A STUDY OF PAINTING CAREERS OF SELF-TAUGHT FEMALE NIGERIAN ARTISTS NIKE OKUNDAYE AND PEJU ALATISE

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MARCH, 2017

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P14EVFA9008

Graduate Cert. In Education (ABU), BA (Hons.) Fine Arts (ABU),
M.A. Art Education (ABU)

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) DEGREE IN ART HISTORY

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS,

FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN.

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,

ZARIA NIGERIA

MARCH, 2017

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Thesis titled "**A STUDY OF PAINTING CAREERS OF SELF-TAUGHT FEMALE NIGERIAN ARTISTS NIKE OKUNDAYE AND PEJU ALTISE"** is an authentic record of my research and that all information derived from available literature used in the research, has been duly acknowledged in the text, and a list of references provided. No part of this Thesis has previously been presented for another degree or diploma in any university or institution.

Dorcas Ibrahim

CERTIFICATION

This Thesis titled **A STUDY OF PAINTING CAREERS OF SELF-TAUGHT FEMALE NIGERIAN ARTISTS NIKE OKUNDAYE AND PEJU ALATISE** by DORCAS IBRAHIM meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Art History of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work first and foremost to God Almighty, who enabled me surmount all difficulties related with this work, and life's trials as a whole. I also dedicate it to the memory of my late father Ibrahim Sako, a true literary inspiration for my scholarship. And finally to my Grandmother Gimbiya Audu Chinyio whose narratives on ancient practices in her past fuelled my adventure into Art History.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge with immense gratitude the two artists Nike Davies- Okundaye and Peju Alatise for their willingness to permit me carry out a research on their painting careers. Their provision of useful materials made this study possible.

To the indefatigable chairman of my supervisorial committee, Professor A. Rufai Saliu, I am grateful for the patience applied in reading and scrutinising my cumbersome drafts, including spotlighting of technical errors that would have marred my work. I also appreciate the encouraging prodding, perceptive direction, and support which gave me the courage to go on with this course. Thank you for helping me believe I could do it.

To my Supervisor, Professor Philip Gushem, I appreciate the insight and guidance most especially, regarding intricacies of research procedure and issues related to painting related. I am thankful to Dr. Aliyu Muhammad my supervisor who spurred me on, and for the helpful prompting about critical aspects of my work. I will also, be forever indebted to Professor (Mrs) Rose A. Nkom who was on my supervisorial team till my work reached an advanced stage; for her valuable contributions, and providing me guidance on salient points of my research. To all of my supervisors as a team, Words alone cannot express my profound gratitude for your collaborative input upon my work. I say-May the Almighty God reward your untiring efforts- Amen.

My residence during this course would have not been possible, but for the accommodation graciously provided by my older sister Mrs Esther Z. Goje who inconvenient her family to

ensure the comfort and progress of my studies. For the loving care, prayers and sacrificial support of my siblings Dinah, Charles, Christie, Joseph, Rebecca, Rachel, Hannatu, Godfrey

their spouses and families, I say may the Lord repay your labour of love. To my maternal aunt Florence Chetden and uncle, Ezekiel Chinyio, my gratitude for your support knows no bounds. My thankfulness also goes to my mother Mrs. Tani Ibrahim Sako for being always there for me. To my son David Tisan who had to bear with my absence in pursuit of this programme, and for your prayer support and encouragement, I am thankful. I'm appreciative to my friend and colleague Deborah Kujyat, for sacrificially offering me the use of her gadgets, and for support that enabled me undergo my field trip with ease.

Furthermore, I appreciate the Management of the Kaduna State College of Education, GidanWaya, for affording me the study fellowship to pursue this Doctorate programme. I thank my immediate past and present Heads of Department Mrs. Doshiya Aboy, and Gabriel Yanet respectively, including my supportive colleagues at the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Kaduna State College of Education for their sacrifices and standing with me. To my course mates Ezra Rabo and Ifeanyi Ejiofor, thanks for being my enthusiastic cheerleaders.

Lastly, I express gratitude to lecturers of the Departments of Fine Arts and Industrial Design, who variously, constantly offered me encouragement and useful suggestions. To the Faculty of Environmental Design academic staff for valuable inputs on my work. I am indebted to Professors Sani Mu'azu, Tonie Okpe, Dr. G.G. Duniya and Dr. Joyce Maina, whose concern over the progress of my work, has been a great comfort.

ABSTRACT

At the introduction, this thesis proposes that an observable under-representation of women artists (most especially self-taught painters) in Art Historical documentation, is the background which inspired the study. An impression that; the painting careers of self-taught female artists notably Nike Davies- Okundaye and Peju Alatise, have not methodically investigated, is the specific problem of the study. For that reason, the study assesses their painting careers using seven objectives including: ascertaining forms, content, media, style, relationship of their careers and contributions. An eclectic Conceptual Frame work involving the *Triopied* model (Egonwa, 2012), Triangulation methods of Eisner (1997), Willis (2007),Olson (2013) and others is used as means for appraising form, content and context of art, using self-development or actualisation theories to understand circumstantial contexts, and connoisseurship involving criticism of the paintings. The study's scope spans Okundaye and Alatise's entire painting careers, and paintings only.

The literature covers an overview of self-taught female artists, forms, content, media, techniques and style of the two artists' paintings and contributions to the Nigerian art milieu. In chapter three, the research strategically adopts the qualitative design, with a historical and descriptive bias. The study's population embraces the universe of female self-taught Nigerian artists, with professional painting practice. The snow-ball sampling technique was used for picking the two artists and a purposive method to select 70 paintings each for scrutiny. The methods for collecting data include interviews and observation. The research Instruments include unscheduled Interview questions, an observation guide, a painting inventory and photography. The data is subjected to an analysis involving mapping out information according to categories matching objectives of the study.

The results obtained show that, though from specific enclaves, the artists derive inspiration from a common ethno-cultural Yoruba background (Okundaye being Okun from Kogi and Alatise from Ogun State). Excepting, Okundaye's feature of landscapes and animals, the artist's painting forms mutually include portraiture, compositions with human figures, mixed media compositions and installations. Their subject matter commonly boarder on women, religion and other social matters. Employing conventional techniques of acrylics, oil paints, water colour, and manipulation of mixed media in ingenious forms characterises the paintings of the two artists. Varying only in intricate details, Naïve naturalism, expressionism as opposed to expressionism, appropriating surrealism, *Art Nouveau, Art Deco* are traits of Okundaye and Alatise's painting styles. The duo have contributed prolific paintings, philanthropic training of females and youths in areas of art, and commissions. The study recommends encouragement of more research on female self-taught artists to augment knowledge on that group. As contribution to knowledge, the study has established the specific nature of forms, content, media, style, relationship, including contributions of Nike Davies-Okundaye and Peju Alatise.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Ingenuity in Painting is an attribute that could be exhibited by creative individuals, irrespective of gender and manner of induction. That supposition is aptly summed up in Frank's (2006) reflection that, "…the urge to create is universal, it has little to do with training". Thus, it is to be expected that, according recognition to painters for outstanding performance ought not to be regulated by training or gender boundaries. However, this appears not to be the case as there seems to be an observable under-representation of the activities and roles of women artists (most especially the self-taught painters), by Art Historians. Stokstad (2008), conveying feminists' protest regarding recognising women's contribution to the Western art movements, noted that they "…were almost never mentioned in histories of art." Onwuakpa's (2010) similar observation that "…the involvement of women in art has not been published as it has been for their male counterparts" also illustrates this position.

Contrary to the subjective acknowledgement of their roles in painting, it may be argued that, right from cave painting period and throughout world history, women have made valuable contributions to the profession. Emily Carr (1891-1976), Rosalba Carriera (1675-1757), Elisabeth Vige□e- Lebrun (1755-1842), Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), Georgia O'Keefe (1887-1986), Judy Chicago (b. 1939), and Susan Rottenberg (b. 1945) to mention a few, were self-taught painters who ranked among leading portraitists and accomplished painters, including being founding members of the prestigious Royal Art Academies and Societies of Art (Johnson, 2003; Scheineider, 2007; Stokstad, 2008). Such, are fortunately among the few notable

exceptions of women painters worldwide, whose painting careers have been acknowledged and documented. Some others with similar remarkable achievements have remained in obscurity.

Similar to the aforementioned global trend, the posture of promoting male painters above their female counterparts has likewise been the norm in Nigeria. It would seem also, that this tendency of under-representation, appears to have included the training status of painters. This regrettable situation might not be unconnected with antecedents, whose roots are from the onset of modern painting in the country. Corroborating this position, Ezekwe (2010) remarks that, the colonialists who brought western education, imported their values of relegating women to the background. Interestingly, records incidentally indicate that, renowned pioneers of Nigerian modern painting beginning with Aina Onabolu (1882-1963), Akinola Lasekan (1916-1972), Eke Okaybulu (1916-1951) were at the first instance, self-taught (Egonwa, 2011; Odoh, 2014). Upon obtaining the necessary qualifications, Onabolu and other pioneers including Ben Chuka Enwonwu, and an expatriate Kenneth Crosswaithe Murray embarked upon establishing art education in Nigeria. It is noticeable that, at that early stage efforts made by these pioneer art educators to enrol aspiring artists involved mainly males. Although concerted effort was made to include females, their representation among earliest pioneer modern painters in the country is comparatively negligible.

In reality, unlike sculpture which had been men's preserve in the traditional Nigerian setting, the converse was the case about painting. The active involvement of indigenous female painters in Nigeria, is traceable to the pre-colonial era. This manifested in form of traditional mural decoration. Kasfir (1999) and Ikwuemesi (2012) relate that, prior to the introduction of modern painting in the country, women were the predominant mural decorators in many parts of Nigeria's ethnic settings. The most visible examples of such, were the traditional Igbo, and

Yoruba mural painters. Although they may not be appropriately classified as self-taught, nevertheless, their example is useful in understanding the position of female artists and their contribution to modern painting in Nigeria generally.

Irrifere (2009) provides authentication on this, by remarking that; *mamwuli* also known as *uri* (*uli*) was customarily applied by women to walls and for body beautification among the Igbo generally, Urhobo of Delta State, as well as the Isoko in parts of Edo state. The contributions of these female artists, have not been judiciously documented. Ikwuemesi (2012) expresses this in his observation that " … western scholars and colonial administrators, collected *uli* stamps from some Igbo 'traditional' women painters in Eastern Nigeria, without such ventures or studies, mentioning the names of these women, although none forgets the names of the expatriates involved" (sic).

With time, increase in art awareness in the country brought about by art education and related activities, produced a negligible number of female Nigerian painters in the 1950s, notably Clara Ugbodaga-Ngu (1921-1988), Afi Ekong (1930-2009), and Theresa Luck Akinwale (b 1934) (Babalola, 2004; Akande, 2008). Subsequently, a sizable number of female painters have appeared on the Nigerian art scene. These pioneer female painters are however, mostly formal-trained. The emergence of female Nigerian artists, who could be classified as self-taught, might have occurred as from the 1960s. That conjecture is drawn from antecedents including; the establishment of informal art initiatives like the Oshogbo Art Centre, *Mbari Mbayo* groups, *Ori Olokun* Cultural Centre, and Maroko Art School, which sprang up during that period. It is not improbable that, among the informal-trained and workshop trained painters produced by those initiatives, some likely developed themselves through self-training. Muhammad (2006) cites for

instance that, at Oshogbo, Suzanne Wenger inspired female artists including Nike Davies, Senabu Olajide, and Kikelomo Oladapo. Although, they are not particularly identified as painters, the account reinforces the speculation on the probable presence of self-taught females among the Oshogbo artists in the early post-independence era.

The early existence of self-taught painters among professional artists who have operated since the colonial era in South Eastern parts of the country has been noted by Aniakor (2003). Those artists mentioned in his discourse are however, all men. Visibly, pioneer self-taught modern Nigerian painters were predominantly male and were located at the southern parts of the country. Conclusively also, self-taught Nigerian painters working in modern styles, might have included a negligible number of female artists whose painting works during that period and even now, were barely known due to lack of records.

In due course however, records also show that, some Nigerian art schools began establishing art movements and developing their own styles as from the 1970s through the 1980s. It was at this point that, the motifs employed by traditional female Nigerian mural painters mentioned earlier[1], became a source of inspiration for 'modern' painting styles such as *Ulism* and *Onaism* evolved by Nigerian artists. Ecoma (2005) and Okpara (2012) substantiate this development by establishing that, *Uli* indoctrination spearheaded by Uche Okeke and others, was achieved through adapting paintings and drawings from traditional mural designs. What is more, *Ulism* itself has become the major art style for which the Nsukka Art School is noted.

Similarly, Akande and Makinde (2005) and Folaranmi (2006) relate that, the *Onaism* style developed by graduates of the Ife Art School, was also inspired by the paintings of Yoruba

[1] See contributions of Kasfir (1999), Ikwuemesi (2012) and Irrifere (2009) on pp.2 &3 of this Thesis.

traditional muralists. These writers propose that, Moyo Okediji and his colleagues who pioneered *Onaism* in 1989, did so by studying, and adopting the shrine painting tradition, which had been an exclusive preserve of women in Yorubaland. *Araism*, a painting style introduced later on by Mufu Onifade in 2006 (likewise from the Ife Art School), seems to have also been further triggered from this traditional mural derivation (Adepegba, 2006). Considering the foregoing, this study shares with Ikwuemesi (2012) the reasoning that; this stylistic appropriation (*Ullism*,*Onaism* and *Araism*) has given rise to what became perhaps, the most original and philosophical creative idiom to emerge in Nigeria in the 20th century.

Thus, it could be concluded that, Nigerian female painters (whether informal or self-taught), have through this avenue, impacted on modern Nigerian painting. This was accomplished by conceiving the models which were later evolved by male artists for creating modern styles of painting. It could be argued that, this creative impetus of female traditional painters is likewise inherent in their modern counterparts, irrespective of their training modes. For that reason, it should be gratifying if, the potential of Nigerian women painters is dully encouraged through better documentation.

A cursory appraisal of records about developments on the Nigerian art scene shows that, as from the 1990s onwards, painting related activities intensified in Nigeria. These comprise exhibitions, and establishment of organizations including women art associations. Auspiciously, the primary aim of women related art societies in Nigeria is to provide encouragement for female creative professionals to continue practising their various art forms actively. Some of these bodies hope to achieve this by "… identifying talented Nigerian female artists, use their skills to bring about positive social changes as well as development in the society" (Akande, 2012).

These associations have played a significant role in encouraging Nigerian female artists generally, and to a great extent, made way for the gradual rise in female self-taught painters of proven professional standing in Nigeria. Such include individuals who have carved for themselves, a reputation within, and even in the global art community. The most notable among these are; Nike Okundaye, Peju Alatise, Lawumi Banjo, Tosin Jegede, Abi Adeyemi, May Ikeora, and Amina Doherty, who are mainly involved in painting (Sowole, 2011; George, 2013). Like their male precursors, activities of the female self-taught Nigerian artists seem to have concentrated in cities, especially in the southern parts of the country, where art patronage is more favourable.

So far, it is visible that, the outcome of combined inputs by the aforementioned initiatives, has not succeeded in significantly elevating the status of female Nigerian artists generally, or those of them who were self-taught, specifically. In order to contribute towards addressing this position, there is need to identify, document and hopefully bring to light self-taught female painters of note, who are impacting on the development of painting in Nigeria. It is against this background that the researcher was inspired to study the paintings of two self-taught female Nigerian artists namely: Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise.

Nike Okundaye (b. 1951) and an indigene of Ogidi –Ijumu in Kogi State, is a Nigerian Textile artist, better known for batik and *adire* work. However, the artist has also been practising painting. She is reckoned to have participated in not less than 102 exhibitions, of which her paintings have been featured. After acquiring a primary school education, the artist delved into traditional Yoruba cloth dyeing at an early age, and has since been painting along with her textile work and other related activities (*Nigeria Best Forum (NBF) News*, 2011). Peju Alatise (b.

1975), a graduate of architecture from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology ogbomosho is a younger self-taught artist, who opted into the painting profession due to self-interest. She has exhibited an overriding passion for painting. Alatise expresses herself through various artistic media with success, and has participated in numerous solo, and joint exhibitions (Anonymous, 2013).

Both Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise are not just actively involved in painting, but in other art related activities and philanthropic work using art. These two, are among the few recognized Nigerian female artists whose works are known internationally. They are considered to be unnoticeably, making a mark with their painting in the Nigerian art scene. It is against this background that; the researcher sought to embark on an assessment of the painting forms, themes, and styles of Nike Davies-Okundaye and Peju Alatise.

Statement of the Problem

A perusal of researches on Nigerian painters accessible by the researcher, also corroborated by Ikpakronyi (2001), shows that; an appreciable number of the past and even ongoing studies or reviews in Nigeria appear to have concentrated on pioneers and prominent individuals within the visual arts. Articles and Studies including those by Ene-Orji (2004), Gushem (2006), Okachi and Sani (2006), Muhammad (2006), Okoli (2007), Akande (2008), Sani (2010), Danjuma (2010), and Gushem (2011), are focussing on the painting and contributions of renowned Nigerian modern painters. Among those mentioned above, only studies by Muhammad (2006), Okoli (2007), and Akande (2008) have concentrated on female artists. Even then, most of these writings only contain information on the works of a few formally-trained female painters.

Like it has been mentioned earlier, Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise are self-taught Nigerian artists who, in addition to excelling in other art areas, are actively involved in painting practice. Nike Okundaye for instance, is an internationally renowned batik and *adire* artist, while Peju Alatise is a trained architect. It is to be expected that, the painting work of these two female artists, is well known especially in the academic circles in this country. The converse, however, appears to be the case. This might not be far from the erroneous view that self-taught painters, are roadside or street practitioners only. Such a view, assuredly limits the creative possibilities among that group.

This study proposes that, modern Nigerian painting is being enriched by works done by indigenous self-taught female artists such as, Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise. The painting accomplishments of these artists no doubt, lie in the diversity of form, content and styles of their paintings, which need to be investigated, analysed and documented. It was perceptible that, so far, no known concerted research focussing on self-trained female Nigerian painters, or on paintings done by Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise specifically, has been carried out. In view of the foregoing therefore, the view that the painting careers of two self-taught female Nigerian artists; the prominent textile artist Nike Okundaye, and trained architect Peju Alatise, have not received sufficient scholarly attention, was the major challenge for this study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research was to carry out a study with the view to documenting the painting career of two self – taught Nigerian female artists; Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise. The objectives are to:

1. investigate and establish the inspiring background circumstances, which have inducted these artists into the painting profession;
2. establish the nature of painting produced by these artists;
3. contextually discuss the thematic concerns of paintings by the artists under study;
4. ascertain the media and techniques employed by these artists for their paintings;
5. distinguish the individual stylistic traits in paintings of these artists;
6. identify similarities and differences in the painting careers of the artists under review; and
7. record some of the painting related contributions and achievements, made by these self-taught female artists within the Nigerian art milieu.

Research Questions

In consonance with the objectives, the study sought to find answers to the following research questions.

1. How have the backgrounds of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise influenced their painting career?
2. What is the nature of forms produced by Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise in their paintings?
3. Which inferences can be drawn from the content of these artists' works?
4. In which media and techniques do the artists under study produce their paintings?
5. Which stylistic traits are distinguishable from the paintings of these two artists?
6. What similarities or differences are identifiable in the painting practice of the artists under review?
7. How have these artists under study contributed to contemporary Nigerian visual art generally?

Justification for the Study

As earlier observed, the painting profession in Nigeria has been enriched by the traditional motifs employed by women who inspired 'modern' painting styles such as *Ulism*, *Onaism,* and possibly *Araism.* The male dominated historical narratives have however, continued to dictate about any novelty, ingenuity, and contributions by male artists, within the academic circles. Thus, the male gender are highlighted as founders of new styles, and promoted as the more prolific and ingenious painters, whereas female artists (especially the self-taught), are hardly publicised. A study of this nature, which seeks to uncover and document the ingenuity (in painting) of two talented self-taught female artists, is unarguably worthwhile.

Reiteratively also, since the emergence of self–taught female artists in Nigeria, none of their achievements or contributions especially in painting, have been properly studied and included in art historical records of the country. Few available records obtainable in Exhibition catalogues, Newspaper clippings, and internet articles project Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise as having acquired a widespread reputation for their painting, philanthropic works, and promotion of Nigerian art. Therefore, putting into proper perspective, the contributions of these female self-taught artists to the development of Nigerian painting, also validates venturing into this research.

The choice of Nike Okundaye for this study, is supported by the conviction that; she is a seasoned self-taught Nigerian artist with an extensive artistic career of international standing. The artist for instance, is already widely known for her textile works. Peju Alatise's inclusion in the study is premised upon the realization that, at the global level, younger artists with proven artistic achievement are currently being acknowledged and documented by art historians.

Johnson (2003) and Nicholson (2009) have cited a few examples of such artists including; Gary S. Hume (b 1962), Gillian Wearing (b 1963), Tracey Emin (b 1963), Fiona Rae (b 1963), Damien Hirst (b 1965), and Abigail Lane (b 1967). The attainment of these artists, as highlighted by the writers, embraces among other things, prolific and outstanding artistic work, winning reputable art prizes, and election into the renowned Royal Art Academies.

It must be agreed that, recognizing these western artists on the basis of their achievements, should equally validate acknowledging Peju Alatise as a notable Nigerian painter. This is supported by Odoh's (2014) apt observation that; Peju Alatise's visibility in the Nigerian scene has grown exponentially in the past few years, as a result of her vibrant art practice. The writer argued further that, the effectual outcome of her experimentalist approach to studio work, places her firmly on the same pedestal occupied by other distinguished Nigerian female artists like; Nike Okundaye, Lara Ige - Jacks and Ndidi Dike.

Besides all these, research on artists who are actively practising painting, but who have not been studied before now, is seen as sufficient rationalization for carrying out this research. The mere venture into an area that has been little delved into therefore, makes it a viable area for investigation. Hence any doubt, the idea of bringing to light new information about paintings and accomplishments by two self-taught female Nigerian painters is considered sufficient justification for carrying out this study.

Significance of the Study

It is the conviction of the researcher that; a comprehensive history of art in Nigeria, could only be complete, if it incorporates information about indigenous self-taught female modern painters,

among other stakeholders. This is reinforced by Duniya's (2006) call that "…scholars, particularly Art historians, and critics, should continuously update the developmental history of artists." It was partly in response to the need of filling such information gaps that, this research was carried out. This is because, it is envisaged that a research of this nature, will end up providing more enlightenment about painting careers of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise. The outcome of this study is consequently envisioned to be a potential resource material, to the contemporary visual arts community of Nigeria, students of Art History, Art Education, painting practitioners, the academic set up of the visual arts and art collectors in the country as a whole.

Conceptual Framework for the Study.

The present investigation firstly comprises of an appraisal involving two self-taught female Nigerian artists. Secondly, the interaction of these painters with their forms, content, and styles is being investigated. It is to be expected that, a research of this nature, should be carried out against the backdrop of feminism. To be more exact, self-training is seen by this study to connote self-actualization, or personal development, which are expressions used interchangeably by some theorists. First among outlooks considered, Kassin (2009) seems to advocate self-development, as an appropriate framework for guiding considerations involving self-taught individuals. According to the scholar, the leading humanist Abraham Maslow (1908-70), postulated that; after satisfying basic needs for food, shelter and health, people are usually moved to fulfil certain aspirations or higher needs which include among other things, the need for self-actualisation. Maslow's theory, seems to explain self-actualisation as a kind of recreational means through which people may consummate their innate potentials.

Akin to this, Proponents of Self-development subscribe that; Personal development can also include developing other people (Student's Friend.com, 2015). In that context, Self-development as a concept, includes getting involved in activities geared towards improving one's awareness and identity. It is also understood as discovering and developing talents, as well as, contributing to the realization of dreams and aspirations of oneself, or those of others. It is in line with these perspectives that, values within self-developmental concepts are used to understand what has predisposed the achievements and contributions of these two self-trained female painters.

It is similarly of value to this research that, advocates of self-actualisation identify creativity as the hallmark of self-actualised individuals. Within the context of artistic activity, painting is a creative need, which involves developing inborn talents. It usually entails the production of works that are satisfying to either the painter, audience, or both at the same time. When painting is practised by individuals, who learn the craft through their own effort rather than at a school, they fall into the category of artists who have been inducted into the profession, through self-development and actualization. Such self-taught painters are seen to acquire their skills through following their own methods, without having undergone the rigours of formal instruction. Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise are therefore perceived to fall within the context of self-actualised persons, who have attained personal development through painting activities.

In order to fit the background of self-actualisation, with an examination of paintings done by Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise, another dimension of the eclectic approach, was considered. This involved following the *Triopied* Model and Triangulation methods. In 2004, Egonwa and some other Nigerian scholars proposed that the *Triopied* model, is a viable conceptual framework for researching on art works (Egonwa, 2012). The use of Egonwa's recommended

approach, is not new to visual arts research. It falls within the scheme of Triangulation methods used for research generally (Robert Wood Johnson Project Foundation [RWJPF], 2008). Expounding on the nature of that framework, RWJPF identifies Triangulation to be a borrowed term, which employed in the context of a qualitative research, simply implies making use of two or more approaches.

Notably, the employment of the triple parameters such as those recommended by Egonwa, have proved useful to a great deal of art historical documentation. It essentially comprises of three angles via which visual art forms should be appraised, namely: The Formal, Contextual and Connoisseurship. Prior to its recommendation by Egonwa and his team, there is evidence of such use of several approaches adapted by Art History researchers. By all indication, most Art History books available today, are the outcome of making use of such approaches. From the research components offered by the *Triopied* Model, formal assessment is understood to be a description of the physical appearance of an art object. The *Triopied* concept therefore embraces Formalism, a popular approach to understanding art propagated by Roger Fry (1866-1934) and others. Formalism is construed as a concept which posits that, everything necessary to comprehending a work of art is contained within the work of art (Fried, 2013). Fried goes on to explain that, the purest formal analysis is limited to relating what the viewer sees. Subject is not considered and neither is historical or cultural context. Consequently, it involves formal analysis which is essentially, an explanation of visual structure, or the ways in which certain visual elements have been arranged and how they function within a composition. Items described include stating materials (medium or media as the case may be), equipment or tools employed in producing the work, and the techniques (manner of manipulating media) to create art forms.

Similar to Egonwa (2012), some other advocates of Triangulation such as Altheide and Johnson (In; Willis, 2007), in addressing criteria which should be used to evaluate interpretative qualitative research, included contextualism and connoisseurship. Contextual considerations are understood to entail recording background factors influencing or inspiring art works being appraised. Such factors may be biographical, socio-cultural, political, cultural or geographical antecedents surrounding the creation of such works. These authors link such claims to Eisner's (1997) Connoisseurship Model of Inquiry found in Willis (2007). The renowned Art Educator Elliot Eisner, is esteemed by Altheide and Johnson, to be a leading proponent of the qualitative research approach, generally known as connoisseurship. Supporting the efficacy of these components in qualitative research, the scholars advanced that, connoisseurship draws on methods from the arts and humanities. The scholars explain Eisner's approach as interpretive, but maintain that it makes room for critical approaches as well. These scholars argue also that, the relationship between what is observed and the larger context is critical. This simply underlines that, appraising the art object cannot be divorced from knowledge about its background. This perspective providentially also, supports treating the artists under study, against a backdrop of self-development/actualisation.

Altheide and Johnson (In; Willis 2007) further distinguish between connoisseurship and criticism, by expatiating that; the means through which complexities, nuances, and subtleties of aspects of the world are studied, is understood to be Connoisseurship. Altheide and Johnson further clarify that, it becomes criticism when the connoisseur communicates his, or her views, to others. They distinguish the task of the critic to be, that of performing a mysterious feat well, which is; to transform the qualities of a painting into a form which illuminates, interprets, and appraises the qualities that have been experienced.

The implication of connoisseurship deducible from this, is simply that; an assessment of paintings must firstly, involve understanding the particulars and intricacies of such works. Secondly, the researcher is required to present a comprehensive interpretation of the artist's works and experiences in a logical manner. Fortunately, Altheide and Johnson have reduced the difficulty of achieving this, by providing four aspects of criticism—description, interpretation, evaluation, and the explication of broad or general themes—which they claim, are accomplished more through the methods of art and humanities criticism than through the scientific method (Willis, 2007). Connoisseurship is, as such, closely associated with aesthetics. It is understood as an attempt to interpret or classify works on the basis of peculiar characteristics or, categories as style, subject matter, and so on.

Advocates of Triangulation approaches aforementioned, have provided additional explanation regarding procedures to be used in research. According to them, it uses multiple forms of data collection, such as observation and in-depth interviews to investigate the objectives of the research. Such experts are convinced that, utilizing multiple data collection methods enhances verification of facts, and leads to an acceptance of reliability and validity when the data from the various sources are comparable and consistent (RWJPF, 2008).

Elements of these prescribed components are found in narratives of Mount (1973), Fosu (1986, 1996), Johnson (2003), and Stokstad (2008) to mention just a few. A number of recent studies including those by Saliu (1994) and Gutip (1995), adopted a format which embraces these concepts for investigating other forms of the visual arts as decorative art forms, and sculptures. Muhammad (2006), Danjuma (2010), Gushem (2011) apparently also, used aspects of this approach involving appraisals of content, form and styles of Nigerian modern painters, with

success for their various researches, making it a viable methodological approach for a study of like nature as the present one.

In view of its suitability therefore, self-development is the rationale behind the perspective from which this study is rooted, while the *Triopied Model* has been followed in tackling the problems of this study. These frameworks have been used to investigate how backgrounds of the artists have impacted on their painting careers. It has also essentially been applied, to appraise the overall structure of paintings by the subjects of this study; in terms of media and techniques, content and styles exhibited by their works.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The research has been solely restricted to assessing the forms, media, style, painting content, and contributions of two self-Taught Nigerian female artists namely: Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise. As much as possible, the scrutiny of their works covers the span of their entire individual painting careers, excluding other art forms, produced by these artists, outside painting. Also, apart from using the self-development theory to ascertain that both subjects of the study were self-developed, the study is not concerned with establishing levels of self-actualization of the two by the research. Neither was the level of self-training of the two artists being assessed by the study.

Definition of Terms

The under listed are some key operational terms that are presented for more insight into the study:

I. The use of **Self-taught artist** in this study is restricted to any individual artist who has not undergone a full-fledged course in Fine Arts or the Industrial /Commercial arts from

any Institutions in Nigeria, or abroad. Such are individuals who have not specifically obtained either a Certificate, Diploma (whether lower or Higher), a minimum of Bachelor' Degree in the visual art areas, including even art related areas like architecture. Also it excludes any individual artist who has acquired a systematic art training through any established Art Institution being run by a trained artist, or art related organization. Such an art school may be private or government owned. In this category are those art sections in Art Councils, Galleries or private studios. It is presumed that the art training in such institutions, are to a large extent formal. Some or all of these rather informal art institutions are known to offer some kind of certificates to their graduates. The usage of this term also excludes the class of artists who learnt art by apprenticeship system. Although the master might present the apprentice a kind of certificate, it only serves to qualify the recipient to operate as a 'qualified' artisan. It specifically refers to those who developed on their own probably due to a natural flair or talent, or even interest or by learning privately or from studying paintings of other artists.

II. **Forms-**In this study form connotes the general genre to which the painting is classifiable such as portraiture, landscapes, still life or nature studies, collage, mosaic, mixed-media work and installation[2].

III. **Subject matter or theme-** refers to the basic images or structural features that can be detected in the painting, which define the main focus or message of the work such as those featuring life studies involving individual or even multiple images as in portraiture, or those loaded with narrative content, symbolism, emotion or be political in nature.

[2] An installation could be termed painting when the images are painted, or brush work or any other techniques of painting dominate the work.

IV. **Media and Techniques-** Medium refers to the basic material with which the artist produces a painting. Such include paints (water colours, Gouache, oils, acrylics, enamels), local or synthetic dyes for flat paintings. Tessarae (bits of glass, stones, pebbles, ceramics) for mosaics. Found Objects including ropes, wire, strings, cloth, beads, metal scraps, pieces of wood, bottle tops, paper, pictures and other sundry objects- for Collage and mixed media work. It includes supports or surfaces on which painting is done such as hard board, canvas, glass, wooden or metal panels, or walls in the case of murals and some mosaics. **Technique** simply implies method or manner of applying tools to achieve a painting including brushwork (impasto, light washes, smooth, rough, tonal quality, shading), sawing, cutting, gluing, pasting, tying and scorching.

V. **Style-** The term Style as applied in this study is seen in two senses. Firstly, it could refer to the distinctive visual elements, techniques and methods that typify the work of an individual artist. It is usually easy to perceive the style of an individual artist by the peculiar brush strokes, colour scheme, or tendency of representing images, or arrangement of basic elements within the picture. In that case, style is personalized such that, the peculiar patterns adopted by a painter in his work are said to be his/her style. Secondly, style can also refer to the art movement or school that an artist's work is associated with. Thus, a painter could be classified under a particular stylistic group, on the basis of visible characteristics displayed by an actual group that the artist was consciously involved with, or it can be a category in which art historians have placed the painter. Such groups, movements or classifications include the following: Realism, Impressionism, Expressionism, Abstraction, Minimalism, Abstract Expressionism, Pointillism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Cubism etc.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Three basic approaches were followed to guide the literature review for this study. These included firstly; Osuala's (2005) suggestion that literature review "…surveys research previously done on the problem, and evaluates what this research has, and has not accomplished, in solving the problem currently under study." The second was Kassin's (2009) submission that; one method requisite for placing research in proper perspective, involves relying upon summarising narratives, subjectively evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the various studies on a topic and making arguments for certain conclusions. Lastly, Egonwa's (2012) underlining of research in art as that, which makes use of knowledge and practice from related disciplines.

Taking all of the preceding into consideration, the review fell into two broad categories: The first part covers a general background, involving tracing the development of self-taught art, and

women within that category. Then, in order to provide an understanding on the general context of the research problem, an appraisal including models of self-taught female painters in history was made. Conceptualisation about self-taught art, and artists was included to establish the common basis for investigating painting form, content, media, techniques and styles of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise.

In the second segment, particular interest is paid to discover backgrounds, trends of painting subject, technique, and style of the two painters being studied. At the back of this interrogation, is the desire to first of all, establish specific advancements they have made within their individual painting practices. In addition, there is the desire to ascertain the position of these two artists in Nigerian contemporary painting milieu. As a result, the second section of the review incorporates entries on biographical notes, painting content, techniques and style made by writers on selected painters being researched, and concludes with their impact on the Nigerian painting scene.

Among others, a collection of written material from such authors and writers as Ademigbuji (2013), Alowoloke (2014), Dike (2013), CNN News (2011), Odulaja (2009), Osaghae (2002), Okoli (2007), the Vanguard News of 23, May 2013, The *Daily NewsWatch* of 23rd May (2013), and Nike Art Center.com website were consulted. The following is discussion from these sources.

Contextual overview of self-trained painters.

The information gathered from literature generally shows that; documenting about painters who have made significant impact with their works regardless of training orientation, has been a common practice of art history reportage. This posture is ascertained by Barnes (2009) in his affirmation that “art historians study the lives of artists, including their training and practices”.

The same stance is also expressed in the rationalisation that "…individual works and their makers do have their specific histories, within the art world that anointed them and gave their work a larger meaning (Gallerie St Etienne, 2012).

The above reasoning is doubtless, founded upon the belief that, the creative outputs of artists are outcomes of their interaction with their various environments. By that, the necessity for discussing artists within the overall context of their backgrounds is unequivocally supported. It is also by the same reason that, art history narratives have always made it a point to include vital biographical information, means of induction into the painting practice, the overall *oeuvre* of the artists, accompanied by the contribution in specific painting movements. Such a tradition is visible in Art History books generally. This review was therefore done in line with that practice.

Self-taught painters in history

Literature generally establishes that, the use of the term "self-taught" for designating certain category of artists, is not entirely new. Corroborating this, Gallerie St Etienne (2012) notes that, from the very onset, some painters are believed to have practised the visual arts, without undergoing any formal training. Parker (n. d.) similarly enlightens that, in addition to formal training in guilds, apprenticeships, or art schools throughout history, several were largely self-taught. Clearly, formal training has right from the onset, been the more sanctioned means of acquiring artistic skills including painting.

At the same time, the unquestionable existence of self-taught artists has equally been acknowledged. Substantiating this in an article "Self-taught and Outsider art overview", Gallerie St Etienne (2012) proposes that, although self-taught art *per se* has always existed, it was after

World War I, at the beginning of the 20th century, that people began for the first time to look seriously at the work of a number of artists who, for various reasons, had been denied formal training. Plausibly therefore, self-taught artists have not always been placed on the same platform with the formal-trained. Substantiating about the side lining of self-taught artists, Kallir (2014) remarks:

> …for many centuries, the dominance of the European art academies obscured the work of these self-taught artists, who were judged to be inept and inferior. Only at the dawn of the 20th century, when artists began to rebel against the academies, did self-taught art suddenly receive serious attention from the mainstream art-world.

In addition to Kallir being categorical about the non-acceptance of self-taught artists by the academies prior to the 20th century, it is also plain that, before that period, their work was seen to be inferior. Some other writers including De Lorme (2008), Harris (2009), and Jones (2009) for instance, present various impressions of self-taught painters including seemingly denigrating labels such as; outsider art, street artists, folk artists, sign writers, or 'naïves'. Just like other writers above, DeLorme's outright condescension for the group, comes through in his further defining self-taught painters as only capable of "…producing landscapes, portraiture, and still life; or works ranging from small, idiosyncratic drawings to elaborate outdoor environments"(sic). There is no mistaking that, this perspective reduces self-trained painters to individuals who are merely capable of producing simple works of no significance.

To contradict his earlier statement, De Lorme (2008) went on to point out that "…this early contingent of self-taught artists was sufficiently remote from mainstream culture to develop startlingly original technical and pictorial solutions". This seems to infer that, the detachment or

independence of individual self-taught artists, affords them the opportunity to offer ingenious contributions to the conventional art circle. Kallir (2014) also seemed to share a similar viewpoint in citing celebrated artists such as, Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) as having declared that "… trained artists are inevitably corrupted by their schooling... whereas self-taught artists are 'purer' and potentially greater". It must be seen that, interpreting Picasso and Kandinsky's assessment as rating self-taught artists highly, supports the rationality of accepting them into the mainstream of global painting.

It must also be conceded that, the preceding arguments have proved that, in spite of their presumed 'backwardness', self-taught artists do unexpectedly produce cunning work. Support for this, is further relayed through Parker's (n.d.) observation that, self-taught artists established their own style of painting without any formal study. The foregoing auspiciously encourages upholding the impression that, self-taught painters are either self- developed or self- actualized individuals.

Paradigms of Self-taught female painters in the history of art.

A further examination of literature has established that, Art historical accounts which contain records about self-taught women painters are not in abundance. Writers on the issue, appear predisposed to reflecting the assertion of male superiority over female painters. Substantiating this, Cowen (1996) whose research titled "Why women succeed, and fail in the arts," discovered that, most renowned artists in records, have been male. The scholar in addition, stumbled on the proposition that, the supposed state of lagging behind by women artists, unfortunately and particularly, appeared more visible among painters. Further substantiating that supposition,

Cowen quoted the great philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer as having posited that "…Women have proved incapable of a single truly great, genuine and original achievement in art, or indeed of creating anything at all of lasting value; this strikes one more forcibly in regards to painting (Schopenhauer, In; Cowen, 1996). Yet another pessimistic view recorded by Cowen, included the conviction of a school of thought that, "…no list of female creators compares to Raphael, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Velazquez, Rembrandt, Picasso and Matisse".

