# EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CHARCOAL MARKET IN PAINTING USING A RESTRICTED PALETTE

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DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS

FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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# EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CHARCOAL MARKET IN PAINTING USING A RESTRICTED PALETTE

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this dissertation entitled ***EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CHARCOAL MARKET IN PAINTING USING A RESTRICTED PALETTE*** was performed in the studio and written by me. The research was done in the Department of Fine Arts. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any University.

| _____ | _____ | _____ |
|---|---|---|
| Name of Student | Signature | Date |

## CERTIFICATION

This Dissertation entitled ***EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CHARCOAL MARKET IN PAINTING USING A RESRICTED PALETTE***, by John, Oyedemi JOSHUA meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, PhD (Painting) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge, visual arts practice and literary presentation.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Professor Jacob Jat Jari** | _____ | _____ |
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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God, the Lord and shepherd of my soul. I went through the fire and the fire did not kindle against me and through the waters and I was not drowned because He has been my guide. My Wife Bibitola Oyedemi, my son King David Flourish Oluwaseun Oyedemi, and my daughters Gift Oreoluwa Oyedemi, Melody Oyedemi and Favourite Oyedemi; and my spiritual Fathers, bishop David O. Oyedepo, Prophet/Evangelist Daniel Okedoyin, Pastor and mrs Tunji Adeyinka, Pastor Steve Agbo, Pastor Emmanuel Agi, Pastor Abel Dinamaji, Pastor Olusoga, Pastor Maigeri Salem, Pastor Polycap, Pastor Akinyemi Oloniyo, Pastor Adedayo Lawrence, Pastor Emmanuel Omomoh, Pastor Tanimola Obasa, and Pastor Abayomi Babalola.

**Abstract**

This research seeks to explore charcoal market in painting using a restricted palette. The palette consists of gray and subdued primary colours employed to build up a structure in painting that evokes a somber mood and aesthetically document a charcoal market. The inspiration was derived from an environment that is overwhelmingly black and capable of absolving other colours thereby making them to lose their identity. Various aspects of the charcoal market were explored focusing on the activities of elements inherent in its different patterns. The paintings epitomize inquiry that embodies the processes which interpret and question social phenomenon through studio experimentation. It looked at the underlining aesthetics of charcoal market to capture the metaphor of the human spirit, of labour of ordinary people in an everyday situation. To achieve the set objectives, a conceptual framework was developed from the works of Piet Mondrian, Rick Stevens, John Virtue and Pablo Picasso to explore this pictorial design concept in series of six(6). The works are divided into two main areas of exploration and development stages. In the exploration stage, preliminary studies explored various notes and sketches for the main body of work. The development stage explored the possibilities of developing the sketches and colour study. The significance of this research describes visual experience from a charcoal market that can help probe more into colour relationships and design concepts. Findings reveal the development of conceptual allegories which transmit cryptic content relating to the environment and create aesthetic space for multiplicity of reading. The tendency to interpret a work in different perspectives can be from social, cultural, economic and philosophical or peculiar visual view-point. The executed paintings reflect environmental influence of charcoal on other colours making them assume another personality.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Background of the study

### 1.1 Introduction

Charcoal market is a place of influence, metaphor and dynamics of colour relationships in pictorial illusion; an environment that is overwhelmingly black/dark and capable of absorbing other colours in a manner that makes them loose their original identities. In the colour field, black, according to J. Jari (personal communication, 2013, may 17), is the absence of colour. Oyedemi. J (Interviewer), and Buhari J.(Interviewee).(2013,march13) corroborates this position stating that it is the absence of light, adding that when there is no light, all colours will agree in the dark. That is, black absorbs energies of other colours without reflecting them. The value of a colour turns grey and subtle after coming in contact with the charcoal environment. Any charcoal market can be ignored at a glance but it has an aesthetic edge that can evolve into an orchestration of colour harmony and value. This reveals different realities that lie concealed in strange juxtapositions, each line portraying endless energy that exists in nature causing the viewer to ask, "What is this"? Two things are at play in this engagement: aesthetic reason describing human experiences and the force of nature. This is especially noticeable in the movement of values from light to dark in the charcoal market that epitomizes the interaction of elements of design for development of visual concepts. Aradeon (1997) sees a market as 'the meeting space for people between places, the living stage where a collage of scenes are acted and played out without a script'. Berthoud (1999) postulates that, in the minds of a growing number of decision- makers, it has become increasingly self-evident that the market should no longer be viewed as an

institution which must be regulated by external social forces, but on the contrary, that it should be used to regulate society as a whole. Market thus becomes the leading principle for guiding individual interaction and collective action. Exploring the charcoal market in painting is therefore to create a conversation between an organized structure (mechanical) and organic (nature) spontaneous effect. This visual exploit can arouse different understandings of the subject.

A variety of new configurations in the elements of design are emerging which makes an artist to start looking for concepts that have bases for visual interpretation from equally new sources of interest. This brings a new imaginative dimension to visual experience in a given space. The experience can be derived from two sources. The first is based on cognitive experience. Arnheim (1969), in Constantino (2007), defines 'cognition as a process of active exploration, selection, grasping of essentials, simplification, abstraction, analysis and synthesis, completion, correction, comparison, problem solving, as well as combining, separating and putting in context'. Visual thinking, as this is known, is the ability to see and process information in mental reasoning through identifying, categorizing and generating images as foundation for a piece or body of work. Arnheim further states that these images which are directly encountered, as well as generated are referred to mean some kind of quality of object stored in memory as visual concepts. The second experience is based on a sense of nostalgia and that is familiarity with certain forms and colours in the environment which helps in visual concept development, making it easily sustainable in a studio practice research. This multiplicity of concepts are developed using various associations put together to express aesthetic experiences that challenge our emotion. Visual concepts could

be objective or subjective depending on the simplicity or complexity of the message they carry as they open up interactive space.

According to Fosu (1986), creative expressions are not controlled by strict duplication of the exactness of nature. It is the idea rather than the object purely perceived in its natural state which determines the nature, meaning and function of the work. Babalola (1995) corroborates this by stating that artists are not only merely concerned with the expression of their nationality or traditional ideologies but the intrinsic value of art which lay in its universal and timeless element. It is this search for concepts that draws artists to familiar areas in the visual field in which relationships and interaction of elements of design influence each other. Selz (1981) observes that the fascination with patterns in nature brought about an intellectual interpretation that creates lively dialogue among objects, words, painted imitation and pasted reality. Lawal (1984), notes that artists like Obiora Udechukwu (b.1947) have transformed the *Uli* from mere body decoration into an aesthetic hot-line for communicating human emotions and aspirations. His concepts developed from lyrical inscription on the body to an aesthetic cultural identity.

Artists over time are therefore guided by certain perceptions in articulating a position when exploring a concept using a restricted palette. An early attempt of the use of a restricted palette in developing a concept is shown in Fig.1,a wall painting in chauvet Cave, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, Ardeche, France, ca.30,000-28,000 or ca.15,000-13,000BCE (Kleiner and Mamiya, 2006). The significance of this philosophy of using a restricted palette with bold black lines to define each animal brings out artistic idioms that can help probe into elements in nature. The images are easily recognisable animal forms engaged in common

activities for their every day survival.They are depicted to show three-dimentionality with a use of expressions of bold lines,colour,texture and sensation of perspective.A sense of overlapping is created in this work.According to Hodge (2011) ‘pre-historic art are found to reveal various social systems and religious ideas that were probably generally understood thousands of years ago…’

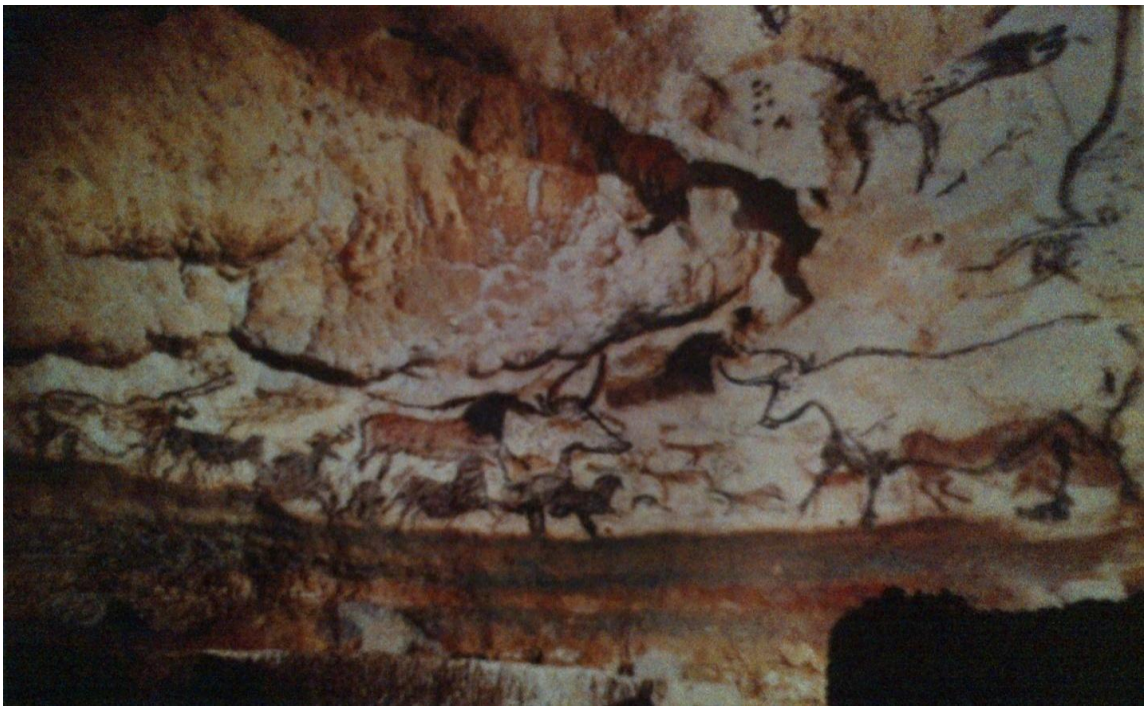


Fig: 1. Hall of the Bulls, Lascaux,Dordogne,France, ca.15, 000-13,000BCE.

Gimenez (2012) confirms that Paleolithic artists developed a primal visual language using charcoal and simple pigments to express and document their way of living. Most of the works created are in a wide range of sizes from tiny figurines painted on walls and ceilings to over-life-size animals, as in the cave at Lascaux. The influence of this is evident in the work of Picasso‘s exploration with a limited palette (See Fig.26 p48 Marie-Therese, Face and Profile, Paris 1931).These instances cited so far, have shown that sometimes, artists

therefore adopt a limited palette to interpret different phenomena in simple decipherable ways.

Olive (2008), writing on issues like species extinction, pollution and deforestation, holds that artists are challenged to create works that promote greater awareness on environment and bring about the renewal process of depleted environment around the globe. He further reveals that there are four categories of understanding that artists have delved into on environmental issues through their works which include, Restoration, Mediation, Integration and Reflection. The concern in this research is Integration, where artists use imagery and metaphors to reveal patterns and relationships that exist in nature. In Nigeria, foremost artists whose works are a synthesis of elements in nature include Jerry Buhari (b.1959), Burns Effiom (b.1965), Kolade Oshinowo (b.1948) and Mu'azu Mohammed Sani (b.1959). These artists remind the society of the hazards of environmental degeneration by depicting the environment that is devastated, deforested and exposed to heat (sun), and thereby causing global warming. Also, other artists around the world depict issues of life and the environment using allegory. These allegories created are interpreted in socio-cultural parlance as the futile attempt of our system to solve the issues of energy demand and societal tension. To this Eze (1995), states that the

> ... artist clothes his concepts with such aura of factuality that the object being represented seems uniquely actual and at times not exactly the same thing, they become complex of the symbolic dimension of the social events they reflect, like the psychological or the metaphysical, and not abstractable from those events to which they refer.

These artists develop a visual concept that represents an idea and not necessarily representing actual things. This makes us to reflect on how common issues in nature can

represent human conditions. Artistic dialogues are interpreted in ideas based on a wide range of engagements with elements in nature. With lines and colours, artists create discursive platforms that question global phenomena on social, political and economic matters such as Picasso's "Guernica" in 1937.

## 1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Artists have painted markets as they perceived them in terms of colour, lines and forms. They employ colours that depict the interaction in a market setting, depending on the article of trade making the market recognizable. Using grey and a restricted palette to portray market scenery has not been the concern of artists. It is anticipated that contemplation with the usage of grey to develop a body of paintings would result into possible allegories. Kleiner and Mamiya (2005) opine that rather than simply describe nature, poets and artists often use nature as allegory. In this manner, artists make spiritual, moral, historical and philosophical commentaries.

## 1.3 Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of this research is to explore charcoal market in painting using a restricted palette to create allegories through a combination of various elements in the market.

The specific objectives are to:

i. use a restricted palette largely consisting of grey and subdued primary colours to build up a structure in painting that evokes a sombre mood,

ii. develop paintings that encompass abstraction, quasi-figuration and landscape that have a multiplicity of reading,

iii. explore the possibilities of creating a body of work that is imbued with philosophical issues relating to the environment,

iv. portray and document aesthetically a charcoal market,

v. create paintings that mimic the structure of Piet Mondrian's Neoplasticism.

## 1.4 Research Questions

i. How can the use of a restricted palette consisting largely of grey and subdued primary colours build up a structure in painting that evokes a sombre mood?

ii. What is the possibility of a painting that encompasses abstraction; quasi-figuration and landscape generate multiplicity of reading?

iii. Does the conception of a charcoal market help in fashioning out our perception of philosophical issues in painting?

iv. Can the works portray and document aesthetically a charcoal market?

v. How can the works produced mimic Piet Mondrian's structure of Neoplasticism?

## 1.5 Justification of the study

Expressions of a market in painting especially of vegetables (tomatoes and onions) and clothing may easily elucidate a joyous mood that can inspire artists to explore. Danjuma (2010) observes that "the environment of such markets is usually charged with a lot of movements, noise, and clashing of colours..."A direct engagement with the charcoal market could however stir emotion of gloom, poverty, and chaos. This is partly due to its prevalent environmental influence on other colours. (See figs.2-5). The aesthetic possibilities in a charcoal market can represent a metaphor of the society. With this understanding, perhaps artists will look into harmonizing their work, not only to celebrate beauty but also create works that reflect societal issues.

## 1.6 Significance of the study

The significance of this study hinges on the development of Painting concept from a charcoal market that speaks to us directly or indirectly. The simplicity and complexity of every design is not only to pass a message but to also make an aesthetic statement. It is hoped that the engagement with the charcoal market will assist in developing visual symbols necessary to communicate ideas and messages advocating for change concerning the environment.



**Fig.2. Charcoal Displayed in containers.** *Source: Kosoko, 2010*



**Fig.3. Charcoal environment** *Source: Kosoko, 2010* .



**Fig.4.Woman Selling Charcoal. Source**: Kosoko,2010



**Fig.5.Charcoal Market (bagging the future)** Source: Kosoko, 2010

## 1.7 Scope of the study

Based on the study carried out by observatory method of various charcoal markets in Jos, these markets have prevalent similarities in terms of the effect of charcoal on the environment. However, the scope of this study covers a charcoal market at Tafawa Balewa Street charcoal market in Jos, Plateau State Nigeria, that represents the observations made in other charcoal markets. The choice of this market is because of the aesthetic configuration it offers this research in terms of various patterns of trees, women, charcoal, and bowls and muted colours that co-exist in an entity.

## 1.8 Conceptual framework

The use of different motifs, symbols and icons by artists are guided by a trend of events in the articulation of dynamic elements that reflect on the environment and human existence in an interrelationship of colours. It presents us with the basis for philosophical research in painting. Eastern religious philosophy (Theosophy) and 19$^{th}$ century aesthetic philosophy had influenced artists to develop a unique way of expression far from nature. They developed works that were devoid of emotion and realism. Artists who were influenced include Piet Mondrian who co-founded an art journal, "De Stijl" (the style), where he published the manifesto and philosophy of Neoplasticism, a rigid and extreme form of abstraction which involved the depersonalization of art, abstracting natural phenomena, and making no reference to any recognizable entity. This allows a canvas to be subset into rectangular, horizontal and vertical lines and colours using a limited palette of black, grey, white and primary colours.

Piet Mondrian postulated a 'purities' (pure reality) approach to art because he felt that Cubism had not separated art from nature. He felt that Cubism had not accepted 'the logical consequences of its own discoveries; it was not developing abstraction towards its own ultimate goal'. At that time Mondrian was set to depart from nature, to create a new construct based on his understanding of 'opposites'. Selz (1981) states that Mondrian's highly disciplined works of pure geometric precision do achieve the state of perfect and unalterable equilibrium for which he strove. In view of Mondrian's Neoplasticism, this study is restricted to partial visible orientation in representing subjects or elements from the charcoal market including tree trunks, women, colours, textures and lines, boldly and

loosely defined in grid form bearing semblance to Mondrian's line structure. By exploring organic lines, the researcher reinforces the flatness of colour in one instance and yet attempt to create illusion of depth in another. This, in essence, is to push further the Neoplasticism theory of Piet Mondrian and Rick Stevens' exploration of symbolic associations and organic lines derived from nature. These combined with the fragmentation of forms as in Picasso's (1908) Cubist movement into another platform of illusionalistic rendering. The intention is to achieve aesthetic independence which reflects analysis of forms in a simple plane of gray shades. The limitation of this schematic method or palette renders the motifs subjective within the flow of space.

## 1.9 Definition of Terms

**Allegory**: A symbolic representation of charcoal market events and scenes in painting which expresses artistic genre with a multiplicity of deeper meaning than the surface interpretation.

**Black**: Palace of oppression where colour is subjugated.

**Charcoal market:** a conglomeration of patches of muted colours blending together in a composite whole. It is an environment where dark substance is found which absorbs other colours.

**Configuration:** An arrangement of segmented or component parts alienated by lines.

**De Stijl: '**the style' an art journal where Piet Mondrian and his colleagues published their theories on Neo-plasticism which is described as attempt to create international art.

**Horizontal:** Conveys a solitary and restful moods especially horizon of a flat landscape

**Metaphoric**: Using charcoal market to depict environmental concern and human conditions.

**Multiplicity of reading:** Tendency to interpret a work in different perspectives from social, cultural, economic and philosophical or peculiar visual understanding.

**Neo-plasticism:** (New art).This is an extreme form of abstraction which is dominated by geometric shapes, flat colours and interlocking planes where opposing forces of vertical and horizontal agree in harmony, propagated by Piet Mondrian.

**Organic lines**: Natural occurrence of lines in a forested environment in vertical and horizontal formation.

**Restricted Palette**: It is used to represent a palette of grey scheme and drops of muted primary colours.

**Swirl lines**: Lines that turn with a circular twisting in different motion, to make aesthetic statements.

**Synthesis**: Combination of different ideas, influences, styles, elements and concepts found in other artists unified on canvas into a new whole.

**Ulism:** Traditional body decoration inscribed for identification found in the eastern part of Nigeria developed as an aesthetic philosophy by artists like Uche Okeke and others to express them.

**Western Convention** (Academic art) of $17^{th}$ -$19^{th}$centuries-Official art academies established across Europe; where art is taught to students with emphasis on formal order. It is an intellectual aspect of art with skillful approach beyond craftsmanship.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

The review covers literature and related works which incorporate new forms into Postmodernist traditions in line with free expression, experimenting with forms and colours by blending cultural thoughts to create new sensibilities. Also the review covers artists, their art works, philosophy, methodology, which can contribute to this research and especially those whose works are based on systematic and chronological development of concepts from patterns in the environment (nature) resulting into aesthetic idioms and allegories. These artists and works are categorized into three basic areas; issues and influence from the environment for concept development, aesthetic considerations in developing concepts in painting and the use of allegories to depict societal issues and human condition.

Charcoal is a dark mass of solid carbon derived from heating of organic materials especially wood, bone and other substances. It is black depending on the origin and mode of production. The product is for domestic and industrial uses. One major known use of charcoal is fuel energy source. Riches (1997), Nix (1997) and Harris (1999).Charcoal is use in art as a media for drawings and sketches, and in mixed-media paintings. The early use of charcoal as an art media can be found in the works of Paleolithic painters who are referred to as "Stone Age Picassos" Patel (1996). The paintings are characterized by limited palette of pigments of red, yellow ocher and charcoal marks.



Fig.6. A charcoal drawing of a mammoth

Cave art, at Lascaux, Roufignac, a site in France,dating from 15,000 BC to about 9000 BC.

Harris (1999), states that;

> Charcoal may seem a mundane material, but as we have seen, its unique properties have been valued by man throughout history. Its use as a fuel was crucial in the development of metallurgy, and its qualities as an artistic medium have been appreciated from the earliest times. Today activated charcoal is of enormous importance in the purification of water and air. The science of charcoal has been studied for over 200 years

It is becoming obvious that more charcoal production means depletion of the forest reserve. The continuous usage without recourse to environmental concern is generating issues of discuss at different forum. Tenywa (2013) in his article 'Burning the future into charcoal', posits that countries like Uganda, over dependence on charcoal means the country is heading towards energy crisis unless government regulates its use. Sadiq (2012) writing on the business of Charcoal market in Jos, Plateau state, Nigeria, asserts that, charcoal

becomes more attractive to the masses due to its affordability and easy to use. This is due to sometimes hiked in the price and availability of kerosene.

Artists are drawn to interrogate phenomena (charcoal and issues) in time and depict them as they are inspired. Honour and Fleming (2002) hold that "artworks seem to transcend circumstantial limitations, with a timeless appeal, independent of, and sometimes at odds with the intention of their creators". Philosophically, Symbolists, Colour field artists, Expressionists, Fauvists, Constructivists and Abstract expressionists seek deeper truth and other esoteric meanings which lay beneath the surface. Hodge (2011) posits that "Conceptualists think beyond the limits of traditional media and then present it in whatever form is suitable for their idea. This idea is always more important than the final result". Most of the artists reviewed used a limited palette which reveals an austere application of colour to achieve aesthetic statements. They are made in simple rendering of lines, in black and white and muted primary colours. In some instances the entire surface is rendered in almost black. This typifies what the researcher perceived in the charcoal market. Generally, concepts developed by these artists employ different approaches which cut across different genre. In the late 19$^{th}$ and 20$^{th}$ century, artists began to articulate new modes of expression in colour, form, line and pattern through experimentation with different media. They extracted from different forms and radically transformed their works into universal and classic pieces not identifiable or traceable to any culture. The events provide the basis for the artistic exploration of elements of art and concept which seems to hold sway over content. This is in consonance with the philosophy/tenet of Piet Mondrian's Neo-plasticism and also apparent in the paintings of Vassily Kandinsky (1886-1944)

Expressionist ideas (1911) and Bernet Newman (1905-1970) Colour Field paintings. The understanding is to explore element of various associations which conform to the trend of events as they occur. The fascination with this is the search for a degree of visual independence which does not represent any known imagery in its true state. Technological development and urbanization also create interest for artists of Postmodernism and lately in the works of Nigerian artists to depict a variety of styles and techniques. Techniques and ideas are the main focus in their rendering of signs and symbols in what Mondrian refers to as "pure art" which seeks to be interpreted in its own right inferring nothing.

Feldman (1971) states that contemporary painting can be understood as an effort to develop a language which consists of visual communicating qualities belonging to the world of line, shape, texture and colour alone. He further asserts that an artist can adjust the various surface appeals of a work so that we experience what is often called 'beauty'. That aesthetic order does not rely on visual resemblance, truth or symbolic power. Read (1961), maintains the view that "conceptual art brings to an end the ancient culture of art: the culture of a particular form is approaching its end". The Conceptualists are inspired to interpret and represent phenomenon from their own perspectives. Looking at the works of symbolists, their paintings contain implicit messages which Franz Marc (1880-1916) described as expressing 'inner truth', only accessed indirectly because of the use of metaphoric imageries. Interpretations were based on events in history such as wars, tragedy, poverty and oppressions of leaders against their subjects. Artist's shift of focus was evident from representational of these events to variety of rendering in the present times in terms of spatial relationship. This has led to artistic expressions and techniques in the 20$^{th}$ century

which generate lots of meaning in visual art; this could represent complexity of a life of a country, social diversity, poverty and social injustice as in Pablo Picasso's Guernica (1937), Paul Gauguin's The Spirit Watches over Her (1892) and Odilon Redon's The Cyclops (1898).

## 2.2 Issues and influence from the environment for concept development

The issues of environment have become sources of inspiration for artists in concept development using a restricted palette. Artists like Jerry Buhari (b.1959), Rick Stevens (b.1958), Burns Effiom (b.1965) and Mu'azu Mohammed Sani (b.1959) fall under this category.

### 2.2.2 Jerry Buhari (b.1959)

Jerry Buhari is a social and political commentator, an environmental artist. He is known for his experimental works in various media. He sees his art as a medium of commentary and critique. His works demonstrate high level of proficiency in handling of media. In his experimentation with round and curvilinear support, he used a limited palette that sought to depict a complex visual order without aiming at reproducing natural appearances. The expressions are not a formal component of a particular scene but of abstract expressionist trends. This could also be seen as a reminiscence of Jackson Pollock's 'Reflection of Bigger Dipper' (1947), but without gestural spontaneous drips that characterized the work. The inspiration of Buhari's paintings came from instability, chaos, economic and social effects in the society. His works are indication of a paradigm shift in our life style to meet up with the modern/advanced societies of the West resulting into greed.

Increasingly in his works, Buhari decries alienation, oppression and environmental rape. He uses expressions that could best represent his emotions; an archetype of inner search by the artist to reflect on man's actions on his environment. From a religious perspective, he interprets the situation of the environment from Genesis chapter1:11-12,which states that "God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, after his kind: and God saw that it was good". Humans degrade the environment and thereby destroying its purpose. Greed, materialism, oppression, injustice pervade all the fabric of the society. All these vices are locked up and represented in a round plate in a few colours with each looking like a palette of an artist.

His work provides insights into the issues of the environment and organic relationships affected by activities of humans who are a strand in the eco-system. In his quest for exploration, he developed a limited palette that pushes the limits of perception to a more delicate sensibility towards our futile actions to handle social problems as represented in this research. The ripple effect is deeper and complex in the context of our collective effort.

Buhari's palette is predominantly black, sparsely grey with drops of primary colours which he says are symbolic. He employs his enamel pigments to experiment with relationships in a field of muted, low-colour painting, clothe with non-recognizable symbols that carry messages. Each work expresses the sensibility of the artist as he reacts to a particular issue. The pigments of enamel are poured on board and allowed to fuse into each other and are controlled in some instance by the artist. The direction of movement of paint looks like

molten lava from a Volcano (Danjuma, 2010).Rather than running with buckets of paints, Buhari poured paint out almost in a controlled manner to achieve his desired goal. He integrated colours into grey, fused together to produce a tactile quality with great sensuous appeal, shimmering surface and unsteady appearance. There is no agitation to suggest details of an object but occasionally the viewer notices a myriad of dots. These paintings are like the works of the Surrealist that presents us with a world of indecipherable visual riddles. (Sayre,2007).

