man's inhumanity to man and the troubles bedevilling man all over the world. This can be seen as he attempts to represent his ideas in clay. Echeta's conceptual works interrogate political issues that have to do with poor leadership which has subjected the masses to untold hardship. Ahuwan on the other hand uses his ceramic works for cultural identity as exemplified by the "Humkuyi exploit". This is due to the fact that he studied in foreign lands and cannot afford to adopt foreign cultures to the detriment of his indigenous culture. The main idea gained by this research from these ceramic artists is the need to make a mark in the specialisation by not limiting oneself to the everyday ceramics techniques.

For the actualisation of Nigeria's historical experiences as stated in this study, conceptual ceramics was explored for generating clay forms. Ruskin (2016) defines form as one of the seven elements of design. At its most basic, a form is a three dimensional figure as opposed to shape which is two dimensional and flat. In a broader sense, forms in art mean the whole of visible elements and the way these elements are united. In this context, form allows viewers to mentally capture the work, understand it and attempt to analyze it. It is the visible element of a piece, independent of its meaning. From a conceptual ceramist perspective, Echeta (2013) asserts that form in ceramics production gives the clay the ability to draw attention to itself.

A critical look at the works of the Nigerian conceptual ceramics trio, their style of works have strongly influenced this study in one way or the other but at the same time, this study is able to stand out in the area of subject matter, material usage and method of production. This study dwells its focus on different themes of Nigeria's historical experiences and captures

them in tactile conceptual form. In the aspect of production method, construction and deconstruction of clay was adopted and this gave a unique outcome of forms. Lastly, in terms of material usage, this study attempted the use of iron filings in clay to bring about variations in the surface quality of the works as a result of speckle effects of iron fillings. The surface quality was later further enhanced by the adoption of reduction firing.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

"Art, like traditional research, is a form of documentation that collects information and builds upon knowledge" (Byrd, 2014). One advantage of art as a form of research is its ability to present a material that is more evocative rather than denotative, unlike traditional research. This may lead to further questions, interpretations, and explorations creating a more complex picture of the information (Eisner in Byrd, 2014). First, as the Artist, one is involved in creating a work of art. Second, as the Researcher, one may explore various avenues of research. The subject matter as well as art creation may represent a form of research (Byrd, 2014). This study adopted the studio based research approach for convenience in the actualisation of the aim and objectives of this research through a concept of throwing and alteration of clay forms. Studio based research is occasionally referred to as *studio practice, practice-led research, arts-based research* (ABR), *arts-informed research, practice-based research*. According to Sullivan (2005), one of the best articulators of the theory of visual arts practice, "the imaginative and intellectual work undertaken by artists is a form of research". Apparently this means that the exploratory engagements, the social and cultural inquiry the visual arts have, the critical, creative investigations that occur in studios, galleries, on the internet, in community spaces, and in other places where artists work are legitimate forms of research grounded in art practice.

This chapter highlights the materials and methods that were used to undertake this research. The different themes that build up to the body of work for this research were presented in the form of sketches to provide guide into the execution of the actual conceptual ceramic art works. Conventional methods of collecting and processing of material was observed. Throwing and alteration were employed for exploring human and other stylised forms in clay. Other forms of manipulation were carried out on the basic hollow cylindrical shapes to give credibility to the conceptualisation. Hopper (2015) asserts that the usual way artists develop their work is to find some form of inspiration, concept, vision or idea and proceed through several working stages to realize or resolve the idea in its final, concrete art form. The actualisation of the conceptual ceramics forms for this study was made possible by observing some conventional processes, and some relatively unconventional processes that have been established by conceptual ceramic artists in their practise. This have to do with inclusion of foreign materials alongside clay in the execution of their art works for dipper conceptuality. In like manner, iron fillings were blended into clay for the purpose of creating variance in the wares for colour appeal, to strengthen the surface quality of the clay forms and to create conceptual meaning. First, the different ideas of works were presented in drawings.

3.2 Preliminary Drawings

Tailor (2000) asserts that there are visible differences in the conceptual attitudes which shape modern ceramic artists, some work with a preconceived idea, while others start work with a free mind. In the first instance, the artist is giving form to an idea that is already fixed in his mind whereas in the second instance, the artist is letting the medium guide him. Tailor (2000) further states that these two dimensions, the technique of production and the conceptual attitudes, are not exclusive to each other but may overlap. The preconceived idea of this study was presented first in drawings. The drawings express the first stage of the articulation of the

themes of historical expiriences. Hodge (2008) reveals that “sketching is an excellent way to quickly explore concepts. According to him, you can sketch for one or two hours and work out multiple possible solutions to the design problem at hand. This is an essential step in the design process. It will save you time to work through concepts on paper”. Drawings in this study were done basically with Rotary black ink pen and they form the initial impetus for excursion into the realms of conceptualism. The drawings served as basic guide. There were either major or minor differences between the drawings and the actual production as work progressed. The different themes presented in drawings might not be closely sequential in the way they actually happened in reality historically. This study is more inspired by themes as deemed possible for conceptualising within the ability of the researcher in clay forms.



Plate 3.1: "*Self-Sustenance (Traditional Pre Colonial Technolog)*" Preliminary Drawing I, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plate 3.1 above illustrates an example of the early indigenous technologies and craft that sustained the people of Nigeria. It shows a local storing hut for keeping of agricultural produce and a living hut. In front of the two huts are stylised human forms in sitting position, busy with round containers that could either be calabashes or pots. These sustained the people in their domestic needs. The different line drawings were achieved in tactile form by the throwing and alteration method of production.



Plate 3.2: “Foreign Rule” Preliminary Drawing II, ink, 2016

Source: The Researcher

Plate 3.2 above shows an illustrated foreign rulership over the people. It is assumed that a leader is always in front depending on the direction of ‘traffic’. A whiskered human figure with a hat is in front of three other human forms that are indicative of traditional rulers. Doted effects as seen on the followers in the drawing was a deliberate attempt to show variation as a result of iron filings that was blended into clay.



Plate 3.3: “Negotiation into Slavery” Preliminary Drawing III, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plate 3.3 above illustrates the negotiation of Nigeria people into slavery. Human figures in cylindrical forms tied one after the other are represented. The negotiators could be recognised as figures with a hat and long moustache, and the other with a cloth tied on the head standing and bargaining. This drawing portrays humans because basically the form of humans can be generated from manipulated cylindrical forms that are produced on the potter’s wheel.



Plate 3.4: “Freedom from Oppressors” Preliminary Drawing IV, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plat 3.4 above shows people in the middle in jubilant mood, waving their hands as in a thanksgiving manner. Two figures are shown with the usual hat and moustache representing the colonial masters, standing at both ends with hands folded in dismay. This drawing illustrates freedom from the hand of oppressors. The forms of the figures also show the emphasis on thrown cylinders. Doted effects on some of the images is supposedly created as a result of the addition of iron filings. The use of the doted effect cuts across almost all the drawings.