The recognition of male artists, as makers and producers of outstanding paintings is decried below. Schopenhauer's declaration in particular, is more disheartening, since it appears to obliterate any hope of finding promising female painters, capable of producing worthwhile paintings. This hopelessness of women artists, is also clearly expressed in yet another of Cowen's (1996) cited related work of Australian writer and feminist, Germaine Greer (b 1939). The latter, said to have been drawn to art, is best known for her revolutionary `book *The Female Eunuch* (Greer, 1970). In that book, she allegedly, challenged traditional concepts about women. Greer's writing is first of all, found to be of import because, she also researched for a book about women painters titled, *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work* (Greer,1979, in Microsoft Encarta, 2009). Coming from a woman however, this study finds Greer's contribution to be divisive because she is said to have observed in the publication that, "…women could not be truly great artists because of their damaged egos" (Microsoft Encarta, 2009).

In all fairness however, it is contestable whether this assertion is justifiably applicable to all women painters without exception, and in all circumstances. It could be argued that, Greer's position is obviously not tenable in the light of Cowen's (1996) affirmation that, feminists attributing different gender achievements to socio- cultural barriers have contested this male dominated

position in the art. It is discredited in addition, by Cowen's further argument that; in the realm of art, women face no intrinsic lack of talent and are not less skilled than men.

The circumstances highlighted above could account for how most art historical narratives have paid more attention to making comprehensive records of male painters. Incidentally, some of the reputable male painters in world history were self-taught. A few examples of such are mentioned here as case in point. These include Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), George Inness (1825-1894), Winslow Homer (1836 - 1910), Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Paul Gauguin (1848 – 1903), Henri Rousseau (1844 – 1910), Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), George Stubbs (1724-1806), and Thomas Cole (1801-1848), to mention just a few (Cavendish, 1985; Microsoft Encarta, 2009, and Johnson. 2003).

Records generally establish the fact that, the renowned male painters mentioned achieved their expertise through self-development. Records also indicate that, each of these painters produced revolutionary works, which altered the course of painting in the world. If record keeping were fairer, it would not be improbable to find self-taught female painters with equivalent attainments in the global painting scene. Such is only realizable if their *oeuvre* is always given a fair representation in art historical reportage.

Providentially, the contributions of a number of outstanding women painters have been unveiled in the history of art. Writers including Johnson (2003), Scheineider (2007), Stokstad (2008) and Baumgartel (2013) for instance, cite two women who were founding members of the Royal Art Academy in Britain within the 18th century. These were the Swiss painters Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807), and Mary Moser (1744-1819). Sadly, as important as Moser was, little seems to have been written about her prolific painting career with over 800 works including a legacy of

remaining the only female art Academician, for the next 200 years (Baumgartel, 2013, Blueth, 2015).

Blueth (2015) observes among other things that, Moser gained a reputation for her exquisite painting of flowers. He deduces it was the notice of her talent, which must have prompted Queen Charlotte in the 1790s, to commission Moser to design a complex decorative scheme for Frogmore House in Windsor. Apart from this contribution, and recognition of her prestigious position, neither were any other roles played by the artist nor the nature of her forms widely acknowledged in many art historical accounts. It could be surmised that, this lack of comprehensive reporting could not be unconnected to her gender.

In like manner, Kauffmann who trained under the renowned British painter Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792; first president of the Royal Academy), is only acknowledged as a proponent of the Rococo and Neo-classical schools of painting (Mann, 2009). Unlike the copious elaboration that accompanies the painting records of her male contemporaries like Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825) and Jean- Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), Kauffmann is merely remembered for her elegant technically brilliant works such as *Cupid's Wand* executed in 1793, which located at Attingham Park near Shrewsbury in England (Microsoft Encarta, 2009).

As opposed to Moser's case, more information seems to have been provided on Kauffmann. The above writers recognized the ample decorative work on ceilings, walls and furniture, which the latter executed for the British architect and designer Robert Adam. In the face of the partiality towards female artists, this study finds such minimal elaboration on Kauffmann consoling. The Encarta Encyclopaedia illustrates Kauffmann's *Self-Portrait* (Plate I) painted in the late 18th century, showing the artist in a Roman setting. Considered typical of her style, painting elements

of that picture purportedly belong to the Rococo style, yet with a stillness and serenity not found in Rococo work.



Plate I: *Self-Portrait,* Angelica Kauffmann
Tate Gallery, London/Art Resource, NY
© Microsoft Encarta 2009.

Kauffmann is also credited for using light with great clarity to define texture and the simple roundness of faces and limbs (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). It may therefore not be out of place to concede that, by taking up tasks known to be done mainly by male artists, Kaufmann and Moser's achievements repudiate the notion of second-rate painting abilities of women painters. Also, judging by their painting styles and refinement, their works could reasonably measure up to those made by their male counterparts including; Jan Van Eyck (1390?-1441), Titian Teziano Vecellio (1477?-1576), Rembrandt Van Rijn (1606-1669), Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), to mention just a few. However, most narratives would hardly condescend to make such analogous assessments.

Records further allude that Kauffman and Moser were only superficially allowed to support the men in establishing and running of the academies, which only admitted male artists. This position is corroborated by Stokstad's (2008) admission that, although several women were made members of the European academies of art before the 18th century, their inclusion amounted to little more than honorary recognition for their achievements. It is also substantiated by Blueth's (2015) observation that, these two founding women were prohibited from attending committee meetings and dinners, which were the main arenas for discussion relating to determining the direction of the academy. Furthermore, Stokstad (2008) reflects the prevalence of side-lining women artists in spite of Louise XIV of France's avowal at the founding address of the Royal Academy that; its attention was to reward all artists 'without regard for difference of gender. However, that resolution was never put into practice.

It is nevertheless undeniable that, in what was essentially a men's preserve, these two female painters are a rarity. Their exceptionality is better appreciated in the light of Johnson's (2003) affirmation that, no women were admitted into art schools until 1860s. Historical accounts unveil the fact that, the reluctance of male artists and critics to recognize women as creditable painters, only left them with no choice but to learn in private. Parker (n d) in an article "Self-Taught Painters throughout History" for instance, substantiates that the few ladies who dabbled into painting in early history were privately trained.

Likewise, Cowen (1996) ascertains that until the 19th century, nearly all prominent women painters were daughters of artists. The writer even assures about biographic proof from research indicating that, where family training was not available women could hardly receive artistic education. Frank (2006) similarly corroborates that in the past, the world's trained artists

generally learnt by working as apprentices to accomplished masters, pointing out that; with a few available exceptions, women were exempted from such apprenticeships. It is deducible therefore that by training women artists privately, their position of remaining out of the limelight was ensured.

Thus, it is glaring that, women aspiring to be painters in the past were relegated to trailing behind the menfolk. A few women trained by their fathers or siblings, however braved these established hurdles of relegation, to become celebrated painters. Distinguishable among the few known early examples is Italian Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi (1593?-1652?) who studied under her father Orazio Gentileschi and with Agostino Tassi, a local fresco painter. Others include Lavinia Teerlinc (circa1510-1576), Caterina Van Hemessen (1527-1587), Marietta Robusti (circa 1550-1590), Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614) and Elisabetta Sirani (1638-1665) among others (Johnson, 2003; Microsoft Encarta, 2009 and *Artcyclopedia*, 2015).

As earlier assumed, it could be probably due to reasons described previously that, accounts of self-taught women who gained recognition for their painting by self-training are few. Thus, some of the prominent self-taught painters whose careers are briefly reviewed here, include; Judith Leyster (1609-1660), Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899), Suzanne Valadon (1865-1938), Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), and Anna Rose Moses (1860 -1961). A short summary on these artists' careers is presented for the purpose of understanding the challenges of self-taught women painters in history.

An appraisal of Judith Leyster's (1609-1660) painting career, is deemed valuable to understanding the situation of self-taught artists in this study. Leyster was supposedly, born into

a non-artistic family in Haarlem, Netherlands. Art historians speculate that, Leyster studied with a local portrait painter, Frans Pietersz de Grebber, who also trained his own daughter to paint. Acclaimed the most well-known Dutch female artist of her era, Leyster was famous for her portraits, still-life paintings and genre scenes (scenes of everyday life) featuring relaxed poses and expressive brushwork described as loose, but classified poignant (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). These listed qualities plainly define her contributions to painting as noteworthy. Unlike many of her female contemporaries who concentrated upon meticulously painting true-to-life flowers and insects, Leyster more ambitiously and notably ventured into figure based projects including innovative and evocative night scenes. In 1663, she reportedly became the first woman to be accorded recognition as the only female member of the Haarlem painters' guild (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). Among Leyster's notable works is "*Laughing Children with a Cat*" (Plate II), believed to have been completed in 1629 (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). The piece illustrates the artist's creativity and skilful manipulation of medium.



Plate. II: *Laughing Children with a Cat*, Judith Leyster, 1629.
Noortman (London) Ltd. /Bridgeman Art Library, London/New York.
© Microsoft Encarta, 2009.

Leyster, stands out as an example of a self-taught female painter, who excelled not only at an early period of modern art history, but in a dominantly men's world. The only regrettable point writers (including the Microsoft Encarta, 2009) find in Leyster's career was the cessation of artistic activity after her marriage, evident by only one surviving painting from this later period.

The circumstances of another noteworthy female painter, Rosa Bonheur, appear not to differ significantly from those of Leyster. Notably, even records of though Bonheur's painting career appear more extensive than those of the former, the gender challenges were similar. Accounts by Scheineider (2006), Stokstad (2008), Malyon, (2011), *The Art History Archive* (2014) and Esaak (2014) establish that the 19th century self-trained French painter Rosa Bonheur, did not attend any formal art school but trained in Paris under her father Raymond Bonheur. The painter reportedly grew to establish a reputation as one of the foremost animal painters of her days. The

above records also indicate that, in 1894 Bonheur became the first woman to receive the Grand Cross of the French Legion of Honour, a prestigious distinction even for men, at that period.

Among identified encumbrances Bonheur encountered, were the difficulties involved in obtaining sketches. The artist is said to have solved that problem by visiting stables and cattle markets of Paris twice a week, over a period of more than a year, dressed as a man, to avoid attracting unwanted attention. The painting *The Horse Fair* (Plate III), is ascertained to be archetypal of Bonheur's work, and portrays her interest in animals. The painting (illustrated on p.33), depicts a horse market in Paris, with young men attempting to restrain some unruly horses. The artist makes the scene appear realistic by paying attention to anatomical detail and through the manner in which she conveys the horses' movement (Microsoft Encarta, 2009).



Plate III: *The Horse Fair*, Rosa Bonheur. 1853-1855. Oil on canvas, 244.5 x 506 cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York © Microsoft Encarta 2009, Microsoft Corporation.

Conclusively, it is only rational to propose that the drama and atmosphere in *The Horse Fair* (and in her work generally), is in no way inferior to those in landscapes by Théodore Géricault (1791-1824), Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863), or any other male outstanding landscapists in history for that matter. Whatever the case, two cardinal lessons are drawn from Bonheur's story; firstly, being under her father's tutelage was certainly an advantage, but did not guarantee the artist's license to operate freely, in the artists' world like her male counterparts. Consequently, Bonheur's achievement in painting was a result of her resilience and sheer determination. This amounted to being more or less, a self-taught painter.

The painter, Suzanne Valadon (born Marie-Clementine Valadon [1865-1938]), is another distinguished, self-taught female painter, whose painting vocation is also inspiring to this study. Originally from Montmartre in Paris, Suzanne's induction circumstances differ fairly considerably from the earlier two, only in the sense that, neither did she have an artist parent or sibling, nor did she start out as a visual artist, but rather as a fashion model. It is commendable that, by associating with skilful painters, she eventually developed into one herself.

Contributions by Malyon (2011), Engel (2012), and the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA, 2012) trace how Suzanne began her career by modelling for such artists as Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), at the same time, sustaining a close friendship with Edgar Degas (1834-1917). Valadon's resolve, coupled with this connection no doubt, provided her the desired platform for becoming a successful painter. Similar to other female painters of her time, not much detail on Suzanne Valadon's painting career has been recorded. The artist reputedly taught herself how to paint, by watching how the artists painted her.

Valadon's paintings, drawings, and etchings are said to offer an expressive and unsentimental vision of daily life. The works reckoned as her most famous, include; *Summer, After the Bath,* and *Adam and Eve.* The latter painting alleged to be modelled after the artist, and her young lover André Utter, is considered the first piece by a female artist to show a nude man and woman together (Amazing Women.com, 2012). That daring venture is commendable, considering that it came from an artist without formal art exposure or training. This is because the study of classical arts, and anatomy studies are largely available to students who undergo formal art training, which Valadon never benefitted from.

Valadon, is nevertheless, recognized as the first woman to exhibit along with male painters in 1894, at the *Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts* in France, and had her first one-person show in 1911 (Giraudon, 2009; Engel, 2012). Altogether, she is estimated to have produced over 475 paintings, 275 drawings, and 31 etchings, which is an impressive number for a woman. Engel (2012) reports that, some of these works, are visible on the National Museum of Women in the Arts [NMWA] website (NMWA, 2012). Thus, Susan Valadon's success, has earned yet another triumph for female self-trained painters. Valadon's achievements, demonstrate the possibility of attaining success by self-trained female painters, if they put themselves to it (Malyon, 2011; Engel, 2012; and NMWA, 2012). Engel (2012) however subscribes that, even though Suzanne Valadon was a prolific, and successful contemporary of such famous artists as Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) and Edgar Degas (1834-1917), the artist is often dismissed in art history books and biographies, as a mere model, or defined as the mother of her artist son, Maurice Utrillo (1883-1955). Engel sadly remarks that, Valadon's art is often not even mentioned.

It is generally attested that, Valadon's painting *The Blue Room* (plate IV), is a *Self-Portrait*, which demonstrates the artistry characteristic of her work. The piece is described as, depicting a female lounging on a bed, covered with blue and white floral sheets. The model is wearing striped lounge 'pants' and a pink camisole. Her hand is at her side and a cigarette dangles from her mouth. She is portrayed as a voluptuous, yet feminine figure with peach cream body. At her bare feet lay two books. She is gazing to the right, avoiding the viewer, as if caught in reverie (Amazing Women.Com, 2012).



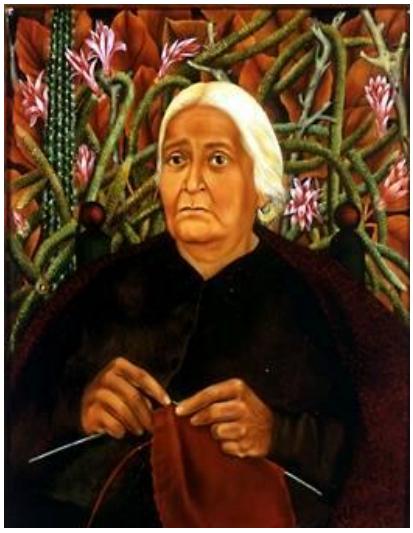
Plate IV: *The Blue Room* (*La Chambre Bleu)*, Suzanne Valadon, 1923.
Oil on canvas 90cm x116cm. *Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne, Centre* Georges Pompidou, Paris, France. © Amazing women.com (2012)

Another reviewed self-taught exemplar, is the Twentieth-century Mexican, Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), whose painting career, is not much different from those of other self-taught painters already considered in this review. The painter's first solo art show, was in New York in 1938, followed by another solo display in 1953, at Mexico. Kahlo is acclaimed one of Mexico's most famous painters, and labelled a surrealist. In 1922, Kahlo entered the National Preparatory

School, with the intent to study medicine and medical illustration. She got involved in an accident and while recovering, began to paint as from 1928 (Brookes, 2005; Scheineider, 2007, and Stokstad, 2008). The writers sum up that, Kahlo created some 200 paintings using bright colours.

Kahlo, whose work only began to gain more attention in the 1970s, is largely seen to have celebrated her Mexican heritage, by depicting folk themes in her art. She is best known for her highly personal self-portraits. Shown in Plate V, is Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Small Monkey*, and *Doña Rosita Morillo* (private collection). In the portrait, the artist depicts herself impassively staring at the viewer. In the other painting, *Doña Rosita Morillo* (Plate VI), Kahlo used vivid colours and a style based on native popular art to portray her subject (Microsoft Encarta, 2009, Lloyd, 2013).





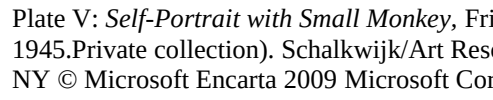


Plate V: *Self-Portrait with Small Monkey,* Frida Kahlo, 1945.Private collection). Schalkwijk/Art Resource, NY © Microsoft Encarta 2009 Microsoft Corporation

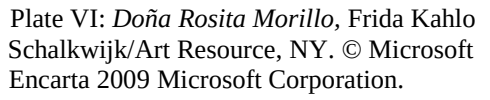


Plate VI: *Doña Rosita Morillo,* Frida Kahlo Schalkwijk/Art Resource, NY. © Microsoft Encarta 2009 Microsoft Corporation.

One more self-taught woman painter worth mentioning by this review, is the American folk artist, Anna Mary Robertson Moses (1860 -1961). Kallir (1973) and Lane (2012) note Anna Mary (More popularly known as Grandma Moses), for her realistic paintings of rural life. With no formal training, Moses took up painting in the mid-1930s, when she was in her 70s. This was after arthritis forced her to stop the embroidery work she had all along been involved in. Moses started painting by creating simple, balanced compositions. In 1939, her work was displayed in

an exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York, which brought her recognition. The largest collection of her works is on display in the Bennington Museum in Bennington, South Eastern Vermont of the USA. (NMWA, 2014; Antiques and Fine Arts.com, 2015).

The records of these few self-taught female paragons mentioned in this review show that, with determination, women artists have scaled the obstacles of traditional prejudices, to achieve commendable achievements in painting, and have actually strived to become recognized as painters, in a world that is partial towards recording work by their gender. The accounts have at the same time confirmed that, female painters, especially the self-trained, were not accorded as much attention as their male counterparts. This is not encouraging in view of the fact that, they have made vital inputs into the global painting milieu.

In the light of this background, the position of women painters is the way it is because, they have been denied a fair chance against their male counterparts. On the whole, the general situation of self-taught female painters in world history highlights the need, and provides ample background for reviewing the painting *oeuvre* of the two self-taught Nigerian female painters – Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise.

Self-taught art in the Nigerian setting

It is so far apparent that, although there is fairly vast literature on self-taught artists, there is still no clear-cut or satisfying operational classification on those sets of artists. Some perspectives which provide a contextual understanding on self-taught painters in non-Western societies like Nigeria, include those presented by Kasfir (1999), Aniakor (2003) and Odoh (2014). For instance, Odoh (2014) observes that:

> In the historical narration of modern art in Nigeria, and in the West, the phenomenon of self-taught art shares a parallel timeline of origin which can be historically located in the early 20th century. Apart from the shared history, its manifestation is also traceable to certain individuals whose art careers strongly define this unique creative niche.

Odoh's articulation affirms the reality that, compared to the Western world which introduced the modern painting, self-taught art in Nigeria is not necessarily a more recent development. Defending this position, Odoh quotes Kallir (2000) as having identified Henri Rousseau (1844-1910), to be the first self-taught artist "… anointed by the art world". Odoh bases his argument on the widely accepted proposition that, the first kind of modern painting officially known to have been practised by any indigenous Nigerian, is by Chief Aina Onabolu (1882-1963), as far back as 1895. He is therefore seen to be justified in insisting that, in terms of historical incidence,

Rousseau finds kinship in Onabolu, the first recorded self-taught artist in modern Nigerian art history.

Odoh (2014) also cites some other pioneers including Akinola Lasekan (1916-1974), who began his career as self-taught artist. He maintains that, since those early days, other self-taught artists like those mentioned, have arisen. Odoh's additional claim that; '…self-taught art in the Nigerian context, continually strives to integrate itself within the mainstream art" would be seen to portend hope for other painters (including women), who are following the same path. Odoh however finds it regrettable that "…unlike the West where considerable attention has been extended to self-taught art, this terrain remains highly uncharted and as such, inadequately documented in modern Nigerian art". Ultimately, these assertions reinforce the position of insignificant documentation involving self-taught artists (especially women) in Nigeria, and the need for remedying that situation.

Related to the above line of argument, Kasfir (1999), Aniakor (2003) and Odoh (2014), streamline the Nigerian visual artists into professionals and popular artists. While this delineation might not appear exhaustive, these two broad categories suffice for an understanding of Nigerian visual artists generally, and ultimately self-taught artists. For this research, the relevance of Aniakor's (2003) structuring of Nigerian artists lies in his further sorting of the 'professionals' into academy bred, or "…on a few occasions, self-taught". By indication, Aniakor is convinced about the worth of work done by the self-taught artists being significant enough to rate them as professionals. On that basis, it only seems proper, for this study to acquiesce with Aniakor over the designation of some self-taught artists as professionals.

One other area of Aniakor's (2003) contribution found resourceful to this work is, his highlighting personal development[3] as a means by which professionalism is attainable. According to the writer, the aforementioned professionalism is achieved via "… sound workmanship, and …practice of art as a prestigious occupation". Unmistakably, the criteria envisaged for achieving the status of a professional artists, are in effect: firstly, a display of dexterity emanating from a full understanding of techniques requisite for the particular art area the artist is working in. Understandably also, for an artist to be reckoned a true professional, such must see and operate his or her art as a serious and prestigious enterprise. This specification provides a useful springboard for pegging any artist's commitment and professional status.

Also useful to this study, is Aniakor's (2003) additional perspectives on self-taught artists whereby he categorises them as individuals with little educational background, and those with sound academic qualifications. This viewpoint is backed by his argument that, "…the creative act derives from the constructive powers of the artist" This reasoning is seen to be in line with Delorme's (2008) earlier proclamation that, although many self-taught artists are by no means uneducated, as a group, they lack formal training in art. Apparently therefore, self-taught artists could belong to any of the two categories: either those highly educated in other fields of endeavour, or those with little educational enlightenment. Whatever the case, it is clear that, the lack of formal training in art, and self-development rather than a formal induction, are the likely qualification for those classified to be self-taught artists.

[3] Part of the conceptual frames on which this study is placed is personal development; see Conceptual framework on p.12 of this Thesis.

On the strength of the reasoning above, it could be concluded that, self-taught painters could either be literate or not; but are certainly, individuals who have not undergone art training in conventional art institutions. They are artists who have developed their talents by their own effort. It follows that, if artists like Nike Okundaye, and Peju Alatise fall within this gauge, then it is only fitting to assess them as such. Thus, the prescribed context highlighted above, provides grounds for which the textile artist Nike Okundaye, and trained architect Peju Alatise, are reckoned as professional painters worth studying.

Related research

A few studies accessed by the researcher concentrate on issues related either with female Nigerian artists, or the manner of art practised by the two subjects of this study. Out of these, Okoli's (2007) Doctoral dissertation titled "The contributions of female artists to modern Nigerian art" deserves mention. The work bears ample value for the present study since its focus was on Nigerian women artists generally, and is a befitting treatise on their artistic careers. Like the present study, it is concerned about the underrepresentation of female artists in art historical documents. The scholar among other things, set out to "…discover and assemble the fragmented and shallow accounts of the art practice and contributions of women artists to excellence in Nigerian contemporary art practice" (Okoli, 2007).

Okoli elaborates further that, he investigated the present "…contributions of female artists to modern Nigerian art in a thematic and stylistic manner." Specifically, areas of his focus were, typology, form and content of their various art areas. Finally, the import of the artists on the Nigerian art scene was assessed against their social, cultural, religious and political contexts.

Okoli's overall approach, the manner in which description, interpretation of artworks and other contributions are duly done with chronological considerations, has been found inspiring to the present work.

Although self-trained female Nigerian painters did not form part of the study, inspiration could be drawn from the manner in which the scholar indiscriminately picked reputable Nigerian female artists from both formal and informal trained backgrounds. It highlights the artistic careers of twelve female artists which include: Clara Ugbodaga-Ngu, Constance Afi Ekong, Ladi Kwali, Suzanne Wenger, Theresa Luck Akinwale, Elizabeth Olowu, Nkiru Nzegwu, Funke Ifeta, Sokari Douglas-Camp, Chinwe Uwatse, Ndidi Dike and Lara Ige-Jacks. Among these artists, Afi Ekong, and Lara Ige-Jacks are known as painters. Elizabeth Olowu, Dr Funke Ifeta, Sokari Douglas, are sculptors, whereas; Susan Wenger, Ugbodaga-Ngu and Ndidi Dike, double as sculptor/painters. Ladi Kwali is an informal trained ceramist, while Chinwe Uwatse is acknowledged as a historical writer and painter. Okoli goes on to make an exposition of the artistry of these women, which renders them outstanding not just in their fields, but in Nigeria's art milieu as a whole.

Observations from his findings led Okoli to deduce among other things that, historical feats that have been achieved by women in the past have been ignored by art historians or other documenters of the modern art history of Nigeria because of the apathy with which women issues are treated. In the study, Okoli highlights the global and localized (Nigerian) struggle for women's rights, antecedents such as divided the roles of men and women, relegating women to their 'rightful place' at the background, and feminist agitations against this position. The scholar concludes that "…lethargies towards female artists could have resulted

in the relocation of some of these artists", which portents a negative state of affairs not just for aspiring women Nigerian artists, but for the country's art as a whole. Okoli's findings suggest that indigenous female artists seem to be offered more recognition outside the country. This reinforces the need for encouraging home based female artists.

Therefore, the foregoing extrapolation served as a guiding principle for examining the painting careers of the two self-trained female Nigerian painters being studied. The preceding rationalization makes it agreeable therefore, to visualise self-taught Nigerian artists like Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise, as not necessarily mediocre, but as professional artists whose painting career and works deserve to be studied.

Background, Painting Content and Style of the two Selected Self-taught Nigerian Painters.

The attempt to uncover research findings and publication on the subject of forms, content and style of the Nigerian artists of this study so far shows that; with the exception of assorted articles in exhibition catalogues, brochures, newspapers, magazines and the internet, not much attention has been given to the intricate details of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise's painting career in publications. A survey of available literature on the content, form and painting styles of the two self-taught professional Nigerian modern painters, accessed by this study, is displayed as follows:



Plate VII: Chief (Mrs) Oyenike Okundaye. © Nike Art Gallery

Background of Nike Okundaye.

Literature touching on the background and painting career of Nike Okundaye whose picture is shown in plate VII, is obtainable from the *Nigeria Best Forum (NBF) News* of *The Nigerian Voice*, on 17 April, 2011; Egonwa (2011), the *Vanguard News* of May 23, 2013; Ademigbuiji (2013); *My Daily News Watch* of 23, May, 2013, Alowoloke (2014); and Anonymous, Nike Art Center.com (2011). Information gathered from these documents reveals that, Chief (Mrs) Oyenike Monica Okundaye, also sometimes addressed as Nike Okundaye, was born at Ogidi-Ijumu, Kogi State on May 23rd of 1951. The artist is reportedly currently married to a retired commissioner of police, Mr. Reuben Osaruiye Okundaye. Okundaye's 65 years of existence is indicative of the artist's advancement in age. This shows the efficacy of taking an advantage of

her being alive to study her painting career of which, little has been documented in a systematic research.

Several accounts unanimously concur over the fact that, Okundaye whose picture is presented in Plate VII, ended her initial attempts to acquire a formal education in Primary six. Corroborating this, the artist disclosed "As a child, there was no money to further my education, I lost my mother at a very tender age. My grandmother took care of me until she died. The lot now fell on my great grandmother, the *Iyalode* of Ogidi, to raise me" (CNN International's African Voice, 2011). Further corroboration about Okundaye's lack of formal art training was also supplied by Ademigbuji's (2013) contribution that, Okundaye has no degree from a local or foreign university.

The story of Okundaye's early educational deprivation is further substantiated by the NBF (2011) which relates that, at the age of 13, she ran away from home to join a travelling theatre, before settling down to stay with her aunt in Oshogbo. Shedding more light on Okundaye's training background, Reed (2002), CNN International's African Voice (2011), Egonwa (2011), and Ademigbuji (2013) corroborate about the fact that, Okundaye's earliest artistic skills were nurtured by her great-grandmother (Madam Oraun Ibikunle) who was a cloth weaver, *adire* maker and indigo dyer. Similarly, Ademigbuji (2013) intimates that Okundaye's father (the late Nicholas Ojo Allah) was a basket weaver, leather worker and traditional musician. The artist herself adjoins that "…Art runs in my family. My aunt, who also raised me was an artist. My late mother was an artist and my father was a trumpeter" (CNN International's African Voice, 2011).

Okundaye's background is commonly associated with the artist with Ulli Beier's Oshogbo workshop. Kashim, Ogunduyile, and Adelabu, (2007) in highlighting the purpose of Beier's

establishment of the Osogbo Art School in 1963 as developing untrained artists, hints on this. Referring to her as prominent textile artist, Kashim *et al* (2007) go further to list Nike Okundaye along with other prominent participants in the art school as Jimoh Buraimoh, Taiwo Olaniyi, Muraina Oyelami and Asiru Olatunde. Egonwa (2011) substantiates this impression by likewise mentioning the artist among members of the Osogbo Art School. Filani (2013 similarly expresses that similarly widely held speculation, by classifying Okundaye as workshop trained along with Jimoh Buraimoh and Muraina Oyelami. The preceding records presume that; since Okundaye was actually residing at Osogbo at the time, she probably participated in one way or the other in the art programmes. The last opinion however, requires substantiation in the light of Okundaye's being designated as a self-taught artist. Filani's acknowledgment is nevertheless heartening because, most writers who count the supposed 'core' Mbari Mbayo artists usually exclude females.

In any case, writers seem more at ease to connect the artist with Susanne Wenger. Kashim *et al* (2007) for instance, report about Okundaye having worked under Susanne Wenger at the Osogbo Art School. It is also acknowledged that Wenger's art continued even after Ulli Beier had left the country. Additional details on Okundaye's background such as that provided by the *Daily News watch,* 23 May, 2014, made what this study considers an unsubstantiated reference of the artist's being adopted by Susan Wenger when she became an orphan.

From this last information, it was possible to deduce an explanation for a few things: Part of Okundaye's inspiration for painting occurred while she was a ward of Ulli Beier's first wife, Susanne. The other likely assumption is that, the determination for self-education which the artist has pursued was instigated by associating with the indomitable Susanne. Okundaye personally

acknowledges this in an interview with Adejobi (2013), the *Vanguard Newspaper* of 23 May, 2013, and *Daily News watch* of 23, May, 2014 where she makes exactly the same remark "For me, Susanne was the one that I derived inspiration from specifically". This detail is complemented by her husband's disclosure that, Okundaye learnt English by interacting with people who spoke and understood English as she grew up (Ebu, 2014).

Altogether, these pieces of writing ascertain that, Okundaye did not study art in a formal art institution. They correspondingly establish that the artist grew up in an artistic environment. It is plain also that the earliest art forms Okundaye came in contact with, were crafts like cloth weaving and dyeing, which probably account for her pronounced involvement in textile crafts. This study was consequently intrigued by Okundaye's success in painting. Such perplexity has been likewise expressed by the writer Ebu (2014) who to begin with, acknowledges that Okundaye is actually a bundle of talent having learnt weaving and textile design from her great grandmother. The writer however, finds it amazing that the artist was able to develop painting skills, the ability to combine colours and produce remarkable paintings, without any formal art education.

Conclusively, Okundaye's creative talent could be said to be the outcome of a combination of hereditary factors and growing up in an artistic atmosphere. Most likely, this background might have served as inspiration for the artist's later foray into painting. It is nevertheless certain that hints about how and why Okundaye went into painting are so far, not sufficiently catered for by the information accessed.

Part of background factors, considered as being instrumental to Okundaye's painting career are her principles. Some perspectives offered by literature suggest various contexts from which the artist derives inspiration for her paintings. The first hint of this was from Osaghae (2002) who sees Okundaye as "…gregarious, fervid, industrious, and possessing a deep-seated faith". The picture expressed by these attributes is that Okundaye is an outgoing, hardworking and religious person. Okundaye's declaration "I am an ardent believer that, the height we reach in this world is not as a result of our making alone, but through the help of God who helps us to achieve such things in life" (*The Vanguard News*, 23, May, 2013) is in accord with Osaghae's description of the artist. As irrelevant as it might seem, the basis of this faith; whether it is Christianity, Islam, or traditional religion was not disclosed by the statement. Fortunately, the artist has discussed about her spiritual stance, which broached on drawing her artistic, and inspiration from *Osun*, the river goddess to the CNN International's African Voice (2011) thus:

> Nobody sees the goddess face to face, but you can see her in your dream. And sometime it talks to me in my dream….Immediately I dream and I wake up, I will quickly sketch it, because if I have to wait, it may go off my head… So the river has made a lot of impact because a lot of what I draw is about females who do the worshipping.

Another inference drawn from that declaration, is the artist's profound respect for the Yoruba *Osun* goddess. This is corroborated by Jona Quest Art (2014) who affirms that Okundaye "…is also inspired by the Yoruba *Osun* Tradition". The piece of information equally provides some ground for advancing that, a great deal of Okundaye's artistic inspiration comes from interactions and principles related to her religious beliefs.

An added dimension of Okundaye's principles identified by writers include the fact that she seems to see art as possessing therapeutic properties. This is inferred from her rationalisation

that, "…Artwork is a therapy. If you see a work in which a mother is carrying her baby, it means love and warmness. If you look at an art work, you would forget your problem" (Okundaye In; *My Daily News Watch*, 2014). This suggests that, part of values inspiring Okundaye's paintings, might rest in her viewing art from this perspective of its purported possession of soothing properties.

Yet another aspect of Okundaye's contextual disposition outlined by some articles, is her desire to render services that benefit humanity. This is summed up in Okundaye's admission to Dike (2013) that "…till art transforms ordinary woman and children, I will keep on working". This statement encapsulates the artist's consuming passion and overwhelming concern over the plight of the downtrodden. Part of this outlook, which she seems to express fervidly, may also reflect in her paintings.

The foregoing reinforces the notion obtained so far that, circumstances of a deprived early education, growing up in the midst of artistic individuals, and a combination of conscientious religious upbringing, sheer hard work and attitude of compassion might as well be propelling force behind Okundaye's painting and other art related achievements. It determines the artist as someone who has attained her artistic status due to self-development.

Nike Okundaye's painting career.

Literature generally acknowledges Okundaye first and foremost, as an internationally known Nigerian, with a reputation for exquisite traditional Yoruba batik and *Adire* designs. Osaghae's (2002) declaration that; Okundaye is most outstanding in painting, design of *adire*, beadwork, and batik however affirms the artist's involvement in many areas of art other than textiles. The

CNN International's African Voice (2011) shares the same view, by recognising Okundaye "…as an artist from Nigeria, who has made amazing strides not just in textile and visual arts, but mixed media painting, as well". Similarly, Okundaye is identified as an African Textile Designer /Painter by *The City People* (2011). It is consequently deducible that, associating Okundaye more with batik and *adire,* has resulted in making her textile work (though rightfully) to eclipse other artistic accomplishments including her painting career.

A probe into published writings dealing with circumstances leading to how, and when, the renowned textile artist Okundaye diversified into painting has uncovered that; this occurred much earlier in her life than it may be thought. The artist reminisced about this in CNN International's African Voice (2011) as follows:

> I started working at an early age with an Indian family to support myself in Kogi State. Kabba is a bigger town than Ogidi. …while working for this Indian family, I discovered my talent as a creative artist. I started producing embroidery and paintings … The Indian couple started selling my works to teachers, Rev. Sisters and Rev. Fathers who were living in the neighbourhood. It made me happy that they were buying my works, and that I was making a living out it… I left Kabba village to stay with my aunt at Oshogbo. I learnt how to make *adire* and other crafts and met the famous Susan Wenger who had a great influence on my work.

This account corroborates the earlier accounts that, Okundaye's artistic career began when she was still young. This contribution is suggestive that in addition to *adire,* the two art forms which the artist was purportedly involved in producing at this early stage were; embroidery and painting. Unless proven otherwise, the facts presented by the artist in this article suggest that Okundaye's painting talent began to show during her stay with the Indian employers at Kabba town. This was even prior to her arrival at Oshogbo, or meeting with Susanne Wenger. It could be conjectured therefore that, Okundaye actually began to make a living with painting much

earlier than officially thought. Regrettably however, there seem to be no records by writers on the nature of paintings the artist produced at that early period.

The *Avenir Magazine* (2011) ascertains (though with no accompanying elaboration) that, the legendary Nigerian artist Okundaye is "…known for vivid paintings". Unarguably, various articles reviewed by this study seem to confirm the well-known textile artist Nike Okundaye as a prolific painter. A substantiated allusion to her painting profession is contained in the *Vanguard News* (23rd May, 2013). It spoke of the exhibition held to commemorate the 62nd birthday of the artist. In that review, the newspaper records that, the display showcased paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures and other mix-media works. The article supposes that, the items enumerated highlight some of the salient trends in Okundaye's over three decades captivating career as an artist. By that observation, the material reduces the span of Okundaye's painting career to about thirty years, but it affirms the renowned textile artist's versatility in other areas of the visual arts as well. Unfortunately, the piece of writing gives no further clue as to which of the works were specifically paintings. The information in addition, reveals nothing about the forms, content or style of those paintings exhibited. Thus, it prevents any meaningful understanding of those components of the artist's paintings.

A seeming unusual, yet interesting aspect of Okundaye's painting career recorded in some literature, is the collaborative work the artist does with Tola Wewe. A number of writers such as Osaghae (2002), Castellote (2009), Gates, Ayeampong, and Niven, (2012), Dike (2012) including the Gallery of African arts (GAFRAA, 2014), have actually made contributions on that. GAFRAA (2014) for instance notes that, Chief Nike Okundaye's reach as a visual artist also extends to her collaborations with fellow Nigerian artist, Tola Wewe. The alliance between

the two, has been described as a partnership stretching back many years.

Among contributions on this, Osaghae and Castellote's presentations provide a good overview of that partnership. Osaghae (2002) in his article "thou shall not walk alone: The artistic synergy of Nike and Tola" discusses extensively about that venture. The author focussed on one of their exhibitions showcasing both early and recent 'Okundaye and Tola' paintings featuring "…works in a variety of scales - from the compact *Blossoms of Life* (2000) to the expanse of *Pillars of Love* (2010)". Osaghae must first be commended for enhancing his entry by including titles of paintings. Although Osaghae admits that one of the artists Wewe starts the work with the other, Nike Okundaye completing it and both artists signing, Okundaye is to be commended for initiating this move as revealed by Osaghae (2002) in the following account:

> In early 2000s when Tola Wewe travelled to Germany for an art project, he had returned with a series of his works in pen and ink which appealed to Nike tremendously. He had given her one as a gift. A few months later, he saw the work again, but she had transformed it and he was mesmerized by it. She had imbued it with designs of her own. She had told him frankly what she had done to the work. She had tried out some design patterns on it and the work had come out unbelievably nice. …The response from her clients, was quite positive and encouraging. This was the genesis of their collaboration which Tola describes as "a visual copula, a kind of lyrical romance on canvas". Between them, an agreement was reached that, while he would produce the initial forms and images, she would provide the designs and embellishments. It would be a matter of motif complemented by design.

Substantiating Osaghae's account, Jess Castellote in an article titled "Tola Wewe, Nike Okundaye and the emergence of the third artist: Nike-Wewe" corroborates that; Wewe usually commences the painting, while Okundaye completes it (Castellote, 2009). The scholar thereby supposes that the process of the duo's collaboration consists of discreet steps such as; Tola conceiving the compositional aspects of the painting, drawing the main lines and basic colours and filling some areas of the work, while Okundaye undertakes the infilling of the rest.

It must be firstly realised that, the collaborative work with Wewe is seen to reinforce about

Okundaye's commitment to painting as one of her artistic outlets. Secondly, it reveals the extent to which the artist is willing to go to in painting, by adventuring into collaborative work. Furthermore, this study agrees with the Castellote's (2009) added rationalization that both in the Western world and in Nigeria, there is a long tradition of art workshops producing art objects through a collaborative effort. It is true, Castellote mentions no other specific Nigerian references, he however elaborates that in the large studios of European artists of the past, and it was not only the "master" who left his input on the canvases.