Buhari achieved dark effects on a rounded shape support which became a quintessential of his rendering of subject matter, basically of a postmodernist artist. He asserts that, 'I found a direct link of the motif in nature, like the sun and moon…the circular shaped formats appropriate surfaces of the subject'. The shape became planet earth, the cosmos and life amongst others. Some of the paintings are regular circular form (See Figs.7-8) and others are irregular circular form (See Fig.9) which depict different aspects that have to do with the environment. The visible difference with this research is the shape of the support, and the technique of colour applications with enamel paint which according to him suits the subject matter of his exploration.




**Fig:7**
**Artis**t: Jerry Buhari
**Title**: Crude Oil with oil motif, 2012
**Medium:** oil on Board
**Size**: diameter 60cm

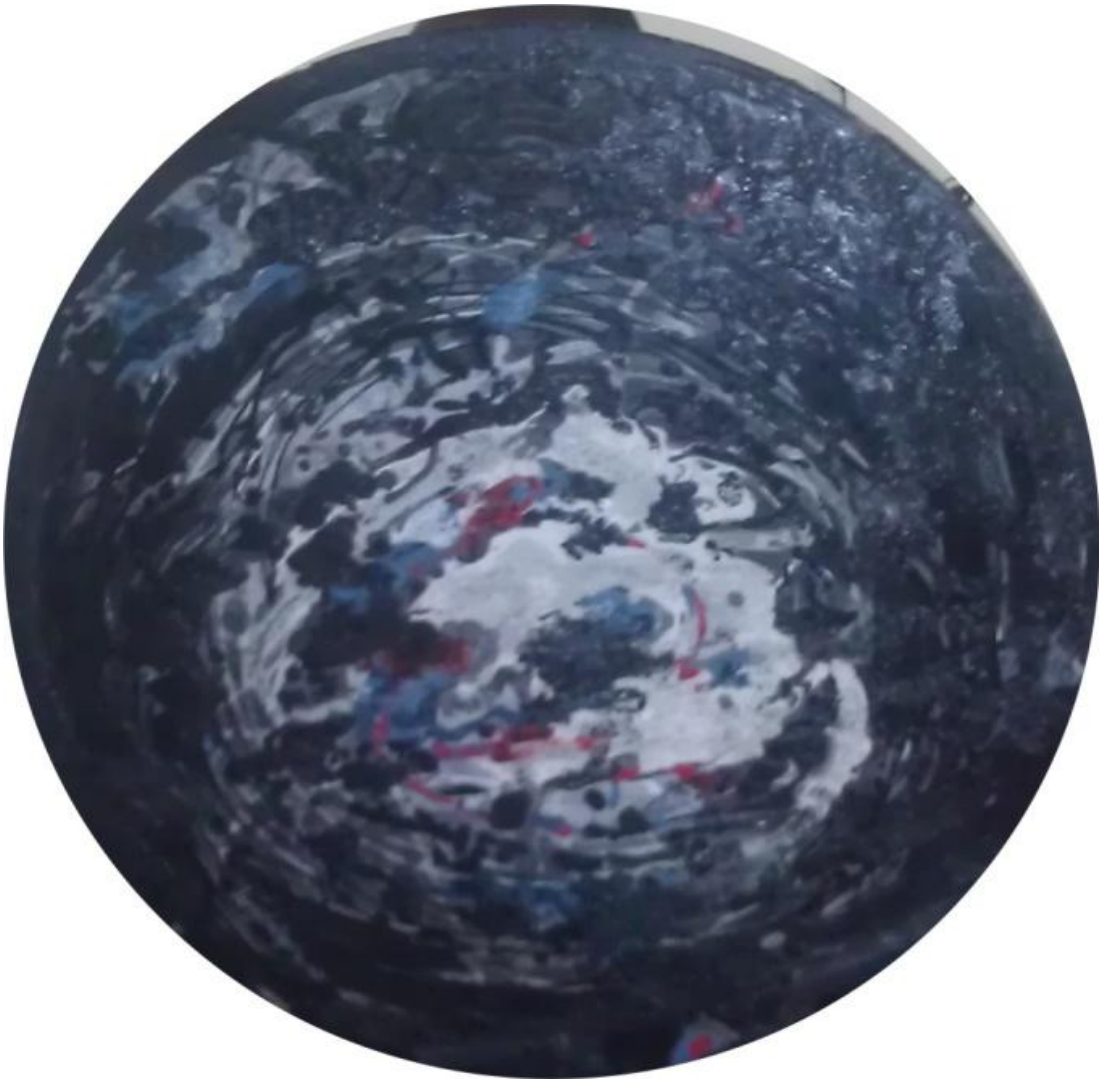


**Fig: 8**
**Artis**t: Jerry Buhari
**Title**: Spillage on Planet, 2011
**Medium:** oil on board
**Size**: diameter 84cm



**Fig: 9**
**Artis**t: Jerry Buhari
**Title**: Melting Planet, 2011
**Medium:** Enamel on board
**Size**: diameter 95cm

### 2.2.3 **Rick Stevens** (b.1958-)

Joseph (2007) quotes Rick Stevens thus;

*"While the shapes in my work may come from observing nature, they may also take on symbolic implications. A line can symbolize man's need for structure. The spotted patterns permeating throughout express the life affirming human spirit that refuses to be constricted by barriers". (Rick Stevens)*

*Also he declared,*

"Nature is an inroad to my spiritual path." "As a painter, I see light as the unifying element. It illuminates all we see. As a landscape painter the critical concern for me has always been not just the subject and composition, but choosing the light to portray it in" (Rick Stevens) www.mark-gallery.com/rick-sevens.

Stevens was motivated while in meditation in the Woods Land. This led to exploring and experimenting with abstract landscapes of objective and non-objective subjects. The attraction to nature, wood, trees, orchards, fields, landscape, the forested areas and streams continues to inspire Rick Stevens. The themes of his works evolved from the connectedness of the interlocking network of branches and the filtering of sunlight, with frequent changes of shadows. His works involve two ingredients in what Collier (1967) refers to as "ingredients of addition and reduction," to lose some of their natural or existential reality or to gain a design from a result of human sensitivity. This process is described as "developing theme."

Stevens' organic associations that were developed from nature influenced the sensibility of the researcher. The earlier studies of his works were basicsally depiction of the real world (See Fig.10), but the spiritual aspects of his works form the basis for understanding how concepts are developed. These works also reflect his interest in the natural world, spiritual activities and philosophical theories including Eastern thought (Oriental world) from one angle, celebration of pure colour and form from another. It becomes a meditation on nature, spirituality and the universe as in Floating Dream, 2007(See Fig.11), He paints and draws with a language of intuitive expression that is supported by a lovely, romantic spatial organization, one that encourages the viewer to discover receding planes of space through shifting and overlapping rectangles. He embodies his works within a realist tradition and one based on abstraction as in the contemporary culture of the post-modernist. The expression of ethereal environment is based on the rhythm of nature. This completely eliminated the horizon in his works but achieved illusion of space through fluidity of lines and interaction of shapes with colour and symbols moving into dynamic compositions.

All of Stevens' works in this review express the artist's ability to abstract his observations of the visible, natural world into beautifully organized patterns. The abstract decorative compositions of form and colour all helped his ideological structures making them into a modulation of a spiritual realm (See Figs.12, 13 and 14). He vividly used dark vertical lines from one edge of the canvas to the other. The short horizontal lines and blends of colours create planes that lead into each composition. The dots are influenced by reflections as a result of highlighting. This aspect of Stevens' works helped the researcher in translating charcoal market from the real world to an ethereal environment.

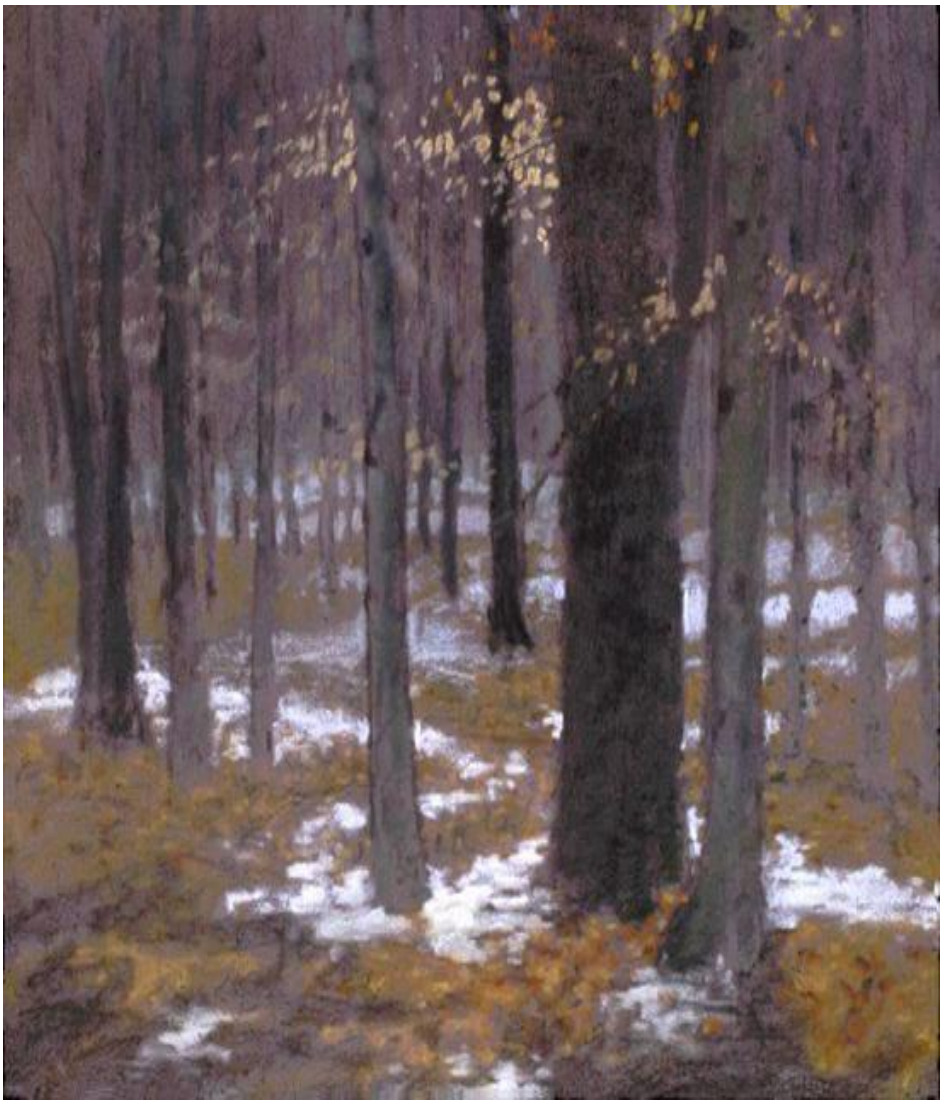


**Fig:** 10
**Artist**: Rick Stevens
**Title**: Dappled Snow,
**Medium**: Pastel
**Size:** 15x17Image



**Fig:** 11.
**Artist**: Rick Stevens
**Title**: Floating Dream, 2007
**Medium**: Pastel
**Size:** 47”x47”

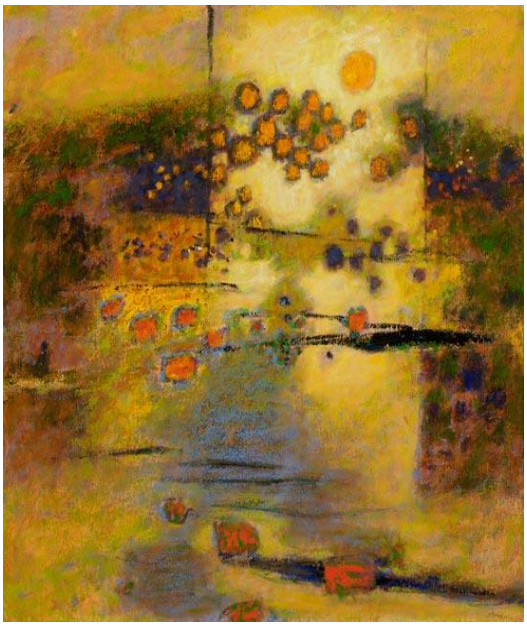


**Fig:** 12.
**Artist**: Rick Stevens
**Title**: Western Space, 2010
**Medium**: Pastel
**Size**:48x42cm



**Fig:** 13
**Artist**: Rick Stevens
**Title**: Land of enchantment, 2010
**Medium**: Pastel
**Size:** 48x48**cm**



**Fig:** 14
**Artist**: Rick Stevens
**Title**: Semantic Spaces, 2010
**Medium**: Pastel
**Size**:48x48cm

**2.2.4 Burns Effion** (b.1965) is a designer, artist and an environmentalist. In his words, 'I am part of humanity, in search of all what art can offer my works especially those emanating from scanning the veins of dynamism'. His work "Climate Song" (2010), (See Fig.15), portrays environmental problems. He likened many of Nigeria's environmental problems to those typical of developing states as a result of excessive cultivation, and increase cutting of timber causing depletion of the forest reserve. It is inspired by the climatic condition of the environment. All over the world today, the familiar tune is about saving humanity from 'man made' and 'natural disaster', what Effion refers to as "… imbalance or disharmony in weather and climatic conditions".

Thatched houses are arranged in a formal order as in a city environment. The composition is fragmented into three major undefined compartments, houses, irregular outlined undulating circular forms which seem to represent the sun and its actions on the eco-system. At the top right corner is what looks like a bunch of flowering motifs rendered in green and violet hues as if flying, probably because of the heat. The work is full of jubilant motion like tied balloons released from the horizon. The researcher sees the green in the air as what could represent disappearance of life from the environment due to the impact of global warming. One noticeable thing here is that there is no human form seen in this work. It looks deserted, could it possibly be as a result of the effect of the condition that makes it uninhabitable to humans? The entire environment is taken over by a dominant colour of brownish orange signifying dryness. Circular motion is been highlighted with yellow and orange suggesting the changes that occur in the ozone layer while the changes assume a different dimension. The plant life is fizzling out as shown in diagonal motion. At the

foreground and all through the thatched houses, the artist uses black to create movement in horizontal orientation. This work is not rendered with a restricted palette like in this research, but the artist used few warm colours to depict the effect of global warming as a result of deforestation.



**Fig**: 15
**Artis**t: Burns Effion
**Title**: Climate Song, 2010
**Medium:** mixed media/oil on canvas
**Size**: 147cmx84cm

## 2.3 The use of allegories to depict societal issues and human conditions

Artists are apt to use allegories as a means of depicting societal issues and human conditions in their works which meanings are not accessed directly. These works are rendered in a restricted palette. Artists like Jari Jacob (b.1960), Kolade Oshinowo (b.1948), Obiora Udechukwu (b.1947), Pablo Picasso (b.1881-1973), and Robert Motherwell (b.1915) fall under this category.

### 2.3.1 Jacob Jari (b.1960)

Jacob Jari is a conceptual artist and a social commentator. According to him, 'The non representational nature of my work allows the viewer to engage closely with the medium thereby bringing a fresh and most likely, respectful attention to a once discarded object'. His works are basically conceptual which comment on social issues relating to the happenings in every facet of our day to day existence. His work mimic the society projected through the restoration of the discarded to give them continuity. His philosophy is based on second chance. Everyone deserves a second chance to make amends. He cited the metaphor used in Ezekiel chapter 37 and verses1-2.

Verse 1.which reads "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. (Verse 2) And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they are very dry". The bones represent the discarded pieces thrown away and by an inspired idea, Jari found another life for them. The dry bones can still live again. He would usually pick pieces of discarded materials by tailors to give them another life instead of been burnt. He said 'we

leave pieces of us behind with the tailors each time we make a dress to wear'. These pieces represent us, our collective aspirations. It is by picking them back that we can fill the holes. These holes perhaps represent injuries sustained by us as individuals or as a Nation that require our attention. It is by reinvesting the pieces to give the second chance that the new can emerge. The works could infer a nation holed, perforated like biblical saying in the book of Isaiah chapter 42 verses 22 which reads, "But this a people robbed and spoiled; they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and non delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore". He elaborates further that his works show how life is reintroduced where it was once extinguished. The researcher sees this as a dialogue of holes in a puzzle, an experimental undertaking to advance the role set for us to bring to fore what is absent in each hole.

Fig.16 shows 'The Hunt' 2012, mixed media on canvas. Jari incorporates cave art aesthetics into postmodernist aesthetics that accept marriage of convenience to develop a new idiom. A view of this work from a distance reveals a narrative account of a hunt represented with silhouettes of running animals and two men in black superimposed on bullet-ridden colourful fabric. This represents an allegory of the country that is on the run to mend holes. Though the animal and men can only be seen through perforated holes, they are visible enough to create an imagery that expands our views and confront our existence.

Saliu (2012) observes that Jari's "Without Colour 1 and 11"shown in Figs 17 and 18, demonstrate a philosophical content. Both works were produced with Fabric off-cuts. He described the works as blue rings arranged in simple repeat pattern and as blue buttons randomly repeated. The works seem to remind the viewer that despite the short comings of

the country which looks as though there is no hope, there are unaccountable positive and progressive potentials in Nigeria. The perforated holes seem to signify negative situations, but this could be reversed. These according to Saliu 'may be empty holes or a sign of hopelessness, but they contain lots of hopes if only patience is exercised'. The works are reminiscent of those produced by a colour field artist whose use of just a colour can have an impact on the beholder. When viewed side by side Mark Rothko's black canvases and the works in this research, Jari works are highly evocative. The common trends in his reviewed works are the holes and the utilization of discarded clothing materials to create allegory, without necessarily using artists' oil colour. The artist was still able to make statements on the human condition which this research exemplified. The burnt holes of 'Without Colour I&II' resemble the charcoal environment where the researcher derived inspiration from.



**Fig.16**
**Artist**: Jacob Jari
**Title**: The hunt, 2012.
**Medium:** Fabric. Mixed media on canvas
**Size**: 88.9x119.4cm

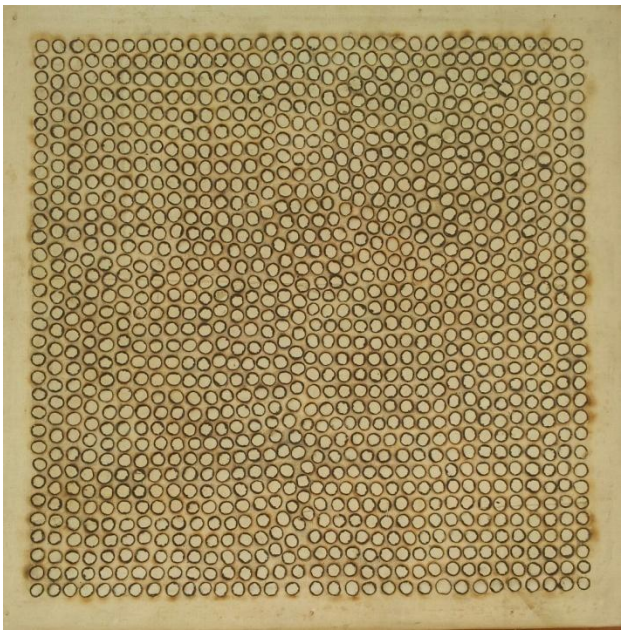


**Fig: 17**
**Artist**: Jacob Jari
**Title**: Without colour 1, 2010.
**Medium:** Fabric.
**Size**: 88.9x119.4cm

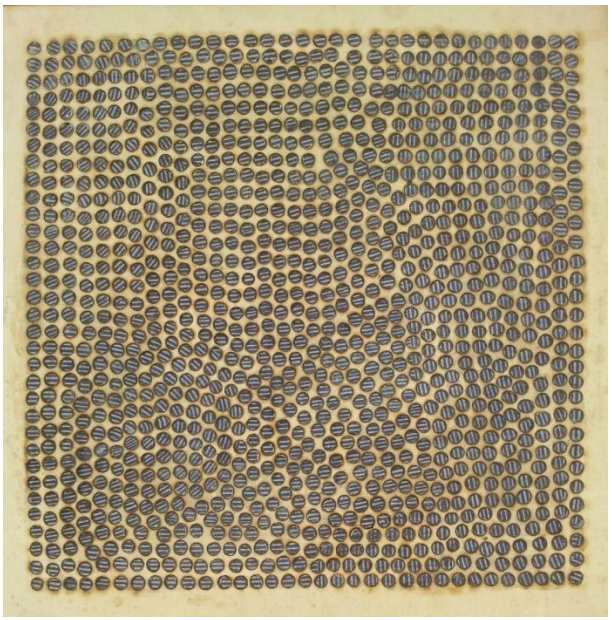


**Fig: 18**
**Artist**: Jacob Jari
**Title**: Without colour, 2010.
**Medium:** Fabric. Mixed media on canvas
**Size**: 88.9x119.4cm

### 2.3.2 Robert Motherwell (b.1915-1991)

"Every artist's problem is to invent himself." "Most painting in the European tradition was painting the mask. Modern art rejected all that. Our subject matter was the person behind the mask."-Motherwell

Motherwell's paintings exude metaphors of contrast between 'opposites' such as life and death in his popular painting, "Elegy ***to the Spanish Republic" (See Figs.19-20).*** These paintings explore his passion of symbolic associations that convey the tragedy of the Spanish war and the human condition. He created arrays of black and white relationships which take the spectator through a journey of black and colour units. This gives an impression of weighty black image with a suggestion of movement flowing from one end of the canvas to the other.

Motherwell's bold calligraphic-like images became more of a signature and passion considering over 200 works he executed using the same theme. His use of a restricted palette shows how important statements about issues that dwell on human conditions can be depicted using a symbol in a simplified manner. Motherwell's political experience and understanding of human misery constrained him to use the flag of his nation as the dominant icon for expression with hanging hopes in a country bedeviled by civil unrest. Experimenting with a technique of emotionally charged brush work, he developed his own idiom that is unique. This is as a result of the influence of Expressionist and Surrealists techniques of spontaneous and provocative use of heavy black shapes, abstract imagery to express feelings. It is said that his influence came also from the writing of James Joyce in the titling of his paintings, drawings, and prints throughout his career. A poem by Spanish

poet Frederico García Lorca gave him the theme of the ***Elegy to the Spanish Republic***. Part of the poem reads, "…the Elegies use an essential component of pictorial language that is as basic as the polyphonic rhythms of Medieval or African or Oriental music." The usage of colour in his paintings is without visible modulation which differs from the researcher's approach. His lines are boldly defined in vertical and horizontal dripping formation contrasting with the renderings in this research.



**Fig: 19**
**Artist:** Robertmotherwell (American,1915-1991)
**Title**: Elegy to the spanish republic, 70, 1961
**Medium:** Oil on canvas
**Size**: 69 x 114 in. (175.3 x 289.6 cm)



**Fig: 20**
**Artist:** Robert motherwell (American, 1915-1991)
**Title**: Elegy to the spanish republic, 57, 1957-60
**Medium:** Oil on canvas
**Size**: 108 x 84 Inc.

### 2.3.3 Kolade Oshinowo (b.1948-)

The subject of women for artistic expression in painting is noticeable in Oshinowo's elegant rendering of the subject matter. Buhari (2013), quotes him as saying that,

> The use of female subject is a universal one and it has been so through the ages. The female is endowed with a form that is as complex as it is beautiful. The woman also adds to her beauty by wearing various forms of headgear and adding accessories such as ear rings, neck, laces and bangles of various sizes and materials. The female body represents the beauty and challenges of womanhood and motherhood. These I try to capture in my paintings.

Every work of his in this review shows a celebration of womanhood in sharp contrast to the woman form illustrated by De Kooning ‘Woman III’, 1953, Fig.48.

His recent exhibition in 2012 can be regarded as a celebration of Womanhood. The woman element that dominates most of his works is an expression influenced by his immediate environment. The energy of his works, the strength of forms and lines, elegance and colour are knitted together in a unified entity. Oloidi (2012) observes that Oshinowo imageries are well fed with very profuse ornamentation through multi-variety of organic and geometrical patterns and aquatic formations that are integral to the fabric used in compositional material. Oshinowo is drawn to exploring interaction and connectedness of every strand of the society viewed from the artist’s lens, depicting the woman in elegant and superlative postures that celebrate her person, taste, desires and form.

The researcher’s series on ‘woman’, Plates 60-63 contrast with Oshinowo’s in this review. This is because the women depicted are integrated into a grey and dark environment while Oshinowo shows them in their daily activity with the object of their trade in another environment. The environment evidently impacts on the way the women dress and look. It is obvious in Oshinowo’s paintings that the woman despite her daily chores is attired in a colourful decorative material unlike in the paintings of the researcher. His design elements are well expressed in calm pictorial composition.

He also developed a painstaking approach that gives attention to detail in the exploration of the female form. An exploration of this kind opens up the understanding of the place of artistic appreciation of the female form which carries intrinsic meaning. The subject matter

of female forms in Oshinowo's works gives credence to his quest in celebrating them such as in Fig.21, Sisi Ologe 1,2012 and Fig.22, Discussion 2012.