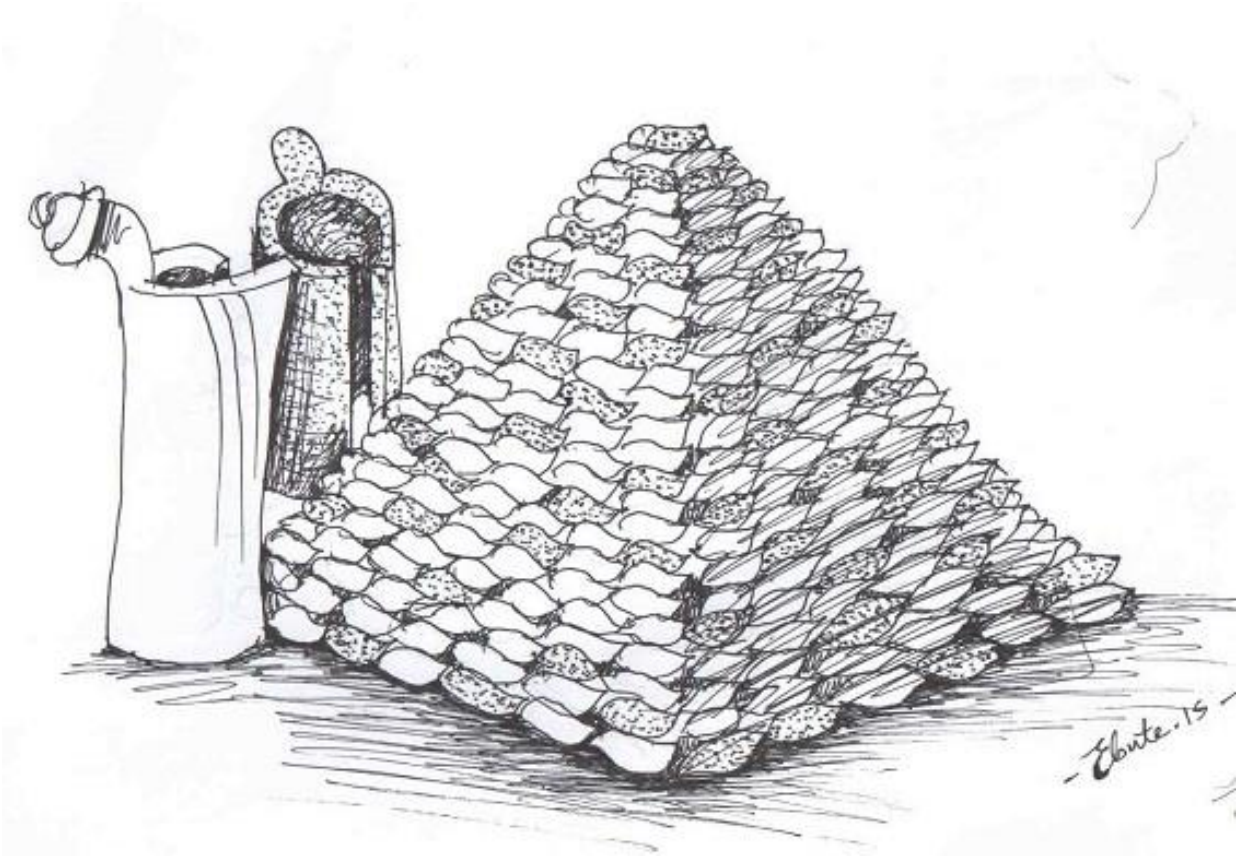


Plate. 3.5: "Agro-Economy" Preliminary Drawing V, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plate. 3.5 above shows two human figures standing proudly beside a pyramid with one in 'baban riga' regalia. This suggestively means that affluence in that era was based on an idividual's level of involvement in agricultural venture. This portrays the era of agro-economy when agriculture was the main stay of Nigeria's economy. This has been represented by the popular groundnut pyramid of ancient Kano.



Plate. 3.6: “Crude oil Monster” Preliminary Drawing VI, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plate. 3.6 above exemplifies people in “agbada” regalia surrounding and gesticulating in a proud manner to the barrels of oil in their midst - as if to say we have arrived. This illustrates the era of crude oil that led to the ill-informed neglect of a vibrant agricultural economy.

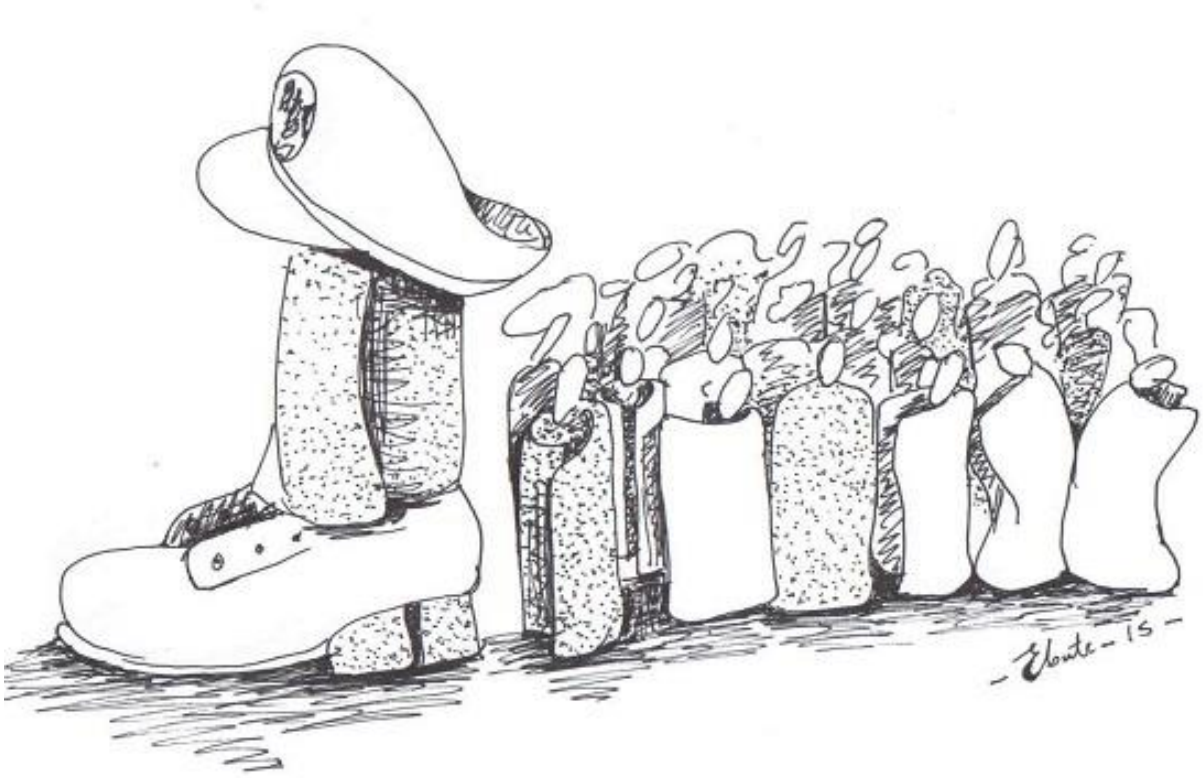


Plate 3.7: “Forceful Leadership” Preliminary Drawing VII, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plate 3.7 above shows a military boot and cap while human figures are standing behind in seemingly different unsettled postures. This illustrate the snatching of power and the enforcement of military rule which clearly shows that it is anti-people from their reactions.

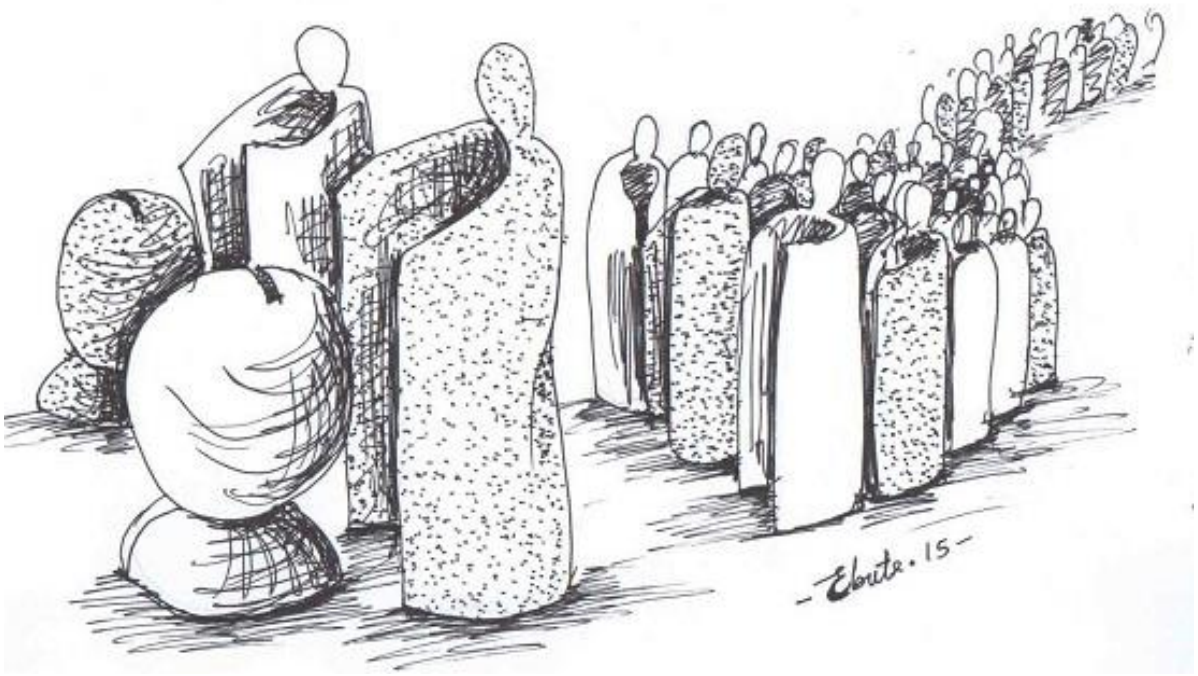


Plate 3.8: "They Say we are in Democracy" Preliminary Drawing VIII, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

The illustration in plate 3.8 above shows people on queues patiently waiting to perform their civic duty of voting for the next person to lead them. Two round pots are portrayed signifying ballot boxes, in which the people's votes are cast. This illustrates the era of democracy where people decide on whom they want in power.