Without question, there is ample indication of the existence of collaborative painting in many places. Incidences of such practices among Renaissance masters (in their workshops), and others in their wake, are generally- corroborated in the writings of Johnson (2003). A typical example of workshop painting collaboration cited here to further buttress about collaborative painting, is Masaccio (originally named Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Mone Cassai; 1401-1428?). Ascertained a co-founder of the Renaissance painting (14th century to 17th century), Masaccio collaborated with the painter Masolino Da Panicale (1383?-1447?), in producing a series of frescoes for the Brancacci Chapel in the Church of Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence (Johnson, 2003; Microsoft Encarta, 2009).

Clearly supportive of collaboration, Castellote insists that neither Rembrandt nor Raphael ever had any problem appending their names to works produced in their studios, on which more than one artist had worked. Similarly inclined, Princethal (2009) points out that, some collaborative installations brought together dozens of artists. The latter cites American artists Judy Chicago,

Faith Wilding, and Miriam Schapiro who collaborated with their art students to create *Woman house* in 1972 (located at Santa Monica, California). Still pursuing his earlier trend of thoughts further, Castellote refers to Warhol and Basquiat having painted several canvases together. The Microsoft Encarta (2009) corroborates that; in 1983 and 1984, Self-taught American painter Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988), collaborated with renowned formal trained American artist and originator of Pop art, Andy Warhol (1928-1987), and yet another self-taught painter, the Italian Francesco Clemente (b. 1952) on several paintings.

Probably seeing a similarity between Okundaye and Wewe's work to the former, Castelotte (2009) points out that; "Warhol would use a projector to outline symbols, text, adverts, logos on the canvas, and Basquiat would complete the work adding his highly expressive, graffiti-like inscriptions around –sometimes, on top of Warhol's drawings". Perhaps (and not necessarily in exact use of media), this last procedure of Basquiat and Warhol seems to fit what obtains in Wewe and Okundaye's work. Closing his argument, Castellote (3009) contends that, other less known painters and assistants applied their skills to the work eventually assigned to a single artist. The author concludes that, this was not a way of "corporate deceit" but a way of producing art.

It is apparent that, this collaboration was a chance occurrence which began with one painting. Eventually, the two artists decided to deliberately plan on making paintings together. Rationally, the joint venture by Okundaye and Wewe could arguably be seen as a write-off on the basis of who should be accorded creator rights. However, that may not necessarily be the case as Castellotte (2009) goes on to point out;

> Most of us share the prevalent image of the artist as that of an independent, stand-alone figure, expressing her singular creativity through the production of artworks. This stereotypical image is deeply entrenched in the way artists are presented in the media and in the way originality and authenticity are valued in the art markets. Looking at the extensive collection of works signed jointly by Nike & Wewe …some questions about this way of art production came to my mind. And the reason is that collaborative art changes our accepted view of the figure of the artist, transforming individual artistic identity into a new merged identity.

Osaghae (2002) on his part, is convinced that Wewe and Okundaye's visual interactivity is sustained on the platform of mutual fidelity, trust and professional integrity. The writer seems to think that the collaboration between the two, is inspired largely by a spirit of sharing or of reciprocity. He further maintains that, "…given the exceptional level of concord between Okundaye and Wewe, the challenges have apparently been surmounted". Osaghae clinches his argument by remarking that the first exhibition of the duo tagged 'Stitches of partnership' and others afterwards, has not only revealed but accentuates the artistic genius of Nike Okundaye and Tola Wewe.

The general useful point garnered from these two pieces of information, is the undeniable fact that; Okundaye has produced a large body of work in collaboration with Wewe. Under normal circumstances, such paintings are viewed with reservations by some critics. Notwithstanding the misgivings about collaborative painting generally, Osaghae (2002), Castellote (2009), and Gates *et al* (2012) seem to consider Okundaye and Wewe's collaboration in a positive light. Thus it is deducible that, supporters of collaborative painting see the legitimacy of a painting's creator, as not jeopardized by teamwork on such work. Rather, as Castellote (2009) proposes, with skilful handling collaboration might improve the resulting painting. Whatever the case, Castellote further sees one of the reasons for the success of Okundaye and Wewe's collaborative practice to be "…a mutual respect for boundaries by each of the artists". The bases for drawing such a

conclusion, derives from the writer's postulation that, Okundaye and Wewe possess the "…particularity, differentiation, and uniqueness proper to an individual artist". Moreover, Castellote (2009) even goes further to conclude that "in many ways, these works are richer than those produced by Wewe or Okundaye separately".

Seen in the light of the above arguments therefore, collaborative painting is not a practice that is out of place and Okundaye is to be commended for daring to launch out on such a venture. Whether this position is actually tenable or not, is for the moment not only hypothetical, but outside the scope of this research. Its consideration within the review is nevertheless important since one of the subjects in this study (Nike Okundaye), is involved in the venture, and it is thought to be worth emulating by other artists. The important point drawn from this is that, a number of paintings done by Nike Okundaye are collaborative paintings with Tola Wewe. The main thrust behind the collaboration is; Okundaye's ability to effortlessly work on paintings with a painter whose manner of painting is well known and distinctive. Also, the fact that the outcome of such teamwork has been positive is in no doubt. This should erase any doubt about Okundaye's painting ability. Rather than being seen negatively, it is indeed, an additional proof of the prominent textile artist Okundaye's pedigree, as professional painter worthy of note

Nature of Nike Okundaye's painting Forms

In discussing Okundaye's painting forms, two perspectives of painting form are examined by the review. The first, is a consideration of the category, kind or genre of work such as; portraiture, landscapes, installations, murals, collages or studies. The Second, are the kind of images or

objects portrayed in the paintings. That approach follows Kleiner's (2005) proposition that, form refers to an object's shape or structure such as a figure painted on a canvas.

In following this, the review has uncovered that, not much seems to have been specifically written about Okundaye's painting forms. Filani (2013) in excerpts from his paper "Continuing Traditions and Western Influence," only appears mildly suggestive about this in his proposition that "…a more refined articulation of forms by the workshop trained artists could be seen in the works of Jimoh Buraimoh, Muraina Oyelami and Nike Okundaye". Above all, the writer's mention of forms articulated in a refined manner, is appreciated as a fair contribution that hints on the state of Okundaye's forms. However, for the fact that the kind or variety of forms are not divulged, it is only to be presumed that such forms might have included paintings.

A more rational allusion to the nature of Okundaye's painting forms, could be gathered from Kashim *et al's* (2007) remark that; Susanne Wenger encouraged many local artists to produce sculptural images and paintings reminiscent of the Osogbo forms. Earlier on, it has been established that Wenger inspired Okundaye[4]. It is only reasonable to assume that, since Wenger was a painter such influence must have included painting. Once again, it is clear the information had divulged little about Okundaye's painting forms.

More specifically GAFRAA (2014), has enumerated Okundaye's painting forms to include self-portraits, landscapes and observations from daily life. African Crafts.com (n.d) added wall hangings in batik and embroidery (Needle worked pictures framed into panels) to that list. This is gleaned from the statement "…she draws extensively on her rich cultural heritage and fathomless imagination to create stunning batik, starch-resist and embroidered hangings." This latter article, goes on to provide some useful detail about the nature of such works mentioned. Works cited to

[4] See discussion about this on pages 46 and 47 within the literature review.

buttress their presentation included "…*Young Mothers*, the horizontal batik with two mothers and a baby holding a bottle…*After The World Mothers* (Plate VIII), which replicates and gives



Plate VIII, *After-World Mothers* © African Crafts.com (n.d)

birth to the young mothers in the next world". The added elaboration provided on this piece is that, "…the batik hanging features a large figure of a woman seated with a remedy in her hands, seems bigger than life. She is flanked by two cats who are either mother and child, or agents of *Orisa*, or both" (Modern African Crafts.com, 2014). It is visible that although this article and others seen, offer a fairly ample description of Okundaye's works, it is deficient in providing other details as, the date and size of such paintings.

Subject matter in Nike Okundaye's paintings.

The appraisal of the two artists' painting content, is premised upon the view that; content, also referred to as subject matter or themes, convey the idea behind (or the main preoccupation of) an

art work. By implication, Aniakor (2001) and Kleiner's (2005) affirmation that every painting seems to have its own name or title reinforces this point. Bearing this in mind, it was discovered that, accessed literature related to Okundaye's painting content, is sparse. The various texts consulted hardly deliberate upon Nike Okundaye's painting subject matter in details. It is only from snippets of information here and there, that minute hints about Okundaye's subject matter could be gleaned.

The *NBF News* (2011) for instance, seems to perceive Okundaye's painting content as mainly concerned with traditional matters. This is reflected through the observation that Okundaye's works "… gloss on traditional themes." Correspondingly, Adejobi (2013) appears persuaded that, Okundaye is "…known for her … approach to traditional themes." Without any substantiation these assertions merely impress that Okundaye's paintings focus either mainly, or entirely, on traditional issues. As far as these contributions are concerned, the precise ethnic leanings, peculiar traditional forms and specific themes the painter has a penchant for portraying in her work, still remain in doubt.

More enlightenment about Okundaye's subject matter, possibly lays in her purported link with the Osogbo Art Center of the early 1960s. Even though it has not been specifically established, Nike Okundaye's painting career as a whole, could be seen to fit with Fosu's stipulation that pictures by Osogbo artists illustrate strange stories (Fosu, 1986). The designation 'strange' has been explained by Fosu to signify the stories of ghosts, witches, and dwarfs which form the major repertoire of their inspiration, and normal work. It follows that, if Okundaye is working in the creed of those Osogbo artists, then her subject matter should comprise of the same so-called 'strange' subjects.

The preceding line of reasoning is similarly reinforced by Kashim *et al's* (2007) disclosure that; the Osogbo centre's major focus was training artists that could work on local cultures, folklores and narratives with production, which fused cultural traditions with modern practices. Adding

clarification on the issue, the last writers cite Okundaye as having worked under Susan Wenger, where Yoruba folklores in form of dreams and nightmares, were fully explored. This detail buttresses about the possibility of Okundaye focusing on folklores, cultural traditions and dreams as subject matter in some of her paintings.

Another substantiated hint to a possible leaning of Okundaye's subject matter, was found in *This Day Newspaper* of 4th July, 2013, which made reference of her alliance with Taiwo Olaniyi. The reference providentially permits an understanding of Osa Egonwa's inference that, Okundaye's encounter with the Osogbo artists during the workshop days of Ulli Beier, likely influenced her painting subject matter (Egonwa, 2011). From all indications, Egonwa (2011) is similarly inclined over the likelihood of Okundaye's painting themes' affinity with those of the Osogbo workshop experimentalists like Taiwo Olaniyi, Jimoh Buraimoh and others of that group. By that supposition, strains of similar subjects by Olaniyi and Buraimoh are to be expected in Okundaye's painting. However, apart from outlining activities of the Oshogbo artists in a sequential manner, the *This Day* Newspaper article of 4th July, 2013, provides no other clue about Okundaye's painting themes. For that reason, it is only by an investigation such as that being carried out by the present study, that facts could be established about specific issues, which Okundaye addresses in her paintings.

Another reference to Okundaye's painting subject matter is the suggestion that, she likely works in an *Ona* mold. This notion emanates from Osaghae (2002)'s observation that, Okundaye was

not part of the inauguration of *Onaism*, but later knew about it and keyed in. Irivwieri (2010) presents a perspective on common subject matter of *Ona* painters as follows: a focus on morally upright happenings of the society, and generally drawing inspiration from Yoruba traditional motifs. Irivwieri elaborates in addition that, *Ona* artists use their conceptions as point of reference to create modern forms in the context of technique, materials and tradition. Adding more detail, Irivwieri elucidates about how motifs derived from geometric, organic, techno morphs, animals, bird images; or from nature, utilitarian objects, lettering and sculptural forms are composites of *Ona* content.

With regards to Okundaye's painting content, the only deduction to be drawn from the preceding is the possibility that; like *Onaists*, the artist's works may likewise include commentaries on unfavourable societal conditions. And should that claim be factual, it will be logical to assume that, a conglomerate of objects and images such as those listed by Irivwieri, will make up the paintings of a presumed *Ona* artist like Okundaye.

Other few pieces of writing which have attempted offering similar input on Okundaye's painting subject, indicate that; "…they celebrate proverbial philosophies and cultural maxims in their individual works". This was contained in a commentary focusing on her collaborative paintings with Tola Wewe by Osaghae (2002). It is however clear that, in addition to aligning Okundaye's content with *Onaism*, the minimal understanding gained from this writing, is the assumption that the duo represent such traditional objects as staff, divination trays and human figures among others. Osaghae goes further to provide a fair list of items represented in Okundaye and Wewe's collaborative pieces to include: decorations with Yoruba traditional motifs on *esu* posts and staff (with hand and body embellishments), divination bowls, decorative necklaces, divination trays,

wall gecko, comb, fresh leaves, elephant, huts, fish to barbed wire and so forth. It must be said that, the likelihood that Okundaye also produces paintings with such subjects in her solo works is notwithstanding, subject to substantiation.

Like the preceding propositions, GAFRAA (2014) finds portrayal of traditions among Chief Okundaye's painting subjects. This is seen to be represented in *Pattern of Our Heritage* painted in 1992 (Plate IX), where the artist purportedly pays tribute to the generations of female Adire weavers – using *Adire* symbols traditionally passed on by a mother to her daughter. Also mentioned in this contribution is the detail that, the motifs include the fish - a symbol of fertility and the elephant - a sign of strength and vigour, are derived from Yoruba folklore.

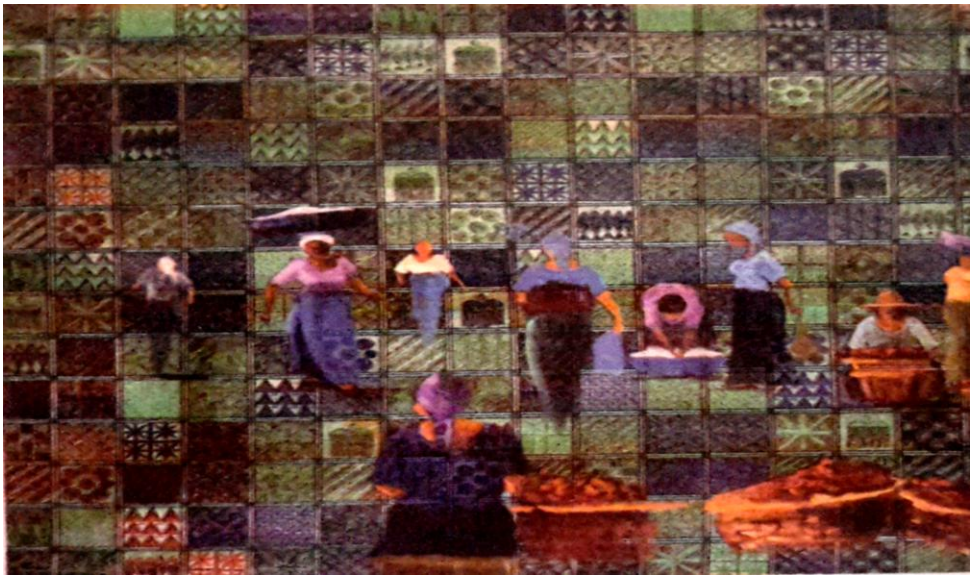


Plate IX; ***The Patterns of our Heritage and Channels of Hope***, 2006.
Oil and acrylic 91" x57". ©. GAFRAA (2014).



Plate X: *Untitled,* Nike Okundaye and Tola Wewe, © Jesscastellote 2009/nike-wewe-1.jpg



Plate XI: *Untitled* Nike Okundaye and Tola Wewe, © Jesscastellote 2009/nike-wewe-22.jpg

Castellote's (2009) contributions have also included useful inputs regarding Okundaye's painting content. However, with the labels of works in Castellotes's entry for Plates X and XI being both *Untitled*, not even information from Osaghae's earlier treatise on Okundaye and Wewe's collaborative paintings, seems to provide a clue as to the specific direction on the subject matter; whether traditional or secular issues. Rather, they appear to be a mixture of the two, which is similarly reflected by Osaghae (2002) thus:

> *A measure of fulfilment, Vivid thoughts of expression, Feminine fantasy, Temple of life, Concord, Frontier of affection*, to mention a few of their vast collections featuring in the exhibition *'Temple of life'* and *'Feminine fantasy'*, far from being vulgar, are antithetical to the amoralities which characterize the dark, somewhat seedy worlds of Ayilara in mainland Lagos or Ugbague in Benin City. The messages, essentially, are an admonishment to young women and men alike to uphold the moral tenets of their cultural backgrounds; to eschew indolence and heedlessness; to embrace hard work, responsibility and self-discipline.

In a similar manner of presenting a painting backed by minimal elaboration, Okundaye's painting *Angel* (Plate XV done in 2004) also featured by GAFRAA (2014), is merely described as depicting angels whose job is to caution, offer counsel, or give praise.

Some other writings including (Jona Quest Art, 2014), have been more forthcoming by indicating that Okundaye's work showcases women, and celebrates womanhood. Altogether, these inputs have not provided much insight about features and circumstances of such women she focusses on, still leaving much to be desired.

Nike Okundaye's painting media and techniques

Like in other aspects of her painting, a minimal written information is available on details of Okundaye's painting techniques. Among efforts to describe procedures employed in Okundaye's paintings, is the declaration by The *NBF News* (2011) that Okundaye is "…known for her colourful paintings". Upholding a similar view, Adejobi (2013) remarks that, the artist is known for colourful batik and paintings. It seems reasonable therefore, to conclude that, Okundaye's paintings are colourful, even though the nature of their colourfulness is yet to be specified. Also obviously missing in this contribution, is any elaboration on techniques employed for producing the so-called "colourful" works.



Plate XII: *Adam and Eve's first love*, Nike Okundaye,
14.5" x 10.5 " 1975. © Gallery of African Art, London (2014).

An exposé revealing Okundaye's earliest used media was fortunately, traced from the report on her exhibition at the Gallery of African Art in 2014 (GAFRAA, 2014). Citing *Adam and Eve First Love* (Plate XII) which she produced in 1975 as example, the paintings are described as including "… the early monochromatic pen and ink works by Nike Okundaye". Such works are presumed to have been produced during time spent at Osogbo, under the guidance of Susanne Wenger. It is however arguable that, in the absence of additional description, an understanding of Okundaye's peculiar processes involved in producing exquisite pen and ink pieces like *Adam and Eve's First Love,* is not achievable. GAFRAA (2014) nevertheless, goes on to mention that, the same exhibition, also showcases the delicate water colours that Chief Davies-Okundaye has

produced since 1999. Although that was not accompanied with illustrations, it auspiciously corroborate that, water colour is another significant medium employed by Okundaye.

Osaghae's (2002) reflections on Okundaye and Wewe's joint works seems to provide more useful insight about Okundaye's painting technique. Some of these features are described as:

> Lines dominate and glorify the images in them, only allowing splotches of colour to stab through them. Something of the dual images is replicated loosely in the upper part of the canvas with a dexterity that could be mistaken for a spasmodic gesture on the part of the artists. Other non-human forms also find creative expression through the lines. They represent some of the essential accoutrements for highlighting and celebrating the beauty of Yoruba folklore which constitutes the cornerstone of these artists' origins…linearity permeating the images to achieve a graffiti effect.

Linearity appears to be an overriding feature in the works being described here. Nonetheless, the impression gleaned from Osaghae, projects an image of a coloured background, with superimposed images. In more explicit terms, Osaghae perceives the colour handling of this duo to consist of fine lines filled with colour. The writer further elaborates that these objects are steeped in beautiful colour combinations of red, cadmium yellow, sap green, violet and gold. ostensibly used to grace the picture space. Notwithstanding the usefulness of this contribution, it remains unclear whether the paints are thickly or thinly applied and whether surfaces are texturised. The kind of medium employed and means of application is still unsure.

Mbongo's (2014) contribution that Okundayes' works vary from one medium to another, is perhaps also illuminating. The writer notes further that, the designs on African fabrics are usually flat, but simple repeat patterns showing no depth. Mbongo commends Okundaye for achieving the effect of 3-dimensionality using media such as pen and ink. The writer goes on to propose that, the artist achieves such by continuously going over an outline to create a thick mark. Mbongo adjoins that, at times, a specific shade has been used in the foreground to mimic colours

in the background. Though not particularly linked to a specific work, this extract is among the few available valuable inputs on Okundaye's pen and ink painting technique. It is conclusive that except for these few inputs presented here, the specific techniques used by Okundaye in producing her paintings remain uncertain.

Nike Okundaye's painting style

Like painting forms and content, the issue of stylistic predispositions of contemporary Nigerian painters is a matter of utmost significance to this study. Style is denoted as a way of doing something especially in expressing a particular attitude or typifying a particular period. A similar connotation, expresses the meaning of style as a particular procedure by which something is done. Style is further identified as a distinctive and identifiable form in an artistic medium; a way of painting, characteristic of a particular period, place, person, or movement (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). Three cardinal points are deducible from these definitions. Relating them to painting, it could be said that, style within the context of this research, is a peculiar manner of presenting forms, the use of particular procedures in a unique way by the artists, and modes painting that could either be unique and novel, or recalling other patterns already in existence.

It has earlier been alluded that, Susanne Wenger inspired Nike Okundaye. A reappraisal of Wenger's style was deemed helpful in predicting Okundaye's painting style. This is drawn from Filani's (2013) remark that, Wenger "…produced paintings …that were surrealistic in forms, to suit the religious ambience of the spirit world, from which she derived inspiration." Filani's description here projects the impression of surreal images arranged on a somewhat flat manner. Additionally, Filani has more specifically intimated that;

> …In another peculiar though seemingly naïve format, the artists that emerged from the workshop centres in Osogbo (organized by the German Ulli Beier and his wife Georgina Beier and later Susanne Wenger, introduced a novel compositional arrangement that defied perspective and with forms that derived from folklores. The mythical allusion to the spirit world which is characteristic of African tales seems to come alive in the disproportionate images made by artists such as Taiwo Olaniyi, Jacob Afolabi and Rufus Ogundele.

Although Okundaye's name is not specifically cited in this list, the writer had earlier on alluded to her affinity with the group[5]. While it has not yet been out rightly established, in the interim, these assertions provide grounds for assuming that, Okundaye's painting style as a consequence, bears relationship with that of the Osogbo artists.

GAFRAA (2014) also offers hints on Okundaye's mode of painting by identifying elements expressed through her collaborative works with Wewe. Like other writers had earlier on proposed, the publication also sees Tola Wewe's geometric shapes and stylised forms to be complemented by the detailed designs of Nike Okundaye in works like the *Feminine Power Series* (2002). This creates an understanding that; Okundaye sometimes produces stylised forms, which are geometric. The absence of further elaboration however, precludes any reasonable comprehension of her style up to this point.

Like Osaghae (2002), GAFRAA associates Okundaye's style to the shared Yoruba roots with the beautiful motifs, which appear in many of their compositions, adding that; recent works such as *The Prince and His Bride* executed in 2014 (Plate XIII), suggests a new stylistic direction in their enduring partnership. This contribution remotely merely links the work of the duo to Yoruba traditions, without specifically highlighting specific features. Apart from the picture

[5] See Filani's remarks on p.56 & 57

attached, the absence of any aesthetic elaboration, precludes a better appreciation of the duo's fresh stylistic tendency.



Plate **XIII**. *The Prince and His Bride*, Nike Okundaye and Tola Wewe, 2014. © GAFRAA.com (2014).

Contemporary Art.com (2014) offers some clarification on Okundaye's style by intimating that, the painting *Drumming* (Plate XIV), supposedly reveals the beginnings of the intricate pattern making, which has become the artist's signature. The éxpose further expatiates that "…Chief Davies' paintings have been informed by her textile practice, evidenced in the use of symbols derived from *Adire* cloth". This contribution permits the supposition that as from the 1980s, Okundaye developed a painting style comprising of patterns, which is distinctive of her work. It is also obvious that, the patterns in question are *adire.* Details left out by this input however,

include the manner in which the motifs are arranged in her compositions, and whether or not, the paintings include images.



Plate XIV, ***Drumming***, Nike Davies Okundaye, 1000 cm x 754 cm. 1984. © Gallery of African Art.

Also substantiating the preceding, Rice (2015) designates Okundaye as a Nigerian modernist artist, who has used Yoruba *Adire* textile in her work. Although no specific added elaboration is provided, this piece of writing is useful because, it goes further to explain that the *Adire* symbols in Okundaye's work are not merely decorative but meaningful. Similarly, in making reference to Okundaye's painting *Angel* done in 2004 (Plate XV), Contemporary Art.com (2014) describes it simply as depicting corn brow braided angels playing traditional instruments against the

backdrop of ordered geometric patterns. Once again, like in many presentations reviewed, the absence of the work's dimensions, and any other further expansion impede a better grasp of the painting style in this work.



Plate XV. *Angels* Nike Okundaye, 2004. © GAFRAART .com (2014).

As earlier seen also, some other writings presume that Okundaye works in the canons of *Onaism.* An understanding of that movement supplied by writers including Irivwieri (2010), as well as, Akande and Makinde (2005) is that, *Onaism* is a style which developed in the western part of Nigeria in the later part of 1988 and earlier 1989. *Onaism* purportedly started through the activities of a group of graduates of the "Art Department" of the "University of Ife" now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile – Ife. Similar to the development of *Ulism* among

professional artists in Eastern Nigeria, these artists sought to further their creative ideas in modern Nigerian art practice by developing *Onaism*.

It should be agreed that, literature is not particularly clear on Okundaye's predilection for *Onaism.* Osaghae's (2002) contribution must nonetheless be commended, for reinforcing the impression that, she is in fact a serious painter. Doubtless, this contention does not in any way contradict the earlier allusion to the likely affinity of Okundaye's painting style to the Osogbo School. This later revelation supposes that, Okundaye's exposure to Beier, did not necessarily imply her automatic induction into the painting experiments at the time. Following the preceding argument further, it must be understood that activities at the Osogbo centre in the early 1960s, pre-existed before the founding of the *Ona* movement. Apparently, Okundaye started painting two decades earlier than the onset of *Onaism.* This implies that, even if the artist ever embraced *Onaism* at a stage, she had definitely, been painting in an earlier style, prior to that. As a result, the story of how Okundaye became actively involved with painting has so far, not been made clear by the pieces of writing. Providentially, it further reinforces Okundaye's self-trained stance.

From the foregoing, it could be agreed that, up to this point, it has been difficult to find inputs that directly explain the style of Okundaye's painting. The contributions have only supported the anticipation that, her painting style will be partly naturalistic and highly ornamental with surfaces filled up with decorative, plant, and symbolic textures. Also, Okundaye's style observed by literature could be summed up as naturalism, surrealism, abstraction, and possibly, *Onaism*.

Achievements and Contributions of Nike Okundaye

It must be reiterated that, first and foremost, literature widely associates Nike Okundaye with textile arts, rather than painting. Osaghae (2002) for instance, observes that Okundaye is

"…synonymous with *Adire* as well as with the outstanding innovative efforts that have gone into sustaining and popularizing it beyond the Nigerian borders". The *Vanguard News* of May 23, 2013 also affirms about Okundaye being an "…*adire* fabric design exponent". Evidently, Nike Okundaye should be more rightly identified as a textile artist. There is consequently, no arguing the fact that Okundaye's paramount area of artistic creativity expressed here, is textiles. Neither is there contesting the fact that her prime area of specialty has been, and will remain, in the textile arts.

The CNN International's African Voice (2011), describes Okundaye as an artist of many parts. According to the piece of writing, she drums, directs plays, dances, paints, and trains young adults to do all of the listed. Similarly inclined, Alowoloke (2014) declares that; Okundaye is a visual and performing artist. It is thus visible that in addition to the visual arts, Okundaye appears to be also making headway in the performance arts. Yet another piece of writing, simply designates her as 'Nigeria's Art Queen' (Modern Green Art. Com, 2014). The general viewpoint upheld about her endowment made Lonely Planet Review (2014) to esteem Nike Okundaye as "…one of Nigeria's most important artists". Purefoy (2014), who from all indications concurs about Okundaye's achievements, sums that she is among Africa's most engaging personalities. There is no misconstruing therefore, the unequivocal, and unanimous accord of many writings about the multi-talented posture of Okundaye in various fields of art.

Some other writings have however, recognised Nike Okundaye's painting career to be equally significant. Osaghae (2002) has gone ahead to declare Okundaye to be most outstanding in painting, design of *adire*, beadwork and batik. In addition to recognising other areas of art, this contribution is doubtless an acknowledgement of the artist's involvement in painting as well as.

Similar to Osaghae, *The City People* (Kehinde, *Ed;* 2011) specifically designates Okundaye as an African Textiles Designer, and painter. Persuaded likewise, the CNN International's African Voice (2011) reckons Okundaye as one of the most respected internationally known female artists from Nigeria who has made astounding strides in textile, visual arts and mixed media painting.

These recognition of Okundaye's achievements above, underline the reality that her painting practice is recognized worldwide alongside her textile art. Arguably, the worth of Okundaye's painting could be said to be revealed in their selling prize. The *Vanguard News* of 23, May, 2013, and Nike Art Center. Com (2014) for instance, estimated that Okundaye's paintings sell for between N500, 000. 00 to N4 million, making them among well rated art works in Nigeria. It becomes plain that, even though Okundaye is actually renowned for her activities related with indigenous Nigerian *Adire* and Batik textile work, she is equally a painter per excellence.

Corroborating the standpoint about Okundaye's artistic talent, the *Vanguard News* of 23, May, (2013) remarks that, "for a woman who ended her education in primary six, Okundaye is seen to have embraced art and her talent blossomed". Explicitly, the Newspaper appreciates the progress made by Okundaye in accomplishing much in art, despite her early educational deprivation. Buttressing this, the *City People* (Kehinde *Ed*, 2011) has this to say about the artist "… although she never had the benefit of a formal education, she today teaches Arts to graduates and Ph.D. students". The writer articulates that, Okundaye accomplishes this by being often invited around the Globe, to deliver lectures on Arts and Culture, in Government or cultural centres, and in some of the world's leading universities.

Corroborating the preceding, Aplerku (2015) and Flavio (2015), quote the artist as having declared "I have lectured and held workshops in several notable institutions across the world. Some of the universities include Harvard, Columbus, Edmonton, Ohio and in Los Angeles, among others. My first experience with teaching was in 1974. At that time, I taught people with doctoral degrees" In view of the preceding, Okundaye's seeming unsung achievements has moved Aplerku (2015) to remark that "…not many in her homeland appear to know about her unique story… in other lands, especially Europe and America, she is a 'goddess' whose works are cherished by kings and presidents".

Adding to the above tributes, Naijaonpoint (2015) recounts that, while little is known about Okundaye and her works across the country, two former presidents of the USA, Bill Clinton and George Bush were so enthralled by her works at various times that, they sought audience with her during their visits to Nigeria. Also, Naijaonpoint pointed out that in addition to meeting and shaking hands with the former presidents, it was Okundaye who decorated George Bush's room in Abuja, during his stay in the country.

Okundaye's exploits with *adire* textiles has also inspired Rice (2015) to declare that, the artist has single-handedly rescued and revived indigo dyeing in parts of Nigeria. Rice perceived the means by which Okundaye achieves this to be, via taking the popular patterns of *adire* and reproducing them as paintings, often with an overlaid scene of village life. The writer goes on to construe her accomplishment as echoing the Zaria Art Society's appeal for a synthesis of indigenous and foreign forms in the formation of modern art. It is with reservation that Rice's latter interpretation could be taken as the real intention behind Okundaye's use of such motifs in her paintings. Regarding her motive, Rice's added explanation that, "…this approach has the

double effect of recording adire patterns in a more permanent, almost archival manner and creating a new outlet of mobility for the adire image" could be accepted as more rational.

Some other notable achievements of Nike Okundaye identified by some writers, include participation in exhibition and related activities. The headway achieved by Okundaye in this direction, appears to be substantiated by the wide distribution and patronage of her works. Reed (2002) expressed this through the compliment "…Celebrated by The Arts Organization of Nigeria, Nike Okundaye has made an impact on the international art community through her participation in exhibitions and workshops around the world." As a matter of fact, record of Okundaye's overall shows add up to over 102 solo art exhibitions, 36 national group and over 50 international shows, of which her paintings formed part of the display (Ademigbuiji, 2013).

Some of Okundaye's exhibition related accomplishments found in records include, being one of privileged few Nigerian female artists selected to exhibit in shows such as; Workshop at the Museum of Natural History Washington DC, USA in 1981, the World Women conference at the African Heritage Nairobi-Kenya in 1986; Women Museum USA in 1989; University of Tampa, Florida in 1996 and Northern Michigan University in 1999 (Nike Art Centre. com, 2011). Extolling the artist's achievement further, the CNN International's African Voice (2011) observed that, "…some of Okundaye's works can be found amongst the collection of George Harrison (Beatles pop group member), the White House (seat of power in the United States of America) and museums worldwide". The piece of writing went on to add that, "…there is hardly any important museum in the world that does not have Okundaye's work".

The proclamation above has been echoed by Rice (2015) who claims that; Okundaye's works are collected and exhibited throughout the world. The various account of Okundaye's work being

collected in many places in the world, is doubtless an affirmation of their rating. Yet, what remains unclear from these pieces of information (which requires substantiation), is ascertaining

particular details about the specific genre of art works (whether textile or paintings) being kept by these museums.

Although the items involved are not mentioned, Okundaye is reported to have held her first solo exhibition at the Goethe Institut in 1968 (Modern African Art.com, 2014, Gallery of African Art, 2015). Since records of that exhibition were not readily available, there will be need to ascertain and any document paintings which were possibly included in that display. Moreover, it must be admitted that, by exhibiting about the same period as Afi Ekong and Clara Ugbodaga, Okundaye ranks among pioneer Nigerian female painters. Altogether, the artist's wide distribution of her visual arts has made the GAFRAA (2015) ascertain in clear terms that, Okundaye has grown to become one of the major names on the international art circuit.



Plate XVI; Nike Art Gallery, Lekki- Lagos. Photograph by the Researcher on September 17, 2015.

In the opinion of some scholars Nike Okundaye's venture into establishing art Galleries is perhaps one of her most remarkable accomplishments. Supporting this notion, *My Daily News watch* (2013) declares that, she built mighty art galleries in Lagos, Abuja, Ogidi-Ijumu and a training centre at Osogbo in Osun State to give something beneficial to the arts and culture. Okundaye's first noted attempt in this direction was her Art Gallery at Osogbo in 1983 (*NBF News*, 2011). The artist adds that another purpose of setting up Art Galleries in Oshogbo, Lagos, and Abuja is in order to promote Nigerian culture and leave a legacy for coming artists. Various art forms such as painting, *adire*, batik, carvings, sculpture and the likes, are produced and displayed in those centres.

Substantiating about this, the *Vanguard News* of 23 May, 2013, recognises the ultra-modern Gallery located at Oba Elegusi road at Lekki in Lagos (Plate XVI), to be the most outstanding among galleries established by Nike Okundaye. The edifice designated as the Nike Art Gallery, is described by *The City People* (Kehinde [Ed], 2011) as an imposing breath-taking high rise three storied building, filled with art works and paintings. The artist intimated to Dike (2013) and the *Daily News* (2014) that, the source of inspiration for the Lekki Gallery was the Convent Garden in the London African Centre. Okundaye went on to enlighten about how, the objective of this gallery is promoting arts, and offering an opportunity to artists to trade their talents. Thus it is perceptible that from the little beginnings when she opened her first gallery in a small bedroom she shared with two co-wives, Okundaye's galleries have grown to the point where she owns the biggest in West Africa.

Yet another remarkable achievement of Okundaye identified by writers, is her administrative adeptness. This involves her ability to organize branches, and arms of her artistic concerns effectively. Such proficiency, includes holding the position of the Managing Director and founder of the following organizations in Nigeria; Nike Art Productions Limited, incorporated in 1994; Nike Art Gallery Limited, incorporated in 2007 and the Nike Research Centre for Art and Culture Limited, incorporated in 2007. Also in 2007, Okundaye founded the Nike Art and Culture Foundation with some eminent Nigerians as trustees. Similar to many other facets of her career, the foundation's objective is to foster Nigerian cultural heritage (*NBF News*, 2011).

Writers have also detected the organization of art workshops and training as significant contributions of Okundaye. Notably, the earliest women empowerment enterprise the artist embarked upon, was textile related. The *NBF News* (2013) relates that in 1996, Okundaye established an *Aso-Oke* (textile) weaving center at Ogidi-Ijumu for the women of the town maintaining that this act of empowering more than 200 women left an indelible mark on the town. This writing further show that six years later, the artist established another art centre - the Art and Culture Research Centre at Piwoyi village in the Federal Capital Territory at Abuja. Like other centres founded the artist, Piwoyi has an art gallery and a textile museum. The *NBF News* considers this venture, which provides functional platform for research into Nigerian traditional textile industry in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, to be the first of its kind in Nigeria.

Records of the figure for individuals trained by Okundaye, stands at a minimum of five thousand over the past 20 years (Perfectly African.com, 2014; *Ogidi Day New Yam & Arts Festival*, 2015). Related to this, Aplerku (2014) notes that among Okundaye's proudest achievements was her invitation to Italy by the Italian government in 2000, to train young Nigerian sex workers on how to engage in creative ventures. Okundaye's wide ranging exploration of the arts with local

people, has inspired the CNN (Bella Naija, 2011) to note the artist for 'breaking boundaries and changing lives through Art'. In her interaction with CNN International's African Voice (2011), the artist declared her main objective as empowering disadvantaged young people (especially women), using *Adire* and art. In that discussion, Okundaye also disclosed: "When they come there, it is free for them. They can eat and they can also discover themselves as an artist….and I

always arrange exhibitions for them so they will be able to sell their work, not only to just do the work." Apparently, Okundaye's generous contribution in this regard is tremendous. This is because, beneficiaries of schemes at her art centres, do not have to pay for services they are offered.

In view of her immense benevolence, an area in which Okundaye has recorded achievements is in notable appointments and being a beneficiary of numerous prestigious awards. The *NBF News* (2011) article identifies Okundaye as the recipient of many national and international awards of merit. Some laudable recognitions of the artist include, being conferred an artist in residence to reputable institutions at the USA. Nike Okundaye, simply labelled an "evangelist of Nigeria's cultural aesthetics" by the *NBF News* (2011), has also been noted by Nike Art Center.com (2011) for giving workshops over the past twenty years on traditional textiles to audiences in Europe and America. The article counts the Educational visits of Okundaye to include; 1991 USA sponsored visits to Howard, Maryland Universities. Also in 2007 a visit to the University of South Florida, including being artist in residence at the University of California, Berkeley-USA in February, 2004; International Folk Art Festival Santa Fe, New Mexico in October 2004; and African Art Festival at Wurzburg - Germany in May, 2005.

In addition to the preceding, Okundaye has been commended by various organizations for her multi-talented contributions. Okundaye's list of meritorious awards comprises among others: Fellow of the Pan African Circle of Artists of Nigeria for promoting art education in the nation in

2002; Nigerian Union of Journalists for contributions towards the advancement of Nigerian cultural heritage, 2004; National Commission for Museums and Monuments of Nigeria for efforts to develop Nigerian cultural heritage, 2005; Obafemi Awolowo University Ile- Ife for promoting art education in the country, 2005; Government of the Republic of Italy, a certificate of Excellence in 2008, for using art to address problems of Nigerian prostitutes in that country. In 2009, CEPAN Foundation recognised Okundaye as African Art Icon of the year (Nike Art Centre. com, 2011).