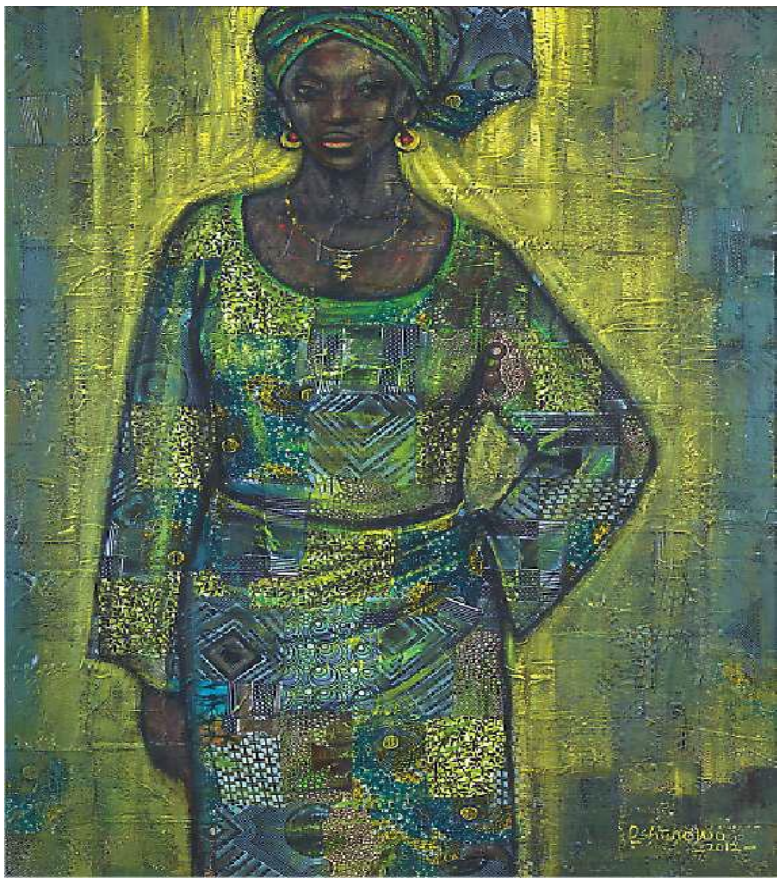


**Fig: 21**
**Artist**: Kolade Oshinowo
**Title**: Sisi Ologe, 2012
**Medium:** mixed –media
**Dimension**: 122x91cm

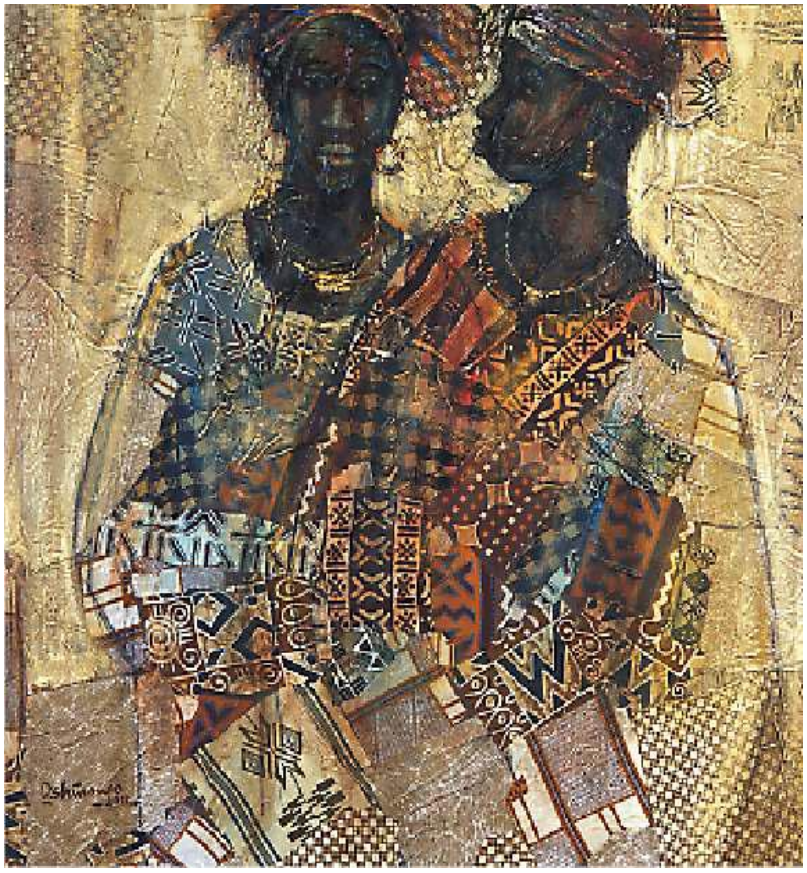


**Fig:22**
**Artist**: Kolade Oshinowo
**Title**: Discussion,2011
**Medium:** mixed –media
**Dimension**: 122x122cm

"Someone Burnt the Bush" (1989) (See Fig.23) is an aesthetic interpretation of what characterizes Nigeria's country side. Apart from the women series reviewed, this work by Oshinowo reflects a relationship with this research on the issues of environment which is the focus especially in Plate. XXXVIII, 'Fire Behind the Bush'. An award winning painting on environmental issues is like a lamentation of one who has lost a vital thing. The background captures trees and a bush in intense flame. At the foreground are patches of colours that represent the glow of fire which gives a feeling of warmth. Gushem (2010) describes this work as one of the most visually intense and conceptually challenging works

of Oshinowo. It is dark, somber, rendered in mixed media. He affirms that Oshinowo felt that there was a need for the conservation of the wildlife. His method, according to Gushem, re-choreographed the burning process by setting fire on the painting board, and poignantly highlighting the uncontrollable havoc that the fire could wreck.



**Fig: 23**
**Artist**: Kolade Oshinowo
**Title**: Someone burnt the bush, 1989
**Medium:** mixed –media
**Dimension**: 51x63cm

### 2.3.4 Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)

Pablo Picasso in (Moffat, 2010) states that,

> Everyone wants to understand art, why don't we try to understand the song of a bird? Why do we love the night, the flowers, and everything around us without trying to understand them? But in the case of a painting, people think they have to understand …people who try to explain a picture usually bark up the wrong tree.

This is a statement by one of the prolific, very proficient artists in modern art history having gone through a period of experimentation in different media in articulating his expression and feelings. Picasso's proficiency in handling media was well noticed as early as 1894, a display of unusual talent at his age. His concept development started with copying the old masters, imitating their style and this resulted in formulating a personal idiom.

By 1906 Picasso's search for new ways to depict form evolved and developed through practice. His approach and experimentation with Cubism challenges the understanding of visual realities. Every part of a work is fragmented to create an illusion of reality of form in space. His quest for innovation led him from one style to another expressed in a wide range of visual expressions. He was also influenced by ancient Iberian, African sculpture and by the paintings of Paul Cezanne. This birthed a new move and a point of departure from careful presentation of illusionary space. In the 1900, Picasso's break from classicism was evident especially after the death of one of his close friends Casagemas in 1901. In the biography of Pablo Picasso, Moffat (2010) quotes Picasso thus, "I began to paint blue, when I realized that Casagemas had died". This shows how a given situation could affect the emotion of artists and reflect in their works. At this period, he was said to depict his

feeling about restlessness and loneliness, isolation, unhappiness, despair, misery of physical weakness, old age and poverty; all of it in shades of blue. Picasso's Blue Period lasted1901-1904, the 'Blue' paintings depict a mood or state of mind. He emphasized the sombre quality in "The old Guitarist" (1903).

"Le Demoiselles d'Avignon" (1906), (See Fig.24), is a fragmentation of women forms which influenced the formulation of Cubism in 1908. Cubism is the depiction of a composition of shapes and forms abstracted in an all-over effect that unifies each component in space. The flat design is made up of five rigid nudes (regarded as prostitutes in a brothel) and fluttering draperies spread over them. Noticeable are their faces which seem to be an assemblage of African masks. The characteristics in this work are rigid lines used to fragment the forms, plain colours and a limited palette. According to Janson (1964), Picasso in this work used human anatomy as simple raw-materials. Limbs, breasts and faces are handled with sovereign freedom. The original identity no-longer matters, breasts may turn into eyes, profiles merge with frontal views, and shadows become substance, an 'endless flow of metamorphoses'. This mode of expression has also influenced other artists like Piet Mondrian and Georges Braque. It marked the voyage of creative force where his work engages viewers in an inquiring situation and become part of the interrogators of the work. The fragmentation of forms is mimicked in the 'woman' series all through the research, though Picasso's colour scheme is dominated by earth colours, blue and a dark shades. The woman in his work is depicted as a sex symbol, while in this research she is represented as a hard working woman despite her challenges.



**Fig: 24**
**Artist**: Pablo Picasso
**Title**: Les Demoiselles d'Avignon , 1906-7
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Dimension**: 96x92”

**Guernica 1937**, shown in Fig.25, is one of Picasso’s popular and great mural paintings. It is seen as a symbolic painting that represents war. This allegorical work is rendered in flat patterns with clearly outlined cut-off shapes from newsprint. It describes a terrible agonizing situation of war over a nation. The artist was said to been moved when he read about Guernica in the newspaper. He depicted a woman to the left with her dead baby in her arms. Mutilated corpses and bodies of dying figures are superimposed in a stampede at the foreground. These seem to represent the torment of innocent civilians massacred during the bombing of Guernica. A dying soldier is shown lying on the ground screaming in pains, rigid arms, and wide open eyes in agony probably because of the ordeal inflicted on his body. He clinches to the broken sword from which sprouts a flower, symbolizing life after the war. A wounded horse is ripped open and a spear is thrust into its back to represent the

collapse of the Spanish people brought to their knees by the Fascists. A woman desperately tries to flee from the bombing, with her twisted body, running in the midst of ensuing calamity. This illustrates how the innocent society is affected by things like war. A figure holds a lamp, the head and arm protrudes out of a window that opens out to form part of the narrative. The image is a symbol of what will draw attention of the world to the violent incident of the war. The bull with a ferocious look, most likely represents the violence of the Fascists responsible for the massacre of the people. A Screaming figure is shown moving toward a tiny window of her burning house. With outstretched arms in helpless horror the looks up with an open wide mouth in a scream of pain and resignation to the anguish.

The anguish was so terrifying that Picasso presented a horrifying situation. Koppelman (1999) affirms that "the greatest discontinuity of life is that of the sudden change from life to Death". This composition portrays brokenness of peaceful atmosphere and love for life above death. The colour scheme of restricted palette was inspired by the black and white newspaper photographs that conveyed the cruel reality, agonies and atrocities of war. He used grey, white, and black in this painting to represent a black day. Picasso's painting spoke out against the war and injustice perpetrated against many defenseless people. Kopperland further states that, "death in the symbol of light is to give continuity to discontinuity". He portrayed a bulb made by human and imprinted into the sun to signify that light is needed in this dark situation over the stricken horse. What does this work portend to us? Every part of this work is full of philosophical significance that unveils the heart of humans against one another. The use of colour is significant in depicting a

sorrowful atmosphere, the fragmentation in space and the circumstances of discontinuity from life as in this research. This can also be related to life of a tree that is discontinued by cutting it down to make charcoal.

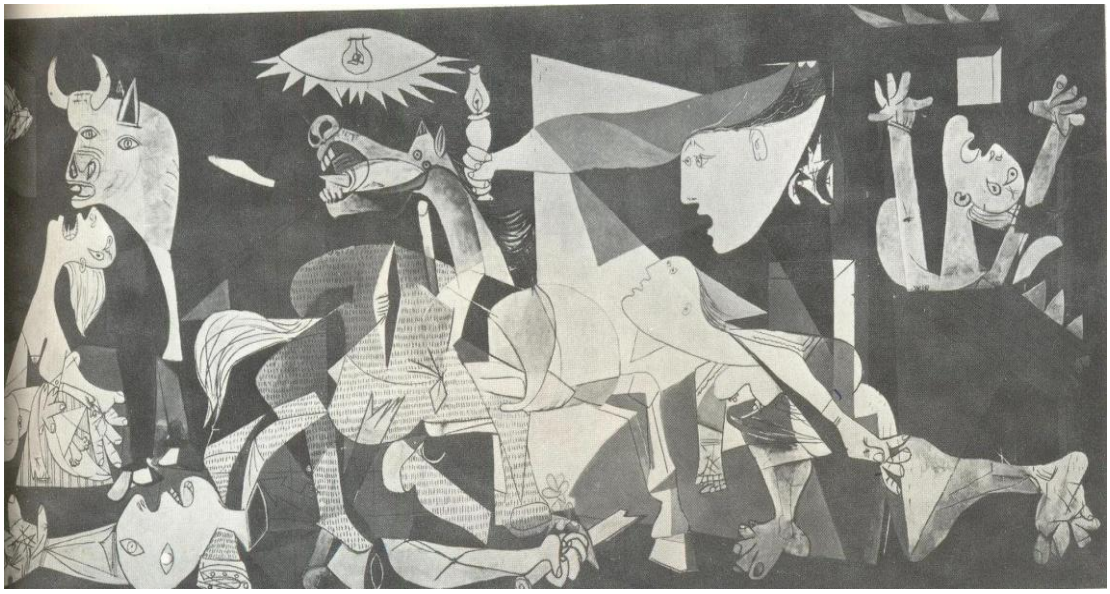


**Fig: 25**
**Artist**: Pablo Picasso
**Title**: Guernica 1937
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Dimension**: 138x308”
(Source: Art in our times, A Pictorial History, 1890-1980)

**Marie-Thérèse, 1931** portrayed in Fig.26, is a face and a profile work of Picasso. Unlike his other works of the Rose and Blue periods, he presents in the work two headed beings that face each other as in a kiss, yet in a mannerism of his Cubist approach. The eyes look directly at the audience. The profile positioning of two faces is obvious. The one with a head gear on the right seems to assume different bodies which overlap to create a connection that fuses them together. One aspect that is intriguing in this composition is the three faces depicted on the same body like a puzzle. The shade of gray and bold outlined

composition is executed to possibly portray lovers in a silent act, away from the glaring activities of others. This could also signify deceptions of human who can betray one another through double dealing. Although this work anchors on a sociability issue, it is however linked by colour scheme and bold outline to define forms, a method employed in this research.



**Fig: 26**
**Artist**: Pablo Picasso
**Title**: Marie-Thérèse, Face and Profile (Marie-Thérèse, face et profil ), Paris, 1931
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Dimension**: 138x308”
**(**Source**:** Guggenheim museum**)**

### 2.3.5 Obiorah Udechukwu (b.1947)

He is arguably one of the respected Nigerian artists who have traversed different aspects of the arts. One of the interesting aspects of his works for review is his lyrical conversation. The use of a restricted palette is evident in his moody pictures which depict the human conditions especially emanating from the civil war. Aig-Imoukhuede (1984) observes that 'the most striking qualities of Udechukwu's works are their spontaneity and their lyricism. In his abstract moods, his lines became personal communication of the mysterious and mystic pulling the eye, ear and the mind along with hypnotic effect'. Earth colours are mostly used. Lines are rendered in black and white to emphasize form. His black washes on paper and drawings are all representing the prevalent circumstances of the period. Social issues became important to him such as the scarcity of water and other themes that portray woes of human. Lawal (1984) reveals that Udechukwu's works have special focus on the poor, the down trodden masses whose social condition is so precarious that they are not sure of the next meal. He did not only highlight the urgency of their plight and by extension, the contradictions in the human condition but also reaches for the inner recesses of our psyche.

According to Ikwuemesi (2004), Udechukwu and his contemporaries at Nsukka played a very important role in the history of art in Nigeria during the post-war period in changing the face of Nigeria's young modernism at the time. His lines distil images and elements that enquire into social discourse often constituting what makes his lyrical inscription a cultural identity. The work then becomes a reference and a commentary on critical issues of concern in the society. Campbell (1993), states that Obiora concentrated on the "Fleeing woman of the exile train" during the thirty month Nigeria civil war. The works did focus on

ladies who wielded the gun. Those who performed diplomatic feats were not the subjects of his artistic endeavour rather the abandoned; the widowed and homeless women were the focus of his illustrations. One of his works, presented in Fig.28, 'Widow Woman and children' (1971), is observed by the researcher to be a reverse image when compared to the images of the womenfolk in Oshinowo's paintings who are elegantly depicted to reflect their class and status. Some of his renderings are conceptual in nature without decipherable forms. In this study also, the researcher conceptualized women and their activities of selling charcoal using a restricted palette.



**Fig: 27**
**Artist**: Obiora Udechukwu
**Title**: Widowed Woman and Children 1976
**Medium**: ink and wash
**Size**:56x38cm



**Figs: 28**
**Artist**: Obiora Udechukwu
**Title:** Widowed Woman and Children 1971
**Medium**: Gouache, Pencil
**Size:** 32x24.5cm



**Fig**. **29**
**Artist:** Obiora Udechukwu
**Title**: Refugee in Desolate Landscape,
**Medium**: Watercolour**.**
**Size**: 46x61cm

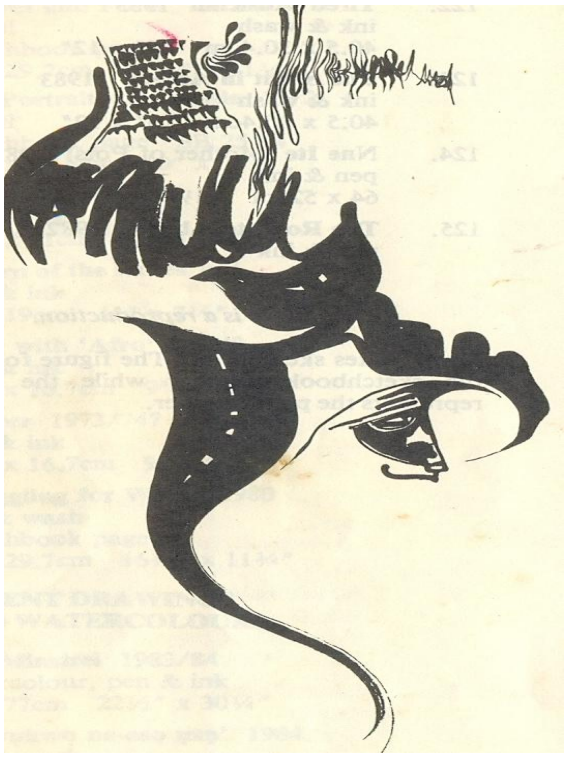


**Fig: 30**
**Artist**: Obiora Udechukwu
**Title**: Organic Forms
**Medium**: brush and ink
**Size**: 46x6cm

### 2.4.1 Aesthetic considerations in developing concepts in painting

The concern is developing a structure of painting that expresses its own psyche conveying no symbolic meaning. The concepts are not necessary imitation of nature. The works represented under this category are exemplified in interrelationship of limited vocabulary and colour and line. The conceptual framework in this research was developed from some of the works of the artists under review. Artists reviewed are Piet Mondrian (b.1872-1944), Franz Kline (1910-1962), John Virtue (b.1947), Song Su-nam (b.1938), Paul Klee (1879-1940) and Cathy M. Woo (b.1949) fall under this category.

### 2.4.2 **Piet Mondrian** (1872 – 1944)

A member of the Leyden group, Mondrian was regarded as one of the influential abstract painters and leading theorists of abstraction. He pioneered a rigid form of abstraction that did not abstract from nature but evolved from horizontal and vertical lines and right angles. His publications in De stijl magazine carry his thoughts and theories and the manifesto of Neoplasticism (Paris 1920). Jaffe` (2008) upholds that;

> 'De Stijl' prides itself on being a logical consequence of the previous development of the arts; it has a pronounced ideological character, which cannot be accounted for without investigating the adjacent planes of cultural activity. Contemporary philosophy deeply influenced the artists which founded 'De Stijl'. The universalism of the movement, the new and quite different scope they have claimed for their art can, up to a certain point be traced to certain trends in Dutch philosophy during the first years of the 20th century.

The art of Neoplasticism assumed its own characteristics based on works that sought to purify art of natural attributes. Its principle is also devoid of the application of colour harmony with reference for distinctive rendering of basic colour pigmentation. This artistic movement investigates and depicts art which is an outcome of contemplation on nature to project 'Universal equilibrium'. This can be achieved through what Jaffe` (2008), refers to as "mathematically controllable technique; dividing their square canvases into a system of smaller squares, and basing their composition on this exact pattern".

Al-Saati (1990) also observes that,

> Neo-Plasticism demonstrates the exact order. It stands for equity, because the equivalence of the plastic means in the composition demonstrates that it is possible for each, despite differences, to have the same value as the others. Equilibrium, through a

contrasting and neutralizing opposition, annihilates individuals as particular personalities and thus creates the future society as a real unity.

The influence of Neoplasticism on this research is based on what Hodge (2011) calls 'Universal harmony' which became its focus. This concept centers on the following:

i. Breaking down of objects to their purist state to create balance.

ii. Expressing the notion of 'Universal harmony' using only pure elements.

iii. Using grid-like paintings in order to reveal the timelessness (no record of time) and spiritual order of the universe.

iv. Discarding any focal point of view with each segment of the painting receiving the same attention.

v. Creating works with opposing forces of horizontal and vertical lines which create balance, calmness and stability.

Mondrian according to Baxter (2008) was attracted by Cubism in the French capital Paris, which led him to create several paintings centering around trees including "flowering apple trees". Mondrian developed a series of paintings on the subject of trees from 1909-1913.These paintings show the influence of Cubism from the paintings of Picasso. His works of this period developed in range of grays (blue and black) and a network of pattern of arcs and organic lines to a more abstracted composition. This influence of Cubism in 1911-12, led Mondrian to a search for simplification as seen in his early experimentation with "Gray Tree" in 1912 (See Fig.31).The tree is stretched out in bold dark lines creating a rhythmic structure through complexity of movement in the picture plane with the use of a restricted palette. His search for a pictorial language using basic elements, straight lines,

primary colours, and neutrals of black, white and grey rendered his painting in "a true vision of reality".

Several of his works reflect the fragmentations of forms and a departure from nature. It is apparent that Mondrian's technique has assumed a new meaning in terms of the transformation of the appearance of nature into an interwoven surface texture. He said 'it is the work itself that has opened the field from which it appears in another light'.

According to Mondrian, there are two opposing elements that make us to see art as demonstrating and expressing universal beauty that does not arise from the particular character of form, but from the dynamic rhythm of its inherent relationships. The opposites, between the subjective and the objective are the direct creation of universal beauty and aesthetic expression of harmony and unity. Mondrian maintained the view that 'For the artist, the search for a unified expression through the balance of two opposites has been and always will be a continual struggle'. This is reflected in canon of equilibrium he sets to achieve in his composition of the vertical and horizontal lines which results to a balanced union.

According to Selz (1981), Mondrian's geometric abstractions were intended to express pure reality and pave the way for a better world and a life of balance and equilibrium as exemplified in his work. He was always in search of space based on a relationship between opposing forces which forms the core of his explorations. This is interpreted to mean the contrast of countless and limited forms in nature. The human condition is regarded as external and internal, existent and nonexistent, unity and disunity and so on. This search by the society for equilibrium is driven by the need to have a place that could accommodate all

views. The restriction of his design to horizontals and verticals means the elimination of emotion, the creation of an interactive relationship of primary colours, white and black. The tension of his line and the purity of colour sought to transform the plasticity of nature into a plane surface.

His art expresses itself only through simplified forms in still-life, reducing them to rectangles that create interlocking relationships of colour planes in a grid of intersecting vertical and horizontal lines. Four elements of painting are employed, line, form, colour and space. With this he created no illusion of space and his colours remain flat on surfaces thereby implying that a painting could be reduced to basic fundamental concentrate. To this Merleau-Ponty (1964) in Ross (1994) states, "the entire modern history of painting with its efforts to detach itself from illusion and to acquire its own dimensions has a metaphysical significance. To him every art is bound by a 'plurality of interpretation' and has a right to philosophical status".

In his paintings (Figs.31-35) Mondrian reveals stages of development that culminate into the use of lines and rectangles suggesting the mechanical precision of the machine made, creating aesthetic order which is as a result of Cubist influence.

According to Carel (2001), in Mondrian's letter to H.P Bremmer in 1914, he wrote

> For when I construct lines and colour combinations on a flat surface, it is with the aim of portraying 'Universal beauty' as consciously as possible. Nature (or that which I see) inspired me, provides me- as it does every painter-with the emotion by which I am moved to create something, but I want to approach the truth as closely as possible, abstracting everything until I come the foundation-still only an outward foundation of things…

Mondrian's work owes its foundation to his spiritual and philosophical studies. His attraction to theosophical theory movement (a religious group) helped to give birth to his major break from representational painting to turn towards a conception of non-objective or pictorial-"pure plastic art"(Kleiner and Mamiya,2005)

His concept is developed by means of drawing a composition from a fragment of reality into an overall abstract view of harmony of the universe. To Mondrian, "a painting no longer has to begin from an abstracted view of nature, rather a painting could emerge out of purely abstract rules of geometry or colour." He believes that it is possible by the means of horizontal and vertical lines to construct 'consciously' but not 'calculating', guided by a higher intuition of harmony and rhythm. Mondrian's works evolved over time, lines took pre-eminence and they were expressed all through to the edge of the canvas of black without depth. His concept development in this direction is a great influence to this research effort. Schufreider (1997) posits that Mondrian extended the space of painting as a space within painting in his destruction of the traditional space of representational illusion to the breakthrough of creating geometrical abstraction. This extension, however, neither stopped with the development of an abstract space in its reduction of painting to the picture plane nor its pure means of production. He observes that Mondrian instead of working in the space of abstract painting eventually revealed a new space for painting, opening up the space between the work and the wall as its true space, that is, as the space to which painting itself belongs. Mondrian works exemplified how the concept for this research was derived following his systematic process. The influence of the structure of his works can be seen in the exploratory study of the charcoal market. It is observed that while Mondrian eliminated

attempts at creating illusion of depth and traces of emotion in his works to arrive at universal harmony, the researchers position is that universal harmony can otherwise be achieved without necessarily purging art of those components as seen in this research. Colour is carefully arranged in predetermined manner in squares unlike in this research where it is modulated as in Figs.31 and 32.



**Fig: 31**
**Artist**: Piet Mondrian
**Title:** The Gray Tree, 1912
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Dimension**: 78.5x107.5cm



**Fig: 32**
**Artist**: Piet Mondrian
**Title:** Flowering Apple Tree, 1912
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Dimension**: 78.5x107.5cm



**Fig: 33**
**Artist**: Piet Mondrian
**Title:** N.3, Composition in Oval, 1913
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Dimension**: 78x94cm

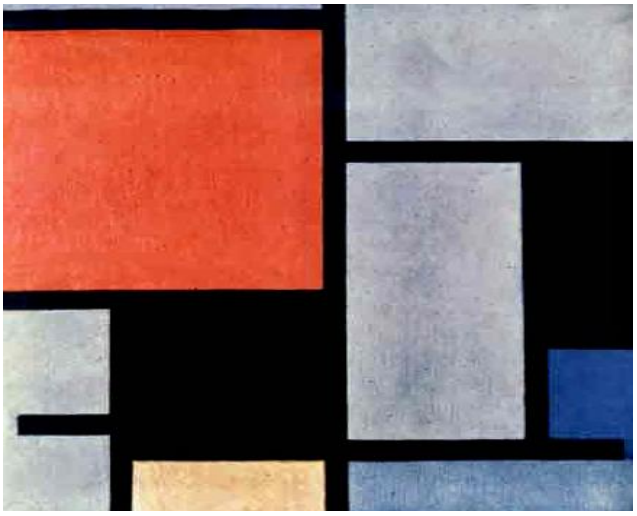


**Fig: 34**
**Artist**: Piet Mondrian
**Title:** Compositon with Red,Yellow and Blue,1920.
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Dimension**: 78x94cm

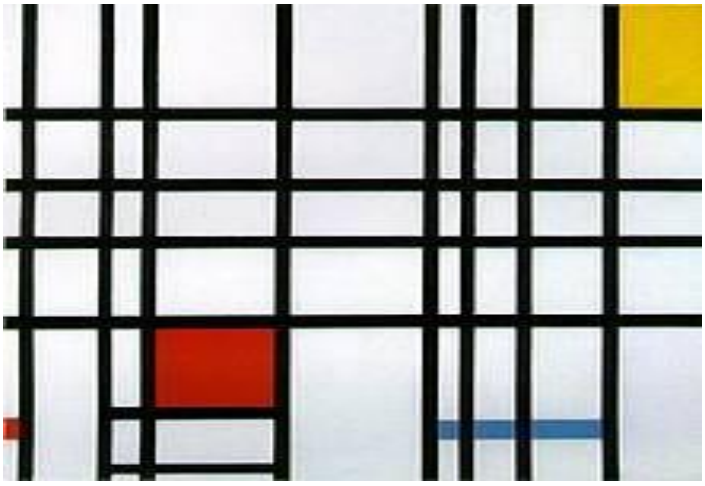


**Fig: 35**
**Artist**: Piet Mondrian
**Title:** Compositon 11,with Red,Yellow and Blue,1930.
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Dimension**: 39x35cm

### 2.4.3 Paul Klee (1879-1940)

> I am expected to do things a clever fellow could easily make. But my consolation must be that I am much more handicapped by my sincerity than by lack of talent or ability. I have a feeling that sooner or later I will arrive at something valid, only I must begin, not with hypothesis, but with specific instances, no matter how minute - Paul Klee (Read 1961)

'…but one should realize that to be as if newborn is not a modest ambition: It is the essential mark of a genius'- Paul Klee (Read 1961).