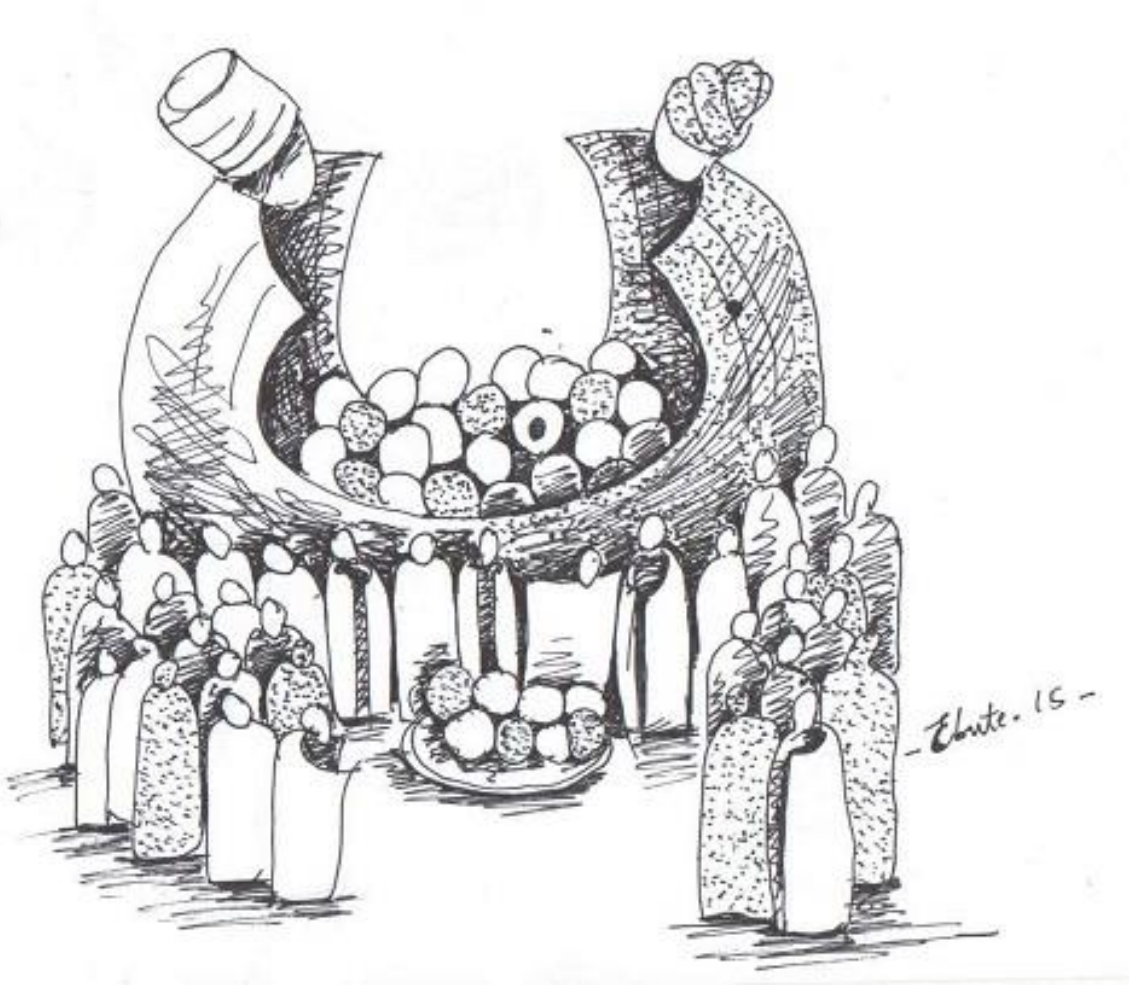


Plate 3.9: “Egocentric Leaders” Preliminary Drawing IX, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plate 3.9 above is an illustration that shows two figures claiming far more resources while the majority of people are left with far less resources to wallow in penury. This is a case of corruption as evident in a Nigerian democratic setting.

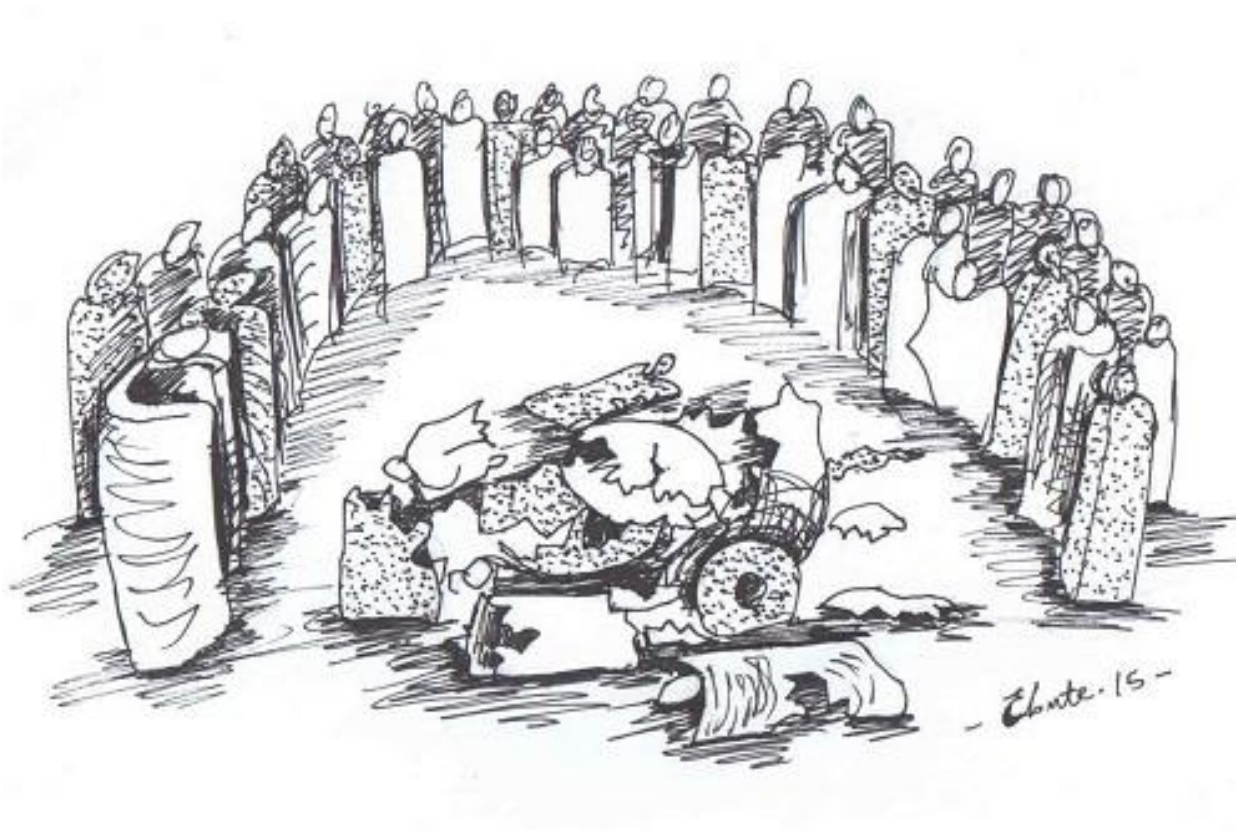


Plate 3.10: “Societal Wreckage” Preliminary Drawing X, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plate 3.10 above shows people surrounding a wreckage which also include human wreckages in a sober mood, perhaps the aftermath of a bomb blast as a result of insecurity .



Plate 3.11: "Societal Uncertainty" Preliminary Drawing XI, ink, (2016)

Source: The Researcher

Plate 3.11 above shows a sliced staggered pot in the middle and three human forms trying to hold it up to avoid total collapse while in the midst of wreckages. Others are in an unsettled state watching whether the pot will either become stable or perhaps fall. This illustrates the uncertain state of Nigeria in the midst of ills of various magnitude. The leaders are trying in their little way to save the situation while the masses are watching in a fix.

3.3 Materials for the Execution of the Works

The fact that secondary clay possesses the requisite qualities to retain whatever shape and handling meted to it as a result of plasticity (see plate 3.12 page 47) , makes the material an indispensable one for the actualisation of this study. More so that when it is exposed to heat by the process of firing, it becomes permanent and ready to withstand the test of time. A

second use of secondary clay is in the form of ‘slurry’. This is a very thick mixture of clay (see plate. 3.13 below) that served as a binder between the wares and appendages. Iron filings (see plate. 3.14 below) on the other hand, as an auxiliary material for this research, possesses the ability to bring about differences in the appearance of clay because of its rustic nature when in contact with wet clay, air and heat. In addition, when iron filings in clay are fired to maturing temperature, it forms enhanced speckle effect in the clay body resulting in unique appearances.