Complementing the overall impression about Okundaye, the *Vanguard News* of 23 May, 2013 classifies her as an art promoter with a sterling art career. In recognition for her art related contributions, some traditional Nigerian institutions have conferred Okundaye with prestigious traditional titles as the: *"Yeye Oba"* of Ogidi-Ijumu land, "*Yeye Tasse"* of Oshogbo land, and "*Yeye Gbasaga'* of Ijumu Kingdom (Nike Art Center.com, 2011). Okundaye is in addition, acknowledged to be "…a registered and active member of Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA), ASA of USA and the Canadian Arts Council for African Studies Association (ACASA), Society of Nigerian Women Artist (SNWA) and Osun Grove Support group" (Nike Art Center.com, 2011).

It is conclusive that, Okundaye's achievements as well as contributions, are extensive. This compelled Ebu (2014) to designate her as "…a consummate Nigerian cultural arts and crafts ambassador" and to further that "in spite of her limited educational accomplishments, she was able to rise to prominence through hard work and resilience." The landmarks recorded by the artist, has no doubt confirmed her self-actualized stance. However, laudable as these achievements enumerated may be, it is observable that most of the writings have not isolated

Okundaye's paintings from textiles, and other visual arts she is known for. The write-ups have simply lumped all of these together, making it difficult to specifically identify the artist's contribution in painting. It is thus glaring so far that, this aspect of the artist's creativity is not really accorded much scholarly attention in Nigeria.

This study observes that, most articles are replete with Okundaye's background story, copious narration of her achievements and contributions. While such is valuable information on her artistic career generally, the essence of the kind of works Okundaye produces are often uncaptured. The result is that information keeps piling about her achievements without keeping abreast with specifics of the said works she has produced. Despite providing proof that the renowned textile artist Nike Okundaye is a self-taught painter per-excellence, the absence of fair consideration of her paintings in Nigerian Art history documents within the country, leaves much to be desired. For that reason, the need to document the paintings of this artist becomes requisite.



Plate XVII. Self-taught artist Peju Alatise. © Artnet.com (2013).

Peju Alatise's Background.

Accessible records on the painting style and content of Olapeju (Peju) Alatise shown on Plate XVII, are mostly obtainable from exhibition catalogues, brochures and Newspaper clippings; as well as a fair exposition in *Position-Visual Art supplement* (n d). Like many articles generally, Labadibi, (2013) cites Peju's birth year as 1975. Peju Alatise is identified as a graduate of architecture from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomosho in Oyo state-Nigeria and as well, a writer and interior decorator. This detail features in most writings on the artist including an online chat with Victor Okereke (in Okedeji, 2014) where she specifically affirms that, "…I have practiced architecture for a couple of years, working for a firm before setting up her studio (sic)", concluding that she still practises architecture.

A number of the contributors including Labadibi (2013), and *Position-Visual Art supplement,* (*n.* d.) also define Peju Alatise as a Nigerian mixed media artist, writer and an interior decorator. This brief profile, clearly highlights Alatise as a trained architect who is at the same time a multi-talented individual that has ventured not just into the visual arts, but into literary arts as well. It is obvious from this background that, Alatise fits into the category of a literate self-taught professional artist earlier outlined by Aniakor (2003)[6].

Incidentally, literature unanimously identifies painting as the favoured form of Alatise's visual art practice. Illumination about this, is provided by Sowole (2011a) who proclaims painting to be Alatise's "…strongest medium of expression". The *Position-Visual Art supplement* (n d) likewise shares this notion revealed through the remark "…as a versatile visual and literary artist, Peju's work budded first as painter, an area in which she expresses herself most". In addition to confirming Alatise's preference for painting, her multi-talented posture is thereby also affirmed.

Records indicate that Alatise's initial encounter with painting appears to have been right from home, through art books and one of her siblings. According to *Position-Visual Art supplement* (n. d.), the artist's mother bought an encyclopaedia with step by step directions on designing and crafts, which exposed her to many crafts including painting. Augmenting on this background, Dike (2015) relates that Alatise's older brother Biodun, is the first artist she ever met and whose work she tried to emulate during childhood. These accounts establish the artist's early motivation for painting since childhood. Alatise's next encounter with the visual arts was at the secondary school level (Dike, 2015). Her exposure to art learning at that level, must also be seen to have impacted Alatise's later interest in the subject. Although it must be understood that, such could

[6] See Aniakor's articulation about professional Nigerian artists on pp. 40 & 41 of this Thesis

not have equipped her with sufficient skills to perform successfully as a professional painter, without some other supplementary inputs.

Other overriding factors which writers have noted for propelling Peju Alatise into professional painting are varied. The prime values seen to be upheld by the artist, include a polemic religious stance. Cole (2011) for instance, apparently shares that viewpoint by out rightly pronouncing the artist to be "spiritual" (but not religious)". The artist herself, however affirms "I have always been a religiously alert person" (Alatise in Onyemenam, 2013). Considered superficially, the misleading image projected about the artist would be that of a controversial figure. A preferable interpretation would be that the artist is a liberal individual, who is both sensitive and perceptive. Buford's (2011) reflection that Peju Alatise is "…a woman bold, sensitive and self-reflective" also supports this proposition. Alatise's disclosure to Kathryn Buford "I do not belong to any religious faith–this displeases my father–and I blame the dogmatism of religion for many

atrocities committed. But, I am spiritual; my art comes from a spiritual place" is hopefully illuminating on that outlook. Buttressing the point that religion plays a vital role in her painting profession, the artist goes further to clarify to Buford that, her religious perspective has spurred her to ask questions right from childhood.

Dispelling any doubt as to which religious background the artists comes from, Alatise, In; Okedeji (2014), bares her mind with the declaration:

> In my work, which is sometimes representational, there is the mystifying and the revealing. There is the tendency for me to be seemingly pious (with covering of the female body because I see the art piece as a living thing, having feelings, being a spectacle to an audience and the Muslim upbringing in me takes precedence). This is counter balanced with the need to call attention to issues the artwork is portraying.

It is unmistakable from this disclosure also that, Alatise hails from a Muslim background, but is clearly liberal enough to interact with adherents of other faiths, as well as, use symbols from

such. Buford (2011) illustrates this by relaying that, part of Peju's ideas about religion is expressed in "*Convert of a Jagged Cross"* (Plate XVIII) which she executed in 2008. It must be noted that, aside illustrating the work, mentioning the dimensions of this piece as 185 centimetres x 137. 2 centimetres and indicating the medium to be oil on canvas done in 2008, no other comments are supplied about this superb work.

Since no further elaboration on this work was made, the only deduction drawn is that Alatise takes religious ideas seriously to mind enough to portray them in her work. Okedeji (2013) noting it has influenced the direction of her creative outputs, declared that "…Alatise's departure from the Judeo-Christian, and liberal secular subjectivities moves her works into an Afro-surrealistic space… her ideas built upon the panoply of her religious upbringing".

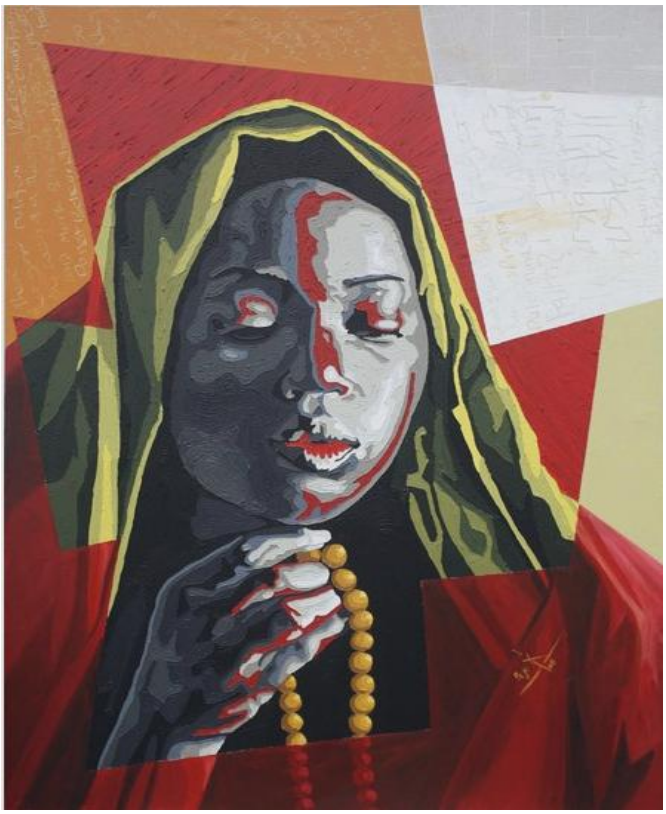


Plate XVIII: *Convert of a Jagged Cross*. Peju Alatise, Oil on canvas.
185.4cm x 137.2cm, 2008. © Liveunchained.com (2011).

Aside religion, writers also perceive social, political and gender considerations as permeating Peju Alatise's thinking that impacts on her art. A hint of this is deduced from the artist's discussion with Labadibi (2013) where she expresses that:

> Africa is a continent with so many issues derailing its progress in development. There is civil war, corruption in government, poor health care systems, apartheid, famine, poor management of resources–the list is near endless. Amongst the issues seen as least pressing are feminism and equal rights for women. The precolonial traditions held back then held a noble place for the woman. The economic and trading power was hers alone as men were prohibited from the market place. You had to respect the one that spent the money on behalf of the household–she was the caregiver in her community and traditional education was her forte.

There is no mistaking Alatise's concern over issues such as the degeneration of society, and the position of women in the preceding statements. The artist had previously admitted to Buford

(2011) that, African women and her experiences growing up in Nigeria inspire her artwork. Akin to Buford, it is apparent that, Labadibi (2013) visualises Alatise as an artist with a strong focus on the significance and the power of womanhood. Labadibi goes on to proclaim Alatise's criticisms of the challenges facing black women as, being as impassioned as her hope that "…we can make things better, and that art can help". As pointed out by her earlier, Alatise fervently believes that, the deplorable situation of women could be improved through using art to make comments on issues related to them.

Also, a compelling unease over presiding social ills has filtered through Alatise's question and answer interactive session with Thokazani Mthiyane. The artist spoke out saying "I think of the African society often representational of poverty and despondency (Mthiyane, 2013). The artist specifically regrets over "…how western ideas of monogamy, the influence of foreign religions and the home-economics education have adversely affected the African society". Also in that interaction, Alatise lamented over the loss of values like nobility, which she noted, have been replaced by vanity; and the care for one another, by suspicion. The artist decries how this has culminated in the disheartening loss of self-identity and the confusion of which gods to please. It is also deducible from this discussion with Mthiyane that, Alatise's keen sensitive mind appears disturbed about these unfortunate social circumstances, and the artist seems bent on addressing them through art.

Ajeluorou (2012) is yet another writer, who finds a connection between Peju Alatise's conceptual ideology, and her paintings. The scholar points out that, the artist sees her role as that of the problem-seeker, and not the problem-solver. Concurring on this, Alatise declares: "As an artist, I have learnt to become a medium for a viewer to observe through to attain a different

perspective. Just as a pair of spectacles would either alter or enhance the wearer's vision, I lend myself to an onlooker to see a subject matter through my own eyes to observe differently." By this declaration, Alatise affirms the role played by events and issues in the environment, on an artist's work generally, and to herself specifically.

Another angle of Peju Alatise's vital viewpoint noted by writers, is freedom of self-expression. Okedeji (2012) for instance, conveys this in the remark, "Peju expresses herself as 'Living unchained', explaining it as the "…the freedom to be me, as I live an unchained existence". Thereby, there is no hiding the fact that, Alatise views the possession of an unharnessed mind to be instrumental towards releasing a painter's creative expression.

Some other similarly inclined literature including Buford (2011), have highlighted Alatise's belief in the therapeutic powers of art, as yet another important perspective influencing her art. Arguably, this inspiration might not necessarily be the same as the medicinal function found for instance, in interpretations like those of Barber (2006), which simply express art therapy as both art and therapy. Alatise's idea of therapy nonetheless, aligns with Barber's conception that "…therapy involves using a wide variety of art materials for example paints, clay and batik, to create a visual representation of thought and feelings". This is realised from Alatise's response to Buford's (2011) question: What do you think art has to offer in terms of healing and solutions? To which the artist maintains:

> Art can be used as an instrument of change. Exposure to the arts is exposure to a type of education, knowledge of history, perceptions of the mind and spirit, an understanding of the world and advancement in culture. They say an artist is a reflection of the society in

> which he or she lives. They also say humans are often too myopic to see the bigger picture of life. Unfortunately, humanity is not myopic enough to see him or herself, hence the need for an artist. The people get to see their true nature in the message of an artist.

Alatise also relays a similar thought to Dike (2015) in the statement "…I make people see through my eyes. Art is an avenue to make thoughts into tangibles and ideas into reality". Alatise is therefore, visibly inclined towards using art as a restorative tool for enabling an artist see and transmit messages to the society.

The general background identified by writers as circumstances that have formed stimulation for Alatise's interest in painting, may be summed up thus: early exposure to art, a conducive home background, a sound education, her philosophical outlook, a highly 'spiritual' personality with a fairly intense and well-articulated view on the social order especially relating to ills, fraudulence, partiality and the second rate treatment of women. These are ideologies expected to run through the paintings of the artist. Shortfalls of these entries observed include, a minimal connection of how these contextual circumstances have reflected on Alatise's paintings. Notwithstanding, this background confirmed the artist to be a self-taught artist, with active painting practice worth documenting.

Peju Alatise's painting forms

Specific classification of Alatise's painting forms accessed from literature, was rather brief. *Position-Visual Art supplement* (n d) for instance discloses that Alatise started with two-dimensional and more naturalistic paintings, before diversifying into other forms including mixed media. The article further notes that Alatise began with female portraits and then progressed to a simulation of totem poles. Further corroboration reflecting this inclination could be gathered from Okedeji (2014)'s contribution where the artist remarks, "I remember showing

some of my mixed media works along with some portraits back in 2005/6, I got a review from a journalist saying, Alatise's attempt to dabble into mixed media is unconvincing and a fail, and she should stick to painting faces!" This observation supports the claim of portraiture actually being among the earliest forms the artist produced at the onset of her painting career. It has also been construed that the impressiveness of those portraits, must have prompted the critic's ensuing remark to the artist.

Another conspicuous painting form, for which Alatise has been noted, is her Installation work (*Position-Visual Art supplement*, n. d.). Historical records mark Installation as a feature of modern, and post-modern expression since within the twentieth century. More precisely, Johnson (2003) and Princethal (2009) perceive installations as art forms which came into use in the 1970s. A brief enlightenment on that genre of work provided by Princethal (2009) is mentioned here for the purpose of giving clarity on Alatise's installations. The writer maintains that, an installation could be termed painting when the images are painted, or brush work or any other techniques of painting dominate the work. Otherwise, it is usually a form of visual art in which an exhibition space is transformed into a three-dimensional work of art. Similarly seeing Installations as artwork made in direct response to an environment, Both Johnson (2003) and Princethal (2009) propose that, installation artists show an interest in making temporary use of evocative spaces for expressive ends.

Apparently, it is unlikely related with the practice by usual installation artists that, Alatise uses the medium to make statements about issues. Some of Alatise's installations written about by critics, are works exhibited in some of her solo shows titled "Testament," "Wrapture," and "Material Witness." Ajeluorou (2012) discloses that, for Alatise's excursion in Cloth as Material

witness, has been a three-year journey, with the first step taken in an exhibition titled "Testament" (held in 2010). Ajeluorou further remarks that in 2010, when Alatise had the salon outing "Testament" at her residence, she hinted that it was a prelude to a bigger show, which she hoped to stage before the end of the year. According to the critic, that other ensuing display "Testament", was "Material Witness". This disclosure at the same time, attests to the consistent rate at which the artist works, as well as, her commitment to the painting profession.

The main kind of forms featured in the aforementioned exhibitions are installations. Talking to Ajeluorou about her installations, (2012), Alatise says:

> …when applied within the context of an art exhibition, *Material Witness* is a body of artworks and installation projects with several layers of approach to it, all in search of a certain truth; of which no one layer can remain independent of the others as it gives credence to others. The three main layers are the thematic, materials/medium and the technical execution style. The ideas, which inform the theme and instigate my formal concerns are not more important than the mediums and materials used or the composition and overall appearance of the artworks. Every process is an integral part that leads to the other.

The picture garnered from the brief description made above, reflects on their thematic interconnection and fairly massive size. This is substantiated by Sowole (2012), who refers to the pieces as huge sizes of relief and mixed media paintings. Citing four pieces; *Erin Ijesha (The Day the Vessel Fall*), *Labalaba (Butterfly), Orun Lo m'eni to mala* and *Alagbada Ina*, Sowole goes on to remark that the material used, sheer size and the creative content could deeply engage the viewer with little or no consideration for the theme.

On the whole, Alatise's painting forms pooled from this review include portraiture, installations and other compositions, of which little individualised elaborations have been made.

Content of Alatise's paintings.

An attempt to uncover Alatise's painting subject matter by writers, revealed some relevant inputs. Some of these, had earlier on, been highlighted as integral parts of her outlook to life and her environment. The *Position-Visual Art supplement* (n d) declares Alatise to be widely diverse in her painting content. Female portraits, a simulation of totem poles heavily laced with Yoruba design motifs and mythology were cited by that document as Alatise's preferred themes. The write-up is commendable for offering vital information regarding Alatise's initial subject matter. Alatise's alluded predisposition towards allegorical subjects found in the text could perhaps, be understood to have either emanated from her earlier on mentioned excursion with totem poles, or inspired by other means yet to be substantively established.

Although pictures of some of her works are illustrated in *Position-Visual Art supplement* (n d), aside from providing information about Alatise's themes generally, the discussion was not elaborate enough to associated such subjects with specific paintings. Notably, the titles and description of the portraiture and totem pole simulation, were not incorporated in the review thereby ruling out hope of acquiring a more comprehensive picture of Alatise's early paintings. Not even, the article's added illumination that "…each of her art pieces tells a story", was found to sufficiently intimate about the kind of stories told by the paintings. This is because, no reference was made about the kind of stories and their connection to specific paintings; whether they are narratives about women, social or political issues.

Some writings have identified Folk lore as a subject expressed by Alatise in her paintings. Belonging to that same stream of thought, Odulaja (2009) seems to categorise some of Peju Alatise's paintings, into a combination of folklore, and social commentary. Citing the painting

'Erin Ijesha' as example, Odulaja goes on to pronounce it a comment about a mundane issue as water. He further observed that, thematically, this painting seems to convey a dual message; a social comment, and mythological. The writer listed this works among those featured in a group exhibition titled *Water E No Get Enemy* held at The Wheatbaker, Ikoyi – Lagos. The show was a campaign for increased water purity in the country and an alarm about global water scarcity, which was organized by the African Artists Foundation (AAF). Odulaja (2009) elaborates that through this embossed mixed media painting titled *"Erin Ijesha, The day the vessel fell"* the artist added a voice to the clamour for better treatment of water. The critic describes the piece as a part painting, part sculpture, explaining that the work makes no distinction between the "elusive female power" and the mythical powers of water. The writer goes on to paint a picture of the work as follows:

> As drops of water roll and tumble onwards meeting and forming as one in a path, into a steady stream that gains power in its increasing volume, making its way to a river where it benefits and serves its people, there is no mistake as to Alatise's view of woman as a life force that is to be revered and adored.

Odulaja's entry is commendably among few contributions that have presented a fairly detailed description of any pieces of work done by the artist. The picture possibly gleaned from this description, is that of a female figure pouring water, but as to how the forms in the painting are arranged, is left to the reader's speculation. The limited understanding deducible from the brief entry as a whole is the notion that the painting comprises relief work, done on a flat surface. Also, it is apparent that, Odulaja neither elaborated on any form in the painting, nor did he provide any explanation as to how the painting is folk lore related. Once again, the reader is left in the dark about the true picture of forms and the manner in which they are displayed.

Literature widely acknowledges Alatise's versatile use of media to include; an extensive use of cloth for the installations in the 'Material witness" and "Wrapture" exhibitions. Explaining the reason behind its use, the artist elaborated that in Yoruba land, a piece of cloth is worn as a wrapper that covers a woman's body. She expatiates further that, "Generations ago, patterns and colours printed on a cloth identify a culture and an ethnic group. Here, I use the cloth as a symbol of intimacy, privacy, spirituality, beauty, death, folklore and violation" (Alatise In; Labadibi, 2013). It is understood that cloth is being employed here firstly as a medium, then secondly, symbolically to express the artist's mind about the issues affecting women.

In Labadibi's (2013) critique on Alatise's Wrapture exhibition, which the critic titled "Tearing at the fabric: Alatise explains that "*Material Witness… Pun Intended* is the idea that clothes are "witness". The rationality behind Alatise's seeing cloth as a witness is "…the idea that an inanimate object can be made to speak in a visual composition of its experiences as though it indeed had life and memory….At some point, anyone would wish to hear the truth from anything other than the human witness". Labadibi relates that a conspicuous subject which Alatise (whom she classifies as "Nigeria's art activist") was also seen to portray in some of her paintings at the show, was folk lore. Plainly, Labadibi identifies folklore as an extremely important aspect of paintings, in the Wrapture exhibition.

Ajeluorou (2012), is another writer who has offered some precise comments, about Peju Alatise's themes in her exhibition, 'Material Witness'. The writer pinpoints that, this set of paintings were "…borne from an idealistic yearning for justice and truth, where it seems there is neither fear of retribution in issues concerning corruption nor caution in the infringement of human rights". Substantiating Ajeluorou's observation, Alatise further articulates:

> Corruption in the Nigerian public and private sectors has contributed to Nigeria's poor image in international circles. *Material Witness* is not an attack against the wealthy and corrupt; on the contrary, it attempts to provoke thoughts against imperialistic ideology, apathetic attitudes and a general lack of consideration for the next person, borne out of ignorance of how to be considerate, which promotes materialistic and selfish behaviour in society.

The subject matter underlined here, is plainly related to corruption and social justice. It conveys her dissatisfaction with ills within the Nigerian society. Alatise likewise relays this to Labadibi (2013) stating that, "My art gives me the freedom to reflect society's maladies". Describing the manner in which she conveys her artistic messages, Karibu (2013) points out "…Alatise expresses ideas that are powerful, poignant, and thought provoking". Reflecting about the same exhibition (Material Witness), Alatise offers additional clarifications to Labadibi (2013) remarking that "My subject matter has evolved with my continued experiences, moving focus from advocating the equal rights of women to politics, philosophical inclination and Yoruba mythology". This shows that rather than restricting herself to one or two subjects, the artist paints from diverse themes. It is also visible from the various contributions accessed that Alatise takes her advocacy on issues so seriously that, she works in series in order to prove her point.

Like earlier mentioned, focusing on women has been part of themes identified in Alatise's paintings. For instance, Ajeluorou (2012) observed during an interaction with Peju Alatise, that, "…it appears African women, their enduring strength and beauty, are central to your visual arts". Responding, the artist reflects "…in the past I have done a lot of artwork on women as subject matter, capturing the joys and pains of womanhood as experienced here in modern-day African traditions with their consequences" (Alatise in Ajeluorou, 2012). Also in that dialogue, Alatise further points out that "my subject matter has evolved with my continued experiences, moving focus from advocating"

A contribution likewise reflecting women as Alatise's figure is found in Kathryn Buford's feature of Alatise's works in Live Unchained Blogspot (2011). The painting *Orita Meta* [*Crossroads*] (Plate XIX) is both mentioned and illustrated in that article. Buford explains that; Alatise's book (also titled *Orita Meta* and published in 2006), chronicles the interwoven journeys of three women, whose greatest challenge they face is being African Women. Buford, translates Alatise's outlook of "The Right to choose" as the most pressing challenge creating the crossroads women encounter in life. Alatise expatiates further that this includes the right to choose their paths in life, education, health, love, their governmental representatives, who and when to marry, how many children they want, financial independence, or self-improvement. Apart from the



Plate XIX: *Orita Meta*, Peju Alatise. Acrylic on canvas,
170 cm x 275 cm, © Live Unchained.com/blog 2011.

preceding useful input, the only other accompanying details traceable to this work that has been documented by another writer, are its auction record of 1.2 Million Naira at the Art-house Contemporary Auction, Lagos, in November, 2008 (Sowole, 2012).

Also related with Alatise's women subjects, Sowole (2012) acknowledges the artist's concern over issues such as teenage marriage, pregnancy out of wedlock and the effect of single parenting. According to the critic, Alatise believes such anomalies emanate from decadence in the society. The critic goes on to expatiate that in 2010, outraged Nigerians sparked a national debate when a senator, allegedly married a 13 year-old Egyptian girl as his fourth wife, on grounds that Islam places no restriction on the age of marriage for a girl. At the instance of that event, Alatise teamed up with Art Twenty One- Lagos and solicitor Edward Keazor to raise awareness on child abuse in a campaign called "Child Not Bride".

The drive, held at the Eko Hotel on Victoria Island, was geared at petitioning the United Nations Organization to stop the Nigerian Senate from sanctioning a law encouraging underage marriage. Likewise corroborating Alatise's involvement in that incidence, Lababidi (2013) relates that the artist expressed her discontent through the painting "*Nine Year Old Bride"*. Once again, apart from mentioning the said paintings they are neither described, nor is any explanation given about how these paintings comment on child marriage. A reader would consequently be at loss as to what forms were used, the aesthetics involved and ultimately relationship of the works to the issue.

Another subject identified by writers in Alatise's paintings, are the intricacies involving love. Sowole (2012) maintains that, although Alatise was not inspired by the late Diva's 1998 album, in her work *My Love is Your Love*, she registers similar ideas, which is; about sharing

affection and being considerate of the other person's feeling among Nigerians. Alatise's explanation for that work, is an accompanying note saying that, lack of love is a major cause of corruption, despite the claims of being a "very religious nation."(Sowole, 2012). Like in many other cases, neither are images of the paintings available, nor were they accompanied by a description of forms and style of work. It is noticeable however that, once again, the subject of religion sneaks into the artist's contemplation of social malaise in the Nigerian set up.

It has previously been seen that one of issues influencing Alatise's paintings is her ideology on religion. Paintings mentioned as specifically addressing the artist's religious views include "*Convert of a Jagged Cross,"* (Plate XVIII) and "*Orange Scarf* (Plate XX*).*



Plate XX: *Orange Scarf-First*, Peju Alatise,
liveunchained.com (2011)

Alatise explains the background leading to the production of the painting *Orange scarf*. At the age of 16, she arrived at a prayer ground in company of her parents, wearing an orange scarf which covered her hair and shoulders. An attendant tried stopping her from entering the prayer grounds for wearing a brightly coloured scarf. The organizers of the prayer programme found the scarf to be a distraction. According to the artist, that occasion registered her first internal dispute with the God of a religion, who would bear a grudge against a minor for wearing an orange scarf to his prayer grounds. The artist attests to having done several paintings with the title "Orange Scarf." as a sort of silent rebellion which art permits (Alatise, In; Live Unchained, 2011).

Summarily, many of Alatise's themes hint at strong feminist contentions, some are sermons on societal malaise, folklore, and love. These all seem to be the resolutions driving Alatise's paintings. Granting that the records appraised have supplied vital information about Alatise's favourite subject matter, this study nonetheless, finds such a summation an unsatisfactory run-down of the painter's content. This is especially as it applies to art historical documentation.

Peju Alatise's painting media and techniques

A scrutiny of literature on the media and techniques, employed by Alatise for her paintings shows that, her procedures vary widely. She is generally classified a mixed media artist by most writers including Sowole (2012), Ajeluorou (2012), and Odoh (2014). This same opinion is shared by Rikki Wemega-Kwawu (In Okedeji, 2014), who designates Alatise a multi-media artist. Similarly, in Enwonwu's (2003)'s contribution, he declared that Alatise combines materials which she tastefully uses, to produce works in three-dimensional facets. Firstly, this outlines her as an artist who employs diverse kinds of materials. Secondly, the outcomes of her

exploration with these media, are an aesthetically refined spectacle to behold.

The notion that Alatise experiments with multiple media is affirmed by Ajeluorou (2012 who counts some of Alatise's painting materials to include; recyclable glass bottles, plastic containers, newspapers, Nigerian-print fabrics, ropes, threads, wires, scrap metal, scrap wood, driftwoods, sawdust, an abandoned boat, sand, acrylic paints, resin, plaster-of-Paris, and stretched canvas. This range of media establishes how versatile Alatise is, in both media and techniques. The artist endorses this fact through the statement "I work with many media" (Alatise, In; Dike, 2015). Alatise insists that, in reality, she has been a mixed media artist since she was four years old. Essentially, through this declaration, the artist affirms the fact that her early excursion with various media, began with the 'How to do' craft books her mother bought for her in childhood.

Broaching on her technique generally, Alatise declared to Dike (2015) that, she is an artist who is not defined by what media she uses. This signifies that her art is neither restricted to any specific media, nor by conventional methods. Ajeluorou's (2012) corroborates this by remarking that; most of her materials are "…manipulated, recreated and used to their possible limits". The writer goes on to expatiate that, the choice and approach to materials in this body of works, are sometimes purposeful, and pre-determined; or at other times it is experimental. He also adds that, mediums or materials dictate specific contextual usage, while properties and limitations redirect the end result of pre-conceived ideas. This notion was further buttressed by Alatise's disclosure to Ajeluorou (2012) that "It is my intention that the materials and mediums tell a visual story".

Although no reference is made as to the employment of these techniques in a particular work, this contribution has provided useful insight about the various ways in which the painter

generally goes about her painting. The picture given here, is an artist who places premium on appropriate materials to be used for particular works. Plainly, Alatise's inventiveness deduced from this, appears to be boundless. It is only rational that, ingenuity is the outcome of such artistic posture. It also reinforces the idea that; Alatise is a talented painter who is creative not just with images, but also ingenious with media.

Alatise's use of media is likewise expressed by the *Position-Visual Art supplement* (n d) as a venture into a medley of forms transcending mixed media, including grandiose installations. Rikki Wemega-Kwawu (In; Okedeji, 2014) also joins in defining Alatise's installations displayed in the Material Witness exhibition, as massive. The scholar concurs that the sheer variety and complexity of the work, gives the impression it was a group exhibition. Once again, the kind of forms identified include a wide variety of unspecified forms, mixed media and installations produced on a large scale.

Like the preceding, some other writers observe the fact that, economy is not spared in the production of Alatise's paintings. Sowole (2012) for instance, refers to them as the huge sizes of relief and mixed media paintings. He cites the four-piece *Erin Ijesha (The Day the Vessel Fall*), *Labalaba (Butterfly)*, *Orun Lo m'eni to ma-la* and *Alagbada Ina* to buttress his point. Sowole goes on to opinine that; the material used, sheer size and the creative content could deeply engage the viewer with little or no consideration for the theme. Once more, the visible absence of accompanying illustrations, limits obtaining a clear grasp of the magnitude of these paintings.

Most contributions have indicated that, the main medium employed in Alatise's *Wrapture* display is cloth. Labadibi (2013) describes *Wrapture* as the Story of Cloth; declaring it a massive three-dimensional installation that erupts in a kaleidoscope of colour. Two certain facts are deduced from Labadidi's statement: firstly, she is similarly inclined about the large size of these works. Secondly, the dimensions are indicative of the artist's confidence and her determination to make a comment, notwithstanding the cost involved. This is affirmed by Alatise's further declaration to Labadibi that, the ideas which informed the theme, and instigated her formal concerns, were not more important than the medium, materials used, or the composition and overall appearance of the artworks. It is clear that for the artist, every process is an integral part leading to the other. The Second deduction is that, much creativity is involved in transforming these cloths into a meaningful, colourful display. It is the end result, which perhaps, obliges Labadibi to describe Alatise's use of clothing in her installation art, as a literal and metaphorical representation of humans.

Elaborating further in Labadibi (2013), Alatise construes the inspiration for this kind of art, to be the role of cloth in western Nigeria. In yet another interaction focusing on *Wrapture*, an expansion of Alatise's symbolic use of the wrapper is given. Discussing on The culture trip.com (2013), Alatise also observes;

> …there, cloth is called a 'wrapper', thus becoming a symbol for covering all human secrets and shame. In pre-colonial Nigeria, certain wrappers were worn for specific ceremonies, and certain colours worn on certain days. Intricate motifs and symbols were drawn and printed on clothing in a language specific to the ethnic group"

This contribution also, describes the function of wrapper with the usual manner in which design motifs are symbolically applied in traditional societies. A more precise picture is glimpsed

through Labadibi's (2013) vivid impression of the exhibition in the statement "…Lengths and knots of fabric stand sit, crouch, kneel, walk through doors or hang from walls: it is the sight of Peju Alatise telling the story of cloth and man". Elaborating further, Labadibi remarks:

> …in that exhibition, Peju presents narratives about individual female who wears the fabric: narratives that include intimacy, privacy, spirituality, power, beauty, death, violation and folklore. The cloth itself is presented as regular clothing items: shirts, skirts, dresses, scarves. The twist is, these items are also presented in an 'un-sewn' state.

It is noticeable thus far that, a convincing art historical appraisal of the representations has not been achieved. This is because, the elaboration given, mentions the forms which the cloth was used to produce, but reveals little about the manner in which forms are arranged (composition-wise) to create this art work. However, the critic goes on to describe the work as "powerfully vivid and provocative in their detail". This leaves the reader in no doubt as to the evocative power of images produced.

One of the pieces mentioned to have been displayed in this exhibition was the installation piece "*Nine Year Old Bride".* Lababidi (2013) presents the dimensions of the work, as a looming four meters high by two meters wide forms, covered with thirty-eight meters of fabric. In addition, the writer attempts to elaborate on how the material was turned into an art piece is illuminating. According to Labadibi, it was draped and wound, to reveal female forms frozen in resin. In this case, an attempt has been made to describe both the forms s well as the media and techniques. Notwithstanding, a clear and complete picture of the installation was still not achieved, leaving the reader to still wonder about the how features of the work look like.

Referring to yet another of Alatise's installations, the panels "*Missing",* Brock (2014) corroborates about the artist's wide use of cloth with the statement:

> "…Alatise has experimented with many different media throughout her career, she frequently returns to fabric, as in this piece. The prints are elaborate mixtures of symbols and motifs that differ from one ethnic group to another, and in assembling them in collages Alatise endeavours to create 'a new visual language".

Thus, it becomes apparent Alatise has discovered in cloth, a versatile medium for painting. Rice (2015) might then be seen to have summed Alatise's peculiar handling of cloth appropriately, by describing her as someone "who uses the fabrics to build up sculptural surfaces on paintings."

A minimal allusion to Alatise's use of colour, is found in Enwonwu's (2003) observation that, they are warm, emotional and subdued. He remarks further that, they are applied in a rhythmic technique, which gives life to her expressions. The preceding views impress that, Alatise's paintings are produced in two main forms: either mixed media work presented in two dimensional form, or partly as solid structures. Such contributions compel agreeing with Sowole (2012) on his persuasion that, Alatise's architectural training is responsible for her manipulation of different materials. Consequently, Alatise's painting techniques may be seen to involve skilful knowledge and manipulation of diverse media and a competent blend of colours. The gap observed however, remains knowing how the materials mentioned are treated in the artist's individual paintings.

Alatise's painting style

Literature accessed by this study, appears not to have focused directly upon identifying, or classifying Peju Alatise's style specifically. Rikki (In; Okedeji, 2014) observes for instance that; Alatise is seen to be "…working in many very-diversified and sometimes, incongruous styles". This observation provides grounds for anticipating not just variety, but unconventional approaches in Alatise's paintings. Notably, Olufunmilayo Inyang (In; Okedeji, 2014) goes a step further to point out that, she notices architectural dimensions in Alatise's works. It is however, not easy to visualize these supposed architectural elements from this statement because, no references to specific paintings were provided. A measure of clarification might hopefully be gleaned from the contribution of Ekiko Itang, yet another participant in the interactive session. The latter expresses that Alatise's works are "…classified weird because of the concepts or design direction… her installation and sculptural works always take". The possible initial deduction from these observations, is that Alatise's paintings bear 'mechanical' features. The suggestion that Alatise's works lean towards surreal, is yet another perception of her style drawn from that remark.

More revealing facts relating to Alatise's painting style is found in the information by *Position-Visual Art supplement, (*n d.) about the manner in which Alatise reflects indigo colours from indigenous tie and dye textile art in her regular paintings. The exposé further classifies Alatise's style, as a painterly interaction based on designs from industrial African textiles, flavoured into new art forms. This description no doubt, refers to the manner in which floral and plant patterns are skilfully fashioned at the background of Alatise's paintings, intermingling with superimposed images.

Additional elaboration relating to that style, is the use of indigo and simulations of dyed textile material in Alatise's work, which makes it stand out as a noteworthy ingenious style. It must be pointed out that, such detail is only reasonably informative enough to give an idea about her technique, without understanding the processes involved. Superficially, this description seems to fit the style of *Ona* artists, known to mingle their images with a background of traditional Yoruba symbols and patterns. The absence of supportive information however, impedes the outright conclusion that Alatise works in the canons of *Onaism.* Consequently, more clarification needs to be sought for by studying the works of the painter.

Some other glimpses that come through writings on Alatise's style indicate that, in some works, pointillism had been used. The added amplification by the preceding article on Alatise's technique mentions that "… she sometimes waxes pointillist forms when she pleases, or adds new paint on surface" (*Position-Visual Art supplement,* n d). The article expatiates that, such paintings were achieved through applying small embossed, close-packed dots of unmixed colour to a white or otherwise coloured background. Once again, the failure to relate these to specific works, leaves much to be desired. Corroborating about this, Enwonwu (2003) discloses that, Alatise's style "…include her pointillist technique" which he classifies as 'rapidographic' defined by utmost precision. The picture presented here in a nutshell, is that Alatise's pointillism is used to create forms even to the minutest detail.

At best, this later description of Alatise's paintings would seem to recall the pointillism of modernist painters Georges Seurat (1859-1891) and Paul Signac (1863-1935). For a better understanding of this reference, Seurat's *The Circus* (Plate XXI, and Signac's *Portrait of Félix*

Fénéon, (Plate XXII) all done in 1890, are considered. In the case of these two, rather than mixing the paint on their palettes, they applied tiny dots of pure colour to the canvas (Microsoft



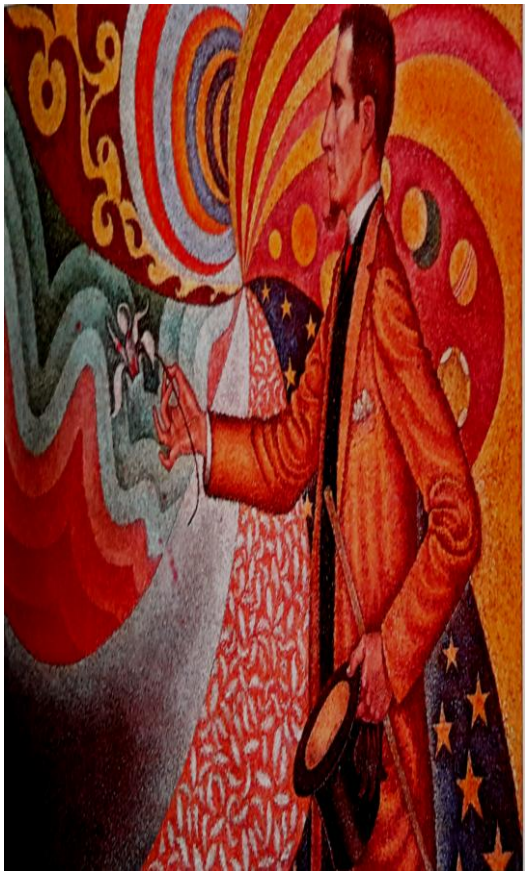


Plate **XXI,** *The Circus*, Georges Seurat, 1890. Francis G.Mayer/Corbis. In; Microsoft Encarta, 2009.

Plate **XXII,** *Portrait of Félix Fénéon*, Paul Signac 1890, Cavendish (1985:259)

Encarta, 2009). In both works, dots were juxtaposed to create the images, which are imposed over angular spaces in the case of Seurat, and intricate design of flowing geometrical patterns and shapes in the work of Signac. However, from contributions on Alatise's technique, her

pointillism may to some extent be seen to differ from the 'conventional' kind presented in works of Western pointillists.