Klee expresses himself in simplified childlike manner in his use of colour, form, and line. To him we do not have to represent the real world as it is or revealed to us but what is behind reality. According to Kleiner and Mamiya (2005), Klee studied the reality behind visible things and nature avidly, taking special interest in analyzing processes of growth and change. He coded these studies in diagrammatic form in notebooks, and the knowledge he gained in this way became so much a part of his consciousness that influenced the

"psychic improvisation" he used to create his art. He represented the society from the point and perspective of a child, a point of nostalgia and return to childhood.

Paul Klee is a man of many influences. During his several travels to Paris between1905-1912 he had contact with his contemporaries like Vassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc. He became consistent in his approach and technique for more than thirty years, in Pen, colour drawings, oil painting and watercolour. It is the consistency of Klee's concept development in dark lyrical rendering and use of restricted palette that influenced the review of his works in this research. In 1915, Klee in his diary wrote, "the more horrifying this world become (as it is these days) the more art becomes abstract; while a world at peace produces realistic art".

His journey to Tunis in 1914 had influence also on his colour. This experience made him to declare 'colour has taken hold of me; no longer do I have to chase after it. I know that it holds me forever. Colour and I are one. I am a painter.' This is the kind of perceptual experience which generates his concept. The drive and motivation to articulate expression with great emotion sustain his flair to the end. Read (1961) argues that Klee possessed the supreme intelligence among all artists of the modern epoch, both in theory and in practice. Klee is said to be an incredibly prolific artist who created over 10,000 artworks over his 40-year career, which is more than almost any other artist in history.

Line is a major characteristic of his paintings. Bold definitive dark lines are used to segment and fragment the canvases under review. Klee's representations can be seen as a childlike art without recourse to formal organization in line, colour and form. Each painting here is carefully calibrated with an austere and restricted palette. His art shares a

contemporary concern that is rooted in his experiences and sensation to colours. His works are subjective expressions of lyrical patterns modulated in space without perspective. The paintings are characterized by abstract organizations of colours and lines that intersect to create interaction of harmonious entity. This is reflected in his interest and concern on the environment depicted in "After the Floods 1936" (See Fig 36), Most of the paintings can only be interpreted by him though a contemplation on societal issues. The works stimulate the imagination of the viewer because of their surrealist characteristics. Noticeable are undefined mysterious patterns and images that make one to ask the question, "What is this?" This is also reflected in other paintings (See Figs.36- 40). Line is a major characteristic of his paintings. The definitive bold dark line is replicated in this research to fragment forms, in contrast to Klee's lines which are like alphabets on a tablet. His works express lyrical patterns in space devoid of perspective which is at variance with the study on charcoal market.



**Fig: 36**
**Artist**: Paul Klee
**T Title**: After the Floods, 1936
**Medium**: oil on canvas
**Size:** 47.9x62.6cm

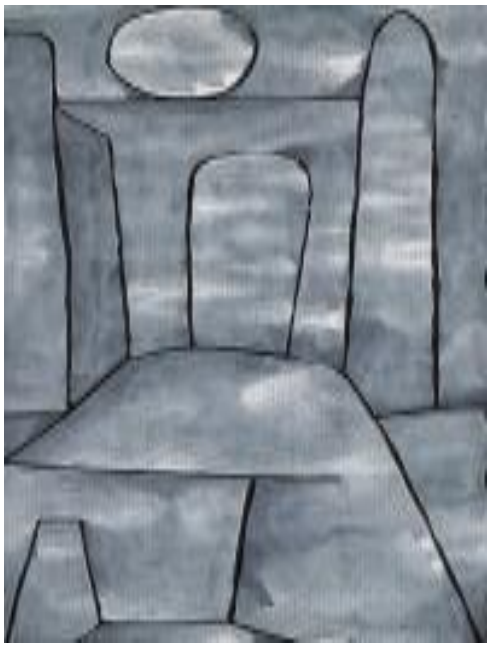


**Fig: 37**
**Artist**: Paul Klee
**Title**: A Gate, 1938
**Medium**: oil on canvas
**Size**: 44.3x60cm



**Figs: 38**
**Artis**t: Paul Klee
**Title**: The Captive, 1940
**medium**: oil on canvas
**Size**: 38x41cm



**Fig. 39**
**Artist**: Paul Klee
**Title:** Death after Life,
**Medium**: oil on canvas
**Size**: 44x46cm



**Fig. 40**
**Artist**: Paul Klee
**Title**: Contemplation, 1938
**medium**: oil on canvas
**Size**: 47.2x65.8cm

### 2.4.3 **Song Su-Nam** (b.1938)

**"Summer Tree"**, 1983, Ink on paper, (See Fig 41), portrays an influence of the abstract expressionist movement of the 20th century. It is a work of similar rendition as those of American painters like Morris Louis (Selz 1981). This work shows Song's cultivation of fantasy, imagination and sensibility of the Orient in engaging the philosophy of aestheticism. His focus was on idea and abstract symbols modulated in flat planes and shapes of special kinds of trees in a personal way. This was achieved through the use of subtle tonal variation of black rendered in broad stretches of ink washes; creating depth. The vertical orientation of "Summer Trees" creates an impression of curtain slabs opening and an arrangement of panels on a stage for exhibition. It is a kind of poetic geometric surface with open and close flap movement. This work also shows a native rendering of the Asian ink on paper but also expresses a universal character. That is a character with freedom of expression not traceable to a particular environment. Song's control of the interplay of a vertical orientation creates a harmonious relationship of an organic sequence on a two-dimensional picture plane. The relationship of harmonious flow of subtle tones in planes loosely rendered is adapted in this research in plates LIII & LIV, Harmony in Line and Colour I&II. The broad stretches of black are similar to the reviewed works of Franz Kline and Robert Motherwell. This makes Song's painting an entity of a structured aesthetic relationship not relating to any particular place.



**Fig: 41**
**Artis**t Song Su-nam
**Title**: Summer Trees, 1983
**Medium**: Ink on Paper
**Size:** 2’ 1 5/8’’ high
(British Museum, London)

### 2.4.5 John Virtue (b.1947)

John Virtue interpreted the landscape and skyline of London in black and white. With restricted palette he created an atmosphere of planes in varying values that invoke a sense of mystery. He discarded the use of colours as they were according to him, a distraction. The monochromatic paintings of Virtue are said to be influenced by Franz Kline’s black and white series. The skyline depicts a smoky and a metropolitan melancholy in passage of time. Noticeable is the continual movement of connected blurred elements in different shades/values of black. The arrangement of patterns of light and dark forms creates a

fascinating and interesting configuration. Virtue masterly and skillfully handles the use of a restricted palette in a gestural manner of the Abstract Expressionists.

Works under review here do not only show black and white but sparse use of umber (earth colour) as in the works of De Kooning. One can vividly see the law of opposites (two extremes) at work on each canvas in a dramatic consequential appearance. The use of black and white movement suggested in his paintings is not to reflect an industrial environment, but rather, to show life of a city celebrated in black and white. It is a restricted palette that elicits emotional or contemplative reactions in viewers. This is because his rendering goes beyond existing boundaries to create individual analysis of events and modules. This coexistence is viewed by the researcher as a kind of harmonious relationship of the opposites to achieve a common goal in a society of many nationalities. According to Schama (2005) 'Virtue's blacks and whites aren't polarized absolutes: they drip and smear each other with gleeful impurity, much of the white flecked with a kind of metropolitan ashiness that gives the paint guts and substance, much of the black, streaky and loose, like road tar that refuses to set'. He describes Virtue's paintings as having been made as if much of contemporary art, or rather the fashion of contemporary installation art, had never happened, or at best is a facile distraction from more solidly enduring things.

His technique involves linear architectural summaries that capture the lively activities with their simplicity and calmness of London using shellac, black ink and white paint. Employing the old masters tradition, he captured a visual document of London from his perspective, the torrent of the city life as if in an industrial atmosphere in a few vocabularies. He used washes of light earth colour, black and white by smudging on canvas

revealing a transparency while in this research; the modulation of colours was carefully done with palette knife. Virtue neither employ line as a narrative of events nor is it a prominent element in his depiction of the environment. Through his critical exploration, the outcomes are not easily determined as they are not situated within an organized framework. With this procedure, his end result is predicated on the subjective rationality. Virtue's attempt at representing his works in black and white and earth colours is a characteristic of this research on the study of the charcoal environment.



**Fig: 42**
**Artis**t: John Virtue
**Title**: landscape 301
**Medium:** Acrylic, ink, shellac emulsion & earth on canvas
**Size**: 275 x 330 cm
Collection: Arts Council Collection



**Fig: 43**
**Artis**t: John Virtue
**Title**: Landscape 715, 2003–2004,
**Medium:** Oil on canvas,
**Size**: 200 x 125 cm
Collection: City of London Corporation



**Fig: 44**
**Artist**: John Virtue
**Title**: Landscape No .268, 1994–1995
**Medium:** Black ink, shellac & acrylic on canvas
**Size**: 183 x 184 cm
Collection: Towner



**Fig: 45**
**Artist**: John Virtue
**Title:** Landscape No.662, 2003,
**Medium**: White acrylic, black ink, shellac & emulsion on canvas,
**Size**: 183 x 183 cm
Collection: Government Art Collection



**Fig: 46**
**Artist**: John Virtue
**Title**: Landscape No.763, 2007
**Medium**: Acrylic, black ink, shellac on canvas,
**Size**: 244 x 366cm

### 2.4.6 Willem de Kooning (b.1904-1997).

An abstract expressionist and a part of the New York Art School, Willem de Kooning worked on a restricted palette. From 1946-9 his works show what is called 'Urban abstraction' and 'Biomorphic abstraction'. 'Black Friday' (See Fig.47), is a work which shows how he integrates negative and positive spaces to create surreal effects of dark and light. His paintings at this period were as if a camouflage without distinct identity. They reflect the interest to depict his environment which is claimed to be inspired by New York City imagery. "Black Friday" signifies a dark and terrible day which is not easily forgotten because of the negative experience of that day. Victor (1986) , affirms that de Kooning used both black and white paint, rather than letting white paper show through. He describe the results as 'sweeting white rivers of paint rush across the dark black ground, creating writing intertwining shapes that suggest figures in a landscape setting but without any specificity whatsoever'.

Women are thought to be the symbol of beauty, glory and fertility. The artist's representation of them is graceful and delicate though with some few exceptions. He was said to have started painting women regularly in the 1940s and by 1950, he began to explore the subject of women series. One of his works of this series is 'Woman 111, 1953',(See Fig. 48) characterized by energetic brush strokes and twisted forms that created a dialogue between human imagery and abstraction. "The woman painted with torrents of dripping pigments, created vibrant fabric of colour" Selz (1981).This series also shows single figures on each canvas in an imposing framework of angular shapes concealing violently distorted figures with exaggerated female features (breasts and lips). His women

series though gruesome as it may seem, is not totally abstract but a combination of various elements boldly outlined. Every stroke of his is aggressive, ‘a gesture of violent toward the female body’. He is as if a man hurt by a woman in some way and trying to push his emotions on canvas by gestural brush strokes and energetic application of dark pigments, a fragmentation in the Cubist mannerism.

His approach of handling women forms on canvas reveals a direction in a bid to arrive at a point of realizing a mode of expression. His painting instead of progressing from figuration to abstraction was the other way round. It was reported by his wife Elaire that he was never satisfied with a concept and that there are ‘approximately 200 scraped away images on a canvas before the final one’. Other noticeable features in the paintings are wide swaths of colour, densely congested canvas with brush strokes, lyrical loops and twisting lines of colours in a close up study that achieves immediate encounter with no depth. His work is said to become a definite force in the 1950s Abstract Expressionist’s art movement. The deliberate vulgarity and provocative figuring contrast with the representation of women in this research on ‘The Woman’ series. Also the violent tendencies displayed by women in de Kooning’s works are at variance with Oshinowo’s works on women in 2012.

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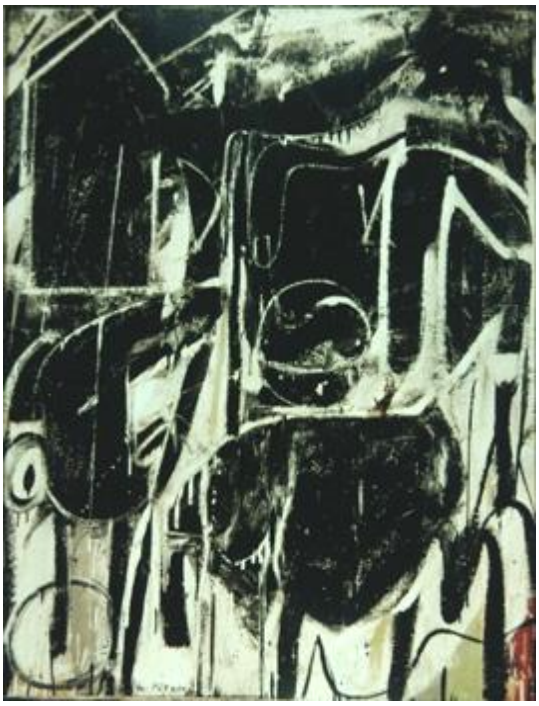


**Fig: 47**
**Artis**t: Willem de Koning
**Title**: Black Friday, 1948
**Medium:** oil on canvas
**Size**: 43x38cm



**Fig:48**
**Artis**t: Willem de Koning
**Title**: woman 111,195
**Medium:** oil on canvas
**Size**: 6'3x4'10

### 2.4.7 Franz Kline (b.1910-1962)

> … I make preliminary drawings, other times I paint directly, other times I start a painting and then paint it out so that it becomes another painting or nothing at all. … When I work from preliminary sketches, I don't just enlarge these drawings, but plan my areas in a large painting by using small drawings for separate areas. I combine them in a final painting, often adding to or subtracting from the original sketches…There are certain canvases here in my studio – the little one over there – that I've worked on for a good six months – painting most of it out and then painting it over and over again. I think I've got it now-Kline 1958 (Dreier, Harper and Row.1962).

Kline was one of the Abstract Expressionists from New York School. In the 1950s he was known for his black and white large, energetic brush strokes. He started developing a structure of this technique of painting after he used a projector to enlarge a black and white sketch that expressed the power of his graphic style in large scale. He sees his

works as a new form of expressionism derived from genuine experiences that translate through the form. He believes that forms experienced are not interpreted to mean what they are, but they are used to create a different meaning that is linked with intuitive ability. His restricted palette of black and white to him is not a matter of procedure but a sense of free association that takes form from start to finish. His methodology is based on the influence of the cultural trend of the Abstract Expressionism of the 1950s.This method can be described as free expression. Betti and Sale (2004) avers that 'abstract expressionists images are not images of anything; they are a result of action. Rather than looking out into space at the horizon, it is as if the viewer's vantage point were above, from an airplane, looking down to the flat surface of the earth'.

Kline's broad black form which flows across the white canvas is rendered in simplicity of composition with brush strokes as if positioned carefully. His works are as if a splinter of wood, rendered in a mannerism of his contemporaries, the gestural artists. The paintings when viewed closely show that white areas are not empty spaces but were painted in white. His swathes of black are laid on canvas in a continuous motion of construction (See Fig.49 and 50. He used commercial paints and house painter's brushes' to exploit his adventure into the field of black and white. In some instance visible colours of raw and muted primaries are seen in his works (See Fig.50). The idea in his work according to him is 'give what you have through your paintings' which means life should be a product of giving. Apart from Motherwell's 'Elegy to the Spanish republic' series in this review which bears semblance to Kline's approach, his works are a synthesis of opposites, black

and white which philosophically meant life and death, a transition from one point to the other as in life.



**Fig: 49**
**Artis**t: Franz Kline,
**Title**: *Harleman*, 1960
**Medium:** oil on canvas
**Size: 134.6x259cm**



**Fig: 50**
**Artis**t: Franz Kline,
**Title**: chief, 1950
**Medium: oil on canvas**
**Size**: 148.3x186.7cm



**Fig: 51**
**Artis**t: Franz Kline
**Title**: C and O, 1958.
**Medium:** oil on canvas
**Size**: Unknown

### 2.4.8 Cathy Woo (b.1949-)

Woo has spent the last 30years painting of which large part of it according to her revolves around nature. In her meditative walk, she gets inspirations from nature which was usually developed in the studio. “Her paintings on panel are rich in sensations and glimpsed moments of order in a disorderly natural environment” (Meyer 2010). The works explore visual patterns created by juxtaposition of colour and shape. According to her, it is a dialogue between “organized structure and organic disarray in adventurous acrylic abstraction”. In her work, scaffold of lines emerge from the midst of a mesh of colours. The use of restricted palette as in this research by Woo is a departure from her multi-colourful canvas of organic lines and dots. She said,

I am excited that I am moving forward with my paintings on Plexiglas. I am quickly

> learning new approaches and techniques. I have landed on this series of "Butterfly" paintings which still has remnants of my "Connect the Dots" theme. In addition I have added the related underlying symbolism of the archetype of the "Tic Tac Toe" structure of dots and x's inside a grid as expressed in the I Ching, crossword puzzles, the game of hopscotch and the Braille Alphabet.

'Meditation 2008' series (See Figs.52-55) depicts the use of restricted palette to develop paintings which reveal her new path of exploration .This shows what possibilities exist in exploring a restricted palette. The pattern on her works is defined with a build-up of subtle tones on already quite paper. She adopts watercolour effect approach to achieve her ideas through the range of subtle tones and dark shades that create contrast. Her experimentation illustrates meditation on patterns that seem to have direct relationship with nature. Line is a noticeable element in this series, connecting patterns in different values of grays. The three paintings represented in the series of Meditation seem to show impressions of landscape. The separation of the ground and the sky line is reinforced by black lines which create illusion of depth.

Her works are embellished with lines that fragment every part from stage to stage. This line patterns define planes, hanging and intertwined with dots to create aesthetic order. Her work is also based on her observation of how the universe consists of an ongoing interplay between things coming together and things falling apart and things coming together again. This thinking signifies a system collapse and is associated with societal issues.

Her procedure began with painting on a grid ground and afterwards she applied dabs of dots that eventually resulted into organic shapes and geometric constructs with a floating appearance. In some instances certain segment of the compositions are simplified and dotted while the ground is linearly rendered. This series captures organic lyrical

arrangement of vertical and horizontal patterns. Unlike the works of Piet Mondrian and Abstract Expressionists, Woo created a ‘conversation between organized structure and organic dissociation’. She sees her paintings as natural and unavoidable products of forces reflected in compositional materials and techniques. Her technique is referred to as “visual puzzles”, applying colours to build up dense of alternating images and shapes which can only be achieve through experience and intuition to establish the foundational structure. Woo’s conceptual art take liberty in experimental techniques to develop her works in grey. The relationship of Woos works and this research is found in objective I, though her works are portrayed in shapes and patterns in mixed media, sparsely distributed on canvas in almost black and gray with little traces of colour, yellow especially in the butterfly series.



**Fig: 52**
**Artist**: Cathy Woo
**Title**: Butterfly, June, 2006
**Size**: 76.2cmx76.2cm
**Medium**: acrylic paint and rice paper collage on plastic sheet

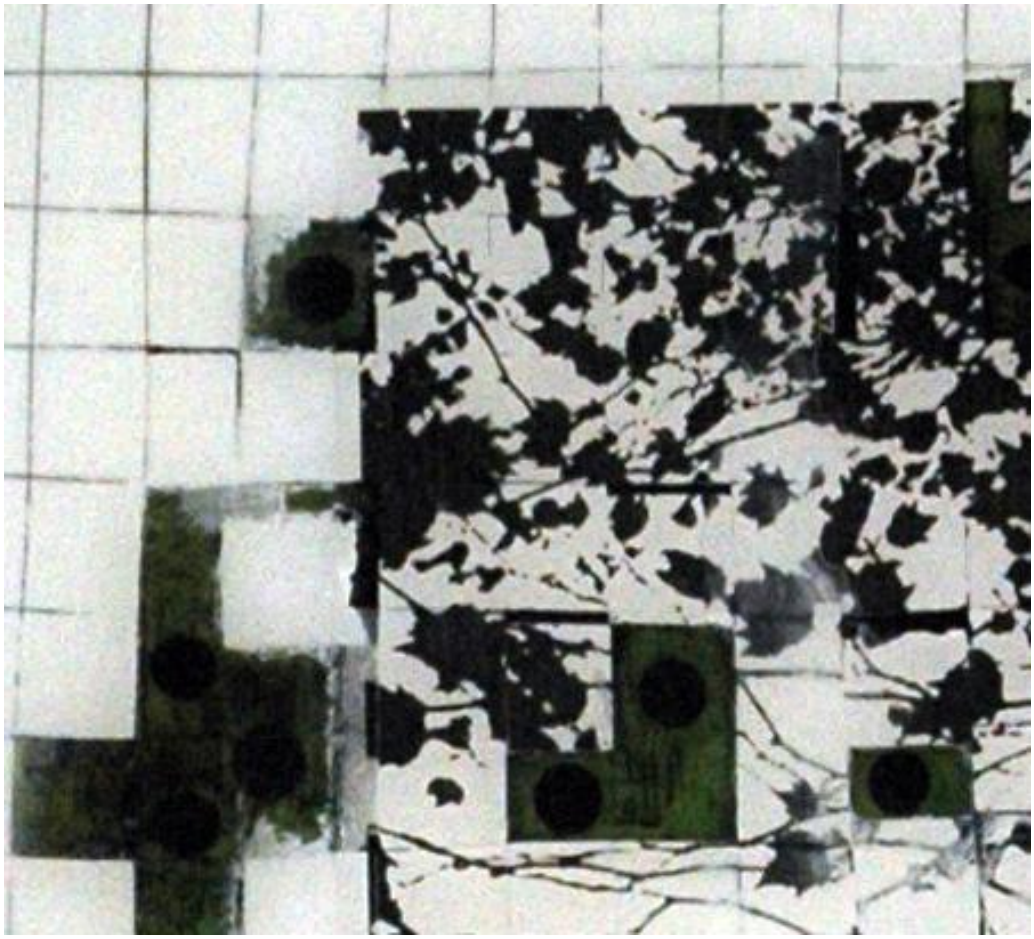


**Fig: 53**
**Artist**: Cathy Woo
**Title**: Tic Tac Toe Trees June, 2006
**Medium**: acrylic paint and rice paper collage on plastic sheet.
**Size:** 76.2cmx76.2cm



**Fig: 54**
**Artist**: Cathy Woo
**Title**: Meditation series
**Medium**: acrylic paint and rice paper collage on plastic sheet
Size: 91.44cmx91.44cm



**Fig: 55**
**Artist**: Cathy Woo
**Title**: Meditation series
**Medium**: acrylic paint and rice paper collage on plastic sheet
**Size**: 91.44cmx91.44cm.

# CHAPTER THREE

## METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

A studio-based methodology on practice is performed through inquiry. In action research, the researcher becomes an active participant. The researcher adopts an existing paradigm based on the qualitative method of research that gives detail description of events. According to Sambo (2005) in Mathew (2010), a qualitative research method describes social phenomena of events or things so as to understand the effect such events or things have on the lives of individuals, groups, societies, or cultures. The experiences from the environment serve as stimulus while undertaking research in the studio. Leavy (2009), states that human experiences cannot be understood separately from the environment in which they occur. It is well accepted that we live in a visual world with a historically specific multitude of visual stimuli in our daily environment. Neo (2000) in Leavy (2009) argues that art can be an effective tool for phenomenological research (a perspective that places experience at the center of knowledge building). For a research of this kind, Neo said our socialization brings out an experience which occurs within a visual landscape, this experience is embedded within its visual context. From this perspective, the process of carrying out a practice based research can be enhanced by the appreciation of its nature. Thompson (2006) elaborates further that,

> In all tradition of all good qualitative methodologies, art-based research is malleable in concept and method: it assumes many forms...It may expand the resources we draw upon in the act of making sense of events and situations, allowing us to recognize works of art in and of themselves as ways of representing human life.

The method used in articulating and achieving this research is to employ an approach that is suitable and flexible. It includes the method adopted in the exploration and development of concepts from the charcoal market. The diagram below shows a research model involving the practitioner through a performative action reflecting stages and processes adopted in the execution of the body of works.

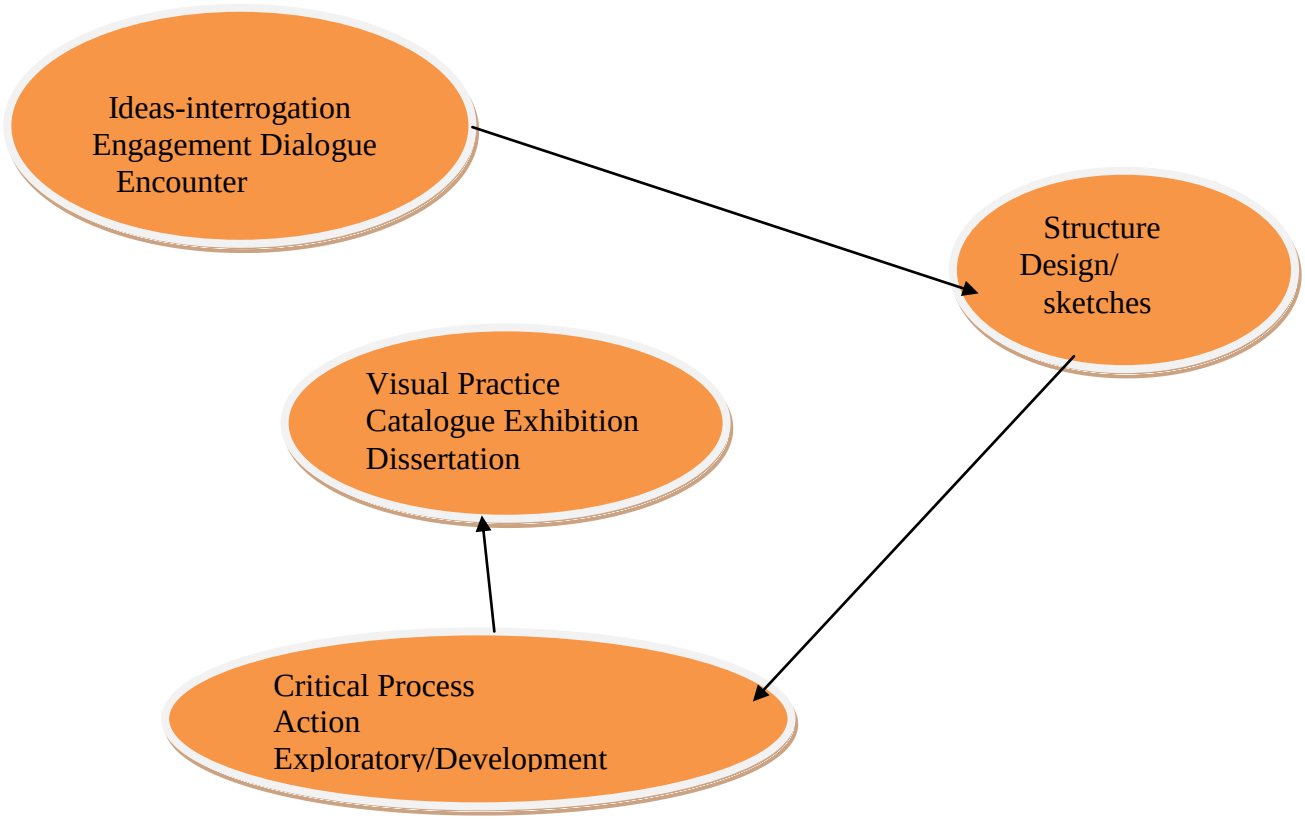



**Diagram 1.Patterned after Graeme Sullivan's framework of Visual Arts Research Projects**.

Source:Sullivan,G.(2010).Art Practice as Research,Inquiry into Visual Arts.