Plate 3.12: Ball Clay in semi- solid state
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.13: Clay Paste
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.14: Iron filings
Source: Researcher

3.4 Collecting and Processing of Iron Filings

Iron filings were procured from engineering workshop at Randa Kano, Zaria, Kaduna State. This material could have been obtained from any other engineering workshop elsewhere. The choice of Zaria is due to the fact that the researcher found himself there at a period of time and decided to take advantage of the proximity to the worshop. The material was obtained in semi powder form. It was subjected to sieving (See plate 3.15 below) with mesh of hole size of 1.18 millimeter to remove particles of unwanted materials (See plate 3.16 below) that would have been injurious or obstructive to the flow of work.



Plate 3.15: Sieving Iron Filings
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.16: Unwanted particles and materials sieved out of iron filings
Source: Researcher

3.5 Blending Clay and Iron Filings

Kneading of the clay before throwing was carried out according to the norm of pressing against a solid surface while rolling for consistency and hitch free production on the potter's wheel. Kneading iron filings into clay was different from the norm. The softness of clay was taken into consideration to allow for desired amount of iron filings into the clay to avoid unnecessary tearing during throwing as a result of stiffness. Iron filings was poured on a table (See plate 3.17 below) while clay was kneaded on top to allow for intake of the material (See plate 3.18 below). The aggregate sizes of iron filings posed no risk to the potters hands during production as far as proper sieving of the material is carried out to remove harmful objects as shown in plate. 3.16 above before production.



Plate 3.17: Sprinkling Iron Filings on the Table
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.18: Kneading Iron Filings into clay
Source: Researcher

3.6 Construction on the Potter's Wheel

Two basic shapes were relied on for actualising the forms desired. These are cylindrical shapes and bowl shapes (See plate 3.19 below). The rudiment of throwing on the wheel were dully followed, these include: centering, bulging hole, opening, pulling into cylinder and shaping into desired shape. The size or height of ware to be thrown determines the size of clay to be used. The choice of cylinder was because the study was centred on historical social events and people made up these events. From an artistic perspective of this study, the human figure irrespective of gender is likened to cylindrical shape (see plate. 3.20 below) and this has informed the choice of the shape to represent humans. This shape cuts across almost all the art works produced.



Plate 3.19: Throwing on the potter's Wheel
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.20: Constructed Cylinders for manipulation into human-like forms
Source: Researcher

3.7 Alteration (deconstruction) of Forms Produced from Throwing

Onuzulike (2009) opines that, throwing in this case is not an end in itself but a spring board to achieving forms that can be further manipulated. Cylindrical and bowl forms thrown on the potter's wheel gave a convenient platform on which to explore. Alteration was carried out in the following fashion:

- Cutting
- Bending
- Beating
- fixing of appendages
- Water pouring

Cutting, as a process of alteration of form in this study was the beginning stage. It enabled opening up of the cylinders for further manipulation. This was usually done at the point when the ware was immediately taken off the wheel. This is because, there is unique effect of cutting at the very wet stage than cutting at leather hard stage. Cutting was achieved by the use of the needle tool (See plate 3.21 page 54).

Bending, as an alteration process was aimed at achieving different body gestures according to the theme of a particular work. This was important because it set the tone of each work, whether in a sober, happy, proud and anxious mood. This was carried out by the hand and sometimes with the help of a wooden beater. (See plate 3.22 page 54).

Beating, was carried out at leather hard stages when the wares were to be further altered into shapes that were not envisaged, but became necessary at some point. This was done with the use of the wood beating tool (See plate 3.23 page 55). Forcing into shape with the wood beating tool at leather hard stage was just the ideal thing to do at that stage as anything otherwise could have resulted in tearing or breaking of the ware.

Fixing of Appendages: Appendages were attached to all cylinders and bowls that appeared as human forms. It is relevant because it further portrays the wares as human forms. This process was carried out by slicing slabs with a knife and attaching the slabs to the forms with the aid of slurry clay (See plate 3.24 page 55).



Plate 3.21: Cutting a cylinder immediately after throwing
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.22: Bending process
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.23: Beating a ware into desired shape
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.24: Using Clay Slurry to attach appendages
Source: Researcher

3.8 Execution of Works

The experiences featured a collection of data from literature that were garnered during the period of research in terms of design, ideas, and themes. Resource material for collection of relevant research information are the print media such as, newspapers, magazines, photography, the internet, libraries (Department of Industrial Design, Department of Fine Arts, Kashim Ibrahim Library, (K.I.L) Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. and private collections), books, journals, e-journals, theses, dissertations, seminars, and lectures. Information gathered aided in the stylization of the clay works in conceptual manner and this gave birth to different ways in which the works were produced. This study has been influenced one way or the other by the mode of works of Abbas Ahuwan, Chris Echeta, and Ozioma Onuzulike whose conceptual ceramic works are mostly terracotta.

The uniqueness in Abbas Ahuwan's style of practise has influenced this study in attempt to be different. Shrouded in uniqueness, from his choice of studio at Hunkuyi village in Zaria where he usually carry out his works amidst villagers, to the body of clay he uses in production which is the traditional clay body been used by the villagers, his method of production (hand building), his forms which are unusual, infusing indigenous style into modern ceramics and his method of firing (open firing) in a reduced or oxidised firing and enhancing his wares in smoked effect. It is this mode of practice that has stood Ahuwan's work out compared to what other ceramic artists are doing both at home and abroad. The impact and achievement Ahuwan's mode of practise has made, triggered the hunger to seek for uniqueness in this study. Chris Echeta's mode of practice has closely influenced this study due to near similar forms in between his works and the ones produced in this study. In terms of installation, similarities could be seen in the manner of display of works. Structurally, his forms are usually standing made from slabs through hand building method to form his conceptual works. While Ozioma Onuzulike's mode of production influenced this study in

the area of form generation and manipulation. By this, Ozioma sometimes generates his forms by throwing on the potters' wheel and goes further to alter them in order to achieve desired shape. This mode of production has been adopted in this study and referred to as *construction and deconstruction.*

There are significant differences between the works of the trio and the forms in this study, especially in the mode of production. These could be seen in the area of execution (throwing hollow cylinders and alteration), form manipulation and aesthetic effects on the works. Hollow cylindrical forms were generated by throwing on the potter's wheel, cut open to form standing slabs and manipulated at semi-leather hard stage. Forms generated in this study were not vigorously altered when compared to Echeta's. This was intentional to keep the forms simple and straight to the point to reflect the different themes. This study took advantage of the speckle effect of iron filings and reduction firing to create variance in finishing to make the works to be aesthetically appealing.

3.8.1 Generating "Self-Sustenance" (Pre Colonial Era)

Bowl like shapes dominated the composition of this work. The stylised thatched houses and the human forms were manipulated out of bowl thrown shapes. Conical shapes were also thrown on the wheel to form the roofs of the houses. At leather hard stage, the conical clay roofs were attached to the bowl and beaten to form a complete stylised structure (See plate 3.25 page 58). The human forms were manipulated and the head-like appendages placed on them. Forms for either pottery or calabashes were also made to serve as the enterprise which the human forms are engaged in (see plate 3.26 page 58).



Plate 3.25: Stylising a thatched house by beating into shape
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.26: Work in Progress "*Self-Sustenance (Traditional Pre Colonial Technology)*"
Source: Researcher

3.8.2 Generating "Foreign Rulership"

Cylindrical shapes were basically explored to form this art work. At wet state, the cylinders were cut open and this allowed further and easy manipulation at leather hard stage. Appendages in form of a slab head (See plate 3.27 below) with moustache and a hat were joined to the manipulated cylinder to represent a white man. Three other forms were crafted wearing traditional head gear of three ethnic groups of Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba, to represent traditional rulers.



Plate 3.27: Working on "Foreign Rule"
Source: Researcher

3.8.3 Generating "Negotiation into Slavery"

The art work was also explored using cylinders to achieve human forms that are bent forward in one direction. This is to capture the manner in which black slaves were manhandled. Two human forms (white man and a traditional ruler) representing the negotiators of the trade are behind negotiating (See plate 3.28 below).



Plate 3.28: Working on "Negotiation into Slavery"
Source: Researcher

3.8.4 Generating "Freedom from Oppression"

The usual cylindrical forms were explored in generating this work. At this instance, each cylinder was divided vertically into two equal halves. By implication, one cylinder was able to generate human-like forms. At leather hard stage, the forms were trimmed and altered into human-like forms that are gesticulating freedom by raised hands posture. Two other forms

representing colonial masters were also made with complete cylinders that were cut open to show their gestures.