Labadibi's (2013) profession that this genre of Peju's pointillism is typical of most of the paintings in her exhibition titled 'Material Witness,' is found to be likewise enlightening. It is regrettable that literature has however, not elaborated on such of her paintings. It is therefore, thought worthwhile to ascertain the kind of pointillism produced by Alatise, and how it impacts upon her paintings.

Achievements and contributions of Alatise

Among the notable achievements Alatise has recorded, exhibitions are prominently noted. Her debut show titled '*Oge,* Beauty of African women' was held in 2001. Subsequently, she has exhibited severally including solo exhibitions (*Position-Visual Art supplement,* n.d).This ascertains that, the overall period of time in which Alatise has been actively involved in professional painting is about sixteen years. Other Solo exhibitions by the artist include; African jewellery exhibition (2002), Jigida (2002), The African Renaissance (2002), Renaissance Craft and "Jigida" in 2003, Material Witness in 2012 and "Wrapture" in 2013.

Records also reveal that, Alatise's participation in group shows has been outstanding. Tajjudeen Sowole, in *The Guardian life* Newspaper of 28th February, 2010 reported about an exhibition which featured old masters such as Ben Enwonwu, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Uche Okeke, Bisi Fakeye and Kolade Oshinowo along with younger artists. The writer notes that, Alatise was first on the list of younger artists, to compete for space with the notable artists. Similarly, Sowole (2011a) in his musings titled "Bold, self-taught Ladies of the Canvas," commented on an exhibition, which featured Alatise along with artists as Ndidi Dike, Duke Asidere, Ben Osaghae

among others. The show tagged "Diversity," was sponsored by Elf Petroleum. Sowole observes that, Alatise was the only self-taught artist among a top-rated nine group show. It must be said that, the choice of exhibiting Alatise's work alongside those of seasoned Nigerian painters of repute, is an obvious indicator of her rating by the curators of those displays. What is more, the appearance of a self-trained painter like Alatise among these painting stalwarts, adds clarity to the artist's pedigree as a modern Nigerian painter, who is worth documenting.

Adenrele Sonarmo's coverage in the *Daily Times* Newspaper of May, 2012, is another article which provides further insight into the calibre of Alatise's painting. Obviously referring to the sale of a painting executed in 2012, the columnist remarks that, "the most exciting bid of the night was Peju Alatise's '*Ascension'* which sold for 77% above the asking price (Sonarmo, 2012). Such proof of distinction clearly shows the esteem of the buyer for the work. Meanwhile, it must be pointed out that, the non-inclusion of any descriptive account of the said painting by the commentator, leaves much to be desired.

Some other accounts of Alatise's achievement are recorded by *Position-Visual Art Supplement* (n.d.), which describes Peju Alatise as a melting point of creative abilities. Corroborating this, Karibu (2013) observes that Alatise "…has diverse and multi-streamed skills". According to the last writer, Alatise uses every form of media available from architecture to literature, to get straight to the heart of her subject matter. The writer as well intimates that, unless commissioned to produce a specific piece, Alatise does not work to satisfy collector's demands. Corroborating this, the artist declares "… and art works are like children to me… I know every part of them intimately, and I always wonder if collectors can take care of them" (Karibu, 2013). This disclosure is a pointer to Alatise's tremendous and single-minded commitment to her painting. It

is also visible that, despite not being too long in the profession, Alatise has acquired a reputation as a reputable painter.

Similar to *Position-Visual Art supplement* (n.d), Moyo Okedeji's internet critique "Peju Alatise-Artist and Architect" (Okedeji, 2013) provides an insightful entry on Peju's paintings exhibited at the Gallerie Benedict. Alatise is denoted in this piece of writing, as a versatile artist. The Critic observes that "…perhaps no African artist has within the first decade of active practice, has found a clearer voice than Peju Alatise." Okedeji adds that, clearly, none has synchronized painting, installation and sculpture as she does. It may be said that, in addition to corroborating about her multi-talented position, Okedeji reinforces Alatise's status as a reputable self-trained Nigerian painter with a visibly exceptional talent.

It is clearly apparent that, Alatise is a painter who has made giant strides in the area of modern painting in Nigeria. Similar to Okedeji, Sowole (2012) extolls the painter's achievement thus:

> …lately, conceptual artistry has become subject of debate in most art discourse. Some critics believe most Nigerian artists are weak or are incapable of engaging conceptual themes and forms in their work. Such critics however, would have been elated or pacified seeing Alatise's *Material Witness*. In fact, the installation, sculpture and painting exhibition, originally scheduled to run for one week at Nike Art Gallery, Lekki, Lagos was extended for another five days, based on what the gallery management described as "popular demand."

The salient points raised by Sowole here are the fact that, Alatise has exhibited a daring by adventuring into a sustained painting career, which involves much conceptualization. Also, as earlier mentioned, Alatise's performance in the visual arts has elevated her to a prestigious position among renowned artists. Rikki Wemega- Kwawu (In Okedeji, 2014), once more alludes to this in the remark "… seeing how far you (Peju) have come as an artist in fourteen years, or

so, to be put on the same pedestal with great masters as Bruce Onobrakpeya and El Anatsui, you'd agree with me is a meteoric rise". Though in response to that observation, Alatise humbly prefers to see those artists as mentors, the reality is that, the quality of her work has carved an elevated position for her.

The above reviewed articles must be complimented for the somewhat wide-ranging exposé on Peju Alatise generally. However, it is clear that, regardless of the fairly articulate presentation by these articles, this study observes the striking absence of details about individual paintings and of what features are accountable for the style described. Also conspicuous, is the deficiency in amplification on content or subject matter of her paintings. The lack of elaboration about her specific work leaves much to be desired, which forms a part of the justification for carrying out this study.

Some records of Alatise' additional remarkable achievements can be gleaned from *Position-Visual Art Supplement* (n.d.), which discloses that some of the artist's vital collections are installed at the South African Airways head office in Lagos, Federal Palace Hotel at Victoria Island, Obudu Cattle Ranch in Cross River State of Nigeria, the Flag House in Abuja, Guaranty Trust Bank Lagos at Victoria Island and at Philips Consulting among many others. Alatise's performance at Obudu ranch so impressed then Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo that, he sent her a personal letter of commendation for contributing towards decorating the tourist site (Pejualatise.com, 2015).

Declaring her work is certainly inspiring and evocative, Ajeluorou (2012) adjudges Alatise to be well known by art collectors and curators in the Nigerian art community. It is plain Art commentators have identified Alatise as a known female artist with a unique artistic vision. Like

Nike Okundaye, areas Alatise has diversified into include jewellery making and interior decoration. Labadibi (2013) records that Alatise's talent extends to jewellery design, installation, architecture, furniture design and painting. Her work expresses her passion for the modern life of African women and their traditions. In an interview with Anote Ajeluorou, the artist informed the

Critic about her interest in training younger people and holding workshops being her current personal project. She also disclosed that, she trains young women in handicraft skills and production of fashion accessories (Ajeluorou, 2012).

In addition to the preceding accomplishments, Alatise is noted to have won awards for her paintings and other art practices. Writing has been identified among Peju's achievements. Examples of her literary work include *Silifat: Twelve Seasons,* and *Orita Meta- The Crossroads, The spotting of Red,* and *Wrapture the story of cloth.* In 2005, the artist received the Solidra Circle Award, and won the Flora Nwapa award in 2006 as Best female writer. She also bagged an award in 2007 for being a role model (www.pejualatise.com, 2015).

The picture obtained generally from the preceding, is that of an altruistic individual interested in sharing the art experiences which she has acquired via her personal development with others. Some documents have made vital inputs regarding Alatise's painting oeuvre against a background of other Nigerian artists. Two such articles deserving mention are Excerpts from OYASAF Lecture: *Beyond the Black Atlantic: Contemporary Artistic Production in Lagos Today,* by art critic Sowole (2015), and Olatubosun's (2015) reflection of Johanna Wild's presentation. Among other things, Wild a researcher from the Department of Art and Art History at the University of New Mexico, discovered during her research that; many of the "contemporary African artists" circulated in the US, Europe and on global biennials today were

often not trained in Africa. According to her, many of them do not practise in Africa, and had not exhibited on the continent itself. Fortunately, Alatise is not only resident in Nigeria, but has held most of her exhibitions at home. Olatubosun further remarks that' although her dissertation research focuses on the work and reception of Nigerian expatriate artist Yinka Shonibare MBE, Wild affirms that, her presentation puts his work into conversation with the work of Lagos-based artists Ndidi Dike and Peju Alatise. The scholar defends this position by asserting that; although Ndidi Dike, Peju Alatise and Yinka Shonibare have used similar media, or addressed related globally relevant themes, her presentation targets how they have domesticated these through the filters of their locales—Lagos and London—to make them relevant to their specific socio-cultural and political contexts.'' Once again, it must be seen that by aligning the artist with the renowned formal- trained Nigerian artists as Ndidi Dike and Yinka Sonibare, this contribution auspiciously establishes the pedigree of Peju's painting *oeuvre*. The writing however, neither describes any of her works, nor provides any hint about their nature.

On the whole, Alatise's overall performance in her painting work has made Odoh (2014) sum up that, their "…unique compositional phrasings provide a fresh aesthetic encounters which add to the diversity of modern Nigerian art". Apparently, Odoh seems to perceive a rarity in Alatise's works, whose outpouring of artistic art forms will impact positively on the Nigerian art scene. The relevance of Alatise's work consequently, deserves to be documented for posterity.

Parallels in painting careers of Okundaye and Alatise's painting careers

Literature which has specifically compared or contrasted Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise's painting careers were not accessible to this study. Only mildly inferential writings were located on the issue. One of these is Okpara's (2015) allusion that;

> The deeply cultural and religious environments of the Yoruba communities of South Western Nigeria provides for them opportunity for the expression of their art – folklores, proverbs, idioms, motifs. These have been expressed via different creative media such as architecture/mural decoration, body scarification, calabash and wood carving, cloth design procedures, pottery decoration, terra cotta work and metal casting.

This contribution merely relates to the common background of Yoruba on their Artistic outputs. It is nevertheless envisaged to prove useful towards gaining a better understanding of Nike similar or contrasting features of Okundaye and Peju Alatise's painting careers. The other related input was Rice's (2015) earlier mentioned discourse on patterned identity, which assesses the use of textiles in the art of contemporary Nigerian artists. As already seen, Rice's appraisal involved some other Nigerian artists including Nike Okundaye's work, but only mentioned Peju Alatise and a few other artists in passing. Thus, it is perceptible so far that, a concerted effort to involve the two artists in question in a combined interrogation, is yet to be accomplished.

Summary of the Literature Review.

A number of documents which have information related to the painting careers and general contributions of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise were reviewed, and the following was discovered; With possible exception to articles in journals, magazines, exhibition catalogues, newspaper clips, or internet sources, little detail has been published specifically on the form, content and style of the two artists. For that reason, the material obtained for examination has not yielded the desired substantial data.

It is quite visible that, the documents accessed are in some instances dominated by biographical data. Important as they are, they are deficient in providing requisite data on other issues as forms, content and style of the selected painters. Another observable feature is the fact that information

was largely drawn from exhibition catalogues. It may be said that, as far as catalogues are concerned, by virtue of the fact that they are usually tied to events, their distribution and consequently accessibility to a wide population of readers is greatly restricted. The same could also be said for materials from the internet and magazines.

Generally, while it may be agreed that, the very disposition of the documentation may have provided some illumination on the painting practice of the selected artists, the position of ascertaining the thematic and painting modes of the interest group for this study is still in doubt. It is apparent that, in a negligibly few exceptions, the manner of presenting the materials by the various writers, could pass for journalistic comments only. Important as the notes on these artists may be, the information accessed neither properly isolate the content and themes of the selected artists, nor do they relate the styles mentioned in a few cases, to any specific works of the artists. The materials obtained for examination for that reason, did not yield sufficient data on the matter under investigation. For most of the entries on paintings, the dimensions of works as well as dates of production are left out.

The entire information derived in the exercise has therefore proven to be mere piece-meal contributions about the issue under study which do not amount to much. This review has therefore established beyond reasonable doubt the fact that; there is an absence of in-depth research on painting career of the two selected self-trained artists of this study. This study therefore, sees the need to apply methodical medium in order to procure more dependable and comprehensive information about the content, forms, and style of Nike Okundaye, and Peju Alatise.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative research design has been adopted for this study. This is grounded on Osuala's (2005), Olayiwola's (2007), and Abdulsalami's (2008) recommending its suitability for research which combines both historical and descriptive survey approaches. Following their suggestion, the study is designated Qualitative because, it involves a systematic, detailed description as well as, explanations for the phenomena investigated, rather than statistical procedures. The study also adopts the use of detailed description which Osuala (2005) finds useful, when no systematic knowledge is presumed to be available about the population under study. This further became necessary because of the variety of paintings produced by the artists being researched upon, which required being described, due to their import on the study. In conclusion, the research is classified partly historical because, it combines freshly gathered information on past events and already documented data by other scholars. Adopting this research design is considered the most suitable for obtaining required information for this particular study.

Population for the study

The population for the study is twofold: The first encompasses the universe of self-taught Nigerian female artists working in canons of modern painting, known to be actively practising it at a professional level[7]. The Second category embraces the totality of paintings produced by them. The list of artists in this category includes among others Nike Okundaye, Peju Alatise, Lawumi Banjo, Tosin Jegede, Abi Adeyemi, May Ikeora, and Amina Doherty[8].

Sampling

A sample of two artists namely; Nike Davies- Okundaye and Peju Alatise was drawn from this mainstream set, using the snow-ball and purposive sampling techniques. The basic criterion used for drawing those to be considered in the sample was firstly that of being a self-taught artist following stipulations specified under the definition of terms at the end of chapter One[9]. Furthermore, these two painters were picked due to their committed involvement in professional painting practice supported by an active participation in exhibitions.

Two basic sampling techniques were involved in arriving at the desired sample of artists. The first sampling method was the snowball sampling technique. This procedure is explained by Osuala (2005) as an approach which simply involves contacting a member of the population of interest, and asking whether they know anyone else with characteristics of individuals belonging to that group. In addition, the scholar endorses the usefulness of this procedure, especially where the subjects are likely to be suspicious of the intentions of the researcher. The procedure followed is described as follows:

[7] For an understanding of this study's conception of Self-taught artists, see Definition of Terms on p.17 & perspectives related to self-taught artists offered by Kasfir (1999), Aniakor (2003), and Odoh (2014) on pp 38-41

[8] The names of self-taught female artist were obtained from a list mentioned by Sowole (2011) and George (2013).

[9] See Definition of terms on p. 17 of this Thesis.

Following the snowball technique therefore, a list of self-trained female Nigerian painters was obtained from a few artists who have been actively practising painting. Outcomes of enquiries from staff of the National Art Gallery, and artists running studios in the streets of Lagos, led the Researcher to the Nike Art Gallery. On arrival there, the Researcher met the renowned Nigerian Textile artist, Nike Davies-Okundaye. Upon contacting the latter, it was possible to obtain a list of other self-trained female artists, who are actively involved in painting (see population for the study listed on page 117 above). A purposive sampling was then employed to pick out Nike Davies Okundaye herself, and Peju Alatise from this designated universe. It was after establishing the subjects to be studied that, the title for the research was decided.

It was discovered that the two selected artists have produced a sumptuous amount of painting works. Some of these had already been purchased by collectors, and consequently were not accessible for review. At the time of establishing the subjects for the study, it was discovered that for Nike Okundaye, some of her paintings are distributed in her Galleries and four Art Centres. A few of Peju Alatise's paintings were still on display at the Nike Art Gallery, Lekki-Lagos. Most of Alatise's other paintings are however, recorded in Exhibition catalogues, her private website and some other sites on the internet. A systematic random sampling technique was applied in selecting 70 paintings each for both Nike Okundaye, and Peju Alatise (see list on Appendix VII). Further using a systematic sampling procedure, the researcher selected paintings which were used for discussing topics as forms, subject matter, style, media and techniques, as well as those for analytical assessments and comparisons. The list of paintings selected are presented in Appendix V, VI and VII.

Data Collection Methods

One of the methods the study adopted is the interview method considering that such has been satisfactorily employed by a vast number of scholars in Art History research including; Saliu (1994), Gutip (1995), Okoli (2007), Duniya (2009), Danjuma (2010), and Gushem (2011). Other methods employed in collecting data for the study consisted of observation and obtaining data from secondary materials such as; the internet, books, magazines, and exhibition catalogues.

Research Instruments

The instruments used for gathering primary data from both Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise include an interview Guide developed by the researcher. The instrument was vetted for reliability by experts. Two basic types of interview schedules were involved namely: the semi-structured and unstructured questions. These comprised of a set of questions directed at issues such as personal background details of the artists, their mode of practice, including media, techniques, and styles. A copy of this is presented in Appendix I. The interviews were done by asking questions using those guidelines. Some of the responses seemed inconclusive, and consequently, generated further probing in order to establish facts.

Another instrument developed and used for the study is the Observational Guide (Appendix II). In order to facilitate easier documentation during the observation, an inventory of painting form, genre or subject, media, and style (constituting a structured observational guide), was developed and used by researcher to record each selected painting made by the two artists. This is motivated by Osuala's (2005) affirmation that, structured observation is employed when aspects of the problem at hand, have been formulated precisely enough, to enable the researcher define specifically the observations to be made. This is further

substantiated by his remark that, "Observation is the act of recognizing and noting facts or occurrences done by arranging to 'observe' such incidences" (sic). The efficacy of this is also seen in his argument that, information from documents may be used to either generate interview questions, or identify events to be observed. What is more, further advantages of observing personal records include provision for making comparisons, which was eventually included in the present research.

The painting inventory forming part of the means is employed by this study to facilitate observation, and obtain descriptive data (Appendix IV). It comprises a detailed list and description of art items similar to kind used by collectors, researchers and organizations such as institutes, galleries and museums. The model used is adapted from three inventories namely; those of the Smithsonian Institute Research Information System (SIRIS, in collaboration with the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Renwick Gallery); The National Inventory Research project of the UK; The National Inventory of Continental European Paintings ([NICE], see Appendix III).

Field Work

The study necessitated taking a field trip to the city of Lagos, where the two artists reside. This also involved carrying out a pilot study and subsequently, executing other research procedures as follows:

Pilot Study

The pilot study involved test-running interview questions and observation (described under research instruments) on one of the subjects-Nike Okundaye. This was to determine the

workability of the instruments designed for the research. It also necessitated taking snap-shots of some of her paintings. These are recorded on painting inventories (Appendix IV), and subjected to analysis using the prescribed boxes (Appendix V).

The Interview

Specifically, oral, electronic and internet interviews were used for the study. This is discussed in detail as follows:



Plate **XXIII**, The Researcher during one of the interview sessions with Chief Nike Okundaye, Photograph by David Tisan Ibrahim on September 18, 2015.

In the interviews carried out with Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise, rigid form was not followed. This was guided by Gill *et al's* (2008) counsel that, interviews ranging from in-depth, semi-structured to unstructured, can be conducted either face-to-face, or by telephone, depending on the information being sought. Gill *et al* defend the advantages of employing face-to-face interviews because, such could be used to further explore the views, beliefs, experiences and motivations of individual participants. Those authorities on research further

maintain that, such interviews encourage detailed questions, further probing, rich data, and more importantly, literacy requirements of participants is not an issue. In the case of Nike Okundaye, oral interviews with the aid of the interview schedules and recording device, were carried out the 24th, 27th and 28th of July, and September 18th 2015 at the Nike Art Centre, Lekki –Lagos.

By a mutual agreement, a decision was taken to employ electronic and internet interviews, document studies on the most part, for the second artist- Peju Alatise. This was done on the understanding that, the artist was much preoccupied with a line-up of commitments and engagements. For those reasons, it became difficult to find suitable time to carry out face-to-face interview, and observation. The researcher was satisfied with this arrangement for the following reasons: Firstly, the internet interview was discovered to have been effectively administered by Okoli (2007) for a research of a similar nature.[10] Secondly, photographs, print and electronic media could be regarded as personal documents whose significance among other things include requiring minimal co cooperation from persons being studied[11]. Lastly, this kind of approach also termed creative strategies is recommended by research experts including Gill *et al's* (2008) for being specifically in keeping with qualitative research related to practice-based work. In their opinion, Creative strategies involving written documents, recorded visuals like videos as alternative to the written word, are useful in art based approaches, and can be used in conjunction with more traditional approaches. The

[10] In his research "A Study of Contemporary Female Nigerian Artists, Okoli (2007) acknowledged employing electronic interviews with some of the subjects.

[11] Fetterman (1989) refers to photographs, print material obtained pertaining to subjects of a study as personal documents. They possess the power to enable the researcher understand how the subject see the world, and reveal what they wish to communicate to the audience.

preceding has been supported by the argument that, although documents accessed may be incomplete, they nevertheless have the advantage of being unobtrusive.

In line with the above, the internet interview was administered in the month of August and September 2015, to obtain data in many cases from Peju Alatise and in some instances, from Nike Okundaye. In addition to answering questions on the internet via e-mail (See Appendix IIb &IIc), Text messages, WhatsApp, and viewing videos online, Peju Alatise provided hard copy documents, which to a great extent, supplied answers to many questions that were posed. She had specifically indicated that a great deal of information regarding her work could be found in those documents[12].

Observation

The observation approach was one of the research methods adopted by this study[13]. This also followed Fetterman (1989) and Osuala's (2005) recommendation on its worth for providing insights into a setting that cannot be scrutinised in another way. The observation drew from non-verbal sources including photographs, narratives in novels[14]. Following this, the observation data for this research derives from two basic kinds. The first kind involved requesting for information about paintings from the two artists. This was done with the aid of questions in the Observational Guide (See Appendix II).

[12] Hard copies of Alatise's exhibition catalogues and her books *Silifat* and *Orita Meta* accessed from the internet contain narratives either describing or explaining her works.

[13] Observation is also considered by National Science Foundation (NSF.Gov, 2002) to be most strategic for investigating multiple variables for in-depth probing and is particularly appropriate for detailed information.

[14] Some authorities propose personal documents to include diaries, portfolios, letters, poetry and scrapbooks which contain first-hand accounts of events and experiences *et cetera*.

It is also in the light of the preceding, that the magazines, exhibition catalogues given to the researcher by both Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise have constituted part of materials used for studying their paintings. Information gathered from such documents were found to be related to issues in the present study, which is seen to be in keeping with the above recommendations.

Photographs

Data related to features of the paintings obtained in this category included scrutinising photographs of their selected paintings, those obtained from catalogues of their exhibitions and from their paintings posted on some websites in the internet constituted the second kind of observation data. Parts of questions posed to Peju Alatise via e-mail, included an attempt to elicit non-verbal information on features of her paintings (See end of Appendix Ib & Ib).

The use of pictorial records is inspired by its effective use by Art History authors and researchers generally, and in related studies by researchers like Okoli (2007), Danjuma (2010), and Gushem (2011). The observation carried out in this study, involves acquiring such basic details as sizes and titles of paintings. In order to procure adequate material for analysis, as well as gain an understanding of the paintings made by the two artists, photographs were taken with the use of a digital camera.

Photographs of paintings obtained from Nike Okundaye's two of her Galleries and measurements of the paintings were taken by the researcher, with the assistance the Nike Art Gallery staff. A few of Peju Alatise paintings still on display at the Nike Art Gallery, Lekki-

Lagos were also photographed. It was similarly discovered that, most of other paintings done so far by Alatise are recorded in Exhibition catalogues, on her website, and other sites on the internet. The artists made her catalogues, and vital references about these sites available to the researcher. Where it became necessary, photographs of paintings by the two artists, obtained from catalogues and the Internet were also taken. The pictures so acquired were transferred into the computer for storage and onward use in the analysis. The list of all paintings accessed is presented in Appendix VI. The selected 70 paintings for each of the two artists under study, were recorded in Appendix VII.

Treatment of Data

The data gathered through field work, involving oral interview and personal observation, as well as data from secondary sources such as books, journals, magazines, exhibition catalogues, internet and other library and archival materials was subjected to analysis. Various analytical approaches recommended by authorities in Art History and other related fields, are used for this study. This is with the view to, ensure the reliability of findings as much as possible. Specifically, categorization, analytic, descriptive and comparative approaches are adopted for data treatment in this study.

To facilitate the analysis for this study, an instrument adopted form of the block by block form system, recommended by Bernet in Danjuma (2010) has been used. This is a 'lumping' technique which permits categories of issues, or subjects, to be arranged in appropriate blocks. Beginning from one block, items are discussed before moving to the next. For that reason, blocks covering forms, content, media, techniques as well as styles, and finally contribution to modern Nigerian painting were used (see Appendix V).

The classification and descriptive approach employed in analysing data collected for this study, essentially entails that issues, are organized under certain categories based on some selective criteria. The painting career of the two female artists for instance, is categorized in terms of subject matter, media employed, and stylistic presentation. Features of these variables, are described taking into consideration, chronological sequence in appraising the paintings, achievements including, contributions to Nigerian modern art. Elements of similarities and differences detected in the painting careers of these two artist are also sorted out appropriately. Lastly, the specific contribution of both Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise to painting, and visual art practice, also form part of the cataloguing. The data related to variables of the study were catalogued and presented as follows:

1. Appendix VI contains all accessed paintings of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise.
2. Appendix VII contains the Sample of 70 paintings each selected from Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise's accessed paintings.
3. Appendix VIII contains Paintings Forms of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise.
4. Appendix IX contains the Content of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise's paintings.
5. Appendix X contains Painting Media and Techniques of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise.
6. Appendix XI contains Painting styles of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise
7. Appendix XII contains a catalogue of some other paintings by Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Oral interview data on backgrounds of Nike Davies-Okundaye and Peju Alatise

The data gathered as a result of interviews and observation corroborates information generally presented in literature which is:

Nike Okundaye born on May 23, 1951, is an unassuming and charming figure, open to all and sundry, as much as possible. Okundaye is an *Okun* Yoruba native of Ogidi, a town which shares boundaries with Kabba, Iyara and Ogale, situated in the South Western strip of Nigeria's middle belt in Kogi State. The male inhabitants of this town are mainly known to practise farming and hunting, while their women are renowned for arts, crafts and trading. For long, the Ogidi people withstood attacks from Muslim Nupe imperialists. They are said to have eventually defeated this foe in the late 19th century. The Yoruba whose ancestry is traced to the age long Ife culture of over a thousand years ago, are known to have evolved a rich visual arts and system of aesthetics. This has been substantiated by Cock's (2013) observation that, before Christianity, most Yoruba

villages had sacred groves dotted with shrines, sculptures and other art works representing gods, sacred animals and people. According to him, few of these practices survived the arrival of Europeans.

Going by this background, the average Yoruba person therefore grows up in an environment of rich cultural display including festivities, costumes, art making, adherence to traditions and customs, and a system of religion involving different deities with requirements for worshipping them. The people of Ogidi were traditionally idol worshippers, before some of them peacefully embraced Islam, and others converted to Christianity. Ogidi is also identified for its age-old art industry, valour, welcoming ambience and belief in resourcefulness. The position of women in Ogidi land is also strategic. Earlier on, in a brief interaction involving the Researcher and Oba Alhaji Rabiu O. Sule, the *Ologidi* of Ogidi on Sunday, 21st June (a day after the 2015 New Yam festival), the ruler intimated that "… Women make peace and are very important to the society; they play an important role as the kingmakers in Ogidi kingdom." This observation is thought to partly account for Okundaye's focus on women.

It is into this abounding background, that Nike Okundaye was born in town of Ogidi-Ijummu in Kogi state of Nigeria, where her family was involved in traditional cloth dyeing and weaving. Her father (long deceased), was a flutist, drummer and leather worker in the Oba's retinue. The town of Ogidi itself, is a scenic settlement known for its igneous mountains, and neatly arranged houses flanked on both sides by sloping hills. The town is separated in its middle by a road that runs through the entire township creating a beautiful landscape scenery. Thus, the atmosphere of Okundaye's nativity could therefore be said to be more or less, an art conservatory. The socio-cultural milieu which produced Okundaye was however a rural and impoverished setting.

As far as religious affiliation is concerned Chief Okundaye is a Catholic, but liberal in her relationship with persons of different faiths. This may not be unconnected with the diverse religious involvements in her life. During the period of her marriage to Taiwo Olaniyi for instance, Okundaye attended the Christ Apostolic Church of her husband. Prior to that, Okundaye's father, initially named Yusuf Ohunenikinu Amuda Ojo Allah, was born into a Muslim family. He grew up to become a musician working for Oba Amunjabi the then ruler of

Ogidi. In appreciation of Yusuf's pleasing performance as his musician, Oba Amunjabi gave his daughter princess Jogole Omoduni in marriage to him. Monica Oyenike was the first child of the union between Yusuf and Jogole. Two years after Okundaye's birth, the couple had a son, whom they christened Joseph Olabode. The latter also grew up to become an artist who travelled with his sister on some of her journeys. After the demise of their father Ojo in 1999, Olabode decided to return back to Ogidi. He too died not too long after that.

A sad twist to Okundaye's early life was the repeated loss of maternal caregivers. The artist hardly knew her mother since the latter died when she was barely six years old. Okundaye's faint memories of her mother is that she was tall and slim. As a result, she was left under the care of her maternal Grandmother Madam Oraun Iyawo Amunjabi. The latter, who was a worker of *Aso ofe* (Textile artist), outlived Okundaye's mother for not too long after that and she was once more without maternal care. Okundaye's maternal Grandmother's mother Madam Ibitola Ibikunle Osadahun (the *Iyalode* of Ogidi at that time), was fortunately alive and now took charge of the orphan. Madam Ibikunle happened to be the head of all the *Aro* workers (cloth dyers and cloth weavers) of Ogidi at that time. From the age of six, Okundaye assisted her maternal Great Grandmother to run errands and watched her work on her textiles. As Okundaye got older, she

was allowed to try out some elementary aspects of the crafts. Through this process, she learnt to draw and paint patterns on cloth that was to be dyed, using feathers and bamboo sticks.

Yet another hurdle in Okundaye's path of progress, was that of furthering her education. During the 1960s, recognizing the impoverished predicament of parents, the Catholic Missionaries made an arrangement whereby children of communicants were allowed to continue with their education by paying school fees in instalments. In order to avail himself of that privilege, the interest of giving his children Western education, led to Yusuf Amuda's conversion from Islam to Christianity. Thereby, he acquired the baptismal name of Nicholas. Consequently, Okundaye was enrolled into St Michael's Primary School Ogidi in 1960. This opportunity for formal education was however short-lived when on reaching primary six in 1966, Okundaye had to drop out of school because, her father could not afford to sponsor her any further.

Further attempts by Okundaye to enrol into St Monica's Secondary School at Osogbo, also proved unsuccessful. Madam Ibikunle direly desired providing young Okundaye with the opportunity of obtaining Western education. The former therefore, took her ward first to Jos and later to Osogbo in search for a chance to enrol her in school, without much success. Okundaye professes gratitude to her Great Grandmother for inculcating discipline, diligence, persistence, determination and love into her life. Okundaye's little involvement with education nevertheless, proved beneficial. She acknowledges that, all of these attributes have influenced her artistic and painting career.

Keeping in step with her upbringing, Okundaye began to show a flair for art at a tender age. This fact is substantiated by supplementary information gathered about the artist from a contemporary of hers. This was done with the intention of supporting information about Nike

Okundaye. On Monday 22nd June, 2015 after the annual Ogidi New Yam Festival, the researcher met and interviewed a retired Engineer Mr. Pius Mesaiyete (AKA Ambali) now residing in the same local Government Area at Ogali village about 10 kilometres from Ogidi. The latter had attended the same primary school St Michael's Primary School at Ogidi, with Okundaye. Mr Mesaiyete intimated that they were classmates up to class 3, when he gained an accelerated promotion to another class. According to him, Okundaye was a brilliant pupil and was noted by their class teacher Mr Agono, as pupil with the best hand writing in their class. Mr Mesaiyete remarks in addition that, Okundaye was noticeably good at singing as well. He also discloses that at that stage of her life, Okundaye was already doing *Aro* (that is local cloth dyeing). Mesaiyete substantiates about the fact that Okundaye's father was a flutist and that she had a brother named Olabodun, whose football skills were quite apparent.

Not long after leaving school, Okundaye's irrepressible creativity began to show leading to the commencement of her artistic career as far back in the mid-1960s. The Reverend Father of the Catholic Church at Ogidi, recommended young Okundaye to an Indian couple, Mr. and Mrs. Matthew who were in need of the services of a nanny for their children. The couple were tutors at the St Augustine Secondary School, Kabba a town barely 20 kilometres from Ogidi. Okundaye faintly recalls that Mr. Matthew taught Science (most likely Biology, because he kept rabbits and was in the habit of extracting their bones for his lessons), while the wife was a History teacher. Okundaye harnessed the little skills she had acquired from her Great grandmother and primary school, to produce paintings and embroidery. The couple, on noticing her artistic talent, encouraged her the more by selling her paintings to Catholic Missionaries, and expatriate tourists. According to the artist, she sold the embroidered cloth at 2 shillings a piece. Also, her work so impressive that the Catholic priests kept commissioning her for altar pieces.

Mr. Mesaiyete further corroborates this, observing that when he proceeded to St Augustine's Secondary School Kabba, he once more encountered Okundaye. This was between 1966 and 1967 and confirms that she was then working as a house help for an Indian Couple Mr. and Mrs. Matthew. Mr. Mesaiyete recollects that after some time, he was not seeing Okundaye again and later learnt she had followed a troupe of performing artists to Osogbo. This account substantiates her background account, and many other entries in the literature review about Okundaye's background. The artist explains that her decision to join the travelling theatre was in order to avoid her being forced at the age of 14 by her father Nicholas Ojo Allah, into marriage with a man working in the Federal Civil Service. That arrangement was not agreeable to Okundaye more so, she discovered that the proposed husband was much older than her. Thus, Okundaye saw the opportunity offered by a visiting drama troupe to start out on a new quest of survival. The deceased renowned Nigerian Osogbo artist Taiwo Olaniyi (a.k.a. Twins Seven-Seven), had much to do with this development.

Olaniyi originally christened Taiwo Olaniyi Oyewale-Toyeje Oyelode (1944-2011), was the son of Osuntokin a prince from an Ibadan ruling family. The former, who had already begun to participate in the famed Ulli Beier's art Workshops at Osogbo, practically grew up at Ogidi. This was because, his mother was a native of neighbouring Iyara town. According to Okundaye, Olaniyi was accustomed to going home every year at Christmas time and he usually brought along art materials, which he distributed to youth in an attempt to discover talents among them. The artist, who was already involved in the Osogbo experimental art training, was merely following the injunction of Beier, which was to propagate the art experience they had acquired in the workshops. Through this practice, Olaniyi noticed Okundaye's potential and got interested in her. He consequently encouraged her to join the travelling theatre in order to avail herself of

opportunities to practise art. This choice paid off because it led her to other openings, which have introduced her more firmly into a world of art. Most importantly, Okundaye's arrival at Osogbo with the Performance troupe brought her in contact with other individuals who further helped to shape her artistic career. Key people among these are, Horst Ulrich Beier simply known by many as Ulli. Others were Susanne Wenger, Georgina Beier and a host of other persons who had participated in Ulli Beier's Mbari experiments at Osogbo, as from 1963.

The town of Osogbo in present day Osun State, is actually sometimes called *Ilu Aro* (home of dyeing) because a lot of dyeing activities are carried on in the town. Okundaye's memory of her first contact with both Ulli and Georgina Beier, as well as Susan Wenger was in 1966, while in company of her Indian employers who often visited Osogbo. The artist attests that it was however in 1968 after joining the performance artistes, that she was opportuned to interact with Suzanne and Georgina at a closer range. Okundaye is emphatic that, in actual fact it is Georgina Betz (who became Beier's wife after he divorced Suzanne Wenger), who took charge of the art workshop. According to her, Beier was rather more of a Linguist preoccupied with writing on African art and culture.

Beier is recounted to have used flyers to advertise the art workshops in Osogbo town. Taiwo Olaniyi, along with others like Adebisi Fabunmi, Muraina Oyelami, and Jimoh Buraimoh responded to the advert. Soon after that, others including Isaac Ojo Fajana, Samuel Omonaiye, Junaidu Oladepo, Ashiru Olatunde, Rufus Ogundele, Adebisi Akanji came along. Okundaye remembers vividly that, women were not enrolled in those workshops. As such, the workshops comprised solely of men. Okundaye is clear about never participating in Georgina Beier's classes. She maintains that at that time, she was just a wife to one of the participants Taiwo

Olaniyi. Also Okundaye clarifies that, although her husband Olaniyi was seriously involved in painting, she did not learn painting from him. She however admits that being his wife, she sometimes watched while he was working on his paintings.

Okundaye explains further that, Kikelomo who is sometimes associated with the Osogbo artists, was the daughter of Junaidu Oladepo. Like Okundaye, Kikelomo who was engaged in producing *Adire Alaworo* (using feathers to create images on cloth that was to be dyed), was actually inspired by Susanne Wenger. The artist recalls that in those early days, female art practitioners like herself faced a great deal of discrimination. She specifically notes for instance that, Georgina Beier was not accorded the desired credit for her contributions as expected. The other artists' wives were similarly relegated to the background. On one memorable occasion, the other male artists asked her if she could draw *Were* (a mad man), she replied in the affirmative. She went on to prove she could on a piece of paper given to her. She first locked herself inside her room, made the drawing and came out to show them. They jeered at her in response chorusing *O ti ya were* (she has drawn a crazy man.) That negative reaction almost dispirited Okundaye. She however resolved not to allow herself be discouraged. She mentioned that, Beier organised an annual exhibition of the artists' works every year. The artist recollects that, at the onset of the civil war in 1967, Beier left Nigeria briefly and when he returned in 1972, he opened another workshop at Ife.

Okundaye's association with the deceased Austrian Susanne Wenger (1915-2009), a co-initiator of the Osogbo Art Workshop, further motivated her artistic career. Wenger, "…whose immersion into the Yoruba culture and worship earned her the pseudonym *Aduni Orisha* or

Iwinfumike *Adunni*"[15], was an immense inspiration to Okundaye by encouraging her to practise art, when the men folk around her never wanted the women to do any art. At the initial stage, since the women at Osogbo were not recognised as artists, Okundaye concentrated more on performing arts as a dancer. Susanne noticed her *adire* work and encouraged her for it. In particular, Okundaye imbibed Wenger's simplistic philosophical and ardent devotion to the *Osun* river goddess. She combined that with tenets of her Christian faith and whatever she had learnt from her Grandmothers. That is why Okundaye is able to say she derived inspiration from Susanne (Adejobi, 2013; the *Vanguard Newspaper* of 23rd May, 2013; *Daily News watch* of 23, May, 2014).

Okundaye's marriages, first to Taiwo Olaniyi then Mr John Davies and presently Mr Osaruiye Okundaye, have impacted her artistic career in specific ways. Okundaye got married to Taiwo Olaniyi in 1968, a marriage which lasted till 1982. Even though Okundaye obviously began painting even prior to her first marriage, her painting career became more meaningful after her marriage to Olaniyi. Okundaye recounts that, when she eventually started teaching women *adire*, it was a struggle. She discovered that due to the income they acquired from it, her involvement in the *adire* industry brought independence for herself and the women. The men around tried instigating Olaniyi to prevent his wife from embarking on such a venture. The artist notes that, when an exhibition was organized in Ghana during that early period, women were denied participating because, they were not seen as artists. Even though Okundaye's dyed cloth were sold at that forum, up to that point, she was not recognised as an artist.

[15] Okoli (2007) stated this in his research "The contributions of Female Artists to Modern Nigerian Art".