The above structure/model explains four stages of action based on studio experimentation.

i. Ideas/interrogation/Dialogue

ii. Structure/Design/Sketches

iii. Critical Process/Exploratory and Development

iv. Visual Practice/Catalogue/Exhibition

**The studio based research outcome**.

Each of these stages suggests the process adopted in this research. Here the researcher is engaged in a dual role as a practitioner and a theorist that creates a convincing interpretation of works conveying a specific understanding. Sullivan (2010) asserts that, studio research relies on plausibility, not resting on generalization of result but on differences in kind. He further contends that it is important to acknowledge that research findings grounded in observation of real world action, events, and artifacts rely on the acceptance that outcomes can be interpreted as connections between the specific and the vague.

### 3.2. Ideas/interrogation stage

Each painting starts with perceptual encounter with the site (charcoal market). Various patterns are noted each day to establish how colours are affected. At this first stage, ideas are explored to ascertain their suitability and sustainability over a period of time. The way to understanding an object is to concentrate on it, fixing it in the mind and the idea realized through this exercise is subjected to analytical judgments.

### 3.3 Structure / Design Sketches

Several "thumbnail sketches" were made at the early stage of the study from direct observations of charcoal markets and from photographs. These sketches served as the preliminary notes for the main sketches produced towards achieving a suitable composition

for each canvas before the execution of the body of work. Various elements were interpreted to develop a structure into pictorial painting compositions. Udechukwu (1984) posits that, "sketches provide glimpses, the invisible sweat of the creative mind that often has to work in solitude, wrestling with fundamental aesthetic..." Oxman (1997) in Rust and Wilson (2001) proposes that "a sequence of sketches can act as record of reasoning processes which can be inferred from transition states from one representation to a subsequent representation". Other researches and concepts developed through sketches like in the works of John Virtue shown in fig. 56. Oxman further states that, drawing is the compost from which a painting develops. It assumes the key to developing one's depth of observation in the visual field. The research used sketches to gain understanding of the charcoal market and to develop a design concept, with each sketch serving as a sequel to the exploration and development stages. Drawing is also used as a mode of investigation to gain full grasp of various elements reminiscent of the Renaissance artists.



**Fig.56**
**Artist**: John Virtue
**Title**: Study from the roof of the Somerset House looking East, 2003/04.
Source:http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/archive/2005/Virtue/Virtue.jpg

The drawing ( Fig.56) was done as a preparatory for series of monumental paintings of the London skyline, which John Virtue made during a two-year associate artist appointment at the National Gallery, London.

### 3.3.1 Study sketches

The following study sketches shown from Plates I-XXXII, illustrate some of the preliminary studies for this research. All of these sketches are taking as a sequel to a painting and also final work. This informs the reason for classifying them as plates.



**Plate I**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Head that Labours
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.




**Plate.II**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Head that Labours
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

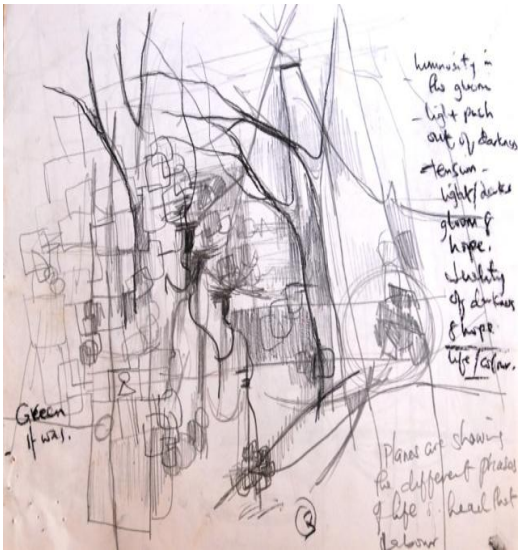


**Plate. III**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Head that Labours
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Plate. IV**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Head that Labours
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Plate .V**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.

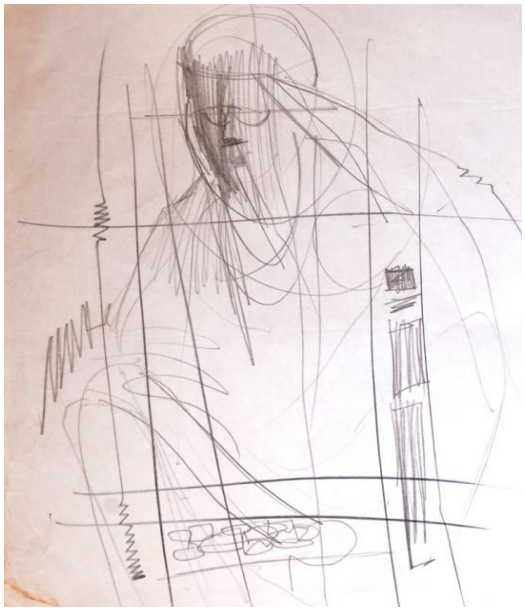


**Plate.VI**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Plate.VII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Plate.VIII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

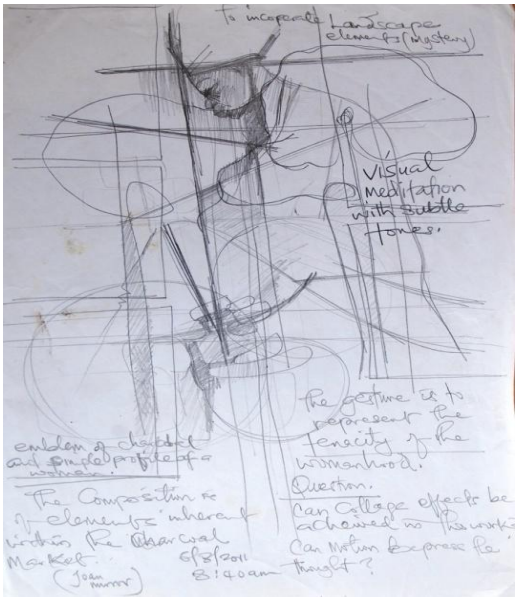



**Plate.IX**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Plate.X**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Plate. XI**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.

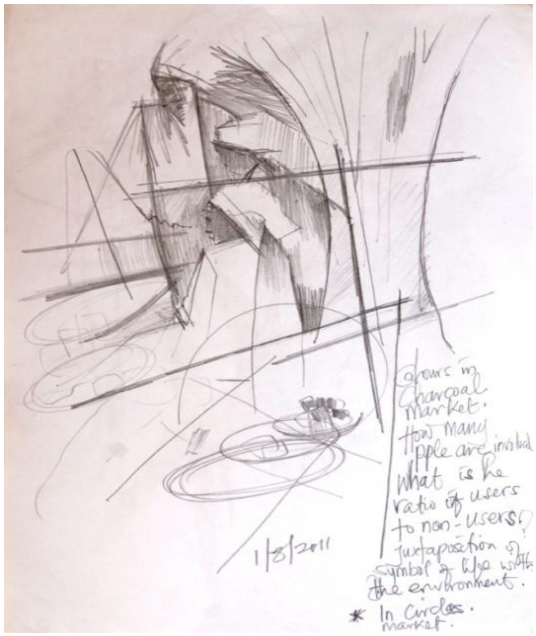



**Plate .XII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm




**Plate.XIII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Grays of Life
**Medium:** **Pencil on paper**
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Plate.XIV**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Grays of Life
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

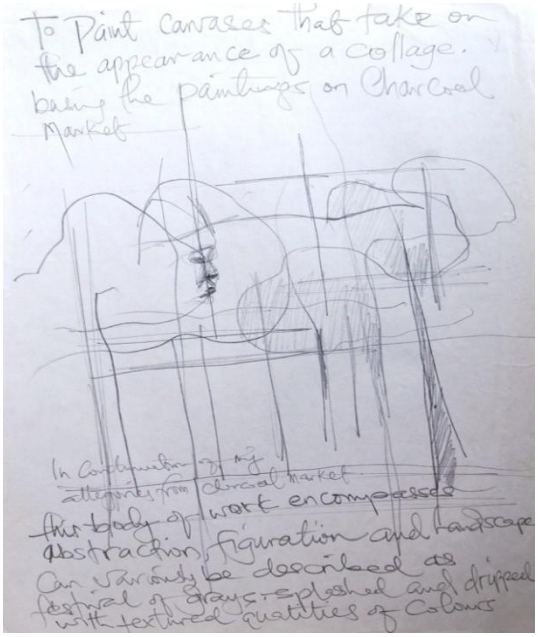



**Plate.XV**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Grays of Life
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Plate.XVI**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Grays of Life
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

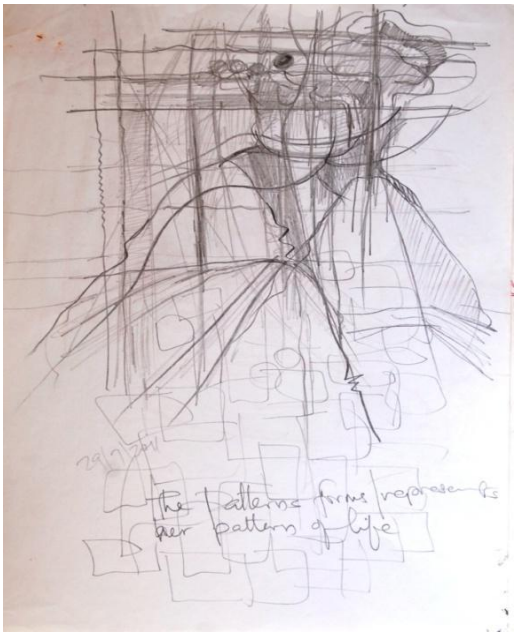



**Plate.XVII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Woman
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.




**Plate. XVIII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Woman
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

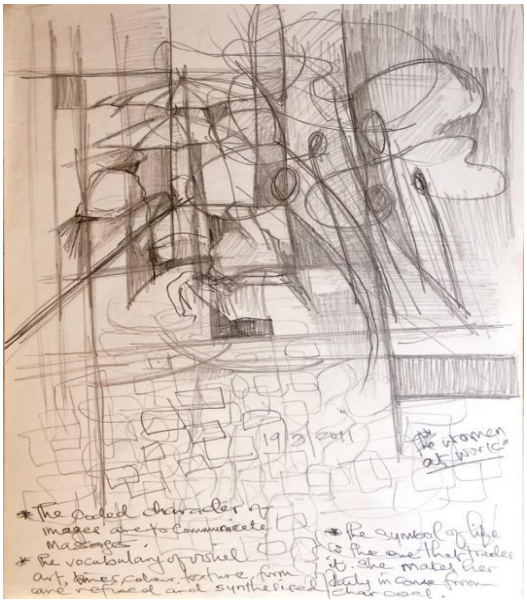


**Plate.XIX**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on the Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Plate.XX**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on the Pattern in Nature
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Plate.XXI**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for contemplation on the pattern in nature
**Medium:** Watercolour on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.

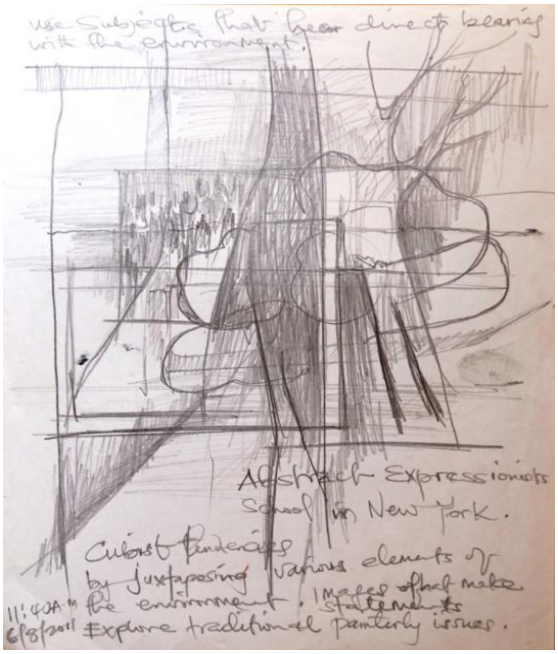



**Plate.XXII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on the Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Plate.XXIII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.

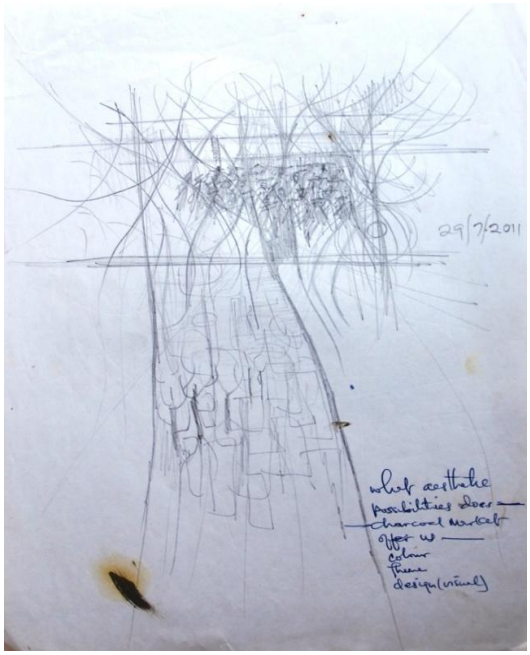


**Plate.XXIV**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

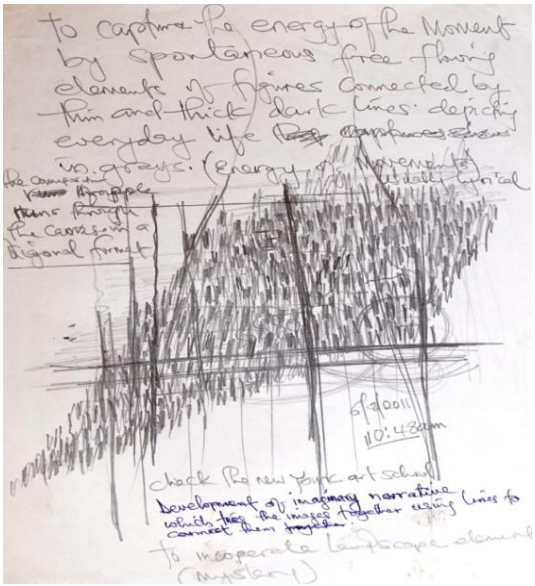


**Plate.XXV**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Plate.XXVI**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Watercolour on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

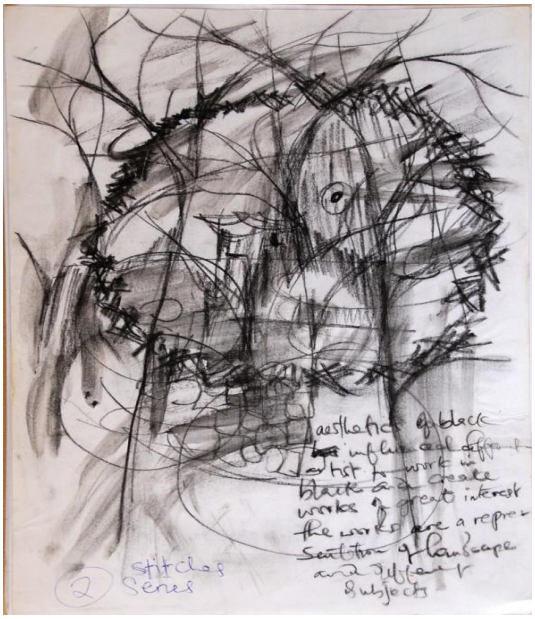


**Plate.XXVII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Charcoal on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Plate.XXVIII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Watercolour on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Plate.XXIX**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Palace of Oppression
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.

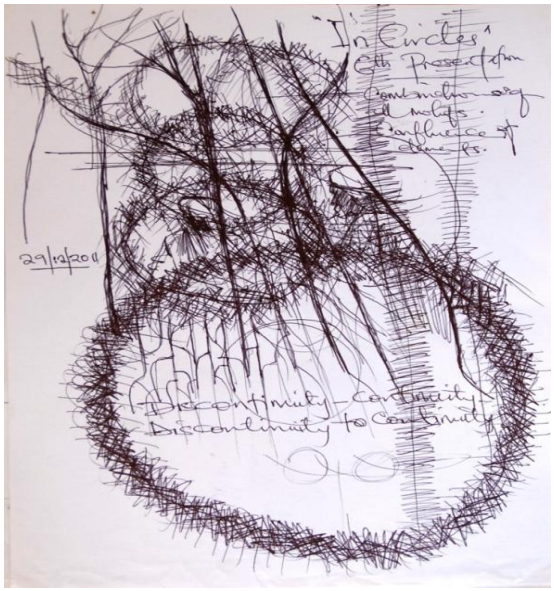


**Plate. XXX**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Palace of Oppression
**Medium:** Pen on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

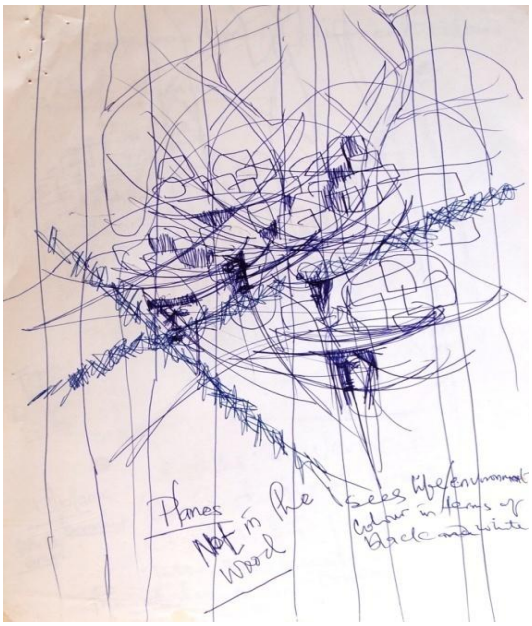


**Plate. XXXI**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Palace of Oppression
**Medium:** Pen on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.

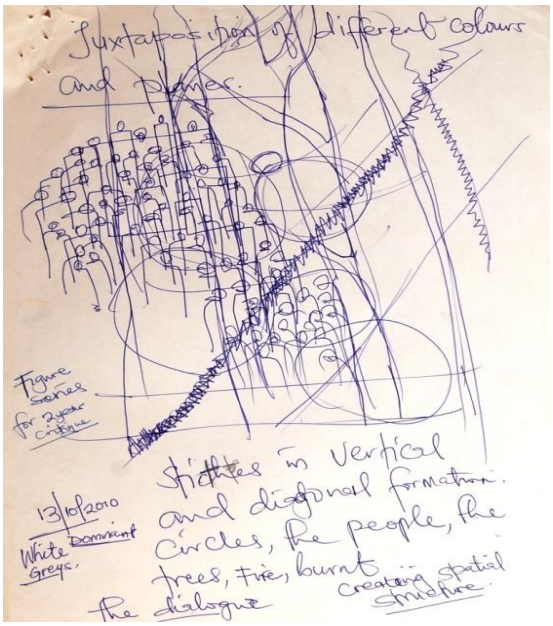



**Plate. XXXII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Palace of Oppression
**Medium:** Pen on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

## 3.4 Critical Process/Exploratory and Development

This stage is the process of critical thinking and indepth study of various materials (photographs and sketches). The information garnered is turned over and over and processed for exploration in studio practice. It is necessary to explore this gathered information to know the size of the support to be used and colour scheme. Gray and Malins (2004) posit that, "critical thinking is the process of effectively applying sound intellectual standards to thinking. It involves 'meta-thinking' and self evaluation '…Critical thinking is creative thinking'. They also argue that, in the domain of visual practices, there are no certainties, no 'right' answers, no simple solutions, no absolute objectivity…many interpretations are possible, different 'ways of seeing' are encouraged". Holding to this view, an abstract generalization is made at this stage in terms of various associations that

are present for contemplation. In this research, dominant units that repeat themselves which include charcoal, women, bowls, wood/trees, polythene, and fire, determine the characteristic forms. Critical thinking is required to select elements for exploration and development because of different possibilities and dynamic qualities of the organic structures in the charcoal market. This expands the perspective of the researcher's perception to challenge entrenched views and methodologies in works of influential artists like Piet Mondrian, illustrated in Composition 11(1930) and Flowering plant (1912) as well as Pablo Picasso's works exemplified in Marie-Therese (1931). The process of critical thinking also helped in translating ideas and images in charcoal market into actions. These actions are categorized into Exploratory and Development stages.

### 3.4.1 Exploratory Stage

The exploratory stage involves the preliminary studies of the market activities. Each theme grows out of a place of information which makes the outcome assume a sense of reality. A study of the interactions that exist in form and patterns is undertaken. The exercise in exploration and experimentation results into discoveries of new patterns and symbols. Different images are broken into a variety of abstract relationships. They are subjected to a series of additions and subtraction as in Cubism. These basic elements are broken and segmented. The researcher occasionally overlaps them and applies dark areas to develop a path towards abstraction. The sketches and paintings (Plates I-XLIII) represent this exploratory stage.



**Plate. XXXIII**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Green, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153x122cm

The inspiration for this study, The "Green", 2010 (Plate XXXIII) was derived from the researcher's expedition to a forested area in Panshanu, Toro Local Government Area, Bauchi State to study natural relationship of form and colour. This lush landscape is detailed to show how a forested area is. The green reflects life in an environment untouched by human. Naturally, climbers move from up down over branches of trees to create interesting linear patterns and this inspired the linear organic rendering in this research.

Abstract shapes, lines, textures, and patterns are visible. At the top a dynamic crescendo of light reveals the overlapping of branches of each tree. The composition shows how nature depicts orderliness as created by the Creator to sustain animal life. The tree trunks are arranged in a cluster to achieve a natural setting in the landscape.

**The Chips**

The Chips (2010), presented in Plates XXXIV - XXXVI, (Pages 94-95) was inspired by wood chippings from cut down trees which were set for processing into charcoal. An oscillating movement is created when the chopped tree viewed as a light ray shines on the heaps. The homogeneity of the chips makes each composition on canvas assume the same character. The lines are overlapped in open and tight grids; hatched in different direction to create optical illusion. The dense build up of lines in these paintings drawn against a dark saturated ground creates kinetic effects.



**Plate.XXXIV**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Chips1, 2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 51x66cm



**Plate. XXXV**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title:** Chips11, 2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: Size 76x64cm



**Plate. XXXVI**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Chips III, 2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size:** 71x51cm

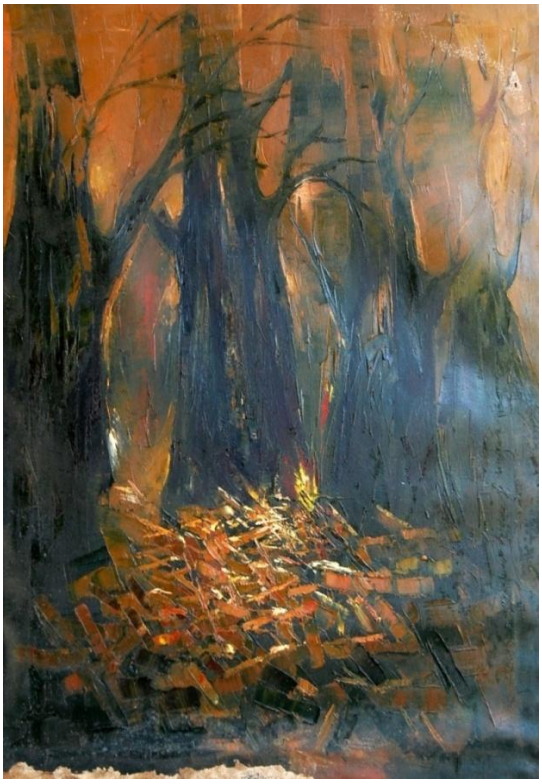


**Plate. XXXVII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title:** Cutting the tree, 2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 76.5x63cm



**Plate. XXXVIII**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Fire Behind the Bush, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 76cmx64cm.

"Fire Behind the Bush" shown in Plate XXXIII, is a colour study. It is an expression derived from the study of the devastation of fire on the environment. The trees are represented in dark values from against the luminous red and cadmium yellow fire. The trees are shown here without leaves because of the effect of fire. There is fire behind the bush set by those chasing rats and other bush meat for consumption. A Situation had once arisen when a whole farm was set in flames, because a man sighted a rat and could not help but set the whole rice farm on fire before realizing that it was just a little movement caused by the wind that gave the impression of a moving animal.



**Plate. XXXIX**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Council of Elders, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 122cm

This painting, "Council of Elders" (Plate XXXIX) shows four large trunks of trees against a hot red atmosphere. As if in a discursive platform, the trees are depicted in a way that colour and form are harmonized to capture the mood of the moment. The "elders" of the trees gather to question the destructive act of cutting down trees without recourse to the consequences. When elders meet, it is for an issue that concerns all. The future of the eco-system dominated the discussion with no solution in view. The researcher employed a simple palette of red and burnt umber highlighted with strong cadmium yellow. The size of the support is of significance in achieving the objective of the theme. The idea is to see if this size could have a possible compelling visual impression on the viewer and to create a symbolic piece that could depict argument over cutting down of trees by using red.

### 3.4.1.1 Colour sketches

The first series of the market were explored in coloured sketches to capture women in the business of charcoal selling (See Plates XL- XLI). They represent the experimentation with gray values that led to subsequent developments. At this point, the interaction of elements was studied and rendered in a simple expression. The abstract qualities are systematically analysed.



**Plate. XL**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Colour sketch, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 76 x 64cm

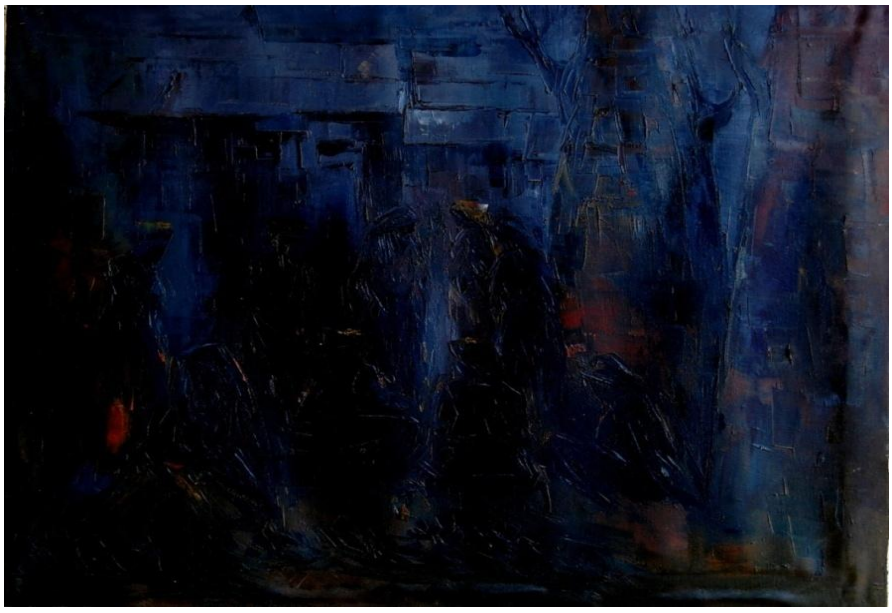


**Plate. XLI**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Market Colour, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 76 x 63cm



**Plate.XLII**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Charcoal, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 86cm x 101cm



**Plate.XLIII**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Exploring market forms, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 152x 122cm

The painting, "Exploring Market Forms" in Plate XLIII depicts a restricted palette, which shows colours of the bark of trees. The dominant colours are burnt sienna and umber with a few dabs of primary colours. The trees on both sides' criss-cross into each other with lines drawn around the figures to link them in a mutual relationship. The light from behind them creates a division on the canvas. The engagement of the figures with nature gives us a glimpse into the activity that affects the environment, which is street trading, but in this case selling charcoal. The market mood is typical of a dense dry forest. It can also be referred to as an effort at putting in much into an activity without obtaining any result.