Plate 3.29: Working on “Freedom from Oppressors”

3.8.5 Generating “Agro-Economy”

The process of actualising this art work started with basic pulling of cylinders. At the conclusion of the cylinders, slicing into shorter cylinders followed (see plate 3.30 page 62). This was done repeatedly and was followed by hand manipulation (see plate 3.31 page 62) into sack-like forms to generate a representation of the famous Kano groundnut pyramids. At leather hard stage, texturing of the sack-like forms with a ‘texturing tool’ was carried out (See plate 3.32 page 63).



Plate 3.30: Slicing a tall cylinder into shorter ones
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.31: manipulating cylinders into sack like form
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.32: Texturing the sack clay form with a tool
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.33: Working on *"Agro-Economy"*
Source: Researcher

3.8.6 Generating "Crude Oil Monster"

Pulling of cylinders on the potter's wheel for this piece was slightly different from all other ones. Being that this work has to do with oil boom, few circular ridges were made on some of the cylinders to take the shape of barrels. At leather hard stage, further cutting and manipulation were carried out on the barrels and human forms for effectiveness in portraying the theme (see Fig. 3.34 below).



Plate 3.34: working on "Crude oil Monster"
Source: Researcher

3.8.7 Generating “Forceful Leadership”

This was achieved by the usual pulling of cylinders, cutting and altering to form human like figures. To achieve the military boot, two cylinders were joined together in stylised horizontal and vertical position (see plate 3.35 below). Clay coil was made to represent shoe lace as characteristic of a boot. The military cap was achieved by throwing a bowl, allowing it to dry up to leather hard stage and followed by cutting out unwanted areas to achieve features of a cap. Alteration followed to give the desired form.



Plate 3.35: Working on “Forceful Leadership”
Source: Researcher

3.8.8 Generating "They Say we are in Democracy"

The objective here was to capture a scenario where voting is taking place. The usual forming of stylised human forms of different size cylinders was carried out but the different thing here is the throwing of two oval shapes as ballot boxes. The oval shapes were altered by cutting open and bending some parts (see plate 3.36 below) at the leather hard stage.



Plate 3.36: working on "They Say we are in Democracy"
Source: Researcher

3.8.9 Generating "Egocentric Leaders"

In forming this work, a bowl was made and later altered into a different shape to accommodate two cut-open-cylinders at both ends. The cylinders and bowl were joined together at leather hard stage and formed into what represents two highly placed human forms at both ends. Round calabashes of different sizes were made to stand for the national resources. The usual human forms were made from cylinders to represent the masses (see plate 3.37 page 67).



Plate 3.37: Working on “Egocentric Leaders”
Source: Researcher

3.8.10 Generating “Societal Wreckage”

Basically, human forms were made out of thrown cylinders to represent onlookers. Debris of Shattered clay were made by throwing clay forms, pouring water on it to create the effect of explosion (see plate 3.38 page 68). Some of the clay cylindrical human forms were cut into halves to represent suicide bomb blast (see plate 3.39 page 68).



Plate 3.38: Generating shattered effect by pouring water on green ware
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.39: Working on “Societal Wreckage”
Source: Researcher

3.8.11 Generating "Societal Uncertainty"

A different approach in conjunction with the usual manner of creating human forms was used to achieve this work. A complete clay jar was thrown on the potter's wheel. It was allowed to get to leather hard stage. Deconstruction of the jar by Slicing into clay rings followed. The clay rings were joined together after firing but in a staggered fashion to depict instability so as to achieve the theme (see plate 3.40 below).



Plate 3.40: Working on "Societal Uncertainty"
Source: Researcher

3.9 Drying of Clay Forms Produced

After the entire process of throwing, bending, cutting, slicing, altering and joining clay forms, the wares produced were carefully staked on a shelve and covered with polythene sheet for gradual drying (see plate 3.41 below). This is so because Ceramics Monthly (2017) cautioned that cracks and warping found in dry green ware are two faces of the same problem. Part of

the formed shape has shrunk more at some point during the drying process than another part. The irregular shrinkage puts stress on the piece. The clay responds either by warping to ease the stress, or where the shape does not permit that, it cracks.



Plate 3.41: Drying Clay forms on a shelf
Source: Researcher

3.10 Oxidation Firing of Clay Forms Produced

The wares produced and dried were conveyed into a gas kiln for firing and conversion into ceramics. Due to the fragile nature of the clay forms, they were arranged on refractory shelves in the kiln. One after the other, props were positioned on shelves to be able to arrange

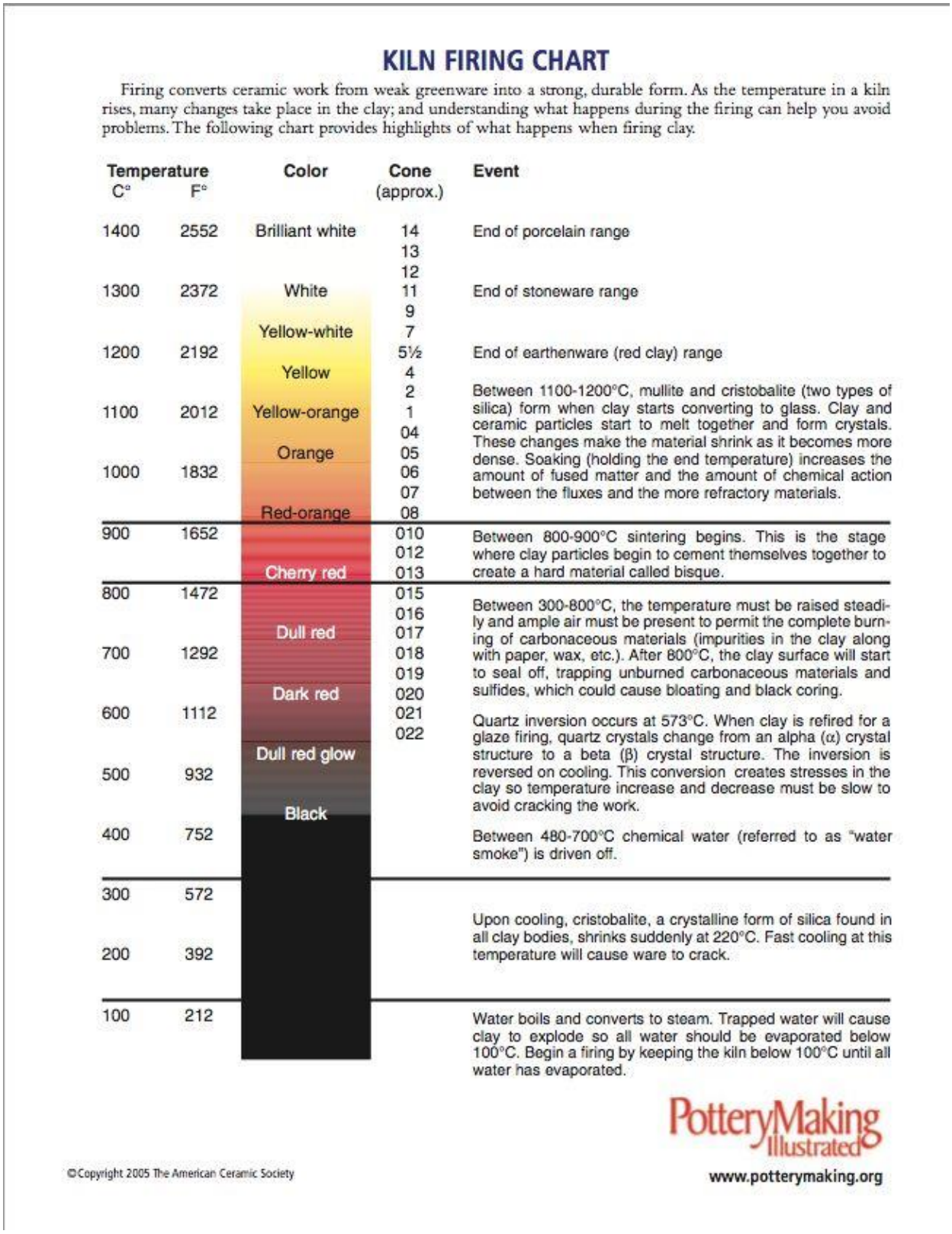
more works above the others. Smaller and shorter wares were arranged under while the bigger and taller ones were positioned on top for space management (see plate 3.42 page 72). The kiln was covered with refractory bricks to maximize and prevent the escape of heat. The wares in the kiln were gradually preheated for about one and the half hours. Pre-heating was necessary to prevent thermal shock that could cause needless cracks on the wares. Full scale firing commenced and lasted up to four hours (see plate 3.43 page 72). Earthenware temperature of 1000^{o}C was achieved and firing was stopped. The temperature was verified from the colour 'red-orange' of heat in the kiln through the spy hole as propounded by the American Ceramic Society (2005) – See figure 3.1 on page 73. After a complete day of cooling down, the kiln was opened and offloaded. The oxidation firing could not give the desired convincing outcome of variation in colour of the wares sought after as established in the objective of this study. Some of the wares were further introduced to reduction firing with the use of saw dust and dried grasses in an open air to achieve good contrast in colour variation of the wares as recommended by A.M. Ahuwan (personal communication, February 15, 2018). (see plate 3.44 – 3.49 for the process used for achieving reduction firing).