Notwithstanding these developments, Okundaye's artistic horizon began to broaden, due to her association with Olaniyi. The former opened a gallery at their Osogbo home, where he displayed his paintings and wife's dyed cloths. In that make-shift gallery, they simply hung paintings on big nails. The artist remarks that it was after their first visit to the United States of America in 1974, that the pair discovered the proper way of mounting art works. The artist notes that, this visit marked her first time of displaying her works and the beginning of teaching the *adire* technique overseas. Okundaye recounts that even though she had been painting all the while, her first Solo exhibition at the Goethe Institute in 1978, only showcased her textile works.

Okundaye met and married her second spouse, John Davies in 1982. Mr. Davies' interest and participation in his wife's artistic concerns, brought further exposure for her. The union lasted till when he decided to return to Britain. Okundaye opted not to follow him because, she was committed to the cause of her fellow womenfolk at Osogbo and was reluctant to leave them untended. She felt that having started something substantial, leaving them would result to their reverting to a status of relegation.

Okundaye has been married to her present husband Reuben Osaruiye, a retired commissioner of the Nigerian Police, who is an indigene of Egbabo town in Edo state for close to twenty years now. The Bini of Edo are known for wood carving and the lost wax technique of bronze casting. With a sterling career as a police officer, which saw him attaining the rank of Commissioner of Police and serving in more than four states, the couple has in the last 20 years maintained a happy marriage. Okundaye intimates that Osaruiye's love for art drew them together. Mr Osaruiye is a person who exhibits shrewdness as far as his wife's artistic career is concerned. He

assists his wife in supervising the staff with a firm hand and displays much insight into the visual and performing art concerns of his wife.

This brief background, plainly shows Okundaye as an artist who has acquired her painting skills due to her own effort or self-development. Aside this, she has severally been listed as a self-taught artist. Evidently, not even the disheartening misfortunes that kept coming her way at the initial stage, deterred Okundaye from reaching the status she eventually attained as a renowned textile artist and an accomplished painter. Some scholars think that, self-taught artists are only capable of producing work that is naïve and mediocre. This has not been the case with Nike Okundaye. Her works are not lacking in academic principles of composition and technique. They reveal a high sense of artistry and keen insight. In addition to being a prolific painter, Okundaye says that she uses her art to 'talk' about issues.

Background of Peju Alatise

A study of how the Peju Alatise's background has impacted her painting career reveals the following:

Peju Alatise was born in Lagos, into the family of the Alatises on June 17, 1975. The couple are Yoruba natives from Ogun state of Nigeria. Her mother is a retired Magistrate and Alatise has lived most of her life in the large cosmopolitan city of Lagos. Despite this background, she has been surrounded by Yoruba life and its traditions. Alatise encountered painting quite early in her life because, she was surrounded by people who encouraged her interest for art. Her older

brother Abiodun was often engaged in painting, which fascinated Alatise. Seeing her interest in art, her mother purchased a book on "How To Do Crafts" for Alatise at a tender age. When she entered Secondary school, art was one of the subjects being taught in the school. However, her parents did not consider the Visual Arts a lucrative course and discouraged Alatise from pursuing a career in that area. The artist now opted to study Architecture between 1992 and 1998.

While at the University, Alatise came across David Dale's work, which further fuelled her appetite for painting. At some point in her studies, Alatise felt so strongly drawn to the visual arts that she made a move to drop out of the architect programme in order to practise painting. Fortunately, her father adamantly prevailed on her to continue studying architecture. Thus, Alatise graduated as an architect from the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho in Oyo State, Nigeria.

After graduation, Alatise practised architecture for a couple of years, working for Leonardo Consulting, before she set up a makeshift studio at Lekki, where she combines her architectural practice with the visual arts. The artist acknowledges the profound role of this educational background upon her present practice. She sees the six years of architectural grooming as having the benefit of inculcating discipline on her. Alatise reasons that, an artist requires some level of discipline to practise professionally. She says "…I do not know if I would be a different type of artist if I studied visual arts". The artist particularly, attributes her ability to think in 3-dimensions to her architectural coaching. She reckons that, studying architecture has made her a well-trained draftsman, and provided her with the knowledge of materials and their properties. In her opinion, it has helped her understand the use of materials better, especially more on the technical aspects.

Aside from her academic background in architecture, Alatise's only other source of induction into the visual arts, is from a few artists she has encountered either through interaction, or through studying their work from exhibitions, and publications. Early in her venture into the visual arts, Alatise came across Rembrandt's paintings. She was captivated by his handling of portraiture and images generally. She briefly attempted emulating Rembrandt's style. The artist however discarded that idea, after a short while. Thereafter she began to explore with styles of her own. The kindred spirit of indomitable female artists like Susan Wenger and Nike Okundaye, inspired Alatise to forge on in the visual arts. Some other artists have also inspired her including the Chinese Ai Weiwei (b.1957) and South Korean artist Do Ho Suh (b. 1962) who constructs metaphorical installations work also caught Alatise's interest.

Some other philosophical considerations are contributory to fuelling Alatise's zest for painting. These include a combination of her Muslim and Yoruba background, with its rich culture. Alatise grew up in an environment filled with ceremonies, festivities, folk lore and costumes that provided abundant imagery to her already fertile mind. The cosmopolitan society of Lagos with its myriad activities, has availed Alatise with varied socio-political experiences. This is substantiated by her admission to Thokazani (2012) that

> "…I am Yoruba, lover of Yoruba mythology, and an idealist. Yoruba is a very philosophical language and thinking in this language, when translated into English language remains poignant despite its true essence being lost in translation. My work really can be said to be a fantasy world of Orishas and their involvement through interactions with earthlings".

It is obvious therefore that the artist has been able to harness these variants into her vibrant imagination to create significant art forms, especially paintings that are lasting mementoes of her society.

Alatise's personal history is backed with a background of having enlightened parents which afforded her a formal education before she took to painting. This undoubtedly, has paved the way for her artistic exploration in diverse channels and media, including architecture, painting, installations and writing. Alatise therefore, strikes one as a conscientious, intensely independent individual who has been exceptionally consistent over the years. She reflects a steady continuity mingled with an untiring zest for experimentation

Nike Okundaye's Painting Forms

An appraisal of the nature of forms produced by Nike Okundaye in her painting establishes that, Nike Okundaye's initial tentative attempts to produce painting was in the late 1960s while working for Mr. and Mrs. Matthew an Indian couple residing and teaching at St Augustine's Secondary School, Kabba. Unfortunately, Okundaye declares that, she did not keep records of her initial paintings because most of such works were disposed of to tourists and other clients. She however intimated that her friend Victoria Scott who resides in Britain, is in possession of some of those early works.

Embroidery is a conspicuous form of Nike Okundaye's initial pictorial efforts that involve the use of colours. This venture began in the early 1960s. Substantiating Mr. Mesaiyate's account earlier on, Okundaye recollects that at the primary school, Craft was one of the subjects being taught. Once a week for about an hour, pupils were brought outside to do craftwork. She also recalls that embroidery was prominent in those craft sessions. She remembers "*Angels*,' '*The*

Lord is my Shepherd', and saints like *'St Agnes'* being her subjects on those pieces. The best of these embroidered works, were selected and offered to the Reverend Fathers. The latter in turn, presented such embroidered works to the Reverend Sisters who were in charge of dressing the church altars. Also, Okundaye reminisces how occasionally, Reverend Sisters who came visiting from Canada, were impressed with the embroidered pieces made by school children. These Sisters often inquired to know who produced the most impressive embroidered pieces. It became noticeable to them that Okundaye in particular, produced more interesting embroidery. As such, the Reverend Sisters often took some of her embroidered pieces and on occasion even commissioned for more.

The *Untitled* embroidery in Plate XXIV represents one of the surviving examples of Okundaye's needlework, which the artist produced in 1968. By that time, the artist was already settled at Osogbo. The piece depicts some of the elements found in the 'ghost stories' paintings of the Osogbo artists. In the piece, different creatures as birds, floral and plant motifs are stitched alongside other concentric patterns on a black cloth measuring 121.9 centimetres x 91.4 centimetres. At the centre, the artist stitched a couple of circular rings of coloured threads, including blue, yellow, red, violet, lemon green, pink ending with white at the outermost of these. She flanked this with birds at the top and plant motifs along with other patterns on each side. The head of an octopus is stitched with blue thread to the left of the central circles having huge eyes. The artist achieves a harmony of this panoply of brilliant colours and motifs by its being set against a black background.



Plate XXIV: *Untitled* 121.9 cm x 91.4 cm. An example of embroidery done by Nike Okundaye, 1968, © Nike Art Gallery.

Aside the preceding, a painting form which Okundaye seems to relish creating, are landscapes. The artist intimates that as far back as 1967 and 1968, when she started painting, village scenes were her main subject matter. This was while she was working for the Indian couple at Kabba. Unfortunately, many of those pieces were disposed to expatriate tourists, who took them away, leaving her with no records of such works. Over time, her love for landscapes has resulted in a ceaseless and prolific production of various land sceneries. Most of these exquisitely rendered country sides, are obviously precious memories of her cherished homeland Ogidi. An example of such landscapes, is the superb untitled painting (in Plate XXV) done in 1995. The painting shows a scenic village view executed with acrylic colours against a background of her usual *adire* patterns. In the work, the artist seems to have divided the canvas into three planes; an

upper, middle and lower parts. The middle part which is larger, is busier starting with the huts and trees arranged along the horizon.



Plate XXV: *Untitled*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas.
22" x 50" (55.8 cm x 127 cm), 1995. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Various tones of violet are dexterously used to portray an array of carefully arranged textile patterns beneath these, which blend with the images, to create a pleasing composition. The upper apart of the work, which also has textile patterns, is painted with ochre and mauve in a manner that makes the work appear to glow in those portions. This same glowing colour is repeated in some of the check patterns at middle of the foreground and is set beside blue,

creating a harmonious contrast. The deeper violets, and darkness at the right hand side of the work heightens the idea of proximity, against the more lightened distance of the far left.

A favourite kind of Okundaye's landscapes, are those numerous studies belonging to her *Village series.* Several of her landscapes are produced in this manner. Typifying this, is *Village series* (Plate XXVI) also produced in 2003. It is a predominantly yellow wash executed with water colour, pen, and ink on paper. The composition comprises of a dark set of huts and trees clustered in the middle, which are arranged on a sloping hill achieved by applying dabs of black ink over that portion. This contributes in giving the impression of recession. At the fore and background, leaves, feathers with deftly arranged checked *Adire* patterns, are painted with a lightly brushed yellow paint. The artist created colour harmony by the deep brown in the middle and top left of the work, as well as, a scanty dash of grey and orange. The patterns and cascading feathers at the back, combined with the ridged formations at the foreground, produce a rhythmic movement in the work.



Plate XXVI. Nike Okundaye *Village Series*, Pen and Ink on Canvas, 12" x 17" (30.4cm x 43.18 cm), 2003. © *Ogidi Day New yam Harvest and* Art *festival* (2014:24).

It is may be said that, even though the aforementioned landscapes represent actual sceneries in the artist' life, they are apparently conceptual reflections on such sites. Those rather conceptual and lightly coloured paintings, are contrasted by the more naturalistic opaque brushwork in *The Water Lily of River Ogidi at Night* (Plate XXVII), which she had painted in 2002.

The piece is a celebration of the beautiful lush African environment of Ogidi. Okundaye's treatment of water at night, is striking. The artist imbues the lilies with a luminosity, as though they were lit from a light source above. The sizes of the lilies gradually diminish, as they recede from view. This combines with the meandering of the water, painted in a more brilliant blue at



Plate XXVII, Nike Okundaye. *The Water Lily of river Ogidi at night,* Acrylic on canvas, 36" x 48"(91.4cm x 121.9cm), 2002. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

the foreground, but subtly darkened at the rear to suggest distance. The impression of night is achieved by the sparkling yellow on the lilies, reflections of light on the river and the hazy colours at both sides of the work. The painter gives the impression that the scene was viewed at a point directly at one end of the river.

Another genre of Okundaye's painted forms are classifiable as portraiture. It must however be clarified that, portraiture in the real sense has not been a significant feature of Okundaye's

painting. She recalls that, her very first portrait was that of Pope John Paul II on his first papal visit to Nigeria in 1982, which was commissioned by then Catholic Bishop of her district. This was produced in embroidered form for which she said she was paid 2 pounds. According to the artist, her next portrait also executed in the early 1980s, was likewise a commissioned embroidery of Ronald Reagan when he was President of the United States.

Surviving examples of her foray into portraiture are consequently few. Some of these include *Portrait* done in 2001 showing the face of a woman at the upper left side of paper, with pen and ink. In that piece, the image is surrounded by *adire* patterns. The painting titled *Pattern of Life* (Plate XXVIII) produced in 1973 for instance, might as well be considered a double portrait of the broadly smiling couple depicted in the picture.



Plate XXVIII: *Pattern of Life.* Nike Okundaye. Acrylic on canvas, 41½" x 51½"(105.41cm x, 130cm) 1973. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Painted in a brilliant orange and ochre, their bodies are submerged into the background of textile patterns, which has come to be known as her signature. Although the left side of the painting is darkened, the outlines of the man's head are fairly well modelled to depict the hair and all facial features. The prominent pattern all over the work is the cycle of life, denoting that every stage of life is set. The woman, whom the artist positioned to his left against a lighter background, has been given the same treatment and wears a similar wide grin. White colour is used sparingly to highlight teeth, faintly impress outlines of shoulders of both figures and shirt collar of the man's shirt. The man and woman are shown with heads tilted towards each other, suggesting the affection between them.

Aside the preceding, Okundaye has produced a number of other portraits. Among these are two of are her *Self-* portraits executed in 2002 (not illustrated) featuring a simple non-detailed profile of the artist all wrapped up against the harsh temperate weather of a country she visited in Europe that year (2002). In that work, the artist dressed in a Yoruba traditional Yoruba attire comprising of *gele* (head gear), and wrapping herself with the *ipele* (cloth usually wrapped round the waist over the wrapper by Yoruba women) of a dark sienna colour. The image is set against a yellow background of *adire* patterns. The second is a fine linear study done with water colour, pen and ink on paper. The image in this last example is surrounded with intricately well arranged *adire* patterns, and a row of lit candles by her right.

The untitled image which Okundaye painted in 2008 (Plate XXIX), is yet another piece illustrating her venture into portraiture. It shows the profile of a woman with her left hand raised and resting on her head. Though her body is turned to face frontwards directing her gaze towards the viewer, her facial and other features are fairly well modelled, capturing her fixed gaze. The

woman likewise depicted wearing a scarf, is all enmeshed in a background of *adire* patterns. The entire work is done in a monochromatic blue. The only contrasting colours in this work are the yellow on the ear ring, hair ornaments and dash of whitened red on the bracelet, making them seem to glitter. In this case, the facial features are shown, displaying a beautiful woman with make-up. Excepting for the bangles, concentric circles (patterns of life) are arranged all the way up the raised arm.

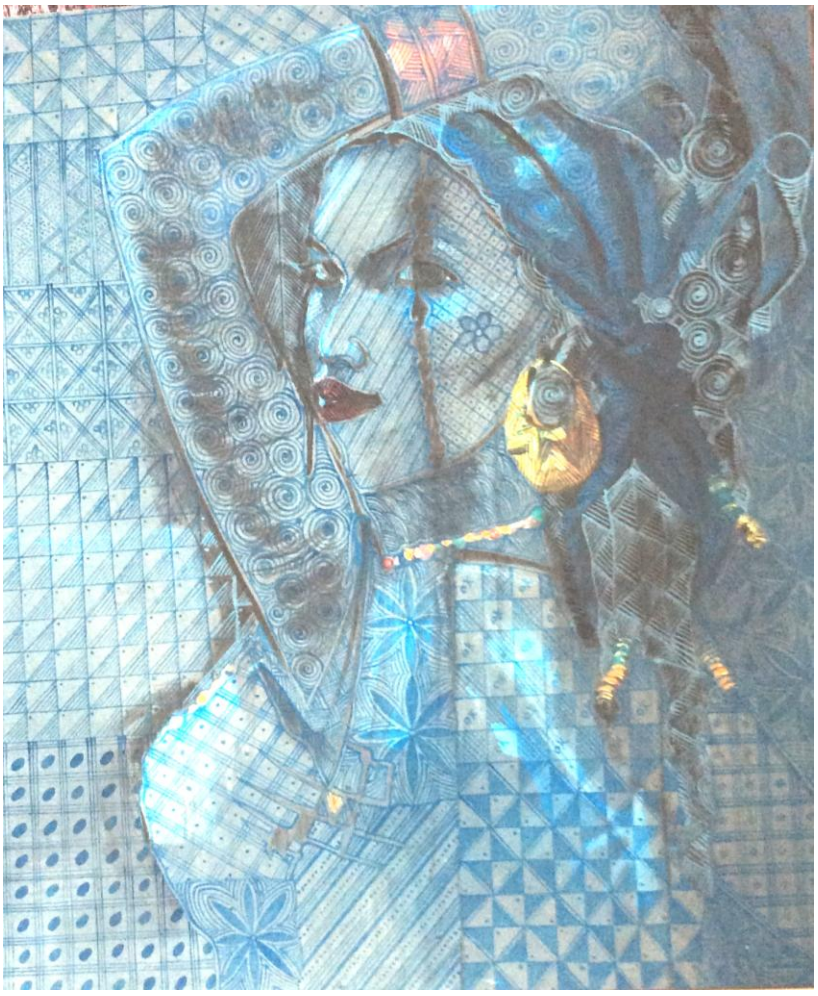


Plate XXIX, *Untitled,* Nike Okundaye. Acrylic on canvas, 34" x 28"(86.36 cm x 71.12 cm), 2008. © *Nike* Art Gallery, Lagos.

In some instances, Okundaye has produced paintings with several faces. *Patterns of life* (Plate XXX) produced in 2004 for instance, shows a group of faces placed against a background of the Nigerian flag colours of green, white, and green. On this canvas, one is immediately confronted with the images of heads some of which wear grim expressions, while some appear cheery. A number of them are backing the viewer, a few are facing sideways with the rest facing frontwards. Another identifiable feature on *Patterns of Life,* are the all over repeated pentagrams (a crossed star) found on Nigeria's old coin currency. The painting signifies that, all Nigerians pass through different circumstances, but are united under one canopy of currency.



Plate XXX: *Patterns of Life,* Nike Okundaye. Acrylic on Canvas.
57"x 68" (144.78 cm x 172 cm), 2004. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The bulk of Okundaye's other painting forms are compositions with either human figures, or a combination of forms and objects, or settings. Most of the latter are compositions showing either markets, village sceneries, images, structures or activities against the backdrop of a rural landscape setting. This category includes those of her works depicting female figures performing one activity or the other. In a few instances, though it seems to be a rarity in her painting career so far, Okundaye has produced installations[16] exemplified by *Quilt* (Plate XXXI) and *Tree of Life* (Plate XXXII) produced in 2006. The piece *Quilt* is simply cloth sewn into a quilt from dyed cloth using *adire* and batik methods. This quilt in Plate XXXI, is mounted in an upright manner, with supports behind it. The main colour in which the patterns were dyed is indigo blue. The patterns at the outer edge are lighter, while she mixed those in the middle with darker shades of indigo. The piece was displayed in a show organised under the Fullbright Exchange programme sponsored by the Public Affairs Section of United States Embassy in Nigeria. The aim behind making this installation, was to showcase traditional *adire* through rendering it as a utilitarian object. Although, the piece is not essentially a painting, it exemplifies Okundaye's few efforts at producing installations that include the use of colours (albeit via dyeing).

[16] The perspective of installation in this case follows Princethal' (2009) conception noted on page 90 of this Thesis. Although the quilt in this case is a textile work, it's display as an installation informs its being cited as an example of Okundaye's few installation works.



Plate XXXI: *Quilt,* Nike Okundaye. Installation, 2006. © Five *Artists: Possibilities and Results* (n.d.:16)

Similarly, *Tree of life* (Plate XXXII) is an installation composed of a batik hanging as background, showing a gently undulating field full of leafless trees with interlocking branches, on which a bunch of some tiny gourds has been hung with some items arranged at the bottom. At the middle of the floor is a basket in which other items as two small sculptures and gourds have been placed.



Plate XXXII: Tree *of Life*, (Installation), Nike Okundaye, 2006. © *Five Artists: Possibilities and Results* (n.d.:16)

The two figures are modelled to show typical features of Yoruba sculpture. At both extreme sides of this, are two stands, over which numerous items including pieces of cloth, and flat miniature figurines have been placed. The main colours Okundaye applied in this work, are blue and green. The only other contrasting colours are the beadwork on the basket, beads hung on the sculptures and the articles on the stands. The effect of these specks of white and natural colours on the gourds are complementary to the dominant blue and green of the background.

A notable part of Okundaye's painting forms, are her collaborative paintings with Tola Wewe. These represent a unique blend of skills and creativity by two artists, already discussed extensively in the literature review section of this study. Tola Wewe (b. 1959) an indigene of

Okitipupa in Ondo State, holds a degree in Fine Art from University of Ife in 1983 and a Masters degree in African Visual Arts from University of Ibadan, in 1986. Wewe worked as a cartoonist, before becoming a full time studio artist in 1991. His basic academic training at Ife, his Masters Research programme on the Ijaw water spirit mask and the Yoruba society, are seen to have tremendously impacted his painting style. Wewe's style is generally said to draw from the *Ona* symbols of the Yoruba and his themes project traditional folklores and myths of his native Yoruba culture.

Okundaye discloses that, she had known Tola Wewe for a long time before they stumbled into collaborative painting slightly over a decade ago. Since then, the duo have produced scores of paintings, which they have exhibited annually. According to Okundaye, they have exhibited steadily over the years both within and outside the country. The formula for their works has remained unchanged. Wewe produces the main images and Okundaye completes the work by adding her *adire alabela* designs. This is visible through the *Untitled* pieces in Plate XXXIII, which is among some of their early works done in the year 2000.The painting clearly shows Wewe's typical images, all clearly outlined. Three images are easily identifiable in this picture. On the right side, a male image looms over a smaller one at its base. To the left, a female figure is depicted facing right. Two pairs of stylized eyes suggesting two other faces, are shown behind the prominent images. The features of all three figures are simplified recall Yoruba traditional sculptures. Lines cutting through the images create shapes on the picture plane. All spaces and shapes are filled up with different carefully penned *adire* patterns. The palette in this work is limited to dark red, black and mixtures of yellow.



Plate XXXIII: *Untitled*, Nike Okundaye and Tola Wewe. Acrylic on canvas. 36" x 24 " (91.44cm 60.96cm), 2000. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.



Plate XXXIV: *Untitled*, Nike Okundaye and Tola Wewe, 2008. © Artnet.com

Wewe's basic linear and flat images are still visible amidst Okundaye's textile motifs in later paintings as in the *Untitled,* 2008 (Plate XXXIV). The treatment in this work appears to differ slightly, but retains the artists' recognizable collaborative trait. It once again, demonstrates the ability of the two artists to blend their styles effortlessly. Notably, there are more images in this work, all simplistic and more curvaceous than the preceding example. The images appear more engaging, showing one hand that seems to be holding what appears to be a spear. The painting also seems to be an exercise in multiple colours whereby red, blue, yellow, green and browns are placed harmoniously in contrasting blocks of the work.

Peju Alatise's Painting Forms

In attempting to determine the nature of Peju Alatise's painting forms, it was found that she has ventured into the production of a variety of painting forms. These include conventional, and unconventional forms. Her conventional paintings are those works that follow general rules and principles, like depicting easily distinguished images in their correct proportions. Portraiture was identified as a conspicuous painting form of Alatise. Her earliest portraits accessed by this research include those she produced in a series: A *little Bit of me in them.* These paintings were presented in the year 2000, along with other works in her anthology of Renaissance craft. Explaining the objective behind that presentation, Alatise remarks that Renaissance craft is about the rebirth of African craft being interwoven with contemporary art.

An example from these early portraits, is *A little bit of me in all of them (3)* depicted in



Plate XXXV: *A little bit of me in all of them (Series)*
Peju Alatise. © *JIGIDA,* African *Adornments,* 2003:4.

Plate XXXV. The portrait shows the partial profile of a smiling woman, whose face is turned rightwards to face the viewer. The image's head fills up three quarters of the canvas. It is executed in a monochromatic brown, showing Alatise's skilful handling of colour. The artist manipulates tones and shades of sienna and umber to model the forms of the face, hair, neck and teeth. She placed this image against a lighter background comprising of flowing patterns. This serves to accentuate the head, bringing it to the forefront.

Portraits are also among the painting forms, which Alatise displayed in her debut solo show '*Oge* Beauty of African Women' in 2001. Other early portraits made by Alatise, include those exhibited among her Jigida show at the Goethe Institut in 2003. Notable portraits in this ensemble comprise of the "*Labake"* from her Lipstick Series. Later portraits include; *The Way She Likes it* painted in 2004. A reasonable number of Alatise's other portraits such as *Untitled, Sunset on Ajantola, When the Sun Sets, When Dawn Breaks*, and *Spring, New Beginning*, were produced in 2005. In 2006, she painted *Seki, the Altar Ego,* while *Portrait of Funke* was painted in 2007. Some other portraits including *Saturday Morning,* and *Convert of a Jagged Cross*, were done in 2008. Some of her portraits are executed as sets of multiple panels. Her collection of such portraits consist of a series of nine portrait panels *I'll be watching you,* produced in 2009, and *Okiemute (Time for Everything);* comprising of four panels executed in 2010. Some other noteworthy portraits of Alatise include her *Orange Scarf* series. A few of her compositions such as *Forgiven* and *In it Together* which she produced in 2008, could be classified as double portraits.

When the Sun Sets (Plate XXXVI) painted in 2005, typically characterise some of Alatise's portraiture. It portrays a young woman, whose neck down to the chest, is heavily decked with finely strung cream coloured beads. Shown dominating the entire canvas, the bust size figure is peering intently downwards. Her countenance conveys engrossment in deep contemplation of an invisible object. In this work, Alatise's keen understanding of contrasting colours materializes in form of the heavy dark Colours, with which she has surrounded the figure suggests that, night

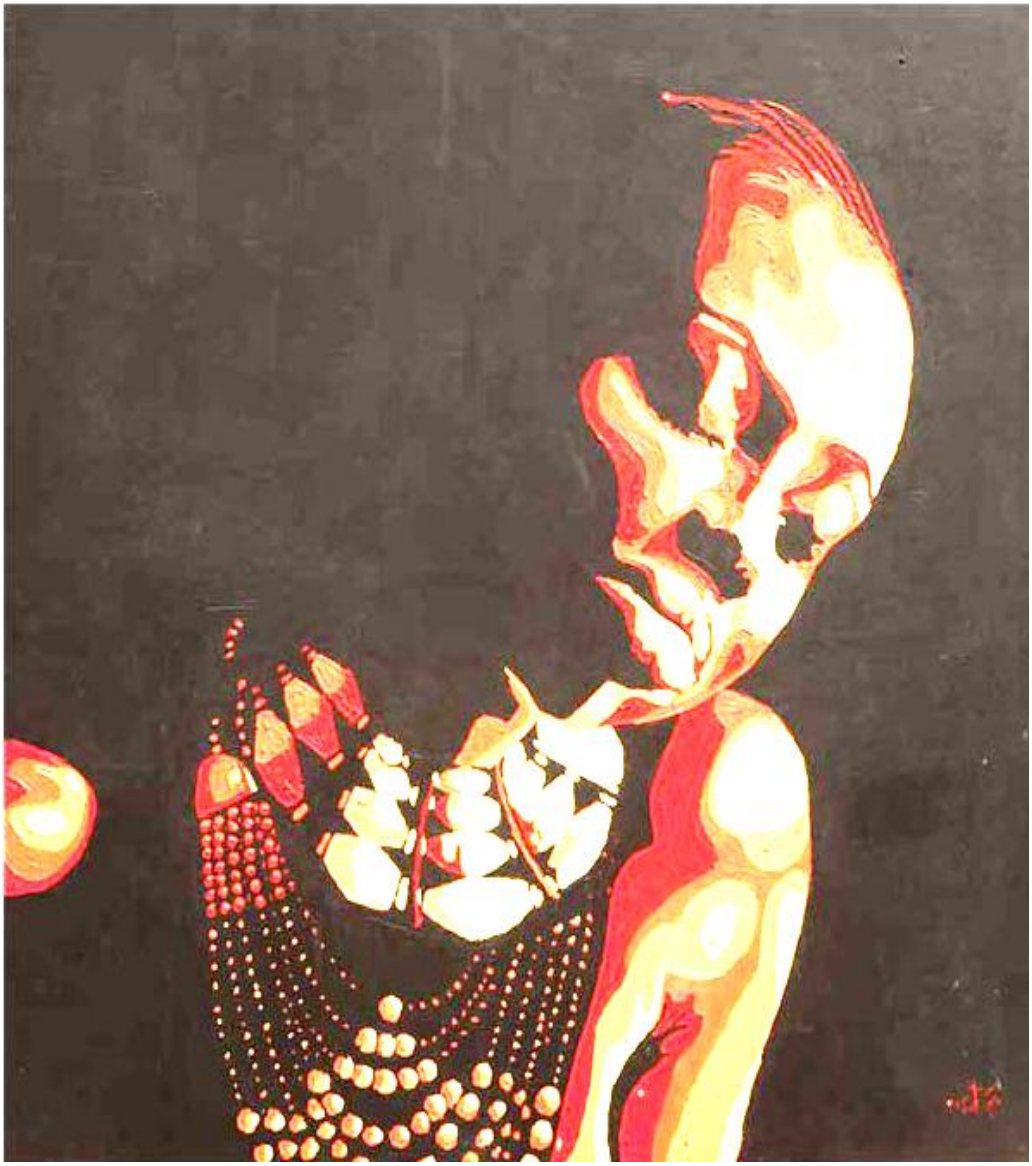


Plate XXXVI: *When the sun sets*, Peju Alatise. Acrylic on canvas
122cm x 122 cm, 2005, Art house-ng.com

has fallen. By a concealed light source, the artist lights up the face, shoulders, and beads. This is done using richly blends of red and light yellow with white, all worked into a thick golden impasto. The effect of the colour work, resembles contour work showing a graded series of

tones. Through this subjective and expressive play on colour, light and darkness, Alatise has succeeded in producing a convincing modelling of the lively figure.

Blue Wrapper (Plate XXXVII), is one of Alatise's paintings produced in 2008. The piece, exemplifies another of Alatise's portraiture, this time featuring a woman who appears to be in

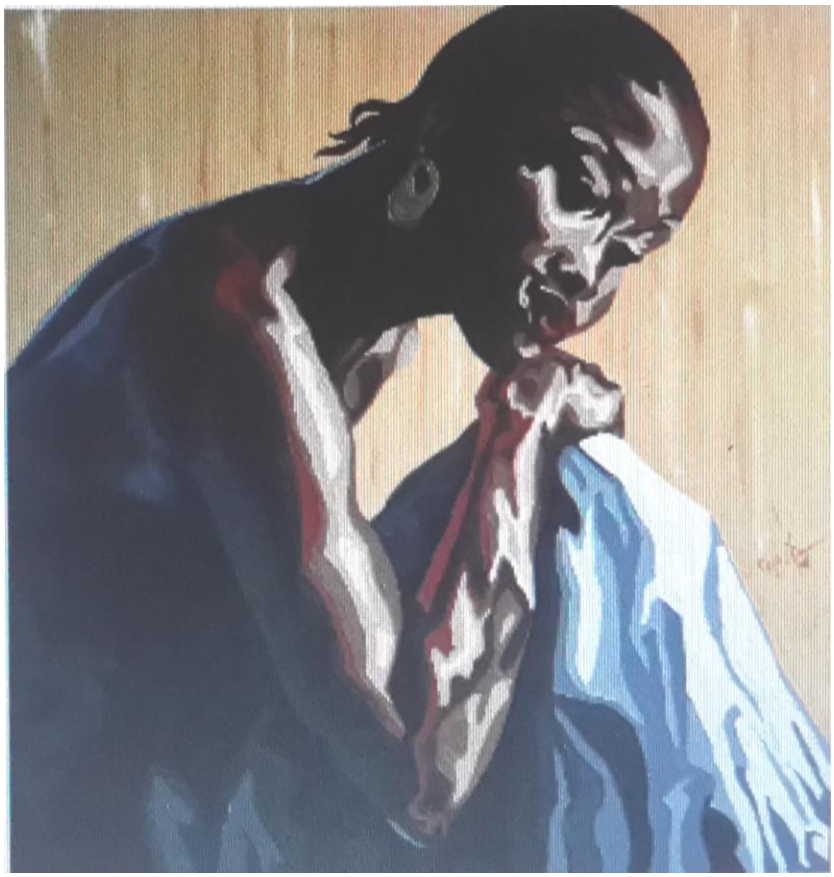


Plate XXXVII: *Blue Wrapper*, Peju Alatise, 2008. © *Silifat* (2006)

reverie. The figure which fills up the canvas, is bent forwards, to rest her half turned head on her wrist that is on her raised knee. The figure's body is bare down to the waist and raised, which are covered with the blue wrapper. Alatise's treatment of this figure and its background is

captivating. The background is filled with thin merging vertical stripes of brown and greys. The upper parts of the body (head, shoulders, and hand) are painted with deep blue, sienna and very dark browns. Light greys and white are used to define areas of light. From the back to the raised knee, Alatise manipulates tones and shades of blue, creating a subtle modelling of the image, which on the most part, is plunged in shadows. The artist does not attempt to portray a photorealism, yet proper anatomical proportions of this image is maintained, and body features clearly defined.

Alatise's set of portraits *I'll Be Watching You* done in 2009 (plate XXXVIII), and *Okiemute (Time for Everything)* in 2010 (Plate XXXIX), illustrate a different approach. The portraits in Plate XL, comprise of nine panels each measuring 99 centimetres x 99 centimetres; depicting the same model in different poses. These are arranged in rows of three portraits each. In this ensemble, the artist employs monochrome tawny brown, sienna and reds to create the portraits. She also displays a fine use of chiaroscuro in this set of works, achieved by smooth and even brushwork in all of these panels. Starting with a dark sienna background in the first panel, she gradually graded the colours, lightening them by adding yellow. By the sixth panel, the model is painted on an ochre background. She resumes the use of sienna in the last row, ending with finely toned red backgrounds.



Plate XXXVIII; *I'll Be Watching You,* Peju Alatise, Acrylic on Canvas.
99 cm x 99 cm per panel, 2009. Source: arthouse.ng

The model has a turban on her head, her shoulders are bare except for the beads hanging around her neck. In the first panel, she is depicted with eyes closed and is facing the viewer directly. Part of the right side of her face is shown to be in darkness. In the second panel, the model is facing left, her countenance displaying a lazy smile with the body displaying a relaxed posture. In the

third panel, the model is completely turned left with only her profile showing. Her head is tilted upwards. In the fourth panel, the model with eyes closed, is slightly turned towards right. In the next panel, she bears a serious mien. In the eight panel, the backside of the model is shown and in the last, she faces left once more, with her head resting on her wrist.

Okiemute (Time for Everything, plate XXXIX) a set of four portraits produced in 2010, also showcases Alatise's exploration with multiple panels of portraits. In these pieces, Alatise continued with the fine chiaroscuro handling on parts of the work in a manner similar to Plate XXXVIII. In this case, she varied the treatment by employing more contrasting colours. Once again, the model is portrayed with a headgear on her head. This time, the head gear is painted blue and loosely tied with a long edge falling over her right shoulder in all of the canvases. The model's shoulder, as in all four panels in this ensemble, is bare and devoid of any ornaments. Also, all of the portraits in this group have an uneven white line crossing over the bridges of the noses, and dots lining the upper left eyebrow.

Some of these portraits appear to be a virtuoso (skilful) exercise in blue and red. The first panel is an exploration with blue-greys. That model, is painted darker grey, is depicted with a blue head gear and is set against a background of lighter toned mixture of blue and grey. The only sharply contrasting hue on this work, are the cherry red lips. The second piece depicts the model painted with a blue-grey, but having parts of the face and shoulder, lit by smoothly brushed portions of yellow ochre, creating a startling glowing contrast. This figure is set against a blue background.



Plate **XXXIX;** *Okiemute (Time for Everything)*, Peju Alatise, Oil on canvas.91.4 cm x 91.4cm per panel, 2010.Source: www.arthouse-ng.com_PEJU_ALATISE.html

In the third panel, there is a subtle harmony achieved by the image being modulated in violet against the sienna background. In the last panel, even though the image retains the same blue

headgear, her shoulders and face are painted red, with a few dabs of yellow and she is set against a green background. These repeated portraits conjure up the impression that, Alatise is systematic and ideological. In the last two sets of portraits, *I'll be Watching You* and *Okiemute,* Alatise clearly demonstrates influence of studying Rembrandt and Dale; this is discernible in the relatively smooth chiaroscuro in those works. The artist however exhibits originality in the manner of presenting her images.

The second category of Alatise's painting forms, are her unconventional works. They include forms understood to either comprise of conceptualized images, which may, or not necessarily, resemble realistic images. Some of these could be rated as metaphorical, fantasy, optical illusion or allegory. Within the seeming short period of her painting career, Alatise could be said to have produced a relatively large body of unconventional works evidenced by murals, mixed media compositions, collages and installation.

Some of Alatise's early abstract forms presented in her Renaissance Crafts anthology in the year 2000, illustrate her initial venture into unconventional painting forms. Such works include *Life's a Highway*, and *Of All that is left*. Belonging also to the unconventional category, collage has been found to feature prominently among Peju Alatise's painting forms. Right from the onset of her painting career, the artist executed two distinct kinds of collages among her 2000 collection. The first of these were the usual type; involving pasting various items unto surfaces such as canvas. The second were her cloth collages described under her media and techniques. The latter are mainly produced in series; each of which can be considered as a form having distinct traits. While all of Alatise's collage elements are adhered to supports, her method of attaching

materials in many of them goes beyond just pasting of paper, discarded objects or cloth in several cases. They include construction, folding, creasing, sewing and as gluing.

A very early example of Alatise's collages is *Oriya* (Plate XL) which is among the set of works she displayed in her Jigida African Adornment exhibition in 2003, which simply depicts objects used by women in making their hair. *Oriya* is the Yoruba name for a wooden or metal crafted comb having a long handle. In contemplating this painting, the attention of the viewer is made to gravitate between, a square piece of red cloth with jagged ends pasted at the middle of the work and four equal parts into which she has divided the composition, using strips of tinted red lines. On this smaller red cloth at the very middle, a metal circle having a vertical line at its center slicing a snake form that begins at the upper and ends at the lower part of the circle. Two carved wooden combs are attached on each side of this middle piece. The handle of the left comb depicts an image supporting two thrones on both of its raised hands. The image of the one to the right bears a single vessel. Alatise then arranged smaller carved combs in the bottom left and top right squares, painted a mixture comprising a lightened sienna. The remaining squares are decorated with white and umber.

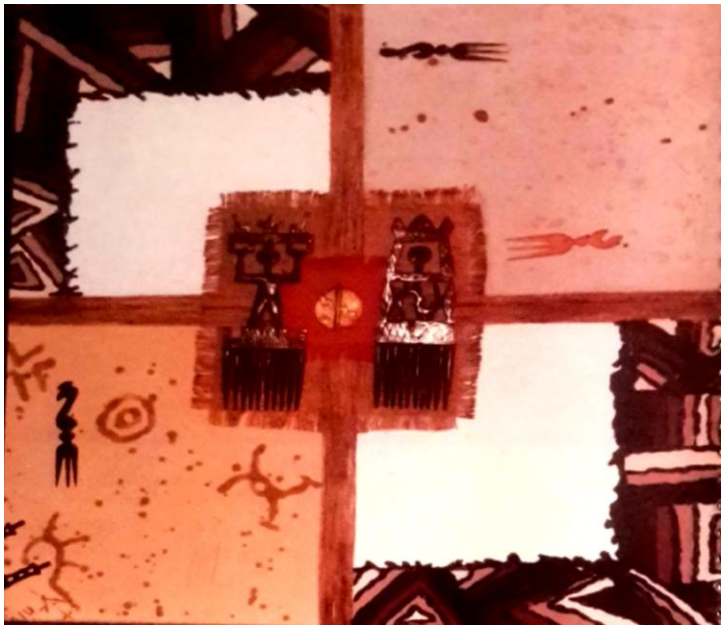


Plate **XL**; *Oriya,* Peju Alatise, © *JIGIDA, African Adornment.*2003:12

In reality, quite a significant number of Alatise's painting forms are actually mixed media work. Evidently, the artist appears to have begun incorporating this among her works right from the onset of her painting career. Another early example of such also portrayed by the artist in her 2000 Renaissance anthology, is *Etched Calabash.* Also in this group, painted crafts such as *Spears from Burkina* (not illustrated) is one of Alatise's mixed media work showcasing five beautifully crafted miniature spear forms placed against coloured backgrounds.