### 3.4.2 Developmental stage

This stage of development is reinforced by the introduction of new elements. Sketches serve as bases for this stage of development. A new structure was arrived at through drawings and the understanding of changes that occurred in the market each day. This is as a result of the introduction of other elements like umbrellas and tree trunks. The lines are made bolder and the structure and methodology of the works of Mondrian are prevalent in all the works. Lines are defined with painting knife using dark tones (a derivative of charcoal appearances). Flashes of light with the use of white vibrate into a field of gray creating an agitated effect. The image on each canvas is sparsely distributed with dot-like patterns in a random order to create contrast. The reduction of chromatic scale is rendered in subtle graduation of black and grays. The cluster of interacting forms is linked by bands of irregular organic lines supporting the vertical orientation.



**Plate. XLIV**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Selling the Future, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

In the course of sketching at the charcoal market, most of the women were found to be under cover of the umbrela ( Plate XLIV).On one part to the right are seen two women facing other women to the left.At the background is a tree trunk without leaves.This is repeated all through the works in this research.The irony is that in a place where the Charcoal market is located,trees serve as shade from the sun though the branches have been cut down to create what they are trading with.The lines show humanity depicted in an

impressionistic approach caged by its own choices while the patterns in the foreground are derived from bowls. Charcoal is represented in conceptual form to capture the contrast in planes to achieve a market concept.Each segment typifies gradual value change in colour which diminishes through the use of light.



**Plate. XLV**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Harmony of Line and Colour, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

The cluster of interacting forms in "Harmony of Line and Colour" (Plate XLV) is linked by bands of irregular organic lines supporting the vertical orientation. It is one of the paintings at the developmental stage that reveal how the research transits from natural representation to almost total abstraction. Expressions with thick and thin lines are emphasized and become dominant all through the research. The segments of the canvas are interwoven and

connected by stitches to symbolize the wretched of the earth, the poor whose outlook is full of stitches. The structure of this painting is organized in relationship with flat compartments of colour and forms. Various lines criss-cross in an alternate manner forming other geometric patterns that were not part of the original sketch. At the top, spiral and curvilinear lines create rotating motion stretching from edge to edge in vertical orientation. At the centre of the canvas, dot –like dabs represent a figure.

### 3.5 Visual Practice/Catalogue/Exhibition.

Sullivan (2010) argues that visual arts research has to be grounded in practices that come from art itself, especially inquiry that is studio-based. The engagements in the studio practice in this research were done in different stages. This section documents the sequence of activities in the studio and the arrangement of the paintings in a catalogue. The works catalogued are put up for Exhibition as a component part of this research.

### 3.6 Source of Ideas

The concept for the body of work is derived from perceptual experience from the charcoal market. Ideas are generated from sketches, photographs and intuition to create interaction of planes and configuration of space. The intricate and interwoven lines are derived from the environment.

### 3.7 Translation of ideas

In translating the concept of charcoal market, the statement by Hollebach (2009) is of importance as he states;

> All art is basically abstract; I begin a painting as a composition of abstract shapes and develop them until recognizable forms are visible. But stop before they become too realistic, because obvious realism will rob the painting of certain aesthetic values: simplicity, visual attractiveness and even a sense of mystery.

The work is categorized into six sections and each of the series of paintings produced seeks to capture the energy of the moment within a theme. These series constitute an expression of society and daily human experiences. These experiences are ideas translated to depict dialogues with the element within the environment in which they were found. In the course of exploration, the researcher borrowed from existing culture in painting and subsumed them into this research to create a new thinking. (see Plates XLVI-LXI). Every aspect from design to finish was done in stages. This was achieved by spontaneous free-flow of figures connected by agitating expressive thin and thick lines to depict everyday human experience in grays with drops of muted primary colours. Also the energy of movement is captured by small flat patterns that create a decorative component. This interaction of line and pattern further create a vibration of interlocking energies on the surface plane which results into broken forms fragmented by lines identifiable only through close observation. All the paintings were achieved with the use of palette knife.

## 3.8 Reference to established movement

Established movements referenced in the course of this research were adopted to develop basic structures which enriched this study. Some of these movements dwell on free expression of concepts using geometry, organic lines, broken forms, unconventional combinations, concentric circles, non-pictorial style to manipulation in technique processes. Artists make aesthetic statements of everyday realities to represent their thoughts in a subjective manner. Unlike other art movements, Selz (1981) states that the avant-garde experiment with art did not tie them to traditional constructs but created their own constructs. Animate surfaces and structural qualities pre-dominate their works especially in Ad Reinhardt, 'Abstract painting, Red' (1953), Barnett Newman, 'Onement Vl'(1953),Yves Klein, 'IKB 48'(1956) amongst others. Sharma and Hyland (1991) see aesthetics as concerned with the analysis of concepts within art: the concepts of the work of art itself and the concept of meaning, intention, representation and illusion within the arts. Symbolists, colour field artists, Expressionists, Fauvists, Constructivists and Abstract expressionists and the researcher operate within this framework of thought. All these movements portray an international ideological trend in their works.

## 3.9 Adapting variety of methodologies

### Technique

Read (1961) affirms that, a work of art is a construction of concrete elements of form and colour which become expressive in their synthesis or arrangement. Two techniques were adopted here in the application of colours, the use of lines as in Stevens (2010) works and the structure of the works of Mondrian (1930); as well as the fragmentation of forms of Picasso (1908) through 'Direct and Indirect technique' of painting.

### 3.9.1 Direct Painting

This infers the transfer to the scale of the final work. It involves direct and spontaneous execution especially of abstract painting such as in Fig.57, Number 1(1950) by Jackson Pollock, Fig.58, Global Warming (2007) by Mu'azu Sani Mohammed, Fig.59, Townscape with Strange Figures (1993) by Gain Odutokun and Fig.60, Spillage with foot motif (2014) by Jerry Buhari among others. These artists executed their works using the direct painting technique. Some colour sketches were carried out by the researcher in this mode and left as a final work. (See Plates XXXIV-XXXVIII and, XL-XLI)



Fig .57
Jackson Pollock, *Number 1, 1950* (*Lavender Mist*), 1950. Oil, enamel, and aluminum paint on canvas, 7' 3"x 9'10. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.(Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund). Source: Art Through The Ages, Twelfth Edition, vol. II



**Fig**. 58
**Artist**: Muazu Mohammed Sani
**Title**: Global Warming 2008
**Medium**: Oil and enamel on Canvas
**Size**: 60x80cm
Source: Modern Nigeria Art, ArtExpo Las Vegas, 2008 catalogue, p27



**Fig**. 59
**Artist**: Gani Odutokun
**Title**: Townscape with Strange Figures 1993
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 91.4x91.4cm



**Fig**.60
**Artist**: Jerry Buhari
**Title**: Spillage with Foot Motif 2014
**Medium**: Enamel on Canvas
**Size**: 153x92cm

### 3.9.2 Indirect painting

This involves the stage by stage approach requiring initial drawings made from the charcoal market and from other reference materials as processes in the final execution of a painting. Feldman (1971) posits that, with "Renaissance artists', drawing was not only a way of making visual notations…it was also a means of studying things they would later paint". This is referred to as "studies". Feldman (1971), argues that, so long as painting is regarded as elaboration of drawing, the indirect method prevails. According to him, if painting is seen as the application of colour to a scheme which has already been worked

out, it proper makes sense to employ the indirect method. This method was exploited by the researcher in some of the works. One of the most magnificent sketches by Michelangelo (See Fig.61) shows one of his male studio assistants who posed for the anatomical study as foundation for a fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican in 1508-12. Sketches like this are well detailed to capture the energy of the work. It is an example of how the Renaissance artists used the indirect technique.



**Fig**.61
Studies for the Libyan Sibyl (recto); Studies for the Libyan Sibyl and a Small Sketch for a Seated Figure (verso), 1508–12Michelangelo Buonarroti (Italian, 1475–1564) Red chalk (recto); charcoal or black chalk (verso) 11 3/8 x 8 7/16 in. (28.9 x 21.4 cm)

## 3.10 Sytematic illustration of process/procedure

### 3.10.1 Colour Scheme and Palette

The choice of colour is not based on any scientific theory but on observation, feeling and nature of each experience in the environment. Collier (1967) describes colour as a powerful symbol corresponding to the human state of joy or gloom, tranquility or restlessness, love or hate, spiritual or physical, passion and so on. As a result of human sensibility to the visual field, colour becomes a vehicle of expression depicting mood and creating aesthetic order. The colour scheme for the research is derived from the environmental effect of charcoal and the overwhelming effect of black on other colours reducing visual facts to patches of grey in the colour field.

### 3.10.2 Composition

Each series of work starts with perceptual encounter with various elements and patterns in the charcoal market. Notations are made in form of thumbnail sketches before rearranging them in the studio. The process of execution is grouped into stages following the indirect technique of painting adopted in this research. All the sketches at the exploratory stage were carried out on a smaller scale to ascertain the effect before transferring to a larger scale. This is to achieve a suitable composition that interprets shifting socio-cultural experiences and relating them to aesthetic issues on each canvas. The researcher engaged a variety of patterns in the charcoal market. They are scrawled on canvas in loose geometric and organic shapes. The geometric patterns are then embodied in entities with lines that make the viewer pre-occupied with searching for meaning and familiar forms.

### 3.10.3 Process

The researcher sees a charcoal market as a conglomeration of patches of muted colours blending together in a composite whole. Expressing this requires a process in order to explore the energy of the subject. The studio process takes into consideration the following stages;

### 3.10.3.1 Size/Dimension

The size of each canvas varies depending on the composition. The dimension of support can help in the freedom of expression on each canvas. The researcher considered these dimensions 110x130cm, 140x110cm, 122x153cm and 152x183cm as suitable for the main body of works.

### 3.10.3.2 Media

Different media were explored for execution from the sketches and colour studies through various stages of execution at exploratory and developmental stages. The media used include: Artist oil colour (Winsor and Newton), Watercolour, Pencil (2b-6b), Paper (watercolour) 190lb and A4 sheet, Charcoal (local) and Canvas (100% cotton).

### 3.10.3.3 Transfer of sketches

Sketches were transferred from an A4sheet paper size to the already primed (prepared) canvas using charcoal to draw. This is where the composition for each theme is studied. At this stage decisions concerning placement of different motifs and structure of each canvas is contemplated from different studies. Also the decision about colour scheme based on a restricted palette is taken in terms of value and colour. Changes are made in the course of

painting that is essential to the success of the over-all composition. Sometimes on a particular work, two techniques were used, the direct and indirect application leading to the build-up of pigment on the canvas.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# DISCUSSION

## 4.0 Description and Analyses of works produced

This discussion is based on the defining issues of practice which include the analysis of vivid outcomes of actions undertaken during the research. Sullivian (2005) states that, contemporary artists adopt many practices that dislodge discipline boundaries, media conventions and political interest, yet do so within a realm of aesthetic experience, cultural commentary and educational relevance. The author sees the artist's image as a creator, critic, theorist, teacher, activist, and archivist among others. In view of this fact, because the artist is part of human activity; it now becomes his duty to postulate his understanding of his environment in practice in a way that is personal to him. The outcome of the practice forms an opinion, outlook and a scrutiny of influences and interrelationship on how elements of design function to create a balanced scheme.

The exploration is carried out to create settings in spaces which inquire into the aesthetic and the environmental issues. Looking at colour in a charcoal market, their relationship from the perspective of community, the action of black creates a neutral that binds colours into the amalgamation. This relationship is the subject of discussion in this research. In line with this, Sullivan (2005) states that, an artist working within the domain of making capitalizes on the immediacy of a critical art practice and investigates ways of challenging perceptions through visual encounters.

Every work in this discourse is an entity of its own coded with messages and grouped under a series. The visual experience from the environment and the influence of black (charcoal)

is overwhelming and oppressive, yet creates an association of harmony on the canvas. This association requires transcendental experiences despite the familiarity with the environment in which they occur. When images of known associations (elements) are introduced in some instances in visual context, the muted surfaces and details can only be viewed at close observation. Suffice it to state that, issues of philosophical relevance in the visual field require a deeper inquiry and understanding within the context from which they are drawn.

The researcher adopted different paradigms that are pragmatic and theoretical to create a body of work which is knowledge driven. Investigating, interrogating, creating are the pictorial voices that reveal the position of Sullivan (2005) in the domain of practice based research. The progression in this research begins with colour sketches which build up to introduction of lines of different widths, lengths and textures in gray and black patches. This results into a structure where human motif and lines interface to create an aesthetic whole in the expanse of a gray field. The paintings are segmented into six (6) series guided by the objectives of the research.

### 4.1. The Head that Labours

The art works in this series (See Plates. XLVI and XLVII) depict ordinary people in an environment that reflects no colour. Khera (2004) states that 'In a positive environment, a marginal performer's output goes up ,in a negative environment, a good performer's output goes down'. Human labour is measured in terms of the degree to which colour reflects mood, highlighting the state of life and class. The works capture the energy of labour without much to show. The painting also illustrates the initial effort at a deeper understanding of how the effect of the environmental colour of charcoal could affect other

colours in the colour field. The researcher noticed that care is required to handle black with other colours. The Charcoal market presents us with a setting for the interpretation of the human condition by using black as a symbol of what restricts the colour of people who labour.



**Plate XLVI**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Head that Labour I, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 122cm

**The Head that Labours** I (Plate XLVI) depict several women-faces reflecting labour. It is a synthesis of realism and abstraction. The work is fragmented into three parts in terms of

colour rendering. The upper level is dominated by the use of light which penetrates the work to reveal the cluster of faces. The head that labours is always out with great expectation as represented by a flicker of white light, but comes back home with deferred or dashed hopes. The middle area is laden with dark values where faces are represented in varying colour schemes, while the remaining part of the painting is dominated by yellowish-brown and reddish-brown, an indication of intense labour. The heads of the people are hardly noticed despite their effort. There is spontaneous flow of forms of women with lines superimposed on them. Varying line values are applied to define the faces that are almost dissolved into the environment. This typifies how devastating it is for one to labour and could not afford basic necessities of life**.**



**Plate XLVII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Head that Labours II, 2011
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 112cm

This painting '**The Head that Labours II'** (Plate XLVII) captures the fluidity of movement of human forms and the expressive use of lines. Thin simplified organic lines run in a diagonal formation over the figures. A sense of spatial illusion is created and segmented by the two parallel bold horizontal lines. There are five figures in this work; three to the right are arranged in a rhythmic order while two to the left are not emphasized. All the women depicted have curvilinear lines drawn over their heads to give an impression that they are carrying something. This is to convey the idea of selling that occurs in the market arena. The foreground is not imprinted with patterns but left empty in gray. The

interplay of light is obvious as in other paintings in this research especially at the top. This work represents the labour of women who are engaged in an activity that gives little compared to what is put in.

### 4.1.2. Selling the Future

This series exemplifies an atmosphere of trading by women. Women are regarded as the symbol of life, but assumed a channel of disposing a product of tree which has life. It is presented in planes of subtle notes which can transport the viewer through a place of stillness and serenity. Umbrella motif composed is prevalent in Plates XLIX and L, arranged in a sequential order. The women are depicted enmeshed in their selling activities. They converged in a sitting posture as if in a shaded environment with web of lines integrated into their conversation. The spontaneous flow of lines drawn over the supports is interjected with dry tree form in this series. The tree branches create design patterns that influenced other possibilities in subsequent works. Swirling lines which connect the figures in a circular motion are complimented by other motifs resulting into a web. The concept is to segment each canvas into grid patterns to capture essentials in each section. Each grid is imprinted with patterns that represent charcoal. Perspective is achieved using various spatial relationships of forms enhanced by light, a tint of yellow light and white. The graduation of gray values suggests depth at middle focal point. The entire compositions are unified by grays while the lower point is darkened to show the charcoal environment. This research explores the possibility of creating works that are imbued with philosophical issues relating to the environment as stated in the third objective (See Plates XLVIII-LII). The irony is that the future is traded away because of the quest for energy, the damage is

not visible now but the future is affected. Out of ignorance through cutting down of a natural resource (Tree) for fuel energy, the continual depletion could spell doom, gloominess, extreme destruction, erosion, desertification, flooding, global warming and so on. The society to which we belong seems to lack what to do concerning solving environmental problems.

The structure of Neoplasticism is an influence at this stage, which is a major break for this research. The peculiarity is in their rendering and analytical compositions all through this series.



**Plates XLVIII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Selling the Future I, 2011
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 140 x 110cm

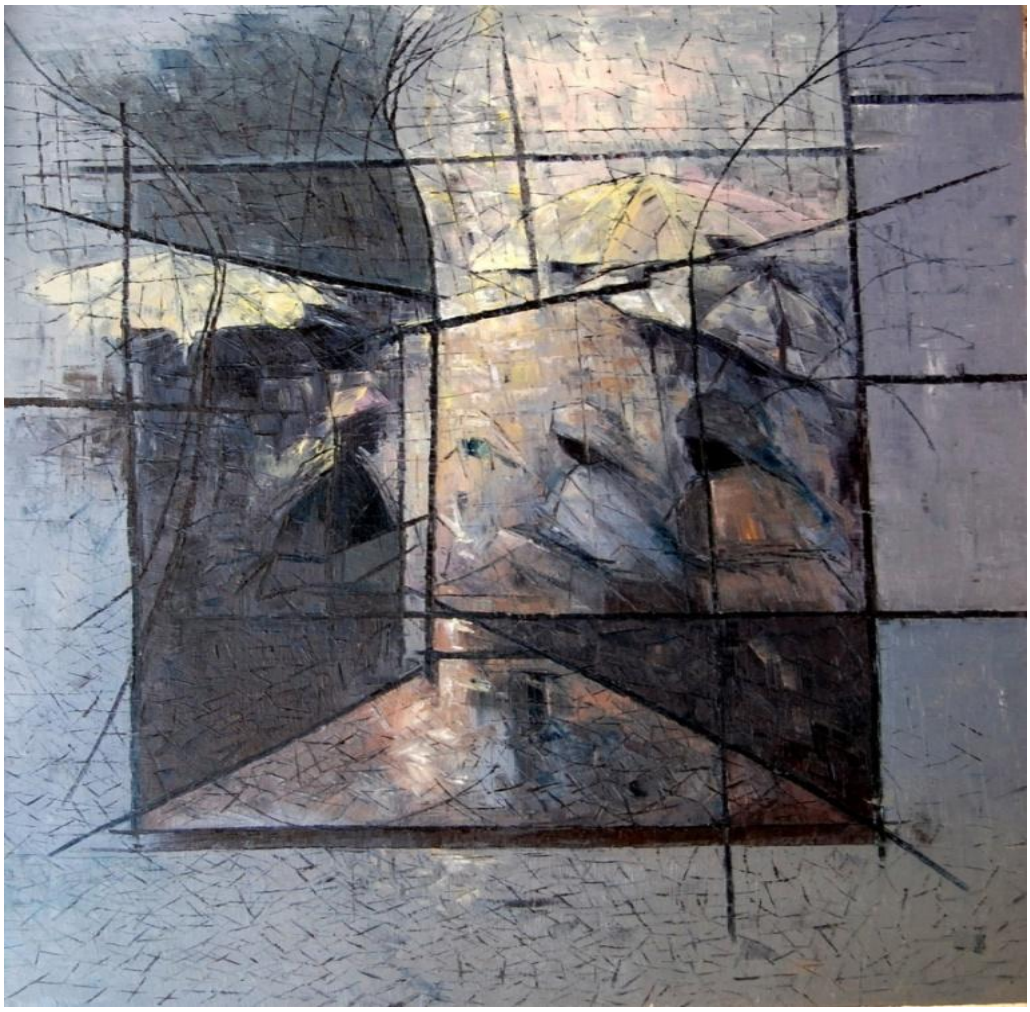


**Plate XLVIX**
**Artis**t: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Selling the Future II, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 112cm

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**Plate L**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Selling the Future III, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Plate LI**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Selling the FutureIV, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

In Plate LI, Impressionism and Neoplasticism approaches were combined in an exploratory manner. At the top part of the painting, tree patterns are depicted on the same plane. The irregular vertical lines represent trees and run into each other to create an impression of depth at the foreground. As in other paintings in this series women are shown in a selling and buying environment. The colours red and yellow are also subdued to achieve the objective of using a restricted palette in every aspect of this work.

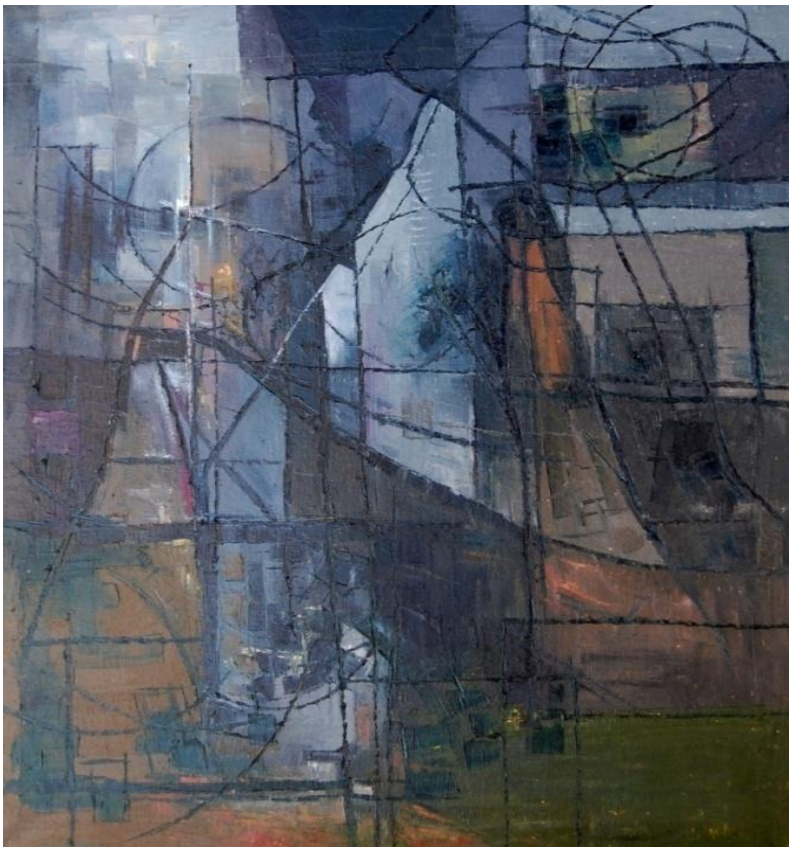


**Plate LII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Selling the Future V, 2012
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

This is the fifth painting **'Selling the Future V'** (Plate LII) in the series. The composition is a relationship between a human form and a structure of geometry in an intertwined spatial articulation. This tolerant relationship is created by flowing lines and an intricate design with distinct characteristics. The fluidity of lines defined each segment of the painting into compartments in different orientation where shapes and colour intermingle. This makes the movement in colour and line to create identifiable shapes. The interaction of seated figures and the tree in this limited palette is achieved with close tonal values.

### 4.1.3. Contemplation on Patterns in nature

All the paintings from the first series were achieved with palette knife painting. Lines are defined using dark tones, a derivative from the charcoal appearance. Flashes of light vibrate into a field of grey creating an agitated dramatic effect that signifies life even in the midst of decay and death (See Plate LIII-LIX).This is also meant to create 'opposites', such as life and death, black and white good and evil, and light and darkness. The gray signifies the shifts in colour that result from the effect of black, burnt umber, white and red. This is to show how interconnectedness of patterns in nature can represent patterns of life. Sofola (1973), on human relationship in Africa, maintains that,

> One important characteristic of African life about which scholars of Africa phenomena seem to show a consensus grows in part out of the moral philosophy of altruism. It is the African group living or collective life as reflected in African personalism, an emphasis on wholesome human relationships among the members of the group at whatever expense and efforts including personal sacrifices of various forms.

Strong lines are used to fragment forms. By juxtaposition new forms are created. The image on each canvas is sparsely distributed with dabs of colours, to represent the evolution of man and nature to create patterns in random order. This cluster of interacting forms is linked by bands of irregular lines that support the vertical orientation in an interaction of illusionary space. The images are connected in empty space in a designed format. This does not correspond to the cannons of any traditional thought, but it is an attempt to understand art forms that do not follow any convention as in the works of Gani Odutokun. Danjama (2010), maintains that Gani Odutokun is a painter who did not align his painting style to any indigenous art tradition, but painted in the international or universal mode. This is reflected in this research where some parts of the canvas are left empty creating a sense of

mystery to represent the image of a depraved environment. 'Harmony in Line and colour I & II' (See Plates LIII-LIV) opens up the discourse in this series. These patterns in nature when contemplated can result into a panoramic view of human activities. The patterns echoes rhythms of colours to create movements in a place where cultural construct blend in the spaces of a community. Ideas are communicated with colours in a cluster of structures created by lines and forms. Cutting down trees is making rare species almost extinct. The environment is being degraded due to lack of proper legislation.



**Plate LIII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Harmony of Line and colour 1, 2011
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 122cm



**Plate** LIV
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Harmony of Line and Colour II, 2011
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 122cm

**Harmony of line and Colour I&II ,** (Plates. LIII-LIV) is an attempt at development of a painting without definition of the human form in with gray palette. The composition is like those of a stage design with two curtain walls, a little opening at the meeting point reflect a ray of light. The arrangement on the canvas to the right shows tree trunks, figures, one sitting, while the other is standing with a line drawn over her head, giving the illusion of someone carrying something. Line is used to create patterns. (See Plate LIII). Muted red and its tint are used to compliment the gray and black dominated work. The cube-like form of black at the foreground represents charcoal. A distinct pattern is created (See Plate LIV). The left dark focal part is abstracted and not defined to look like any recognizable pattern. Lines in vertical orientation are stretched to the top of the canvas with dark dots on what

looks like rushing water. These two paintings reflect the passage of life; people make their choices, in daily activities.



**Plate LV**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on Pattern in Nature I, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

**Contemplation on Pattern in Nature I**, (See Plate LV) is a painting that presents a simple distinction in rendering of nature as the researcher perceives the material world. It is like a floating object in space without any base line, surrounded only by puzzling empty spaces.