Plate 3.42: Works loaded on shelves in the kiln
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.43: Firing the wares in the Kiln
Source: Researcher



KILN FIRING CHART

Firing converts ceramic work from weak greenware into a strong, durable form. As the temperature in a kiln rises, many changes take place in the clay; and understanding what happens during the firing can help you avoid problems. The following chart provides highlights of what happens when firing clay.

Temperature C°	Temperature F°	Color	Cone (approx.)	Event
1400	2552	Brilliant white	14	End of porcelain range
			13	
			12	
1300	2372	White	11	End of stoneware range
			9	
		Yellow-white	7	
1200	2192		5½	End of earthenware (red clay) range
		Yellow	4	
			2	Between 1100-1200°C, mullite and cristobalite (two types of silica) form when clay starts converting to glass. Clay and ceramic particles start to melt together and form crystals. These changes make the material shrink as it becomes more dense. Soaking (holding the end temperature) increases the amount of fused matter and the amount of chemical action between the fluxes and the more refractory materials.
1100	2012	Yellow-orange	1	
			04	
		Orange	05	
1000	1832		06	
			07	
		Red-orange	08	
900	1652		010	Between 800-900°C sintering begins. This is the stage where clay particles begin to cement themselves together to create a hard material called bisque.
			012	
		Cherry red	013	
800	1472		015	Between 300-800°C, the temperature must be raised steadily and ample air must be present to permit the complete burning of carbonaceous materials (impurities in the clay along with paper, wax, etc.). After 800°C, the clay surface will start to seal off, trapping unburned carbonaceous materials and sulfides, which could cause bloating and black coring.
			016	
		Dull red	017	
700	1292		018	
			019	
		Dark red	020	
600	1112		021	Quartz inversion occurs at 573°C. When clay is refired for a glaze firing, quartz crystals change from an alpha (α) crystal structure to a beta (β) crystal structure. The inversion is reversed on cooling. This conversion creates stresses in the clay so temperature increase and decrease must be slow to avoid cracking the work.
			022	
		Dull red glow		
500	932			
		Black		
400	752			Between 480-700°C chemical water (referred to as "water smoke") is driven off.
300	572			Upon cooling, cristobalite, a crystalline form of silica found in all clay bodies, shrinks suddenly at 220°C. Fast cooling at this temperature will cause ware to crack.
200	392			
100	212			Water boils and converts to steam. Trapped water will cause clay to explode so all water should be evaporated below 100°C. Begin a firing by keeping the kiln below 100°C until all water has evaporated.

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PotteryMaking Illustrated

www.potterymaking.org

Figure 3. 1: Kiln Firing Chart
Source: American Ceramics Society



Plate 3.44: Dried grass and saw dust bed for laying the terracotta wares
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.45: Laying of the terracotta wares on the dried grass and saw dust bed
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.46: Covering the wares with saw dust before setting on fire
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.47: Burning away of the dried grass to give way for gradual smoking of the saw dust
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.48: Gradual smoking of saw dust for reduction effect on the wares
Source: Researcher



Plate 3.49: Black brown effect of open air reduction firing
Source: Researcher

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Portraying Nigeria's historical experiences in Conceptual Ceramic form as presented in this study, is not just in the production of tactile works but also on the topical nature of the works that makes them pedagogical. This can be further pointed out through discussing and analysing the processes of creating the art works themselves. This research was subjected to different levels of analysis based on the objectives as set out, which led to the actualisation of the conceptual ceramic works. First was the analysis on conceptualising the execution of the ceramic art works in the form of thumbnail sketches. A second level of analysis was on constructing and deconstructing by throwing and alteration to produce forms from clay that possessed the characteristics of the different selected themes. A third level of analysis was on creating variance in the appearance of the wares in the finishing. A fourth level of analysis is on the installation of wares into compositions that depicted different themes and the employment of elements of designs that made up the works which include; form, texture, and colour. The fifth level of analyses was analysing the works created so as to induce thoughts and create an intellectual property.

The formalistic approach has examined the structure of the conceptual pieces vis-à-vis form, texture, shape, composition, materials, techniques, colour and other contingent technical attributions of their realisation. The contextual approach has taken into consideration prevailing artistic trends in art practice that has influenced the works . Gbaden (2014) notes that "since formalism when taken alone would concentrate on the content of the installation without the context of execution and therefore be insufficient, the integrated approach which combines the two aspects has helped in drawing up more honest conclusions for the analysis"

4.2 Result of Thumbnail Sketches

Several sketches were produced for this study but eleven of the sketches were selected for documentation representing each theme. Capturing the different themes of art works for this study in sketches enabled a smooth and faster production process. The sketches served as guide, though at some point, as work progressed, there were slight deviations from the sketches due to a desire to explore different forms.

4.3 Result of Construction and Deconstruction of Clay Forms

Onuzulike (2009), "asserts that throwing is a means to an end and not an end in itself. The potter's wheel is a tool for generating basic clay forms, which are like plain canvasses awaiting the painter's application of colour pigments. It is also akin to the saw-man's power tool (chainsaw perhaps) for felling logs of wood for the sculptor's creative intervention". According to Onuzulike, he generates 'logs of wood' and 'plain canvasses' from the potter's wheel and then begin to manipulate them for fresh technical and conceptual insights. This study aligns with Onuzulike's idea of throwing on the wheel. Works generated from the potter's wheel in this study further underwent some level of manipulations and alteration to arrive at the desired shapes that embodied Nigeria's historical experiences in the form of conceptual ceramics. All the forms produced for this study were, in first instance, generated from the potters' wheel. A closer look at each ceramic form in this study shows one form of throwing skill or the other on the works, no matter the extent to which they were altered. These skills as could be seen include, throwing strokes or lines and near perfect shapes of round or oval forms. Some of the major features of the forms were the visible throwing lines that emanated from production on the potter's wheel in not only building them, but in their aesthetic embellishment.

4.4 Result of Creating Variance in the Appearance of the Wares

The different clay forms produced needed to be transformed into ceramics in terracotta state for the works to be ready for handling without unnecessary fear of losing them to easy breakage or dissolving when mistakenly they come in contact with moisture. Oxidation and reduction firing helped in revealing clearly the variation in colour value of the wares and also made iron filings in some of the wares to be distinct for easy identification and aesthetics. The idea of creating variance in an art work is important as this enhances aesthetics and create more interest on the work. Flye (2011) states that in general, work using a full range of values will stand out more and be visually richer and more pleasing. Conscious effort was made in this study to produce conceptual ceramic works that are not monochromatic in value and monotonous in appearance. The introduction of the wares to reduction firing made much difference in achieving variance in appearance of the works. There was no extensive body decoration on the clay forms to allow for the potential of colour variation.

4.5 Result of Installation of Wares into Compositions to Depict Themes

Tailor (2000) expounds that "artists who apply ceramics to installation use the ceramic products as the main elements of the installation". Tailor further states that like other installation artists, ceramic artists break the barrier of material and enter the realm of space in which spatial interaction and conceptual clarity become more important than any one single piece of ceramic. The different ceramic forms produced in this study were individual pieces. These pieces could only be made meaningful by composing them together to make a statement. More so, that each piece of clay form was made to represent specific characters or gestures so as to suit a specific theme. Among varieties of gestures and characters portrayed in this study are: Sitting posture, raised hands posture, proud posture, bondage posture,

dancing posture, standing erect posture, colonial master character, chiefs character, among others (see plates. 4.1 – 4.8). These figures have been made to be free standing without any extra support for easy adjustment and movement. Composing the clay pieces together according to themes resulted in eleven thematic compositions as spelt out in the scope of this study. These themes express the historical experiences of Nigeria in clay form.