It would seem that, beginning from 2009, the artist embarked on more refined explorations with mixed media using different kinds of innovative channels. These are discussed in more detail in other sections of this study. Some of the work in that form include; *The Other Half won't let Me, Purple period: Lest I forget 1, 2, 3*; *some Have, Some Have Not*. A number of such paintings like *Beautiful Mind, Captain Red Tape, Back of Eden, Nine Year Old Bride, Wind Element –Like the Labalaba, Water Element –Erin Ijesha*, and *Ascension,* were created in 2011. Also in 2012, she

produced mixed media works such as *Masquerading, Earth Element (Orun lo-m'eni-to ma-la), The Beginning of Ascension, Body Parts* and *Nigerian Woman*.

A considerable number of these later forms of Alatise's mixed media work, are more two categories appropriately, classifiable as cloth collage and cloth panels. She considers them to be her most recurring art form. Other pieces exemplifying Alatise's mixed media works done mainly with cloth are her *Ipele* series comprising of six different works; *Smoke and Ashes* series consisting of four different works; *Aso Bora,* comprising a set of three pieces ending with *Scrabble* and *Scribble*. A variant of her cloth collages include *She put a hole in him, She Said No,* and her Earth Stories Series- *She Let Herself Go* and *Earth Before there was Man* all executed in 2013.

The mixed-media piece *Life is an Enfoldment* (Plate XLI), illustrates a variant of Alatise's cloth collages. It is an exercise involving finely cut fabric, mostly yellow into long slender tapering triangular shapes, which were then folded leaving their tips free. These were stiffened with resin, then stuck to a background on which similar shapes (but this time unfolded), have been painted in washes of violet. Areas of crisscrossing lines on this background, have created spaces which the artist filled with yellow, orange, green and blue. A few lines are also boldly drawn alongside these forms in black.



Plate **XLI:** *Life is an Enfoldment*, Peju Alatise.
48 cm x 96 cm © pejualatise.com



Plate **XLII:** ***Earth Stories;*** *Fire Element- Alagbada-Ina,* Alatise. 272cm x158cm, 2011. Source: *Wrapture Exhibition Catalogue* (2013: 71)



Plate **XLII b, Side view of** ***Earth Stories;*** *Fire Element*
Source : pejualatise.com (2015)

Alagabada –Ina (shown in Plate XLII a & XLII b) is a variation of Alatise's cloth collages, showcasing her skill in fashioning forms and images, from coiled strips of fabric. The fabric used are of two main sources: white speckled with grey, and yellow having reddish designs. The strips of fabric, of varying thickness, are irregularly wound and interlaced around a rectangular frame measuring 272 cm x 158 cm, in the manner similar to threading a weaving loom. At the outermost parts, the fabric are darkest. As they proceed inwards, they get lighter. Towards the middle, the artist interwove strands of the yellow fabric. Attached to this central part, by strips of

the same coiled fabric, is a slender effigy made up from cloth. The image entangled in yellow cloth, conveys the fire element.

Likewise unconventional, are the artist's cloth panels comprising of *Shrouded, All Coming Together*. 10 centimetres x10 centimetres per panel (71 in all) between 2011 and 2012, and her latest panel *Missing*, produced in 2014. *Shrouded* (Plates XLIII & XLIII b), exemplifies Alatise's exploration with cloth panels and marks her artistry related with spatial arrangement and colour composition. The work comprises of 33 panels, each measuring 42.5 centimetres x 42.5 centimetres. The artist produced the individual panels first, from a piece of wax fabric. Another piece which is formed into a different shape, and a little bit smaller than the 'mother panel', is frozen with resin, and fastened unto it. The artist also took care to ensure that these attached



Plate XLIII: *Shrouded* Peju Alatise, Cloth panels, 42.5 cm x 42.5cm per panel (33 panels), 2011. Source: actualite.com (2014)

pieces stand out against the panels. These were all arranged to create a fold like formation of varying shapes. Details of this can be seen in plate XLIII b below.



Plate XLIII b: Side view of *Shrouded* … Source: actualite.com (2014)

On some occasions, Alatise has collaborated with other artists to produce art works. Exemplifying this, is *They Know Not What They Do* (plate XLIV), a piece executed by Alatise and Fidelis Odogwu in 2010, an artist she has worked with for the past twelve years. It is a

mixed media work depicting small images resembling crucified forms on the upper part of the canvas, which is painted with interspersed vertical strips of light and slightly dark grey, while the lower part is dark. An uneven horizontal strip of coarsely brushed brown paint divides the larger upper portion with a dark grey bottom part of the work. Light grey paint is made to dribble unto the darkened lower part, the latter portion being covered with grey embossed dots.

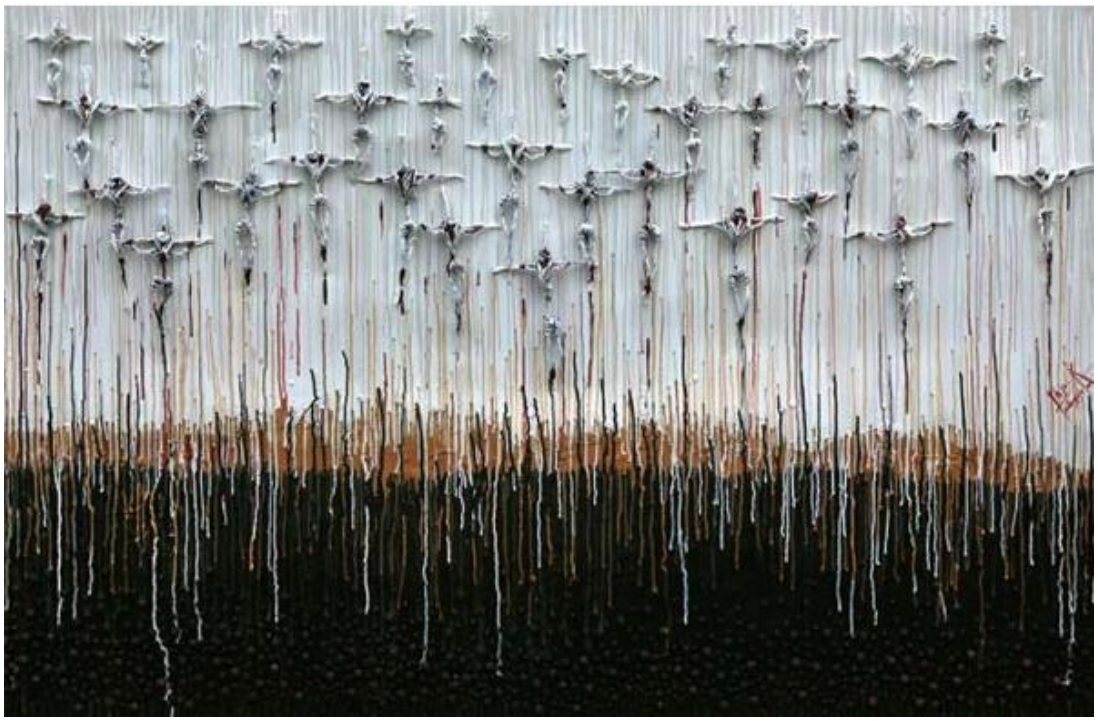


Plate XLIV: *They Know Not What They Do*, Peju Alatise and Fidelis Odogwu.
Mixed Media on Canvas, 121.9 cm x184.1 cm, 2010. Source: Art House-ng.com

Another piece illustrating Alatise's collaborative work, is the renovated Nigerian National Museum mural sponsored by The Ford Foundation. Peju Alatise along with other artists as Ndidi Dike, Richmond Ogolo, and Jefferson Johnson collaborated to produce that mural titled "*Glory to the Fatherland*" (Plate XLV). The mural comprised of five different paintings on the Museum complex façade. Essentially, it showcases different motifs drawn from the different Nigerian indigenous cultures. The visible motifs include masks, animal images showing the proverbial tortoise, lizards, cowries, and sign writing resembling Nsibidi symbols. All of these were rendered in a flat manner combining linear designs, patterns and dots painted with well blended colours.



Plate XLV: Images of "Glory to the Fatherland" New Mural at National Museum, Onikan Lagos. Photography by Chriss Aghana Nwogbu. Source: Aachronym.blogspot.com.

Yet another distinctive kind of identified painting form also explored by Alatise, are installations created from cloth[17]. These have included *Orange Scarf Goes to Heaven*, *All scarves go to Heaven*, and *Girl Interrupted*. The last of Alatise's paintings considered under her forms, is *Orange Scarf goes to Heaven* (plate XLVI). Belonging to works also designated as cloth collages, is this triptych composition measuring 48 inches x 48 inches per panel. It comprises of 12 cloth forms in all, arranged on three white panels. Three of these are in the first panel positioned to the left, four in the second which is at the middle, while the remaining five are in the third. In essence, the images, which are mainly bust-size are not real forms at all. Rather, they are just cloth folded to look like women wearing veils.



[17] Once more, it is acknowledged that the shrouds in *Orange Scarf Goes To Heaven* are three dimensional and should be more appropriately considered as relief sculptures. As installations however, with the composition highlighting colour and Princethal's considerations on page 90, they are discussed here as a painting.

Plate XLVI; *Orange Scarf Goes to Heaven.* Peju Alatise, (Triptych) Cloth collage 48cm x 48cm per panel, 2012. Source: actualite.com (2014).

These hollow 'images,' looking more like shrouds, are actually all done from white cloth with the exception of the first in the second panel. The latter is in created from coloured fabric primarily in orange with patterns in reds interspersed by a few blue flowers. To achieve the female forms, the artist had carefully arranged and folded the cloth before fixing them with resin to make them remain 'frozen'. These were each fastened unto the various panels that had been painted white. These shroud-like forms are in different poses; some facing frontwards, while others sideways. They all seemed to be turned towards the direction of the coloured form, as though focusing on it. Once again in this work, Alatise accomplishes a dramatic tension and sense of movement including the impression of physical contortion by the images. The emptiness and the direction of the forms combine to convey Alatise's philosophical message that whatever the colour of covering, all souls qualify to go to heaven.

Nike Okundaye's Subject matter.

The study finds that, Nike Okundaye's painting themes (subject matter) are hardly quantifiable and that mainly, her painting content has been varied. The artist paints from a limitless stockpile ranging from works that could be considered either remotely or out rightly connected to folklore that portrays Yoruba traditional customs and culture, celebrating Nigerian costumes, womanhood, and religion, social, political, love and other simple mundane issues.

Observably, some of Okundaye's initial area of painting focus included depicting aspects of rural life in her immediate surroundings, which was drawn from her lively imagination. A larger part of her earliest paintings including *Village scene* (plate XLVII), *Market Women,* which she produced in 1969, *Hoping for the Best* executed in 1970, *Royal daughters* done in 1975. All of these, seem to celebrate rural village life. Specifically, both *Village Scene* and *Market Women,* depict a typical Yoruba rural setting in the late 1960s and early 1970s. *A Village in my dreams* I & II both painted in 1977 also portray such rural locales.

Village Scene shown in Plate XLVII, is a batik hanging, portraying the kind of simple images Okundaye painted at the onset of her painting career. The composition enables the viewer a panoramic view of women activities in typical village setting. At the bottom left, a few women are connected to the larger woman seated on a stool towards the right, with a basket before her, by one extending what looks like a fowl towards the former. The seated woman seems to be the focal point of the lower part of the composition. The women at the lower left side, are separated



Plate XLVII: *Village Scene,* Nike Okundaye. *Adire alabela* with vegetable dye. 11.5" x 11.5"(29.2cm x 29.2 cm), 1967. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

from the scene above them, by an arch. That upper scene at the left also comprises of women interacting with one another. Some larger women carrying goods on their heads, loom over the seated figure. They are interconnected by stretching towards this central figure. The colour scheme in this work was limited to indigo, light red and grey. All the images and forms are flatly rendered, without much effort at showing modelling. The clothing worn by these women are all decorated with simple *adire* patterns.

Notably, akin to other Osogbo artists, animals formed a significant part of Okundaye's early subject matter. This is exemplified by such pieces as *Goat, Elephant Dreams*, *Labalaba* and *Heritage III.* Okundaye explains that goats for instance, are known to be properly domesticated animals. According to her, the Yoruba belief about goats is *T'o ba lo, o pada wa ile,* meaning

"no matter where they stray, they always come back home." This sentimentality is reflected in a splendid looking goat done in embroidery.

The elephant is an animal which Okundaye has painted a number of times. Okundaye's depiction of *Elephant DreamsI & II* is among some of her early works in the 1980s. In yet another study, *Show of strength,* which was done later in 2004, Okundaye captures a profile of the elephant's head in a more linear presentation, making a play with the curve of its head, trunk and tusk. In that work, Okundaye explores with transparent colours allowed to run down in some portions, and controlled in others, to create an impression of depth. The artist explains that, in Nigerian settings, elephants are animals believed to possess strength. The painting embodies that belief and portrays her keen insight into that animal's life. These paintings are created with small beads.

The naturalistic rendition of the elephants in *Elephant Dreams I* (Plate XLVIII), depicts the animal dominating the entire surface. Black beads are used to define the outlines of the elephants' bodies. Darker shades of blue beads are employed for modelling the forms of the elephants. They are presented in grey colour against a blue background. The eyes of the elephant

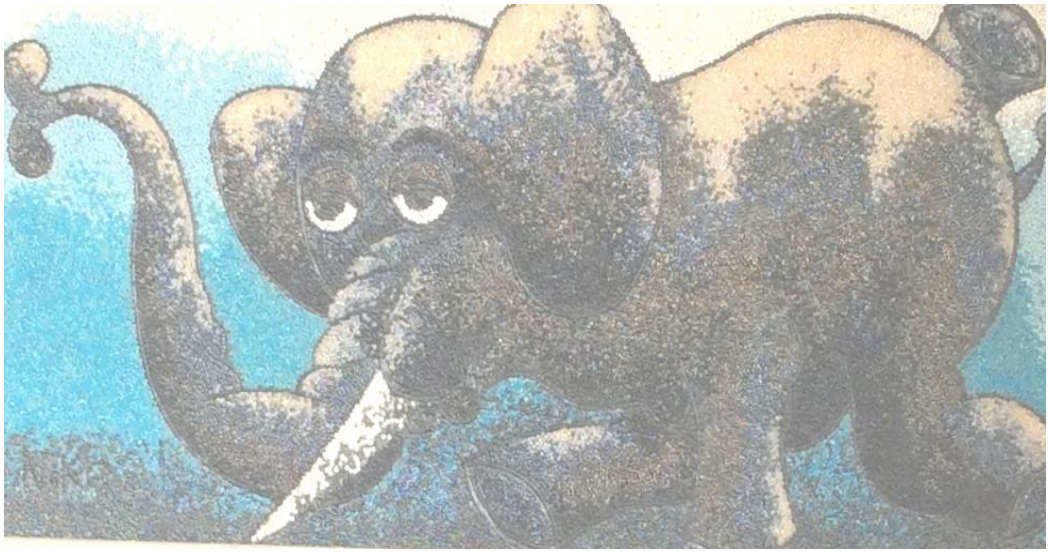


Plate XLVIII: *Elephant Dreams I* Nike Davies Okundaye. Mixed Media (Bead work) on Board11.5 "x 24.5" (29. 2cm x 62.2 cm), 1988. ©Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

recalls eyes found in the work of Osogbo artists like Taiwo Olaniyi. The sky is simply defined in both works by a lighter blue and white beads, while she manipulates darker shades of blue and black to give an impression of the ground. Her interest in this same subject inspired the artist to repeat this subject in different forms at a later period. The last of these, shows a frontal view of five elephants; three big and two small ones, all arranged in a straight row facing the viewer.

Okundaye also demonstrates her interest on portraying creatures in some watercolour, pen and ink studies which she titled *Fish of Like Minds* in 2001, and *Fish Family* in 2003. Excepting for

variation in sizes of images, and details of patterns in the work, the pieces are practically identical, having the same number of fish and similar settings. Illustration this is *Fish Family* (Plate XLIX), which she executed in 2003. In that study, Okundaye featured three fish with every detail within the work, was carefully thought out by the artist.

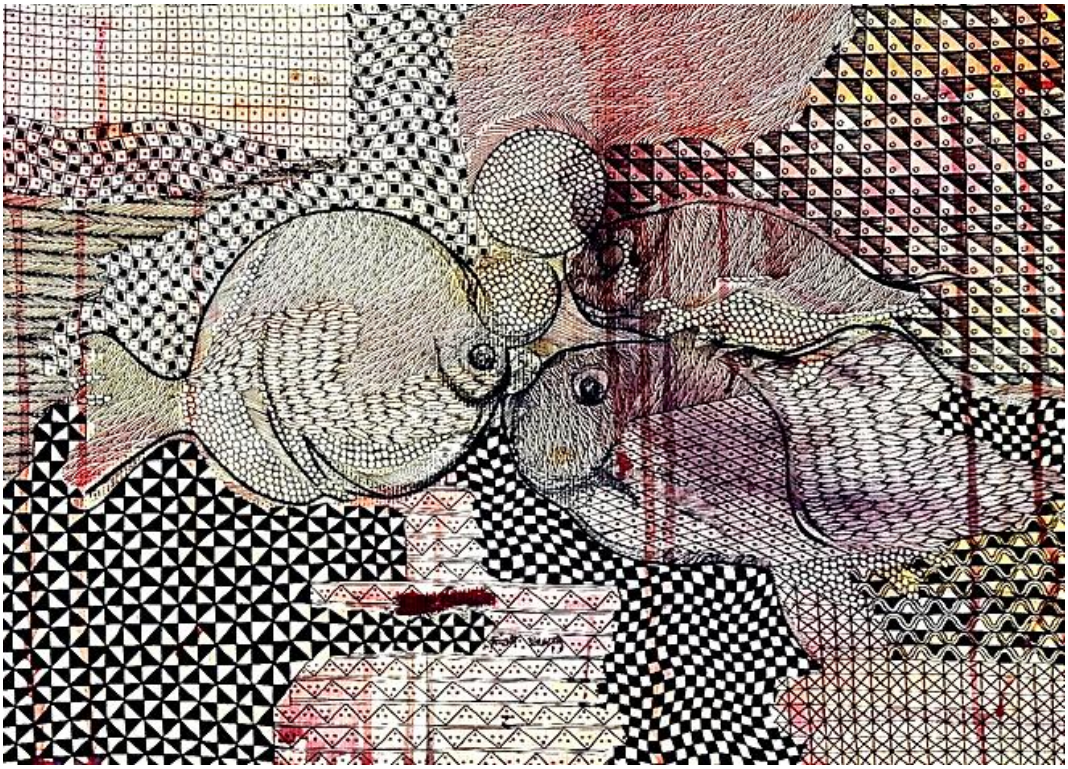


Plate XLIX: *Fish Family*, Nike Okundaye, Water colour, pen and ink on paper. 17½ "x 12½" (44.5cm x 31. 8 cm), 2003. GAFRAAT.com (2014).

The varying shapes and sizes for instance, are significant because they represent aspects of the fish family; the round big male, the flatter female and the offspring as the smaller one. Intimacy is denoted by the convergence of their heads at the middle, creating a cozy atmosphere. The two spore- like filled circles, are suggestive of eggs to propagate the family. All elements of this composition draw the eyes of the viewer to the center of the work, taking in this family scene. The manner in which the *adire* patterns are arranged including the illusionistic treatment applied on the patterns contribute in creating movement, which is suggestive of the aqueous habitat of fish.

Birds are among creatures that Okundaye has featured in her paintings. The charming piece *Baby Bird (*Plate L) done with water colour, pen and ink, illustrates this venture. The composition appears to have been divided diagonally into two portions, with the bird gingerly balanced in the



Plate **L:** *Baby Bird*, Nike Davies- Okundaye, Water colour, Pen & Ink on paper, 12½" x 17 ½" (31.5cm x 44.4) © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

middle. The left section, which is the upper part of the painting is made up of exquisite patterns comprising of smaller bird heads, discernible by the repeated beaks. These are arranged in what appears to be a textile design. That left portion is painted with a light wash of blue, producing a stain-like appearance. The right side comprises of some scale patterns, drawn with green representing the grass. The large baby bird in the middle faces right seems to be emerging from a

nest of eggs and is stylishly flanked by a set of leaves. Its plumes and tail are painted yellow connoting its downy feathers, with the same colour echoed on the eye region and nest. The neck and feet of the juvenile bird are etched with uneven serrated lines that are alternated in patches to produce the impression of the scales on the bird's body. The right side of the work comprising of patterns simulating grass, is painted green. The artist unites the composition by the light colour on the legs, neck and parts of the background.

Trees have also formed an impressive focus in some of Okundaye's paintings. The artist explained that, in Yoruba society the tree is a very important entity symbolizing perpetuation of life within the communities. She adds that this is the reason women are closely connected to trees. She also related the tradition of burying a child's placenta at the foot of a tree in the village because of the significant role of the latter. According to Okundaye, the principle behind this custom is to ensure that owners of placenta buried in that manner, will always be drawn back to their roots. Aside this, the designation tree of life generally, evokes religious connotations. In traditional African societies, the tree of life signifies a distinctive tree possessing the tendency to retain its evergreen form almost the year round. In addition to such trees being rare, they are considered to be imbued with mystical powers and are consequently venerated by host communities.

In the painting *Branches of Life* (plate LI) executed in 2002, Okundaye conceives the tree as comprising of branches related to womanhood. The work is an interesting illustration of an illuminated tree standing formidably at the middle of the canvas. Using thickly applied yellows, and black with daubs of red, the artist casts a bright glow around dark forms of the tree and its

leafless branches, which are depicted spreading out in all directions. The resulting effect of fiery light, provides the impression of an eerie, and captivating living essence.

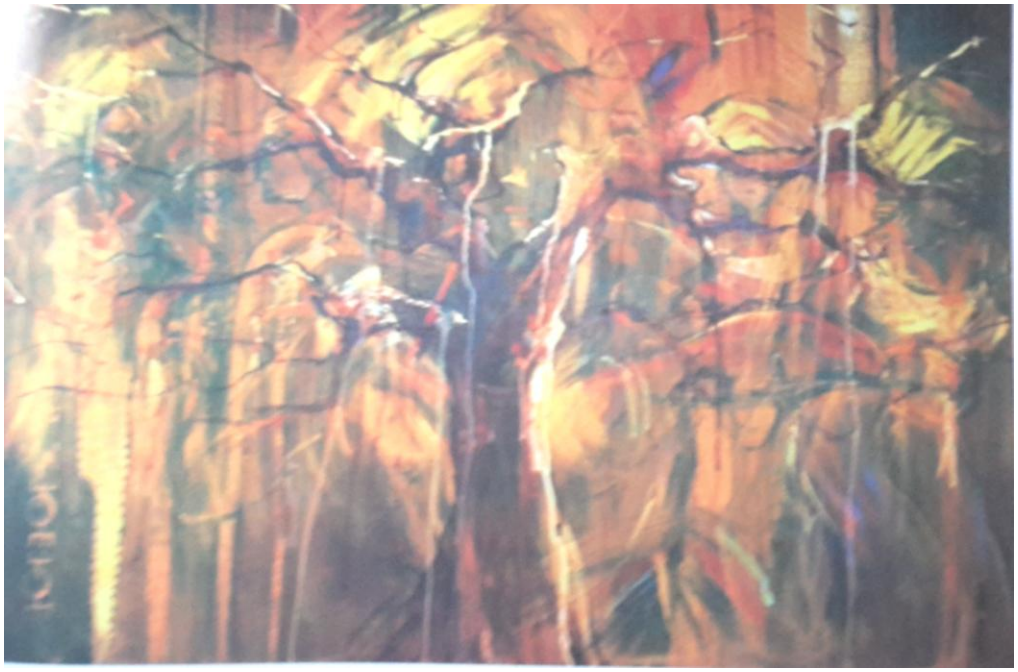


Plate LI: *The Branches of Life,* Nike Davies-Okundaye. Acrylic on Canvas 37 " x 41" (94 cm x 104.1cm), 2002. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The lit up areas are actually images of women, whose head regions and parts of bodies are painted in golden yellow colours. The viewer however, has to look closely to detect their forms. By use of these colours, the painting is imbued with a mystic aura, perhaps alluding to the transience of life. Images of women forms at the background, merging fluidly with tree branches impress the idea that women are propagators of life.

The Silkworm tree is a bush commonly found around the western parts of the country. The tree has provided threads for weaving the famous *Sanyan* cloth among the Yoruba. Its value as a

source of livelihood, and beauty inspired Okundaye to preserve it in this painting *Silkworm Tree*, (Plate LII). With a remarkable use of finely blended monochrome grey and three trees featured



Plate LII: *Silkworm Tree*, Nike Okundaye. 2007. © Artnet.com (2015).

against a setting of houses, Okundaye produces an exquisite landscape. At the foreground, the mesh work of textile patterns is used to create fine natural looking land formations, set against a feathery background. The entire treatment gives the work an impression of a village under a full moonlight. Okundaye skilfully breaks the monotony of grey, by applying a dash of thin red wash at the middle of the work.

A noteworthy feature of Okundaye's painting subject, is its special focus on women. It could be said that they are unquestionably an important part of Okundaye's thematic preoccupation. In some cases, women are singled out in her paintings and given individual treatment. Whichever the perspective presented, Okundaye shows women with elegance and charm evidenced by their elaborate decoration with beads and manner of dressing. Also notable is the depiction of female figures with fine headgears on their heads.

In many of her paintings, poses showing impressive dignified appearance of these women are rendered exemplified by the matronly woman in Plate LIII. Through the painting, Okundaye depicts the ideal well-dressed Yoruba woman, dressed in *Buba* (a simple round necked blouse with wide sleeves), *iro* (wrapper), *gele* (headgear) *and* hanging an *ipele* over her shoulder. The female figure portrayed showcases the feminine fashion for jewellery and adornment by women of substance in the western region of Nigeria during the colonial era up till today.



Plate LIII: *Untitled*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on canvas, 26"x36" (66cm x 91.4cm), 2009. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Okundaye's preference for portraying women, seems to have started early in her painting career. Earliest surviving examples of this inclination, could be seen in such works as *Village scene I* executed in 1967 (seen earlier on p. 175), and *Market* Women. This preference is also reflected in *Royal Daughters* (Plate LIV) produced in 1975. In the last work, the artist focussed on female members of the royal family, who are apparently not exempt from menial tasks such as carrying and selling food items; as the figures seem to be engaged in doing. The figures are simple



Plate LIV: *Royal Daughters.* Nike Okundaye, 1975, Acrylic Hand painted on Canvas, 55" x32" (139.7m x 81.3cm). Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

naturalistic images of three women dressed in green, reds and purple with bodies in profile view. The figures are painted flatly with yellow ochre without modelling on their forms. They are all placed on a checked background of textile patterns, which are painted blue. Notably, the rendition of images in this piece, recalls ancient Egyptian manner of representing figures.



Plate LV: *Untitled*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas, 29" x 29" (79.6cm x 79.6cm), 1995. Nike Art Gallery, Lagos

Similarly, the stylized untitled painting in Plate LV, depicts the image of a woman at the middle of the canvas with a burden on her head and holding a calabash shaped vessel full of round fruits in her hands. This represents the general picture of women, as thy toil tirelessly to support men in providing food for the family. This work seems to be an exercise in arranging curving lines around the main object. The flowing curve of the vessel used for the fruit, are gracefully intertwined by these sweeping lines. Once more, by this impressionistic blue-violet piece the artist proves she is a master at handling monochromatic brushwork.

Also related to esteeming women, Okundaye demonstrates through some of her paintings that; motherhood is commonly regarded as a noble attainment in African societies. Consequently, any

woman who conceives is cherished and the pregnancy is celebrated. Usually also, everything possible is done in order to ensure the safe arrival of the unborn child. Okundaye has produced some paintings reflecting this. *Safe Delivery* shown in plate LXIV, and *The Gift of Life* are both paintings, which subjectively depict a woman proudly displaying her pregnancy.



Plate LVI; *Safe Delivery*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas,
52"x 25" (132.1cm x 63.5cm), 2001. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

In *Safe Delivery*, Okundaye displays the woman's side view, to emphasize the bulging curve of the expecting mother's stomach, proudly displaying her heavy figure. The patterns at the background are all symbolic to ensure a safe delivery. The figure is symbolically dressed in a bright light green signifying fertility. Okundaye further extols the role of the mother through a

series of paintings. Okundaye also explains that the birth of a child considered a bundle of joy is likewise a reason for celebration as she tries to portray in other related paintings such as, *Dividend of Motherhood,* and *No one like my Mother.* The painting *Dividend of Motherhood* (Plate LVII) executed in 2007, reflects the customary practice in the traditional Nigerian settings, of proudly strapping children to their mother's back. The act of carrying her child shows



Plate LVII: *Dividend of Motherhood,* Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas, Mixed Media, 54" x 21"(137.1cm x 53.4cm), 2007. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

the bond shared by the two. In the piece, Okundaye shows a gaily dressed mother with a child strapped at her back. Both mother and baby are portrayed with red head gears. The images are

placed in a brilliant background of aquamarine blue, darkened to indigo at the top edges. The *adire* patterns in the background seem to glitter. The mother's head is turned towards the child, drawing the attention of the viewer to the unmistakable attachment between the two.

Related to the preceding, Okundaye appears to have become fascinated with the Yoruba custom of women outings. She explained that, customarily in ancient Yoruba settings, a newly married woman was at first confined within doors for some time. Outings occasioned a visit or the numerous ceremonies in the society offers women the opportunity to step out. Okundaye took pains to relate this in a series of her works. One of her early pieces on that subject, was a pen and ink piece titled *Evening Outing* which she produced in 1999. It showed a well dressed woman, holding a fan. *Her First Outing* painted in 2003 (plate LVIII), is another of paintings expressing



Plate LVIII; *First Outing*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic, pen & ink on canvas, 2003. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

that subject. It shows some smaller linear figures of women, some coming, and others going; all interposed within an enlarged female figure placed in the middle of the canvas. The piece is a

subjective comment in which the artist avoided detailed presentation for a sketchy drawing set against a light washed background of *adire* motifs. Okundaye once again displays a dexterous understanding of complementary colours, by setting the grey upper part of work against the ochre, sienna and slightly deeper grey she painted at the bottom. She skilfully applied a few dashes of violet and yellow on the headgear of main figure in the middle, then harmonised it with dark shades of violet across the middle of the work. They are all depicted as well dressed. The message conveyed is that, when a woman steps out of the confines of the home on an outing, she is usually well adorned. The artist also echoes this subject in another work *On her Second Day,* in 2004, in which she uses brilliant colours around the ears and neck of the woman to convey her beautification for the outing. Okundaye repeated this subject in other paintings such as *On Her Outing Date,* painted in 2005, and *The Brilliant Outing,* 2007.

In addition to the preceding, Okundaye also became captivated with depicting the stylish appearance of women during special occasions. *Delegate at her Best,* executed in 2007, is one of such works. She has continued producing paintings intermittently on that theme, including different series depicting women delegates. Most notable among these is *Women Delegate,* a set of six works she produced in 2011(Plate LIX) this time, done with pen and ink on paper.



Plate LIX: *Women delegate I-VI* (6 works). Nike Okundaye,
Pen and ink on paper laid on panel, 2011.Source: Artnet.com

In those pieces, some only contain single figures, while others show two. The artist applies few splashes of other colours aside from the black ink, to accentuate the spark in the mood of delegates. In addition to showing them with gay apparels, Okundaye captures gestures and moments of preparation as well. Notably, her penmanship depicts high technicality and sureness of draughtsman ship.

Okundaye's initial lack of further education has by no means implied that she remained retrograde. The artist is, however quite erudite in her mode of expression as well as in the

repertory of subjects. According to Okundaye, the chauvinistic streak in some men makes them say to woman that their 'head is not correct'. As a reaction to that, Okundaye's creative sophistication is revealed in her exploration of themes such as her brain series which she started with *The Brain Subject* in 2005 (plate LX), followed by *My Brain is Correct 1& 2*, in 2006 (Plates LXI & LXII respectively).



Plate LX: *The Brain Subject*, Nike Okundaye. Acrylic on Canvas. 35" X 30" (88.9cm x 76.2cm), *2005*, ©Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Recollecting ordeals she went through while coming up as a female artist, Okundaye decided in 2006 to express her experience via a series of two paintings entitled *My Brain is Correct* (I & II).

Both paintings show the brain within a woman's head, which reflects no abnormality. Okundaye's painting *The Brain Subject,* depicts silhouetted profiles of three heads, all facing right. The first head is more clearly defined. Each head overlaps the rest, merging into one another in an entirely rich light blue background covered with textile patterns.



Plate LXI: *My Brain is Correct I*, Nike Okundaye. Acrylic on Canvas. 45" x 28"(114.3cm x 71.2cm) 2006, ©Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.



Plate LXII: *My Brain is Correct II*, Nike Okundaye. Acrylic on Canvas, 54" x 29"(137.2cm x 73.6cm), 2006. ©Nike Art Gallery, Lagos

The other two *My Brain is Correct 1 &2* presents what looks like a dissection showing the anatomy of the brain. The first of these (Plate LX), and third (Plate LXII) are painted in a predominantly light blue colour, while the second (Plate LXII) is painted with a pale mauve and

a few areas in red. This last work, shows broad red lines drawn from the brain; one leading to the lips, the other two branching downwards to the body, as if signifying the flow of blood from the brain. The last two paintings, are equally interspersed with patches of selected textile patterns, which were carefully drawn over areas of the work, using the main colours of the background. In these pieces, as in most of her works, Okundaye demonstrates a sharp understanding of complimentary colours, by placing hues that contrast, to achieve a muted harmony. By being repetitive, the message of the paintings are resonant; everything is in the right order with the artist's brain.

In particular, Okundaye is mindful of the downtrodden position of women. Consequently, she has articulated her aspiration for these demoralized women in some paintings. Examples of such is conveyed through *Vision of Greatness*, and *Symbols of Success* (Plate LXIII) both produced in 2002. The last of these two, focusses on the accomplishments of women features her conception of 'symbols' representing a woman's attainment of success. This is presented in form of two female heads, the first being an impression of a large female head dominating three quarters of the canvas to the left. The other is a smaller head at the extreme right side. These heads are uncompleted abstracted forms with their faces devoid of features. Okundaye rather deliberately, emphasized the head gears thereby highlighting dressing as the hallmark for accomplishment.



Plate LXIII. *Symbols of Success,* Nike Okundaye. Acrylic, Pen & ink on Canvas.26" x32"(66.4cm x 81.2cm), 2002. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Also related with this last theme in Okundaye's work, are paintings such as; *Above the cradle,* which she had made in 2001, *Survivors,* in 2004, *Transformation* executed in 2006, and *Beauty is a thing of the mind* in 2007. This theme is also repeated in other paintings as *Common factor,* which she produced in 2008.

Kinship is also another notable subject featured in Okundaye's paintings. This is expressed through paintings she produced in 2003, such as *Family of Hope*, and *Family Reunion*. In like manner, the home is a subject close to Okundaye's heart. She has dedicated some paintings

including *Comfort in the Home* painted in 1971, and *Not too far from Home* in 2001, to that theme. Okundaye merely presented *Comfort in the Home* in an abstract piece, as strips of symbols representing values in the home. These symbols include: the "Cycle of life", "feed her", "Talking Drum" signifying sending of messages, "Guinea corn" including "the hand that feeds you never lacks", among others. *Not too Far from Home* is done entirely with two kinds of blue acrylic colour; a rich ultramarine and a light blue green. The *adire* patterns in the composition are arranged in horizontal strips of alternating patterns and colour. Similar to *Comfort in the Home*, all the motifs signify that one always has the home close by.

Okundaye conveys hopefulness in the family via three mask-like female faces depicted in a painting she titled *Family of Hope*. The faces of these abstract female figures, are given a mask-like treatment making them resemble sculptures. Once again, she seems to infer through this work that, aspirations and achievements in the home are dependent on women. This is because, the male figure, which is supposed to feature in a complete family setup, is conspicuously absent in this composition. The dressing of these images, their decoration with beads and fine headgears reflect affluence, symbolically portends hope. The bodies of these images are defined by overlapping strips of *adire* patterns. Okundaye employs deep and light reds, and browns to denote their bodies, while blue, grey and yellow is used for their clothing. Thick dark lines of the same colours are employed to delineate outlines of forms, and indicate areas of darkness. The hazy treatment accorded this piece, as well as the breaking up of the images, gives the composition the semblance to stained glass work.

Allied to the previous subject, is the matter of hopefulness, which Okundaye reflects through this ingeniously executed piece *Message of Hope* (Plate LXIV) produced in 2001. She explains that

the lizard, believed to be an all welcome creature in African homes, is metaphorically featured prominently in the composition, as a harbinger of hope. Its finely decorated body, is placed on a brown circular plane with dots all over. The artist then mounted this central piece over a



Plate LXIV*: Message of hope*, Nike Okundaye, oil colour brushed on a Sanded board, 34" x 24.5" (86.4cm x 62.2cm), 2001. © artnet.com (2015).

rectangular board of carefully arranged patterns painted with indigo blue. In connection with the piece, Okundaye related the commonly believed that, as long as there is an opening, the lizard will always find a way into the home. This fact is further reinforced by the symbolic inclusion of

such motifs as crescent moon, talking drum, feed her, and thatch in the work. The latter, are arranged within four rows comprising of 16 neat squares in blue, behind the circle. Dots, signifying "money will soon come your way," are painted around the lizard. This further emphasizes the expectancy hope in the home.

Celebrating tradition, culture and enactment of historical events has also been found to be a constant focus of Okundaye's paintings. *Bumper Harvest* (Plate LXV), is one of Okundaye's paintings, which is a typical commemoration of traditional events. Created with acrylic on canvas using brushwork, the work is significant due to its relationship to farming, and proceedings of the famous Ogidi day annual celebrations. The piece was done to mark the



Plate LXV, *Bumper Harvest*, Nike Okundaye. Acrylic on Canvas
88" x 54" (223.5cm x 137.2cm), 1995. © Nike Art Gallery

festivities to usher in the new yam harvested from the farms. The celebration of the yam festival is an age long important event, which is as old as the community itself is usually held by the Ogidi people around the month of June. The climax of the festival is usually accompanied by a traditional carnival, with farmers showing off their bumper harvest of the year. Measuring 88 inches x 54 inches, Okundaye's enactment of that annual event is a scene done on a large scale, which features farmers arranging a display of their harvested new yam. The yam, and not the images, are given prominence in this work. This is because, while the irregular shapes of yam are clearly defined, the human figures are barely indicated with no desire to distinguish individual features.

The artist seems to keep the viewer's focus on two major events in the work by employing a three layered perspective. In the first plane, which is the foreground, onlookers backing the viewer and whose upper body is showing, are arranged at the base of the painting. The second plane comprises of three enlarged figures engaged in stacking or discussing about the yam. The third plane consists of a further diminished set of onlookers at background. Thus, a horizontal rhythm is created by the arrangement of figures in the picture plane. The textile patterns also underline the Yoruba background setting of this scene.