This depicts relationships that exist between two ‘opposites’ in nature, the vertical and the horizontal. They interweave to create a composite harmony in this painting despite their different identities. It could yet connote another understanding that is of surface appearance of a structure built as if a crucifix is placed on the picture plane. The vagueness of the ground creates a mystic appearance. Everything on the canvas appears suspended including the figures represented in dot –like mannerism. Figures are part of the landscape in which everything is reduced to subdued values. An attempt was made to use the structure of Mondrian’s work just like all the works in this series. The horizontal and vertical structures fuse together into gray shades but slightly defined by a dark value. The work was inspired by bark of trees and the effect of deforestation. A tree and dot-like patterns seem to be engaged in a dialogue at the top part of the composition. Empty spaces in this painting signify deforested areas. Most actions of deforestation according to Uroko (2011) on the flipside, however results into diminishing wildlife population, which have been identified as the most critical environmental effects of charcoal.



**Plate LVI**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on Patterns in Nature II, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

This work, (Plate LVI), '**Contemplation on the Patterns in Nature II',** was inspired by the relationship between humans and nature. The dots representing figures which fill the surface of this canvas constitutes the energy of moving people. The vertical lines are repeated, running through the figures in dots is to connect horizontal organic parallel lines. The form of a tree is represented in a linear approach and the foliage in knotted lines spread over the top part of this piece. The fluidity of movement gives a picture of a community of people involved in acts that affect the environment. A strong white line which represents light is used to generate a dramatic effect across the dots. The canvas is also sparsely dotted with burnt umber and muted red in a manner of Piet Mondrian's structure of painting.



**Plate LVII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on the Patterns in Nature III, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

The third in the series (Plate LVII), '**Contemplation on Patterns in Nature III'** shows dots that represent human activities in diagonal orientation. The vertical and horizontal lines depict a structure that holds the work together. Other thin and thick curvilinear patterns on the left are derived from the bowls of charcoal represented in arc and convex

orientation. This subtle composition of colours and values is divided by the diagonal dot – like figures at the middle, at the top a gray and at the bottom a bluish value. The colour relationship is integrated with speckle of muted primary colours to enhance the strong diagonal formation.



**Plate LVIII**
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on the Patterns in Nature 1V, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

The painting shown in Plate LVIII, **'Contemplation on the Patterns in Nature IV',** is based on the concept of composition of two extremes black and white in harmony with other colours. The arrangement of shapes and line patterns is different from the previously

discussed works in this series. It is a manipulation of planes to achieve a flowing transition of colours by blending gray into other colours. The concern is with the dynamic interaction of colour in illusionary space. This produces a relationship in a picture plane which results into cluster of forms. Charcoal which is considered dead and lifeless metamorphosed into creating possibilities and evoking thoughts of symbolism. The images are loaded with allegorical content such as the reflection on burnt environment, livelihood and human labour. The images reflect what can be referred to as a convergence of life experiences, a state of worn out, battered, poverty and lack. In the execution of this painting, preparatory sketches of calculated lines and forms are juxtaposed in different values.



**Plate LIX**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:**Contemplation on Patterns in Nature V,2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

**'Contemplation on Pattern in Nature V'** (Plate LIX) reflects the fantasy of space with lines running through in vertical and horizontal orientation. The canvas is segmented almost into equal parts as if stitched to connect the upper and lower focal parts. Thin lines run through from the top to the bottom. The upper part is reinforced with the figure of a tree

defined with lines that weave into each other and give the painting a structure of Mondrian`s work. The shape of the tree is rendered in skeletal manner which makes it transparent. The dots in this series represent people carefully fused under the shade of the tree –like shape. White is used to distinguish between two extreme, dark and light. The vivid and spontaneous action of white application is to balance the existence of the dark notes to achieve harmony. This distinct appearance of white integrated into the painting represents light coming out of every situation, no matter how gloomy. The muted red represent impact of fire on the environment appearing like a band pasted on the canvas.

### 4.4. The woman

This is the fourth in the series. It celebrates womanhood and her resilience despite all odds of cultural perception such as lack of equal job opportunities, education and politics. The irony here is that she is the pedestal on which the trade thrives. Images of women are used and juxtaposed with trunks and branches of trees spreading across all the series of paintings, reflecting faces of labour. Campbell (1993), describes women as "the veritable symbol of life; they represent continuity and stability and are the hope of the human race …favourite motifs of the visual, verbal and literary artists all over the world". Some of the notable expressions of images of women in painting include, 'Love and Life' by George Frederic Watts (1893); 'Before the Performance' by Edgar Degas (1896-98); 'Spirit of the Dead Watching' Paul Gauguin,(1892); 'Sisi Ologe1' Kolade Oshinowo, (2012); and 'Black is beautiful' (1971) by Benjamin Enwonwu. The woman motif served as a vehicle of aesthetic communication to depict social stratum, such as various relationships using colour harmony of grey tones. It is the woman folk that has inspired artists from time immemorial.

The interrogation confronts the artist with the general reality through practice to bring out a mode of expression that depicts various aspects of these women in the charcoal market. This expression makes allegorical statements about humans, their environment and their interconnectedness. The prevalent colour of the environment affected the women and their outlook. Spaces where interactions occur in a charcoal market are usually black and the overwhelming influence of black subsumed them to a point of no colour. The women folk especially in Africa are an epitome of hard work. They are said to often bear a heavier burden in multiplicity of roles only complimented by children. The woman motif is represented in this series as a theme because it is a major symbol common in the charcoal business. The paintings in this series represent ideas which encapsulate the society in a whole of human struggle for survival. (See Plates LX-LXIII).



**Plate LX**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Woman I, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

'My women are simple, honest creatures who are troubled with nothing past their physical occupations…It is as if you were looking through an eyehole' – Degas- From the Nudes category (www.art-quotes.com/auth_search.php...)

"**The Woman 1**" as shown in (Plate LX), depicts three women enveloped in etched surface. The researcher used palette knife to suggest cracks pattern in a subtle scheme. This design brings out the surface of the painting to align with the composition to achieve serenity. The canvas is rendered in gray and roughly textured to suggest the inability to

have what to show for the struggle. The women are represented in elegant poses in their daily activities. The image of a tree is placed behind the women to represent the source of their business. The composition relies on linear rhythms which enclose the figures and fragment them. The linearity of the composition is influenced by Cubist artists. It is created by overlapping planes in space as a result of the use of the charcoal motif.



**Plate LXI**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Woman 11, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

This painting in **"The Woman II"** (See Plate LXI), shows a variety of linear language of abstract relationships (thick and thin lines) employed to make visual statements about the women. The lyrical rendering of a woman fills the entire picture plane in a posture that

depicts movement. The lines captured the essence of her activities in the web of arc, diagonal, vertical and horizontal structure. This modulation of colour gives a picture of a charcoal market in a symbolic manner. The work reflects the interest in the usage of black to capture the activities of a charcoal market in a large colour area. The researcher created floating sensations of light in white on all the work in this series. The foreground and background are tied together in a geometric configuration using dark outlines and simplified shapes.

This spatial construction is achieved through the use of negative and positive planes separated by bands of lines. The mid-ground is separated by mainly black value that flows into gray through the images of two figures. The woman on the right sits with part of the body blended into the dark ground. At the foreground the motif of bowls are overlapped with smudged black on gray. Each segment of the painting occupies a monochromatic expression suggesting everyday life of the women in business.

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**Plate LXII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Woman (fashion), 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

**'Fashion'**, (Plate LXII) shows two women depicted from a back view within the compositional construct of a dark value. Patterns are captured in linear movement which runs through in two vertical lines. Short horizontal lines connect the vertical and thin diagonal lines. Marks and symbols of charcoal are repeated to have a textural effect in space. The elegant head gears are submerged into each other. This work reveals the article of their trade (charcoal) which has become fashionable. Charcoal colour dominates the entire surface area to affect their appearance. The white stripe in this painting is used to illuminate the activities of the figures within picture plane.

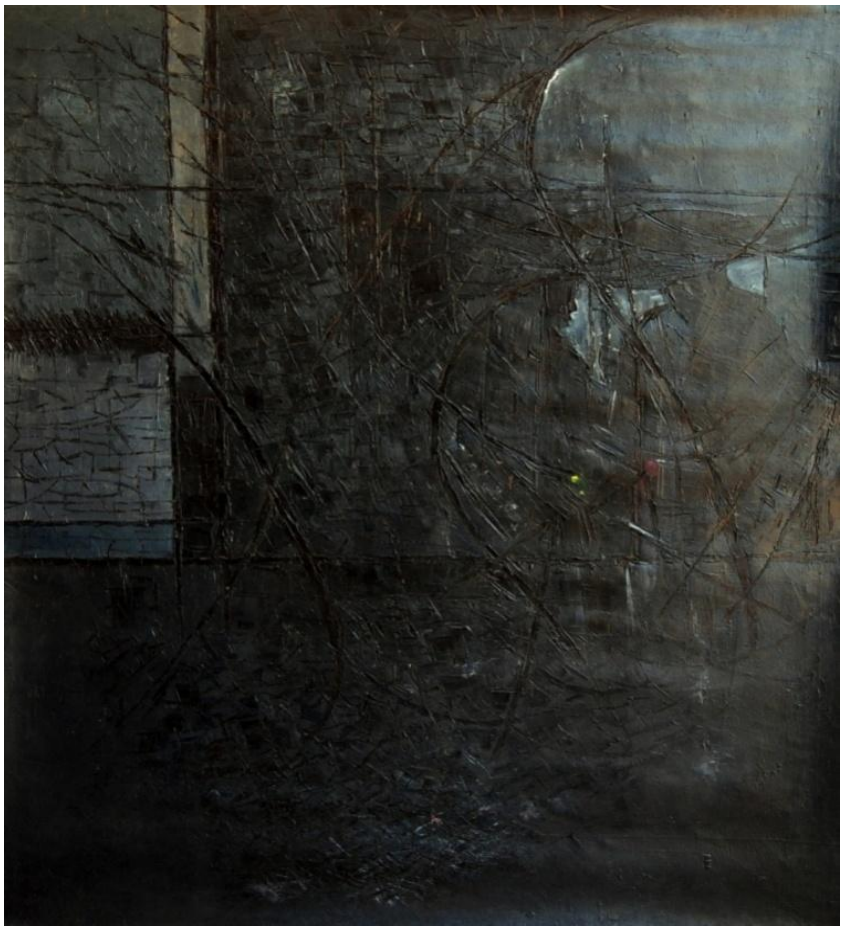


**Plate LXIII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:**The Woman-Discussion , 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

**'In Discussion'** (Plate LXIII), the positioning of the two women shaded under a tree structure depicts secrecy. The entire composition is a synthesis of mainly motifs that reverberate through this research. The two figures are silhouettes in dominant dark tone. Light permeates a curved path through the figures to expose them. The human motif and the environment interact in intricate subtleness. On the left is the impression of stitches

introduced as seen in some works in this research. It represents the low ebb of life where an issue on the human condition especially in this part of the world results into stitching pieces of what is left together.

### 4.5. Grays of Life

The inspiration for this series (See Plates LXIV-LXVIII) is obtained from life conditions represented in shades of gray. It is the perception of the researcher on issues that border on daily living and its complexities. Gray shades could aesthetically communicate life's situations, gloom, age, silence, calmness and so on. It represents a transition between two colours or more and can be use to express symbolic visual pattern that carries universal understanding. When wood and charcoal go through the process of firing, they become ashes. The images, human and tree forms dominate this series with each canvas laced with lines and simple blending of values.

The concept is to put together large negative spaces, bits of compartments of colour areas as in the works of Piet Mondrian's outlined images. A variety of experimentations with abstract elements- line, colour, texture and patterns results into production of the planes of gray. These planes symbolize different relationships in life and nature. White represents Light and hope. Human beings by nature, move from one phase to the other in life with its attendant problems depending on their nature of experiences. Our capacity to succeed or fail depends on our ability to handle our environment. Khera (2004), claims that 'in a corrupt environment, an honest person has a hard time, whereas in an honest environment, a corrupt person has a tough time'. In an ideal setting, a society should be guided by this statement. Stringer (1998) writing on the dry times in the life of humans to advance this

discourse, postulates that "…we often go through dry times to lose our vision and our hope…and discouraging tactics. There are times when we feel there is nothing left within us to give and feel like giving up". He posits a way out thus, "we need to get past this point so that the storms and temptations of this life will not move us off the foundation…" It is then important to note that when the foundation of any society is destroyed everything will be faulty.



**Plate LXIV**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life I, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 122 x 122cm

The inspiration for this painting' **Grays of Life I'** (Plate LXIV) is derived from expressions of patterns from nature to depict grays of life in tonal gradation. This is a natural composition from various sketches to capture humans in labour from under a tree. A

woman is seated with her head bowed; engaged in her daily activities, is covered with interwoven lines, two vertical lines, one on her left and the other on the right. The motif of charcoal combined with dynamic choppy lines in different direction dominates the foreground of the canvas. Part of the trunk of the tree is shown with the branches spreading from the left to the right over a gray background. The colour is predominantly gray. Prussian blue with black was used to achieve this piece.



**Plate LXV**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life 11, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 140 x 110cm

The composition '**Grays of Life 11'** (Plate LXV) represents a creation of natural transition that requires harmonies of gray colour. It is reflected through perceptible relationship of planes and flowing lines which results to design with distinct character. Different alphabets (tree clusters and rattan palm) in nature are used to a develop vocabulary that embodies

experiences associated with the spirit of the environment .The lines which cut-across in a diagonal formation where shapes and colour mingle create an interaction. Two female figures on the right are represented standing with curved lines arranged on their heads. This leads the eye into the composition while a tree trunk on the left further strengthens the vertical force. The middle focal point culminates into a perspective reinforced by a dark value on the left and on the right of the painting. The gradation of value is defined by lines to suggest movement.



**Plate LXVI**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life III,2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 140 x 110cm

This pictorial rendering in **'Grays of Life III'** (Plate LXVI) is structured by segmenting the canvas with lines vertically and horizontally. Each part is patterned with a charcoal motif in varying shades at the middle section and reinforced with dark value. The variation of tonal gradation at the top is to create perspective and illusion of depth with light reverberating in a vertical order. Behind the interposed tree trunk are thin lines which run in a diagonal strand to meet at a point. The foreground is a flat gray separated by light that shines from the back of the tree. The form of a woman is depicted selling charcoal as if stuck under the tree while other forms are represented in lines which fuse into the patterned ground. Curvilinear lines and a segment of patched red at the left are outlined.



**Plate LXVII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life IV, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 140 x 110cm

This repeated rectangle in **'Grays of Life IV'** (Plate LXVII) is arranged in a rhythmic pattern to create depth. The vertical and horizontal lines are held together by interlocking patterns. This kind of pattern emerged from a combination of dense abstract composition of lines in different directions criss-crossing the picture plane. Each frame-like line arrangement implies pages of life in sequential relationship. The middle point creates an entry reinforced by light. The motif of fire for the researcher stimulates life and joy and it serves as a compliment to the overall composition. This is achieved by the drops of muted red and yellow.



**Plate LXVIII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life V, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 112 x91cm

The **'Grays of Life V'** (Plate LXVIII), is depicted showing abstract shapes achieved by the free flow of linear definitions. This web is strengthened with dark values on the left and right focal points giving the painting the impression of a water fall. The reflection on the foreground gives an impression of light on flowing water. The dense build-up of lines in the middle forms a solid base against a highlighted background to present a visual mid-point in the composition. The curvilinear rendering at the foreground represents the charcoal bowls and the continuous circle of daily activities. The direction of a line may give an illusion of three dimensions particularly when it is used to reinforce a form.

### 4.6. Palace of Oppression

A market is interpreted in this research under the theme **'Palace of Oppression' I-IV** (See Plates LXIX-LXXII) as a place of exchange of ideas based on mutual understanding and the recognition of individual differences. It is a melting point in which every participant hopes to return with an air of satisfaction. In charcoal market, black is a dominant factor that determines the state of other colours. One can argue that in an oppressive instance there is one whose image is larger than life, whose influence prevails, the boss, the one that collects all and does not give back. People of equal opportunities are by the tyranny of fellow humans. When black assumes the position of influence in the colour field, it controls the field to determine the value of a colour.

In this series, the paintings started as experimentation with black and other colours until they turned out to be adventures into the world of black. Black creates a protective barrier as it absorbs all the energy (colours) next to it. It influences all colour associations by

devaluing their intensity. The struggle that ensued on the canvas (Plate LXIX), turned out to be experiential for the researcher. Every attempt to 'marry' all colours to agree, as black dominated other colours, reduced their values and stripped them of their dignity. The colours were assimilated by black in a manner that the colours turned gray and frustrating. It is a conceptual market on canvas where trading was expected to take place in a colour relationship using each colour's negotiating power. Patches of other colours resulted from the effect of black on other colours during application.

Humans become victims of the oppressive environment they created. Poverty becomes the order of the day in a society of inequality. When Poverty becomes the norm,the dignity of humans is eroded and makes them live a life of servitude. According to Oyedepo (2006), the world has no regard whatsoever for any input in world affairs from Africa, because of her poverty. He further asserts that Africa has no voting power at the United Nations Security Council, our large population notwithstanding. His thought is that 'The harder men try to come out the deeper they are plunged into it. Poverty today seems to be the norm among Nations rather than the exception. It has no respect for sex, race, colour or creed'. The nations of Africa found themselves among the greedy nations of the world who subjugate themselves because they lack the know how to develop their potentials.

Another very important aspect in the palace of oppression is the political flavour added to it. The pursuit of materialism/greed has left the people in gloominess with few dominating others. Most colours are lost in obscurity in the world of black. Colours affected by the activities of black in the colour field here represent majority of the people who are lost in

obscurity. They are all in ignorance. It is the absence of light that can keep a people bound without knowing their right.



**Plate LXIX**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Market on Canvas (Palace of Oppression I) 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 183 x 153cm

The last stage of this research (See Plates.LXX-LXXII) examined and explored the palace of oppression with circular forms to represent circles of life under oppressive situations. The colours are muted with black delving into possibilities which exist in the colour field. These paintings depict conditions that arise from the subject of oppression. The circular lines are represented in stitch-like patterns in the picture plane. The dominant lines are randomly composed to create effect of motion on the overall expression of the works. The

different combination of overlapping web of curvilinear patterns on each canvas is tangled in a loose orientation. In the three pieces presented, the researcher made no attempt at representing natural forms except where a woman form is seen in the web of lines (see Plate LXXII). The concentration here is to build tones that provoke aesthetic moods yet depicting human conditions. These dark canvases are also set to evoke contemplation on patterns experienced from a charcoal market and from the environment. The patterns from natural falling of climbers in a forested area from one tree to the other offers the possibilities for adaptation for creating paintings in this series. The curvilinear forms are interlocked and repeated to evoke an expression of oppression in this research. Quiller (2009) holds the opinion that a curvilinear line can depict a carefree, lighthearted, or fantastical mood, but it can also suggest haunting or wild expressions. Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Edvard Munch, and William Blake are a few great painters who frequently used this form of composition. The processes of achieving these paintings were through series of thumb-nail sketches put together to develop each piece.



**Plate LXX**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Market on Canvas (Palace of Oppression 11) 2013
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 122x 122cm



**Plate LXXI**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Market on Canvas (Palace of Oppression 111) 2013
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 122 x 122cm



**Plate LXXII**
**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Market on Canvas (Palace of Oppression IV) 2013
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 152 x 122cm

# CHAPTER 5

## CATALOGUE

### 5.0 Artist Curatorial statement

The works that constitute the research entitled, "Exploratory Study of the Charcoal Market in Painting using a Restricted Palette" began in September, 2010 with series of sketches on A4 size paper derived from a charcoal market at Tafawa Balewa Street, Jos. Plateau State. The paintings are arranged in series to differentiate them from each other. Each series focuses on a particular theme linked together in terms of spatial relationship of line, colour, texture, patterns and form which relate to social issues. This brought to fore activities ordinarily regarded as mere buying and selling of an item/commodity without recourse to its attendant consequences on the environment. This body of work establishes facts about how engagement with charcoal could open up aesthetic possibilities which introduce a new way to mirror the society. It also opens a discursive platform on how a place of disenchantment could provide abstract shapes and patterns for a studio research. Charcoal is intended for use of humans for different purposes, but it provides the artist with an assemblage of aesthetic patterns for studio research. The works are symbolic representations of our being, not necessarily using apocalyptic images but images imbued with philosophical thinking. The intention is to portray a collection of colour relationship as it exists in nature and in a charcoal market in visual form.

The works are made up of 32 sketches and 40 paintings cutting across different themes in six series. Two main factors are captured in this presentation and catalogued. First is the aesthetic consideration which serves as basis for this exploration in terms of techniques and

materials and the second is the environmental issue that seeks to address human conditions in allegories.

Each series is focused on a particular genre derived under the subject of charcoal market using a restricted palette to express situations that relate to daily existence. Suffice it to state that black served as a major vehicle of focus in the execution of paintings presented for exhibition. Black a derivative from the absence of light drawn from charcoal exemplified how its relationship with other colours could affect the value of those colours as shown in the paintings produced.

The exploratory stage clearly defines the market study using free gestural statements in colour, gray and pencil sketches.The sketches represent the structure upon which the entire project is hinged. They serve as the basis for studying and understanding various segments of the market patterns, forms, shapes and movements.

The works produced in the developmental stage are more intricate and loaded with a continuum of issues. These issues are directly or indirectly a major setback for the development of a nation that is not responsive to its environment, the consequences of which on a long term cannot be quantified. Visual statements are made in metaphors using images, patterns, shapes, colour thus making the works mainly conceptual.

## 5.2 Portfolio

This portfolio contains all the works executed in the course of this research from sketches to the colour studies and the main body of work**.**

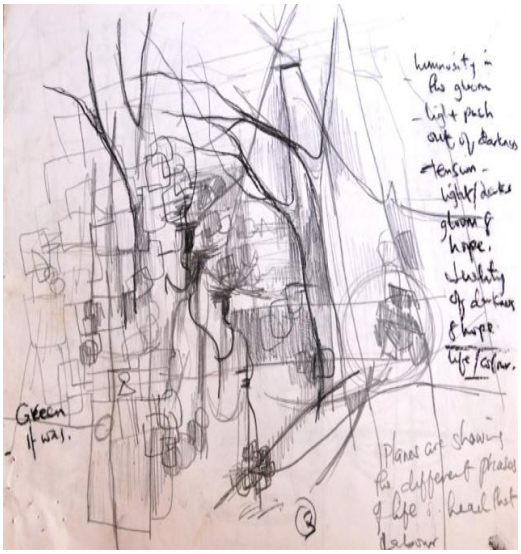
### Study sketches



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Head that Labours
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.




**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Head that Labours
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



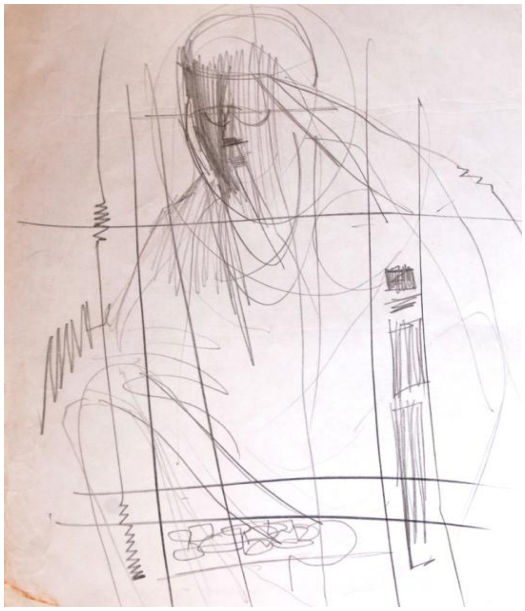
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**Title**: The Head that Labours
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Head that Labours
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



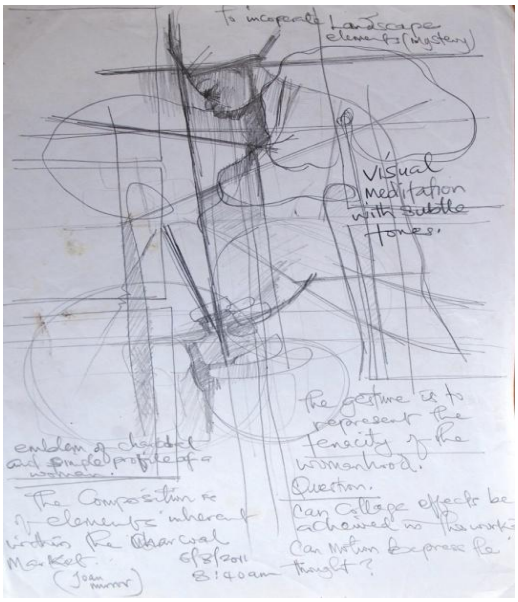
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**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



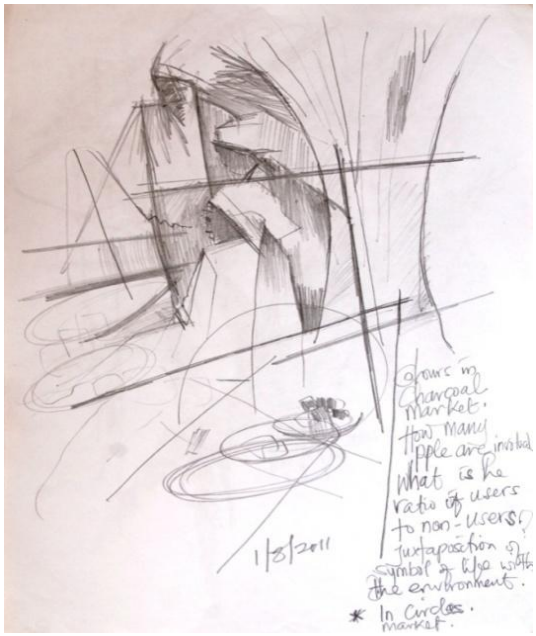

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**Title**: Study for selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
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**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



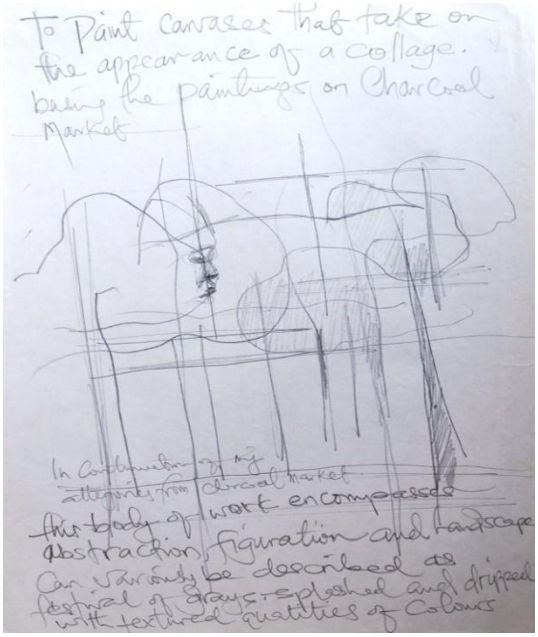

**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Selling the Future
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm




**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Grays of Life
**Medium:** P**encil on paper**
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