Plate 4.1: Sitting posture
Source: Researcher



Plate 4.2: Raised hands posture
Source: Researcher



Plate 4.3 Proud posture
Source: Researcher



Plate 4.4: bondage posture
Source: Researcher



Plate 4.5: Dancing posture
Source: Researcher



Plate 4.6: Standing posture
Source: Researcher



Plate 4.7: Colonial master
Source: Researcher



Plate 4.8: Traditional Chiefs
Source: Researcher

4.6 Result of mounting the works as installations to induce thoughts and create an intellectual property by contextual analyses

A successful completion of the process of sketching, construction and deconstruction, creating variance in the appearance of the wares and installation of the wares into desired conceptual composition is partly the objective of this research. For this study to achieve its full potentials, each thematic body of work needed a critical look and discussion to bring out the substance of the conceptual ceramic works that have been produced in line with the historical experiences. There are elements that have been employed in actualising the works. This could be either intentional or unintentional but the important thing is, when the works

are viewed, these elements present themselves. Elements of design used in analysing the works include, *colour, line (intentional and unintentional), texture, form.*

There are common elements that are prevalent in all the works produced. The first is colour, a product of reduction firing and the presence of iron filings. The variations of earthy colour of terracotta allow for greater appreciation because the variations are more expressive and indigenous compared to glazing the wares. Furthermore, the effect of reduction firing is better maximised for the purpose of this study in terracotta form. The second prevalent element in all the works is texture. Some wares appear in smooth texture because of the absence of iron filings while others appear in coarse dotted texture because of the presence of iron fillings. A third common element in the works is line (*unintentional*). Throwing lines also resulted in the aesthetic components of the works. The method of initial production which is throwing gives a unique visual ring-like line effect and this has made the forms to stand out. Having discussed the common elements in the entire works, there are other elements and principle of design that are unique to each body of work. These are *forms* and *composition*. These are discussed autonomously as they are employed.

4. 6. 1 Traditional Pre Colonial Technology

This conceptual ceramic work has two stylised huts, five figures in a sitting position carrying round calabashes while two calabashes are on the floor. Some of the huts and sitting figures possess incised body marks (see plate 4.9 page 89). Lines (*intentional*) have been used in form of incisions on some of the wares to further create distinctions between the forms. The bigger rounded calabash shapes are altered and in sitting position with slab heads in different lengths. At the back of the seated figures are padded hurt-like forms with irregular cut-out window holes. This is a composition of humans sitting in front of two huts while carrying out their duties.



Plate 4.9: **Technology of Sustenance,** 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.10: **Technology of Sustenance,** 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.11: **Technology of Sustenance,** 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.2 Foreign Ruler

Four cylindrical human figures are represented here. The first which is the tallest possess moustache, a hat and an impression of an English wear. The other three figures behind wear different head gears representing chiefs (see plate 4.12 on next page). The forms appear in a folded cylindrical fashion in different gesticulation mode. The figures are standing in a leader – follower position. The composition suggests a foreign leadership over the locals.



Plate 4.12: **Foreign Rule,** 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.13: **Foreign Rule,** 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.14: **Foreign Rule,** 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.3 Negotiation into Slavery

This conceptual art work shows six figures. Four of the figures are in a procession and in a stooping manner bound with rope around their necks. The other two figures are taller and in upright position in conversation mode. One of the tall figures has a head gear while the other has a moustache and hat (see plate 4.11 on next page). The enslaved forms that have been bound appear in squeezed, torn, bent, folded and padded cylindrical slabs in a manner of dejection. The composition represents negotiation between a black man and white man in giving out people into forceful slavery.



Plate 4.15: **Negotiation into Slavery**, 2017, Clay, Iron fillings and Fibre Twine. (Front view)



Plate 4.16: **Negotiation into Slavery**, 2017, Clay, Iron fillings and Fibre Twine. (Side view)



Plate 4.17: **Negotiation into Slavery III**, 2017, Clay, Iron fillings and Fibre Twine. (Aerial view)

4.6.4 Freedom from Oppression

This work shows a group of stylised figures standing in the middle with hands raised in different manner, in jubilation mode. Two human figures are portrayed standing at both ends at a little distance away, looking backwards to look at the ones in the middle (see plate 4.18 on next page). The group of standing figures in the middle have cut out shapes like hands with pointed edges in open upward direction. The two extreme figures on both sides are in cylindrical, folded manner; their heads and bodies facing opposite directions in a manner that implies - *not intending to leave but have been forced to go*. The arrangement connotes joyous display of liberty from subjugation.



Plate 4.18: **Freedom from Oppression**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.19: **Freedom from Oppression**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.20: **Freedom from Oppression**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.5 Agro-Economy

A pyramid of sacks and two human figures standing close could be identified here. The posture of humans standing shows affluence. Both human figures are in a *baban riga* fashion, one wears a turban on the head (see plate 4.21 on next page). The pyramid is made up of numerous clay sack-like forms containing grains. Some of the forms are completely covered while some are left with some openings for negative spaces to arouse curiosity. The two slab-stylised human forms are in semi cylindrical fashion with head appendages. They are standing and facing the pyramid in a talking manner. The composition represents engagement in agro-business.



Plate 4.21: **Agro-Economy**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.22: **Agro-Economy**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (side view)



Plate 4.23: **Agro-Economy**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.6 Crude Oil Monster

Three human forms in different gestures could be identified in this composition. The first the left could be recognised as in a dancing position. The clay form here could be seen in a bent and vertically sliced posture. The dark colour clay form in the middle is in sliced folded arm, with incised lines in form of drapery from an elaborate outfit. This form is in a recounting position, while the standing form on the right is in an open arm gesture and wearing a cap. It is as if it is trying to embrace the oil barrels. Two clay cylindrical forms in the form of vessels (barrels) are positioned in their midst with cut out negative spaces (see plate 4.24 on next page). The composition represents the detrimental value being attached to the era of crude oil.



Plate 4.24: **Crude oil Monster**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.25: **Crude oil Monster**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.26: **Crude oil Monster**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.7 Forceful Rule

A group of forms that are in disarray behind a stylised clay boot that has a clay form imitating a military cap could be identified here (see plate 4.27 on next page). There are different postures of clay slab forms with head appendages that make up the group behind the stylised boot. Some in folded arm posture facing the boot, others facing opposite directions in a raised arm fashion, typifying discordant tones in an oppressive government. The composition mirrors the military era.



Plate 4.27: **Forceful Rule**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.28: **Forceful Rule**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.29: **Forceful Rule**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.8 "They said we are in Democracy"

Clay standing forms are on two queues in a voting position ready to cast their votes, while two oval shaped containers are in front of the queued clay forms. Some of the human clay forms have no heads while others have (see plate 4.30 on next page). The vertically half sliced clay forms could be seen in line comprising various sizes and heights. The two oval shaped clay vessels could be seen in padded, cut out negative spaces with lines on them. This setting is reminiscent of a corrupt pattern of electing representatives in a democratic setting like Nigeria due to the different magnitude of malpractices that thrive in the system.



Plate 4.30: **They said we are in Democracy**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.31: **They said we are in Democracy**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.32: **They said we are in Democracy**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.9 Egocentric Leaders

This work shows a group of clay forms standing in front bearing few replicas of calabashes, while at the left hand corner are two clay forms standing on a higher pedestal in a "U" shape form. In between the two of them are numerous replicas of calabashes (see plate 4.33 on next page). The stylised human slab clay forms are standing in different posture, paying keen attention to the calabashes. The two bigger clay stylised human slabs standing on a clay bowl bearing more calabashes are wearing clay coil and slab head gears. These present them as figures of affluence. Calabash here has been used to represent "fortune". This composition depicts inconsiderate leadership practise.



Plate 4.33: **Egocentric Leaders**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.34: **Egocentric Leaders**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.35: **Egocentric Leaders**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.10 Societal Wreckage

This work shows a crowd of stylised human clay forms of different sizes in a semi-circle setting. In their midst are wreckages and pieces of broken clay forms (see plate 4.36 on next page). The human clay standing forms are all in semi cylindrical slab with clay slab head appendages. They all bear one fashion of hand expression or the other. These are wreckages of human stylised clay forms among other remains in an explosion-like scene. This composition portrays the kind of casualty scenes that are common occurrences of today's Nigeria.



Plate 4.36: **Societal Wreckage**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.37: **Societal Wreckage**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.38: **Societal Wreckage**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.11 Societal Uncertainty

This concluding thematic conceptual ceramics work has in the middle, three stylised clay human forms that are in a position of trying to support a staggering and unstable clay vessel. On the left and on the right are also stylised clay bystanders patiently gazing at the happenings at the centre. Some broken pieces of clay could be seen on the floor (see plate 4.39 on next page). The human forms here are all in semi cylindrical fashion with different expressions and bearing clay head appendages. The staggering vessel in the middle appears in sliced clay rings disadvantageously placed on each other. The arrangement is a contextual interpretation of the current uncertain state of Nigeria in terms of insecurity, economy, education and more.



Plate 4.39: **Societal Uncertainty**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Front view)



Plate 4.40: **Societal Uncertainty**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Side view)



Plate 4.41: **Societal Uncertainty**, 2017, Clay and Iron fillings. (Aerial view)

4.6.12: Formalistic Analyses

According to Hamilton College (2014), "the goal of a formal analysis of art work is to explain how the formal elements of a work of art affect the representation of the subject matter and expressive content. The emphasis should be on analysing the formal elements not interpreting the artwork. That said, an understanding of the meaning of the work is the final goal of any formal analysis". Hamilton College enumerates formal elements in analysing sculptural works to include:

- in the round vs. relief
- directionality
- shape (organic vs. geometric)
- material
- texture
- volume
- light and shadow
- colour
- technique (additive vs. subtractive)

The conceptual works produced can also be referred to as sculptural ceramics because they are free standing, bearing forms that are quite different from utilitarian ceramics. The formal elements that have been outlined by Hamilton College have been adopted for this segment of analyses. The eleven sets of works that have been produced are free standing. They can be viewed from different angles. The manner of clay form production in this study has its influence from the concept of Chris Echeta while the philosophy draws from that of Ozioma Onuzulike. The forms produced varies from standing, altered slabs to oval and semi oval shapes that have been padded, cut open and incised in line patterns. Most of the clay forms have jagged edges; this is intentional to break the monopoly of edges and make the forms when viewed to be more relaxed and playful. The standing clay slabs which are used to represent abstract human forms in different gesticulations could be likened to dried back peel of tree trunks at one level (see plate 4.36 and 4.37 page 104) and at another level looks like *kpomo -roasted animal skin*, because of the curvy and rolled nature (see plate 4.12 and 4.13 page 88). The oval and semi oval clay shapes are in stylised huts and in abstract seating human forms (see plate 4.9 page 86).

At another level, the oval clay shapes which are used to represent abstracted ballot boxes, look like coconuts with their fibrous cover trying to be peeled off (see plate 4.31 on page 100). The clay forms in this research have been made primarily from secondary clay with the inclusion of iron filings and fired in an oxidized atmosphere of 1000^{o}C into terracotta to attain durability, while open air reduction firing was used to attain clear variations, both in colour and texture. Three textural variations are prevalent on the clay forms. They are smooth textures, rough textures that feel like rashes which have infected the skin, and incised line-texture. The works appear in a common terracotta colour but in different tonal variations that range from light tone, middle tone to dark tone. The appearance of the clay forms in different tone of terracotta colour makes the works to appear attractive and tempting like edible

biscuits at one point and as meat pie at another (see plate: 4.21 and 4.22 page 94). The interplay of light and shade on the works brought out the tactile quality of the forms in three dimensional manner in terms of depth, solidity, contours and enhancing the appendages on the forms. The clay forms are achieved by a process of construction (building on the potter's wheel) and deconstruction (alteration).

4.7 Findings

1. From the first objective of this study, the sketches gave a solid platform on which to explore the conceptual ceramic in tactile forms. The sketches served as guide, though at some point as work progressed there were slight deviations from the sketches due to the desire to explore different forms.

2. The process of construction and deconstruction (throwing and alteration) as spelt out in the second objective was one of the main concerns of this study. In respect to conceptual ceramics, this study has affirmed the assertion by Onozulike (2009) that throwing is not an end in itself but a means to generating forms that can be manipulated for philosophical insight. A combination of production techniques made the sketches to be practicable, without which throwing technique alone would not have been effective in the realisation of the conceptual ceramic works. Alteration of the thrown forms resulted in the different stylised human forms, expressions and gestures that had given credence to all the thematic works. Other major features of the forms were the visible throwing lines that emanated during production on the potter's wheel. These lines have been maintained as aesthetic component of embellishment.

3. The inclusion of iron filings as an auxiliary material in clay created variety of surface quality of the conceptual works. At a fired stage of 1000oC, iron filings in clay created minimal variance of appearance and needed to be improved upon. The introduction of some of the wares to open air reduction firing created the desired variation in colour of the wares. The wares appeared in different terracotta colour values making the end products to be visually and aesthetically alluring.

4. For the forms produced to be understandable and conceptually meaningful, they had to be installed into their different compositions. The installation according to themes resulted in tactile presentation of the different Nigeria historical experiences as spelt out earlier in this study.

5. Conceptually, the wares produced were not just for the sake of production or utilitarian but to convey messages. Eleven sets of conceptual ceramic works were produced and installed to interrogate one aspect of Nigeria's historical experiences or the other like *Self-Sustenance (Pre Colonial Era)*, *Foreign Rulership, Negotiation Into Slavery*, *Freedom From Oppressors*, *Agro-Economy*, *Crude Oil Monster*, *Forceful Leadership, They Said We are in Democracy, Egocentric Leaders*, *Societal Wreckages* and *Societal Uncertainty*. This study has revealed that ceramics cannot be limited to just industrial or decorative purposes nor for tableware usage alone but for conceptual purposes as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Byrd (2014) asserts that "it is art that links us to our past and highlights our humanity. Art is vital to capturing our imaginations". This study was achievable because it followed the objectives as earlier spelt out. It started with consulting literature and brainstorming which gave birth to thumbnail sketches for easy process of construction and deconstruction. The introduction of the terracotta forms to reduction firing with the use of saw dust and the presence of iron fillings as auxiliary material in the clay body created variance in the value of colour of the wares produced and this made the works to be visually exciting. The eleven sets of works produced were installed into compositions to depict the different Nigeria historical themes of this study such as, *Self-Sustenance (Pre Colonial Era), Foreign Rulership, Negotiation Into Slavery*, *Freedom From Oppressors*, *Agro-Economy, Crude Oil Monster*, *Forceful Leadership*, *They Said We are in Democracy, Egocentric Leaders, Societal Wreckages and societal uncertainty*. Analyses were carried out on each of the works to bring out conceptual meanings for intellectual property. The findings of this study shows that initial sketches became very instrumental to the realisation of the conceptual works. Combination of construction and deconstruction of clay resulted in the different thematic clay forms for this study. The inclusion of iron filings in clay alongside reduction firing created the desired surface quality in terms of variance. Tactile representation of themes were achieved as a result of installing the wares.

5.2 Conclusion

The mode of ceramics practice from exponents of conceptual ceramics that has been adopted in this study as conceptual framework, helped in developing this research to a large extent. More importantly is the fact that by adopting the conceptual framework, a unique way of developing conceptual ceramics has been established in this study by the process of building cylindrical forms on the potter's wheel, cutting open into slabs before alteration. This has been referred to in this study as *construction and deconstruction.*

According to Jari (2016), "there is … in the Hunkuyi Experiments of Ahuwan, an alternative to studying Ceramics using local materials and methods". Similarly, this study establishes that while the practice of ceramics such as tableware, sanitary ware and industrial ceramics are well favoured in the Nigeria context for the purposes of household and industrial usage, conceptual ceramics has the power to bring to limelight the creative prowess of a ceramist in interrogating and commenting on issues of societal debate.

The practice of just utilitarian kind of ceramics limits the appearance of Nigeria ceramics at both international and national exhibitions and competitions. This is because experience over time has revealed that renowned art collectors or Juries at exhibitions/ competitions look out for works that are unique and have conceptual insight. For a ceramic piece to be worth exhibiting, it should have some level of derailment from the norm.

This study has been able to use clay to portray Nigeria's historical experiences in conceptual form to support the point that limiting the practice of ceramics in whatever guise to just some aspects is inimical and it means limiting the limitless clay.

5.3 Recommendations

- Conceptual ceramics is not limited to construction and deconstruction of clay forms alone as carried out in this study. For a ceramist that favours conventional ceramic forms such as cups, bowls, vases and so on in his or her practice, these items can be composed in conceptual manner to interrogate social issues or convey one's inner feeling.
- It is evident from this study that the practice of conceptual ceramics is a worthwhile venture that has no limitations. Ceramics students in Nigeria should be encouraged and be given full options of the different areas of ceramics which include conceptual ceramics for decision making regarding the area of interest and choice.
- Ceramics institutions in Nigeria and professionals should assert more emphasis on creative thinking in teaching and handling of clay conceptually to develop students, broadly and effectively in the field of ceramics. This will encourage production of ceramics pieces that can be said to be worthy of exhibition and to compete for honours both at home and abroad.
- The exponents of conceptual ceramics in Nigeria at one point or the other combined clay with other materials and objects to achieve their aim. In like manner, this study had been able to utilise waste iron filings as auxiliary material to create variations in the appearance of conceptual works. The Nigeria environment is full of materials that are lying waste that could either be used in clay or as a separate material that can add conceptual value to working with clay as inspiration permits.

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