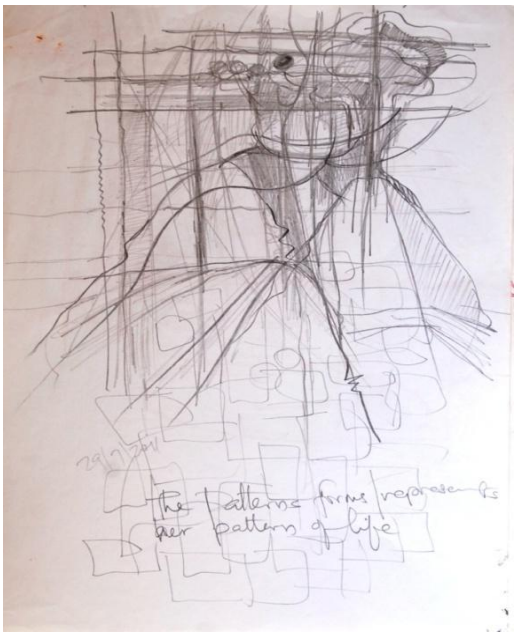
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**Title**: Study for Grays of Life
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
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**Title**: Study for Grays of Life
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
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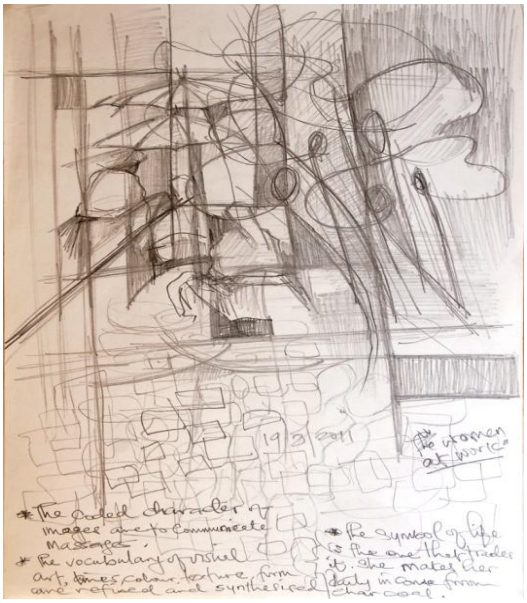
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**Title**: Study for Grays of Life
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm




**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Woman
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.




**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Woman
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



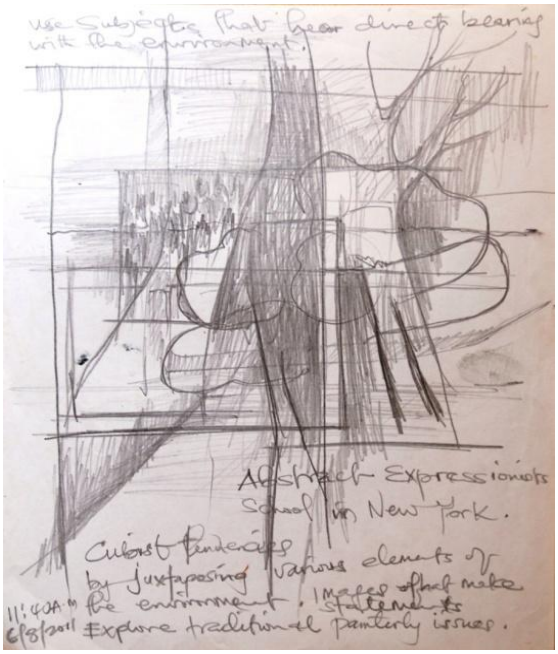
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**Title**: Study for Contemplation on the Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
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**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on the Pattern in Nature
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



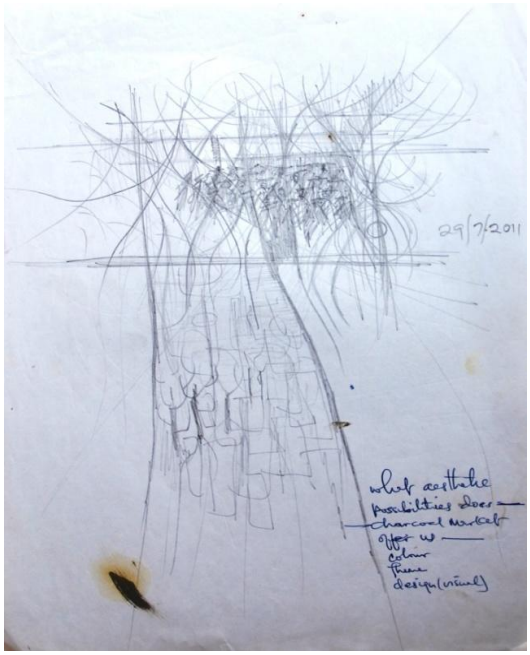
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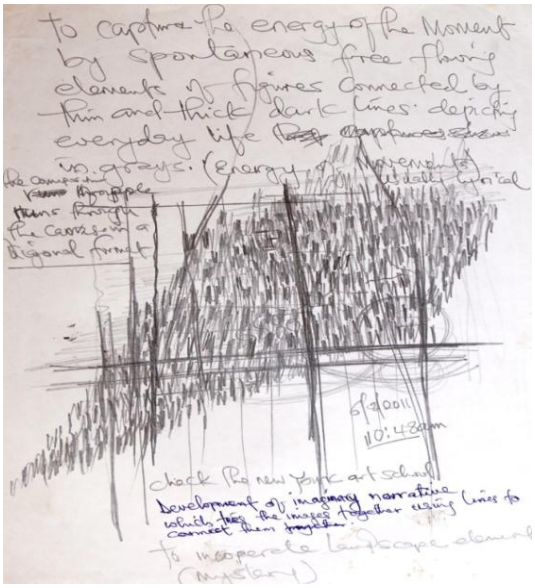
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**Title**: Study for Contemplation on the Pattern in Nature
**Medium :** Pencil on paper
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**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



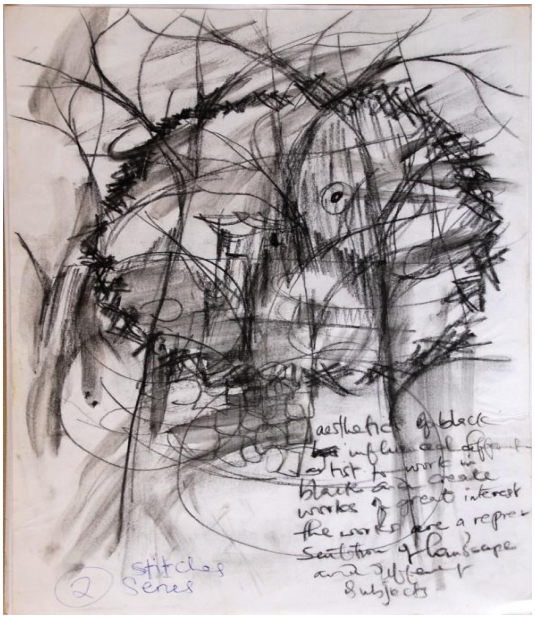
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**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
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**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



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**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Watercolur on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



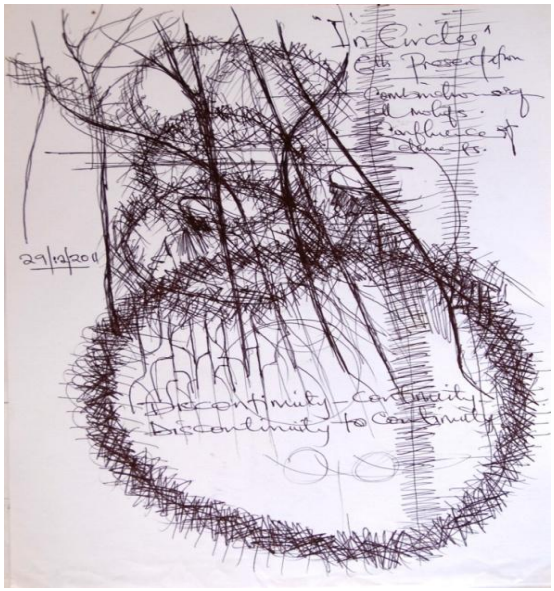
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Contemplation on Pattern in Nature
**Medium:** Charcoal on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



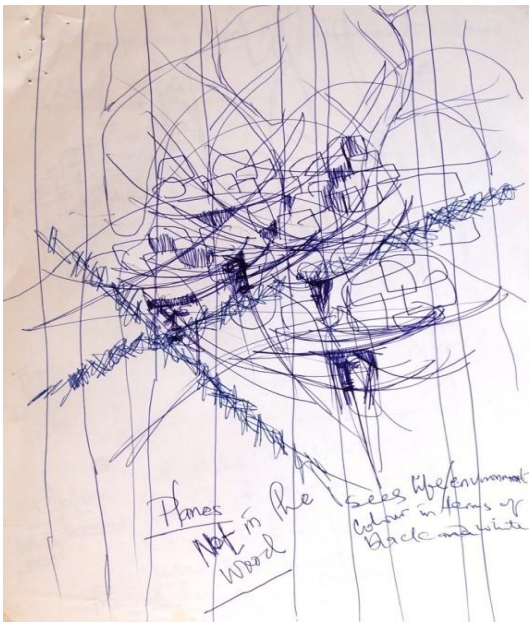
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**Medium:** Watercolour on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm



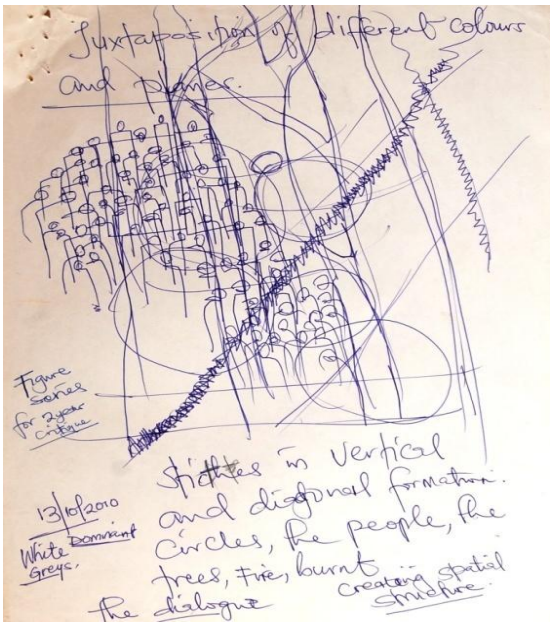
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Palace of Oppression
**Medium:** Pencil on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm.



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Study for Palace of Oppression
**Medium:** Pen on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm




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**Title**: Study for Palace of Oppression
**Medium:** Pen on paper
**Size**: 29.5 x 21cm

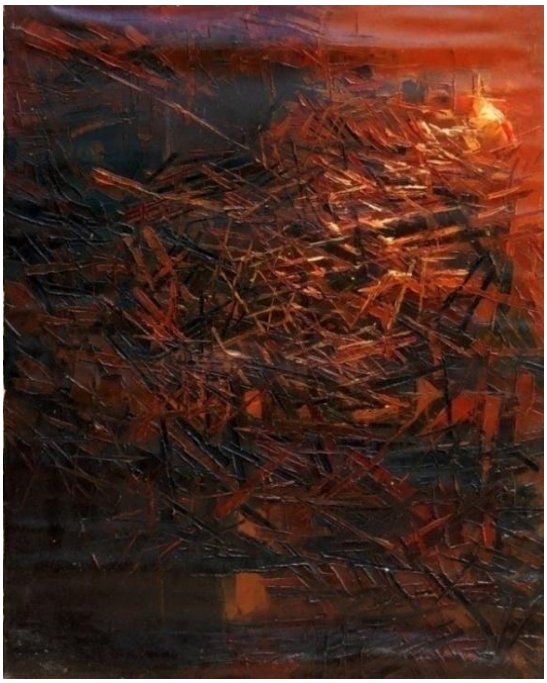
**Exploratory/Colour studies**



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Green, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 122cm



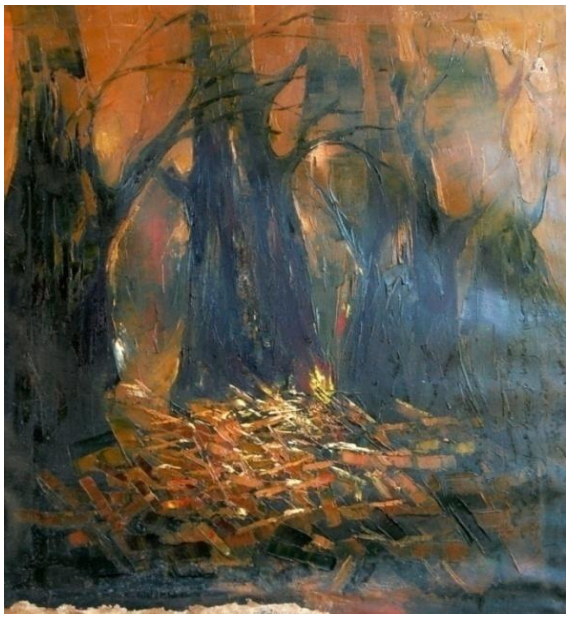
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Chips I, 2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 76x 64cm



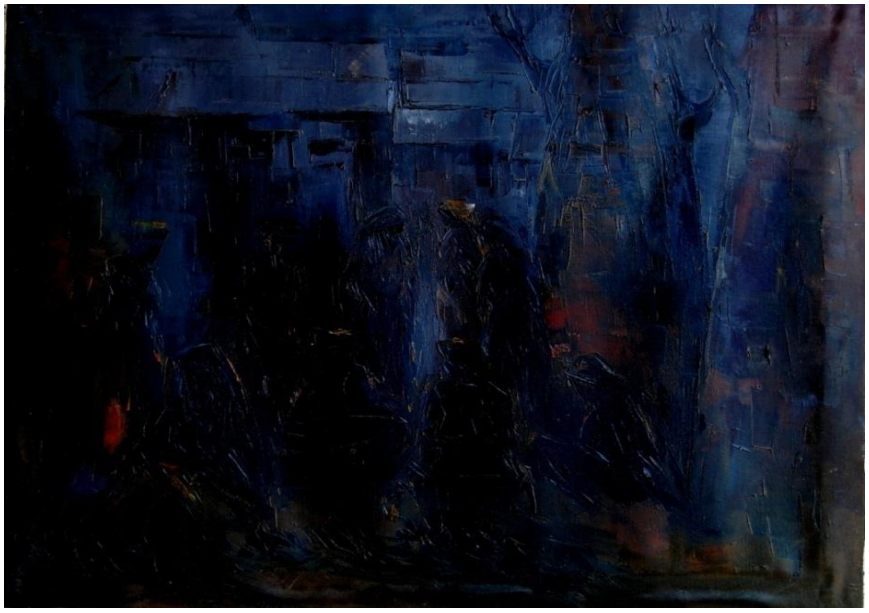
**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Chips II,2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 76 x 64cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Chips III,2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Cutting the Tree 2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Market Colour,2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 74 x64cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Colour Sketch, 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 74 x 64cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Fire Behind the Bush,2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 76 x 64cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Charcoal Market 2010
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 86x101cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Council of Elders,2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 110cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Exploring Market Forms, 2010
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

**Development stage**



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Head that Labours,2011
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 122cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Head that Labours,2011
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm

\



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Selling the Future I,2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: Selling the Future II, 2011
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 140 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Selling the Future III, 2011
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 112cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Selling the Future IV, 2011
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 112cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Selling the Future IV, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Selling the Future V, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on the Pattern in Nature I, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 122cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on the patterns in Nature II , 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 153 x 122cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on patterns in Nature III,2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on patterns in Nature IV,2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 108cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on patterns in Nature V, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on patterns in Nature VI, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on patterns in Nature VII, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Contemplation on patterns in Nature VIII, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Woman I, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Woman II , 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist**: John Oyedemi
**Title**: The Woman (Fashion), 2012
**Medium**: Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** The Woman (Discussion), 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 130 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life I, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 122 x 122cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life II, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 140 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life III, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 140 x 110cm



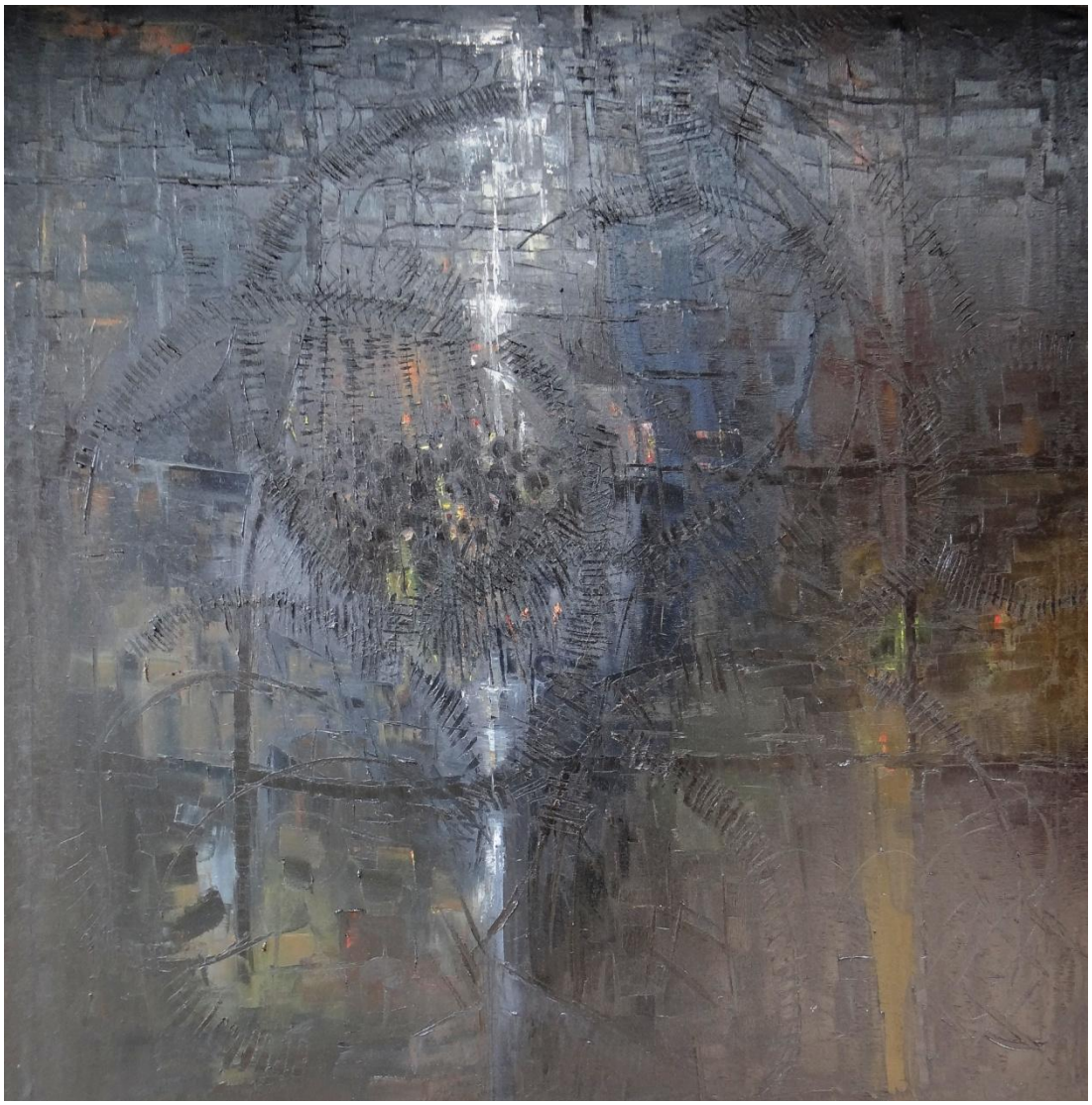
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**Title:** Grays of Life IV, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 140 x 110cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Grays of Life V, 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 91 x 112cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Market on Canvas (Palace Of Oppression I), 2012
**Medium:** Oil on Canvas
**Size**: 183 x 152cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Palace of Oppression II, 2013
**Medium:** Oil on canvas
**Size**: 122 x 122cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Palace of Oppression III, 2013
**Medium:** Oil on canvas
**Size**: 122x122cm



**Artist:** John Oyedemi
**Title:** Palace of Oppression IV, 2013
**Medium:** Oil on canvas
**Size**: 152x122cm

# CHAPTER SIX

## 6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Charcoal market suggests a restricted palette for artistic probe in expressing thoughts on human conditions like satire, gloominess, war, and catastrophe. The modulation of these colours though limited, addresses spatial relationships of objects in a composition with wide range of gray tones. These findings are reflective in the context of this exploration as the outcome of the study of a charcoal market. Findings have shown that charcoal is a product which has attracted global attention in recent times because of its negative consequences on the environment. However, looking at the platform on which charcoal thrives, the market, it thus serves as a discursive path for artistic inquiry. An abstract visual mark characterized by lines in varying sizes is visible in all the painting series of this research to communicate meaning which is imbued with cryptic content. The findings are categorized under the following in line with the objectives of the research;

**Findings of this Research**

### 6.1 Colour

- Charcoal market reflects the complexities of the structure of the society and form a design modality for exploration in painting. It also represents shifting values in terms of colour relationships, a transition of colour from one point to another. A colour value is altered /changed to assume another. An example is red with a drop of black in the ratio of 3:1; the result is a devalued red in intensity and luminosity. A high keyed colour becomes low key.

- The techniques employed depict elements and forms borrowed from academic conventions in Europe in the organization and use of colour. This is incorporated into our cultural milieu in terms of theme and expressions, which can contribute to the growth of painting in general. This has shown that, a particular colour from a charcoal market could be used to freely explore metaphoric issues.
- These paintings so produced in muted values are found to be dark. They evoke emotional or specific moods. They capture the mood of a charcoal environment. The abstract relationships; interaction of shape, pattern, and colour reflect somber mood in the entire project.

## 6.2 Artists referenced

The artists referenced have developed various innovative ways of articulating pictorial space keeping with the times. These innovations often relate to design elements that are structured to accommodate the thoughts of spatial relationships. The conceptual framework in this research encompasses concepts of other artists such as Piet Mondrian who postulated the theory of Neoplasticism. This theory depends on the principle of equilibrium of two opposites, vertical and horizontal forces and the use of flat primary colours subset by lines in right angles. The use of organic association as in Rick Stevens combined with John Virtue exploration of black and white and Pablo Picasso's fragmentation on canvas, can result into advancing Neoplasticism of Piet Mondrian. This occurs when elements of different cultures are interwoven on the same surface plane to make aesthetic statements not necessarily associated or traceable to any nationality. Selz (1981) states that Robert Rauschenberg included common objects in his "combined paintings" partly to illustrate his

idea that the environment is a tableau of scattered objects and meanings that collide haphazardly. The exploration of a charcoal market using a restricted palette can bring about a new aesthetic configuration in painting with multiplicity of reading.

### 6.3 The Social question

There exist the possibilities of creating a body of work imbued with philosophical issues relating to the environment in painting. The demand for wood fuel in the absence of affordable alternative has made charcoal popular even in modern Nigerian cities, boosting its uncontrolled production. The trend has gone unchecked, making it an activity that is depleting the forest reserve and spelling disaster for the future. Butler (2005) states that, Nigeria has world's highest deforestation rate of primary forests, in the revised deforestation figures from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The themes that result from this research reflect all aspects of our living, the concepts of social existence in relation to nature. They are represented in the series of 'The Heads that Labour, Selling the Future, Grays of Life, Contemplation on the Patterns in Nature, Woman and Palace of oppression'.

### 6.4 Cultural and symbolic value

Paintings on charcoal market are found to express the illusion of social disconnects and strata that exist in the society. The paintings dramatize an immense image and features of a depleted landscape because of the empty spaces. The aesthetic (natural beauty) of the environment is altered resulting to gloominess. The lines interrogate and explore the continued impact of the trade in charcoal on the environment. The surfaces evoke

conceptual images of dreamlike subjects which serve as a vehicle for allegorical narratives. Each canvas projects an event that forms a structure in a colour field. Symbolically, a restricted palette is modulated into a compositional orientation of a charcoal market to achieve a unifying order across the picture plane.

### 6.5 Methodical progression

The body of work progressed in a methodical order from traditional representation of a charcoal market to semi- abstraction through careful layout of subtle notes and blending of grays. It progressed from visible defined female figures to partial pictorial vocabulary of lines and from limited dark value to state of no colour (black). Also methodological interrogation of charcoal market led to poetic geometric surfaces in dynamic interaction of planes. This can be referred to as a conversation between organized structures (mechanical) and organic spontaneous effect as in nature.

The paintings can arouse different understanding and aesthetic signal because of the subject or theme of the work that is generated from this exploration. It is this progression that led to an outcome which mimics the structure of Piet Mondrian's Neoplasticism.

### 6.6. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to interrogate charcoal market in painting, creating allegories through a combination of various elements in the market using a restricted palette. From the research carried out, a new vista is opened in painting for other artists to advance. It can be concluded therefore that the entire project is a synthesis of different artistic currents following the Postmodernist approach to creating pictorial illusion in space. Every aspect of

this work provides the researcher with a new mode of expression by using charcoal market to depict issues of life.

### 6.7 Contribution to knowledge

Entrenched in the social fabric is the continuing neglect of the environment to meet energy needs to our detriment. Charcoal market is explored within the context of painting focusing on the activities of elements of design inherent in different arrangements. It is hoped that, this will push the perspective of developing sustainable actions on the environment.

- Interrogation of charcoal market is used to reveal ills of social phenomenon (inequality, ignorance social injustice, oppression of one another, and woman labour in the society) through studio experimentation using black and muted primary colours,
- The representation of women in this research reveals their prominence in charcoal business despite their vulnerability in terms of labour or education especially in rural areas.
- This research brought to fore information that will assist in developing visual symbols derived from charcoal market necessary to communicate ideas for better management of the environment,
- several writers have written articles and award winning documentaries on charcoal and even some charcoal markets especially the one used here as a case study. Findings in journals, books, the internet and other relevant materials have shown that none was as visual as the works of this research,

- Finally, in exploring painting of a charcoal market that elicits responses from the viewer, the researcher used intersecting-linear elements and tonal relationship to capture feelings in visual form to express injustices in the society.

### 6.8. Recommendations

Different possibilities exist in painting for exploration that can generate new interest and direction in themes, techniques and materials for artists/painters in a search for subject which cuts across different issues. Symbols that represent collective aspiration for better environmental practices could be developed. It is also important that artists seek to explore different methodologies as a conceptual framework for their work without necessarily copying others.

- Trading in charcoal is an attractive business but the devastating consequences cannot be ignored. The colour of charcoal is overwhelming and has great influence on other colours around it. One aspect of viewing this can be through creating allegory in painting like in “Selling the future” series. It connotes that when there is indiscriminate felling of trees, the society is left at the mercy of what is referred to as natural disaster. It is the view of this researcher therefore that an interdisciplinary and collaborative research be made to explore similar terrain. Clive Ca Zeaux (2008) in Sullivan (2010) posits that it is the interdisciplinary capacity of the arts to challenge our conceptual understanding and change our perceptions that is precisely what the studio experience can achieve. He explains that adopting new perspectives means that the contents of our experience will change and change in ways that may

be surprising. This can serve as an avenue to widen the scope and expand the horizon of this of kind of research.

- Artistic thought of this kind can also be extended when research is carried out using other media especially mixed-media in interrogating the charcoal market. The resulting images could be a subject of further exploration which may reflect social issues.
- The integration of different media together in a creative practice within a visual environment creates new relationships; promote new thinking leading to new discoveries and findings and open up new frontiers.
- The major concern of the society on the environment can be captured by developing the structure in painting which portrays deforestation.

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