Similarly connected to celebrating traditions, is Okundaye's portrayal of folklorists in her work. The artist recounts that, folklore and folk tales are the means whereby the ancient people passed down traditions orally. Wilson (2011) substantiates this in his remark that; in African societies, oral tradition is the method in which history, stories, folk tales and religious beliefs are passed

from generation to generation. Okundaye recognises that, for Africans, folk lore is a very significant part of their existence.



Plate LXVI: *The Folklore teller*, Nike Okundaye. Mixed Media (Oil & Beads) on Board, 48" X 96" (121.9cm x 243.8cm), 1996. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

In *The Folklore Teller* (Plate LXVI), Okundaye conveys the important role of this figure who maintains societal history and culture. The artist presents a simple village scene in which she subtly partitions the painting into two imaginary parts; the first with the story teller, and the other, the audience. In many of Okundaye's paintings, gesture and glance play an important role in her narratives, as they do in *Folklore Teller.* While the women focus their attention on the story teller, the enlarged folklore teller, dominating almost close to half of the left side of the work, sits on a kind of seat consisting of a woven cloth hung on a wooden frame, which elders of old were accustomed to using. The folk teller's size, in addition to presenting the illusion of nearness to the viewer, serves the purpose of determining him as the mainstay of the painting.

With the exception of the story teller, and children on whose forms modelling is done, the figures though well-proportioned, are reduced to flattened naturalistic forms.

Related to the preceding also, Okundaye recognises night time as important to Africans. After a hard day's work on the farm and conclusion of other menial jobs, night time is usually a period for relaxation by fireside. Moonlit nights are cherished because they provide a good setting for playing, dancing and practising all manner of cultural displays particularly for the youths. In the conceptual painting *Under the Moonlight* (Plate LXVII), Okundaye represents conceptual aspects of the African moonlit night. In this piece, Okundaye presents what appears to be an aerial view of rural village activities, on a moonlit night. These activities include the tortoises



Plate LXVII: Nike Okundaye, *Under the Moonlight,* Acrylic on Canvas.
43"x43" (109.2cm x109.2cm), 2007. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

crawling from different directions, clusters of thatch rooftops, and sporadic palm canopies. The artist uses her usual *adire* motifs, combined with these images, all painted with bright monochromatic orange colour, to impress about all of these.

Okundaye's painting *African Traditional Instruments* (plate LXVIII), which captures an ensemble of instruments used by traditional African musicians illustrates her efforts in further immortalising cultural aspects of her society. Basically linear in nature, the work is a magnificent composition executed with water colour and ink on paper. It must be noted that, the artist has not usually engaged in still life studies and this work appears to be a rare exploration in that



Plate LXVIII: *African traditional Instruments, Nike* Okundaye, Watercolour, pen and ink on paper, 12 ½" x 17 ½" (31.8 x 44.5 cm), 2003. © GAFRAART.com (2015).

direction. In the piece, she carefully penned an arrangement of highly decorated drum, horn, *Shekere* (gourd rattle) and lute over a delicately patterned background. The artist even took pains, to employ darker shades of the various colours to show the shadow cast by the instruments. The light touches of violet, yellow and red in selected portions, serve to heighten the composition.

Likewise bordering on promoting tradition, is Okundaye's deep pride on her heritage. This is reflected in a number of paintings. The artist first conceives this as being represented via the impressive adornment and bearing of the African woman; especially at ceremonial gatherings and celebrations. This is shown in *Rapted in our Heritage* done in 2001, which features the

swinging posture of a female figure suggestive of a celebration mood. The work is highly conceptual, depicting the figure against a background of green *adire* motifs; representing the fruitfulness of the land. In another piece on that theme, Okundaye presents her notion of heritage through an abstract showing fine patterns in browns, violets, spangled by brilliant yellow and greyish green Guinea corn motifs. Those motifs mean "the hand that feeds you never lacks."

Another of Okundaye's interpretation of heritage is conveyed through her 2003 piece, *Design of our Heritage*. This is also expressed through the finely dressed woman, bearing a calabash on her head and clutching a burden in her arms. Okundaye's *Patterns of our Heritage* (on p.62), which was part of her exhibited pieces at the show in London, climaxed her impression of that subject. The piece showcases an overall pattern work, on which women engaged in various menial activities, were depicted.



Plate LXIX: *Village Market Scene*, Nike Davies-Okundaye
Acrylic on canvas, 1980. Source: www.artnet.com

Another subject that has featured in several of Okundaye's paintings, are market scenes. *Market Women* executed in 1969, is an early example of paintings done on that theme. In the work mentioned, she captures a busy rural market scene showing women with various kinds of merchandise. She has produced similar studies like *Village Market* scene, 1980 (Plate LXIX) where she used muted blue and violets at the background, highlighting images with dashes of yellows intermittently/ within the work. Okundaye still made studies on that subject in *Market Woman* executed in 2008, and *Market Place* in 2013 (on pp.269 and 319 respectively).

Okundaye was discovered to be an ascertained entertainer, who has performed as a dancer since her Osogbo days. She recollects that, she had initially enlisted into the dance troupe *Oloshunta* for three months. When her father kept harassing that group, she joined forces with a friend Justina, to form their own troupe. Today, Okundaye has her own group *Alarinjo*, involved in drumming, dancing and singing on invitation, at occasions. It is not surprising therefore that, an appreciable number of her paintings depict dancers, dancing and festivity. She has in many of such paintings depicted the dancing steps of mostly female figures, and in some cases, drummers or music ensemble. This is illustrated in two untitled paintings showing dancers, produced by her in 1995.

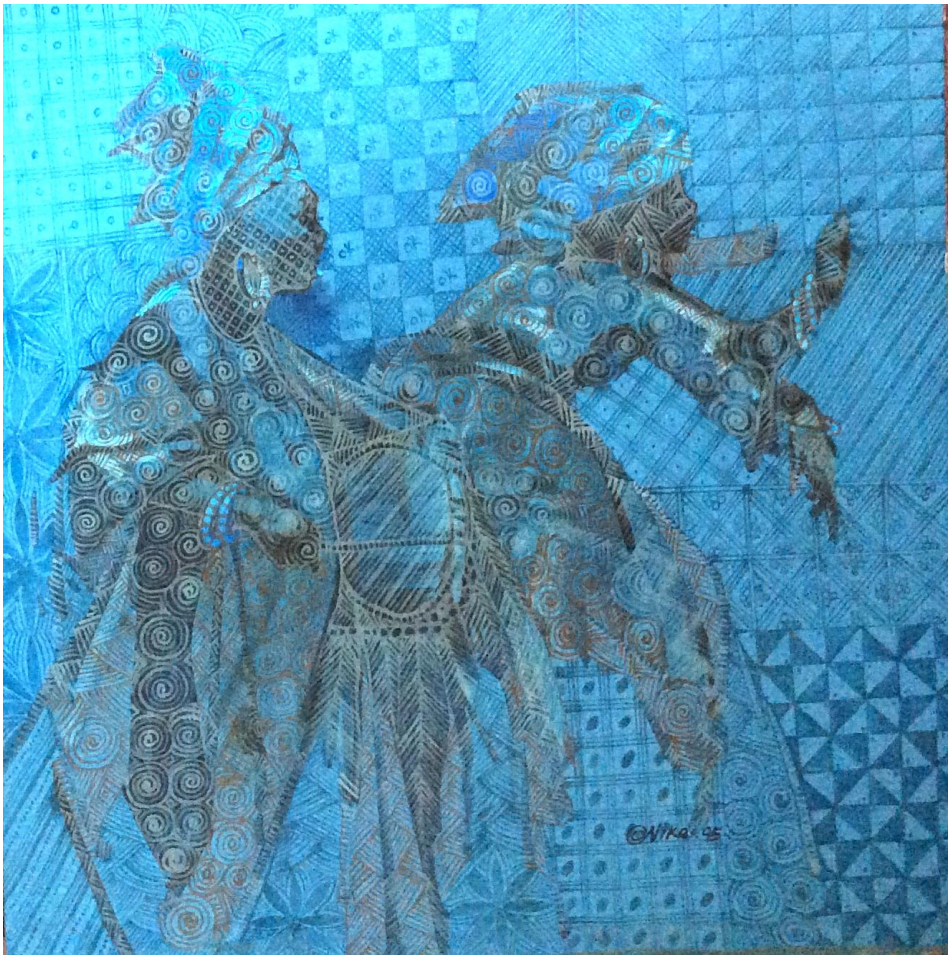


Plate LXX: *Untitled (Dancers),* Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on canvas, 28"x 28 (71.1cm x 71.1cm)," 1995. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Through this impressive work *Untitled* (Dancers, plate LXX), Okundaye effectively conveys the vibrant steps of the dancers through their swayed posture, and flailing hands. The work is a brilliant study in blue monochrome. Darker shades of that colour, are used to denote darkness. The artist employed a few dashes of light blue to achieve the sparkle on the bangles worn by the dancers, as well as, reflect lit areas of their clothing and head gears. Of the two dancing images in this work, the one at the front is a drummer. The drum she is holding is decorated with

feathers hung around its edges. The *adire* motifs used in the work, are carefully drawn and painted to compliment dress designs, bodies and other forms.

Okundaye has often repeated this subject of dance in a number of paintings including *Rhythm of Life* painted in 2001, and a set of paintings including *Dancing Mood* and *Dancing Woman* both executed in 2003, as well as *Ajaota,* in 2012. Dancing and playing traditional music is denoted in *Ndo 13,* while both *Drummers* produced in 1995 and *Celebration II* done in 2009 celebrate music. The title of the latter work is indicative that Okundaye produced a series on that topic.

Okundaye remarks that, previously, in traditional Yoruba settings, women were not permitted to play big drums, but nowadays they are allowed to do so. The artist reflects this in the painting showing two faintly silhouetted female figures executed in 1995. The work is done in a skilful blend of violet and sienna, over a texturised patterned background. In that work, the shapes of the drums, defined by brushwork with dark shades of the main colours, are more visible, than the figures. A few dabs of blue towards the bottom right of the work, produces the subtle effect of contrast.



Plate LXXI: *Celebration II*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on canvas, 46" x 28", (116.8cm x 71.1cm) 2009. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Female drummers are likewise featured in *Celebration II* Plate LXXI, which is another impressive piece painted with a shimmering monochromatic colour- violet, but this time with brilliant contrasting orange, yellow, small portions of brown and light magenta in the center of the work. Six stylishly dressed, and expressionistic images of women, are depicted in this work. The two figures at both extremes, are engaged in drumming. The three images at the rear are dancers. The towering woman, next to the one at the extreme right is facing left and has her left hand on one of the two big drums at the center. The women are lavishly decorated with

jewellery, denoted by tinted red around their ears and necks. The use of these colours and images surrounded with *adire* patterns, further impress the idea of celebration.

Among Okundaye's paintings related with commemorating music and dancing is Okundaye's presentation of festivities. Traditional festivals among the Yoruba are communal events involving carefully planned programme, outpourings of respect, rejoicing, or revelry, established by custom, or sponsored by various cultural groups and organizations. The artist produced a number of paintings showing the Yoruba masquerades. Two paintings having the same titles *Ibadan Dun, Ibadan Dun and Olokun.* They also feature two paintings both titled *Eyo Festival* produced in 2002 and 2003 respectively, as well as, *Egungun Festival Jubilation* as pieces showcasing this. *Eyo Festival* (Plate LXXII) a painting produced by Okundaye with water colour, pen and ink in 2002, reflects her affection for portraying festivities. Like in other paintings mentioned, the images presented in such paintings are the usual masquerades that feature during traditional Yoruba festivals.



Plate LXXII: *Eyo Festival*, Nike Okundaye, Water colour, pen & ink on canvas 12½"x 17½"(31.8cm x 44.5cm), 2002. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The work features seven visible masquerades, which are discernible by the bold outlines defining their forms. They are all wearing brim hats, and covered up with veils down to their feet, each brandishing a stick. The veil of each of these masquerades, is decorated with a distinctive *adire* pattern. The artist penned patterns composed of tightly packed vertical strips in alternate manner at the background that have created a fine matted design. The work is entirely done with a grey ink, the only contrast being a slight wash of yellow and green on portions of the work.

A subject for which Okundaye was also found to express sentimentality, is the matter of love. According to Okundaye, a woman falls in love before she even knows it. Perhaps it is due to her view of its ephemeral nature that she produced a painting titled *Quitted in Love* (not illustrated) showing an impressionistic blurry image of a woman, juxtaposed with inscribed floral patterns and *adire* motifs sparsely dotting the entire work. The flowers are symbolically applied as

metaphors for the human sentiments of love. Next to fiery red, yellow is a colour known to connote warmth. It is for that reason, the emotion of love is conveyed in this painting, by the tumultuous and swirl brush strokes of ochre and muted greens with cadmium. The total arrangement and muffled tones signify the flighty nature of unrequited love.



Plate LXX**III,** *Habitat of Lovers*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on canvas,
48½x 28½ (123.2cm 72.4 cm), 1999. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Furthermore, Okundaye interprets the poetic village landscape painting *Habitat of Lovers* (Plate LXXIII), as a lover's nest. The scene depicted is that of a sloping hillside, with huts enmeshed in a background of slightly embossed linear *adire* motifs. Blue is the predominant colour chosen for this work, which is deliberate because, Okundaye perceives blue as a hue that signifies love. The

monotony of the blue colour is only broken by deftly introducing dashes of vermilion on roofs and patterns on the right side of the work. Yellow ochre and faint tinted yellow are also contrasting hues brushed in patches of the work at the left side, serving to highlight the buildings and patterns. This unites the work in terms of forms and colour, creating both harmony and a pleasing picture at the same time.



Plate LXXIV: *The Cradle of Affection,* Nike Okundaye, Acrylic & Brushwork on Canvas, 48½" x 28½" (123.2cm 72.4 cm).2004. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

For Okundaye, the red rosy painting *Cradle of Affection* (Plate LXXIV), which she produced in 2004, also expresses love. The heart and the home are evidently being seen by Okundaye as the foundation and structure for affection respectively. The deep red, and light yellow are used

symbolically in this work to convey the passion involved in love. Contributing also to this idealized conception of love, are the slightly embossed textural effects of feathers all over the painting's background.

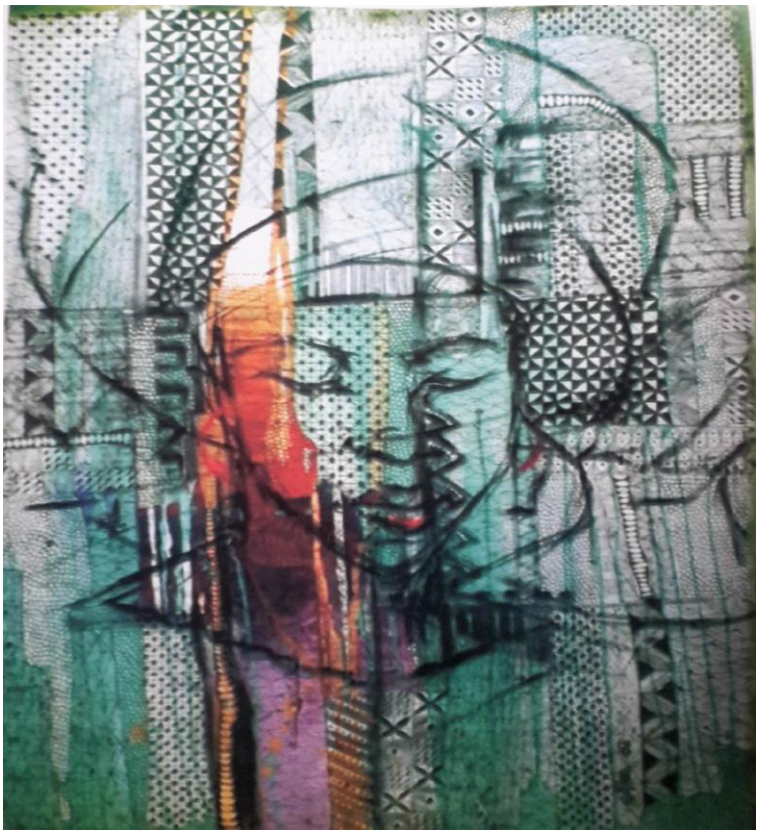


Plate LXXV: *Already in Love*, Acrylic, Pen & Ink on Canvas. 28" x 39" (71.1cm x 99.1cm), 2008. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos

Okundaye's impression about love is further presented in *Already in Love* (plate LXXV) executed in 2008. In this latter work, the artist employs lines to create the image of a pensive woman, set against a light wash of green and *adire* patterns. The woman has an elegant head gear suggested by sweeping lines. The monotony of green used as main hue in the work, is broken by the contrasting slight dash of red applied mildly down the right side of her face, which is continued by violet trailing to her chest. The artist accords the woman a dreamy look; that of a woman already smitten by the love bug. Okundaye remarks over the saying that, love is blind, and once bitten, women hardly care about dangers involved, and they simply plunge into the relationship without looking back.

A reasonable number of Okundaye's paintings have focused on religious related matters. The account of Adam and Eve, who were tempted by the devil in form of a serpent into disobeying God by eating the forbidden fruit, is well known story. Okundaye enacts the scene in the painting *Adam and Eve's first Love* shown earlier in Plate XII. The painting which is one of her surviving early works, was done in 1975. The carefully penned images of Adam (depicted larger in size), and the slightly diminutive Eve are strategically placed on the same level at both sides of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, dividing the picture into equal symmetrical parts. The two are shown holding unto the leaves covering their nakedness after their purported discovery that, they have become offenders.

The serpent winds from midway up the tree, dangling its head horizontally over Eve's form. Its sinuous body lithely simulates the opposite branch above Adam's head. Big leaves cascade above these two branches completing the tree. Below the tree, and surrounding the couple, a bush of plant motifs cover the surface. An undulating double line winds from one end of the

picture plane to its end beneath the feet of the couple. Its rhythmic movement re-echoes the branches above. Although the images are flattened, their proportions are nonetheless maintained. The space at the fore ground is lightened, while the sky over the tree is darkened, completing the picture of a harmonious composition.

Okundaye's *Untitled* (Plate LXXVI) pen and ink rendering of Christ's crucifixion, is no doubt, in the sphere of religious subjects. In the work, Okundaye depicts an African-like crucified image of Jesus Christ on a wide cross at the center of the work, making them the main focus of the composition. Flanking both sides of this cross, are two soldiers with spears, on each side. A large kettle on a three legged stool to Christ's right, represents the vinegar he was served. A ladder is placed at the immediate left side of the cross.

To the extreme bottom left, is a cock with its head lifted towards the cross, as though contemplating the events. This cock creature represents the one that crew after Peter's denial of knowing Christ. The artist ascribed an arch behind the cross, above the soldiers. The space above this, is filled up with check *adire* patterns. The regalia of the soldiers is decorated with repeated leaf motifs. All other objects in the composition are decorated with textile patterns. Okundaye achieves depth in this painting, by placing the embellished objects against a smooth black background.



Plate LXXVI; *Untitled,* Nike Okundaye, Undated. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The next piece *The worshippers* (Plate LXXVII, executed in 2002, is a painting related to Osun worship whereby, women are accustomed to participate in various rituals. The artist related that women usually carry clay pots, with which they fetch water from the Osun River, on their return from the shrine. Okundaye reflects her memory of this, in the expressionistic painting showing a group of women worshippers making their way in procession, to the Osun shrine. Okundaye's *The Worshipers*, is reminiscent of Ablade Glover's *Pilgrimage* (Fosu, 1984), the latter whose



Plate LXXVII: *The Worshippers,* Nike Okundaye Acrylic, pen& ink on canvas, 34" x 48"(86.4cm x 121.9cm), 2002, © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

images Fosu characterizes as impressionistic studies of proud statuesque women with elongated necks caught in a variety of expressive moods. The study focuses on a crowd who are defined by blobs and general features of human shapes. The images painted in rust browns, face the same direction, and are arranged in a pyramidal perspective.

Similar in subject, is her small embroidery *Arugba Osun* (not illustrated) featuring virgins who transport the offerings from worshippers to the goddess Osun, during the annual festival.

Okundaye seemed so enamoured with the *Olokun* goddess that, she has repeated the subject a number of times. One of these is a predominantly greyish green study rendered with pen and ink,



Plate LXXVIII: *Olokun*, Nike Okundaye, Pen & Ink on paper, 52 cm x 32 cm. (Undated). © African Art.com

produced in 2004. It features a finely dressed female figure dominating the canvas, from top to bottom. The meaning behind this painting is clear, the goddess is a source of wealth and well-being.

Yet another of Okundaye's paintings venerating the *Olokun* goddess, is the undated piece titled *Olokun* illustrated in Plate LXVIII. Executed with pen and ink on paper, the goddess herself, is depicted at the center of the painting. Her head is wrapped with a white patterned cloth, and her

body similarly covered from her chest down, with a white patterned wrapper. From the waist down, the goddess is portrayed as having a fish-like tail, and emerging from the water. At her front, is a goat; part of the offerings by worshippers. Behind the goddess, is an abstract presentation of root formations similar to the kind that are found in riverine area whereby, mangrove trees produce masses of tangled arching roots. Towards the top left corner, the image of a fish hangs from this projection; parts of it is in form of a crown. Next to this, mystical subjects were discovered to be part of the few spiritual related subjects that Okundaye has featured in her paintings. This is expressed through such pieces as *Mystery of Life* and *World Beyond* both painted in 2001.

Although Okundaye appears not to have delved much into political commentaries, her thematic focus is not limited to feminine related, and traditional concerns alone. She expresses her mind about socio-political matters as well. *Introspection* (Plate LXXIX) for instance, is a painting with a political connotation. In the painting, Okundaye depicts a male figure (from the northern part of the country, deduced by his turban and clothing resembling a 'gown') garbed in Nigeria's national colours (Green, white green). Okundaye manipulates the shape of the body and clothing of this image at the same time to form the map of the country. The figure holds a spear, which he is intently contemplating. This is indicative of the past battles of the country beginning from ancient jihads



Plate **LXXIX**: *Introspection*, Nike Davies- Okundaye. Acrylic on canvas, 46" x27"(116cm x 68.6cm), 2009. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

in the north, colonial domination, civil wars and ethno-religious crises. The red of his turban and deeper shades of sienna faintly highlighted by a dash of red, symbolise the bloodshed as a result of those battles. Set against a background of varying shades of violet, this pushes the figure forward.

Peju Alatise's painting subject matter

Peju Alatise is an artist whose paintings have reflected various subject matters. Alatise in addition discloses that she 'sees' most of her artworks in dreams. Her horizon of artistic subjects,

derives from a wide ranging perspective, on issues especially affecting her environment. On a wider scale, Alatise's major subject focusses around her beloved continent. At a closer range, she derives inspiration from her immediate locale- the rich Yoruba culture. In the eyes of Alatise, Africa is a continent with so many issues derailing its progress in development. There is civil war, corruption in government, poor health care systems, apartheid, famine, poor management of resources–the list is almost endless.

The artist affirms that her subject matter has evolved with her continued experiences, moving focus from advocating the equal rights of women to politics, philosophical inclination and Yoruba mythology. A great deal of her themes are filled with allegorical imagery and metaphorical meanings, drawn from a combination of her ancestral Yoruba background, its narratives, fantasy and her imagination. Some of Alatise's earliest painting subjects are social comments inspired by historical incidents. The nonfigurative representation *30 Years ago- Illicit Trade I* (Plate LXXX) for instance, registers Alatise's conception of slave trade which took the form of trafficking in human beings and other illicit trafficking especially of women as sex workers. The trade involved exchanging manila, cowries, goats and food items in exchange for the slaves.

Recalling the trade which transpired over three centuries ago, Alatise uses an allegorical story of a fictitious ethnic war carried out 'thirty years' ago, to express her view on this. In her visual interpretation of this subject, she employs sombre browns coupled with an arrangement of trade items such as manila and piercing implements in this work. The use of dull monochrome sienna, is symbolic of the shady dealings in illegitimate trade whether it is of humans, or other commodities.



Plate LXXX: 30 *years ago-illicit trade I,* Peju Alatise, © *JIGIDA, African Adornment.*2003:18.

Alatise also produced a second version; 30 *Years ago-illicit trade II* in which, she depicted the profile of a woman, using the same colours as in the previous work. The figure wears earrings of beads and cowries, with three in her earlobes shaped like manila. She is depicted, looking sadly downwards despite her gay dressing.

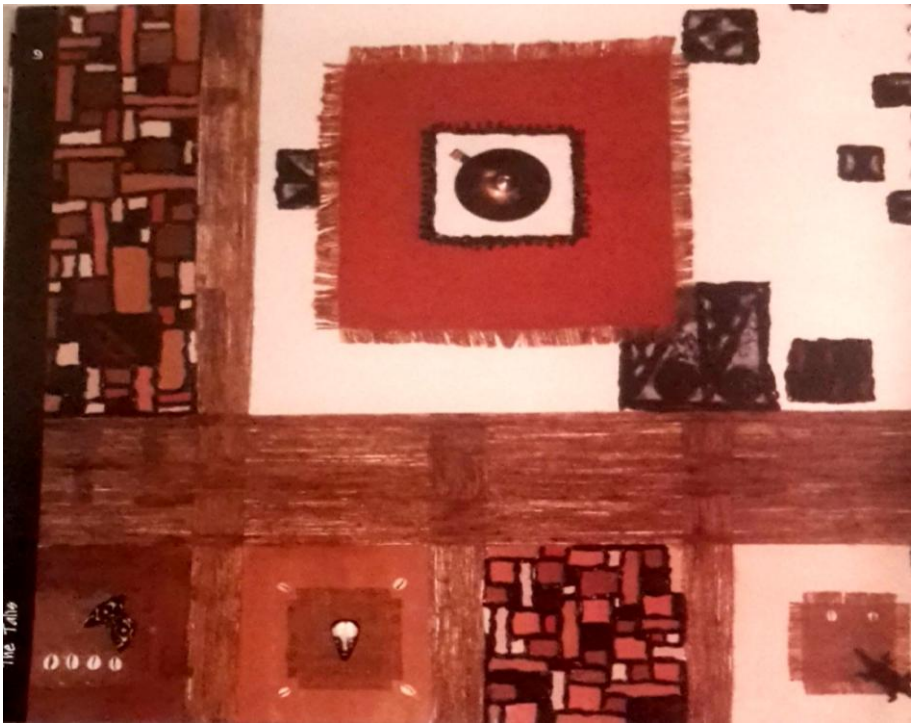


Plate LXXXI: *The Talis,* Peju Alatise, © *JIGIDA, African Adornment.*2003:10

Among her early paintings also, Alatise's fascination for mystical practices is detectable as expressed through her work *The Talis* (Plate XCII). The composition was organised into upper and lower sections. The upper, comprises of a piece of dark red square cloth whose edges are jagged is glued against a white background at its middle. At this part is a smaller white cloth (stitched roughly around its edges to the red cloth), over which a bicycle bell is glued. A smaller brown square jagged cloth is pasted on a white background at the bottom right corner of the work. A lizard form is placed diagonally at its right bottom corner. The remaining parts of the work are painted vertical and horizontal portions. A paved meshwork at the extreme upper left is repeated somewhere towards the bottom right, separating the small cloth also with jagged ends, from another red square to its left on which a keyhole shape has been cut. At the far left corner,

four small cowries and a butterfly have been attached on a brown square patch. Painted in the warm blood colours of red, which are set against the puritanical white, completing the picture of various paraphernalia or aspects of a typical talisman.

Women, especially Nigerians, are unarguably the major focus in a larger part of Alatise's paintings. In some of these paintings, she seems interested in the dressing mode of her gender. In others, she captures qualities of their feminity, joy and pains of womanhood, and even strength. A perception of women held by the artist is a belief derived from her Grandmother's tales that, a woman has many beginnings. This new beginning is likened to the butterfly, which emerges as a pupa from the cocoon, to become a magnificent creature. That idea is conveyed in her painting *Spring New Beginning* (on p.332).

One of the forms through which Alatise expresses her understanding of womanhood, is via her portraits. In Alatise's portraits, the artist has demonstrated her skills of achieving close likenesses and at depicting different textures and material, such as clothing of models, and jewellery worn by her mainly female subjects. The *Red Lipstick* series for instance, are among her earliest paintings, which, in addition to showcasing adornment, metaphorically present life experiences of the fictitious character Labake. Alatise took time to explain about this character in her book *Orita Meta.* According to the artist, in Yoruba land, the name Omolabake, especially the long awaited child of old-age, is given to a girl-child meant to be loved, spoilt and cared for (Alatise, 2006).

At a point in her life, the fictitious character Labake is being urged to get married. She was at that time in courtship with a young man she liked, respected and tolerated but, felt no love for. She writes a letter to her older sister Bisola, in which she questions "…do I wait for love to show

in a man that may be a creation of my imagination?" she continues"…sometimes I feel love is much ado about little." She further ponders about how to be patient when admonished to do so. The missive is ended with "desperately Labake." In the narrative, the man in question callously dumps Labake eventually for another woman. As a reaction to the disappointment, in a moment of frivolity, Labake recklessly puts on Lipstick for the first time in her life, and goes out to join in the village dance. *Desperately Labake* (Plate LXXXII) represents this woman. Alatise describes her in the words "a dark skinned lady with her hair loose, tumbling over her shoulders, showing a bit of her flesh, now wearing bright cherry red lipstick was a woman of daring



Plate **LXXXII;** *Desperately Labake*, Peju Alatise, undated. Source: Liveunchained.com (2011)

possibilities"(Alatise,2006) That fictional episode, has inspired a series of paintings the artist has produced showing lipstick wearing women. Some of these (undated) paintings are included in Alatise's JIGIDA show in 2003.

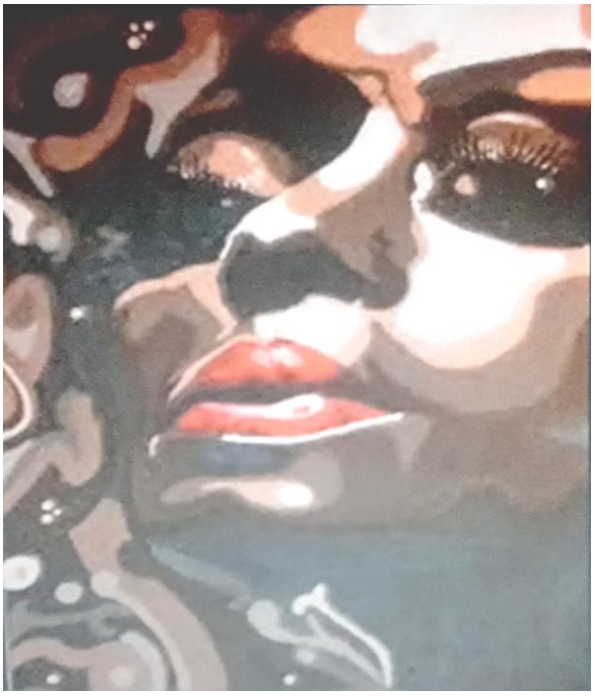


Plate LX**XXIII**: *Labake -Red Lipstick Series7,* Peju Alatise. *JIGIDA, African Adornment*, 2003:7.



Plate LX**XXIV**: *A Little Bit Of Me in all of Them, Joy Within*, Peju Alatise. Source: Alatise (2000:25)

The portrait *Labake- Red Lipstick Series 7* (Plate LXXXIII), depicts the profile view of a female turning to her right. Her head is slightly tilted upwards, and she wears the smug expression of uninhibitedness. There is a certain play with shades and tones of sienna as well as umber in this work, sharply contrasted by white on the cheek denoting light, and red of the lipstick. The manner of colour arrangement on the body and motifs at the background, recall textile patterns.

A similar treatment is repeated in the next piece titled *A little Bit of Me in Them- Joy Within* (plate LXXXIV).

Some other portraits painted by Alatise include *Looking up* produced in 2003, *Blue Wrapper, Saturday Morning,* and *In it Together,* all produced in 2008, depict everyday people in routine poses such as looking out of a window, pensive, showing gaiety or amusement. Most of these studies depict women in the prime of life. One of her portraits of youthful looking women is *Sunset on Ajantola* produced in 2005 (Plate LXXXV). It represents a character in Alatise's book *Silifat* named Ajantola. Alatise characterises her as symbolising the average everyday woman, who is nonchalant about things, pursues nothing but expects top notches. Ajantola appears to give nothing but believes she deserves to own the finest. She is religious without being a fanatic. She is generally dissatisfied with what life dishes out to her.

In *Sunset on Ajantola,* the bust size portrait is immersed against a darkened background. The pensive downward looking female's body is decorated with an interplay of violets, dark sienna, tan and white suggestive of dancing reflective light in the night. Only the left side of her head slightly tilted right, shows clearly. The shimmering reflection on her face and exposed nude shoulder suggests the light source is from the left.



Plate LXXXV: *Sunset on Ajantola*, Peju Alatise, 2005. Source *Silifat* (2015:28).

A few exceptions to this tendency of depicting youthful women, include *Years Gone By* (Plate LXXXVI) a portrait depicting an elderly robust looking woman, covered with a red veil. The woman's gaze seems focused on an unseen object. Her face is lit on the left side and darkened on the right. Once again, the background is plunged in darkness. Alatise's play with colour in this portrait is limited to the deep vermillion of the veil and a very dark green almost black in appearance used for shadows. The remaining parts of the painting are plunged in darkness,

represented by a deep blue-black. The right side of her face, is painted in lighter tones of red, while the left side



Plate LX**XXVI:** *Years Gone By,* Peju Alatise, 2007. © *Silifat,* (2006)

with gradations of yellow. The overall impression of this composition, is that the image is seated in a dark place lit by an unseen light source.

Yet another example of an elderly looking image in Alatise's portraiture, is *Portrait of Funke* depicted in Plate LXXXVII. The figure is wearing a striped veil, which covers her head, and is

wrapped around her neck side. She is looking downwards, with her left side bathed in light by an unseen source from her front. The right side of this image and the background, are shown to be in darkness. This piece is doubtless, a skilful exercise in monochromatic application of colour. Alatise manipulates various shades of the main blue in this work, ranging from giving some areas a tinge of green, to blue-black on parts of the veil and background. The play of colour on



Plate LXXXVII: *Portrait of Funke.* Peju Alatise. © Silifat (2006)

the right side of the face, produces the impression of it being disfigured. The expression of her left eye, the pucker of her cheek and how the lips are compressed, expresses sadness.

Friends of the Bride (plate LXXXVIII) is one of Alatise's early abstract forms which express tradition, and at the same time, her displeasure over the mishandling of some aspects of ceremonial adornment by the society. She cites for instance that, it is customary in Yoruba

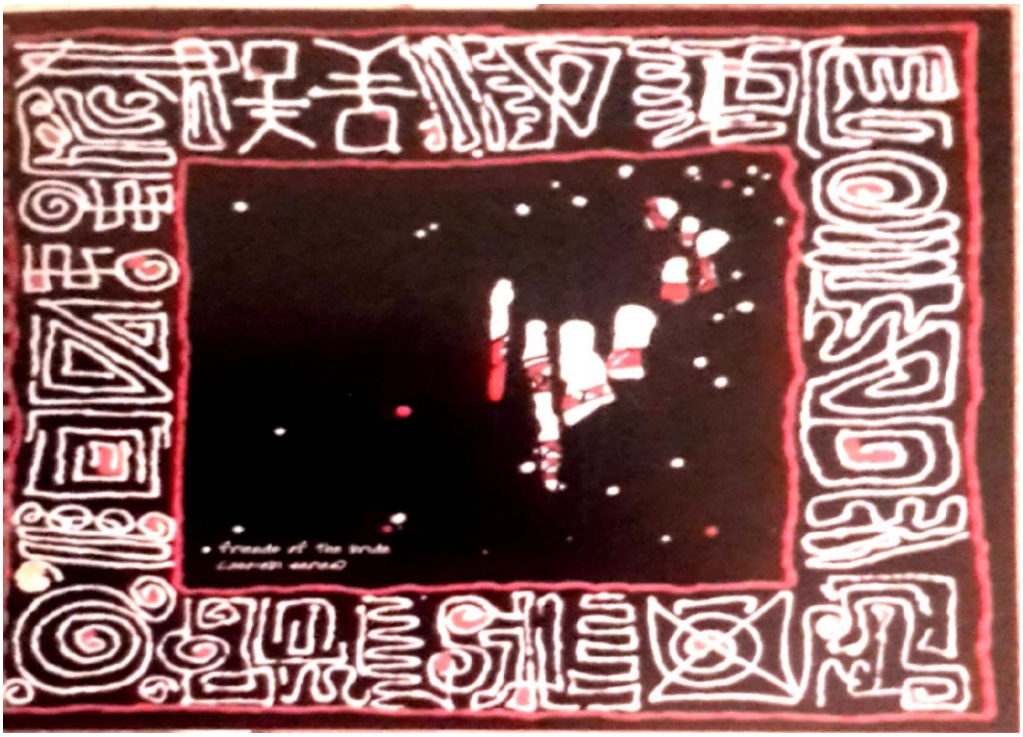


Plate LXXXVIII: *Friends of the Bride (aso-ebi series),* Peju Alatise, *Renaissance Craft,* 2000:19

settings for the individuals to dress up in uniform traditional attires during marriage ceremonies. These costumes are known as *aso ebi.* Alatise finds it ridiculous that, the friends of the bride, go to all lengths to borrow apparels and accessories like jewellery, to wear during the wedding ceremonies. Such is doubtless, done just to maintain a status. This work which has the semblance of a batik hanging, is a comment about such social extremities. It comprises a border pattern having squares, triangles, stick-like figures and other motifs. All of these represent figures in the

ceremony. In the middle, a few shapes towards the right and dots symbolically represent the friends of the bride.

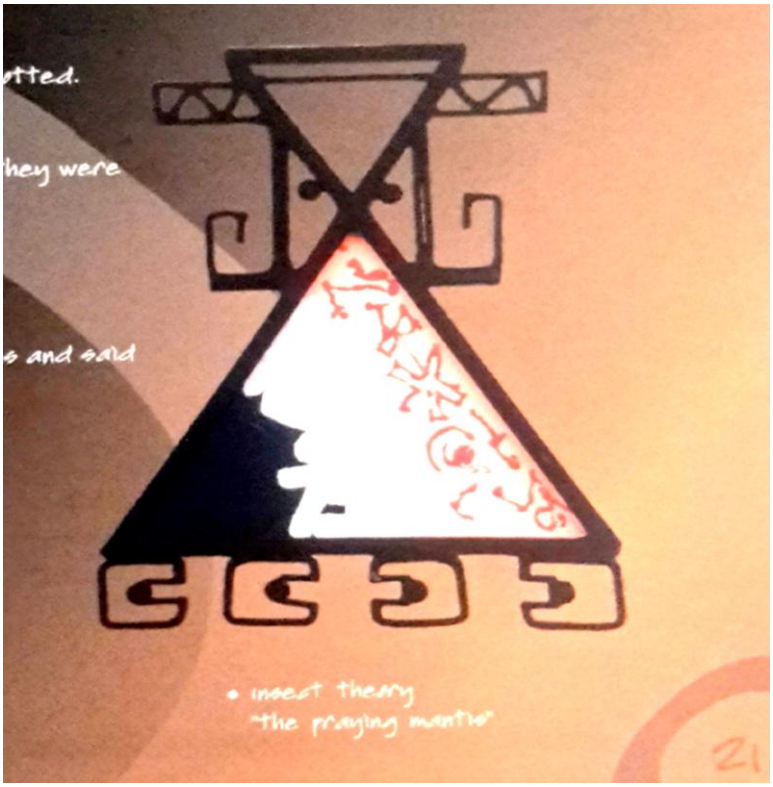


Plate LXXXIX: *Insect Theory-Praying Mantis.*
Peju Alatise. Source: *Renaissance Craft*, 2000:21

Alatise's interest on portraying creatures is presented in form of stylised insects, which she created as part of decorations on her crafted objects. *Insect Theory* done in a series including *Praying Mantis* (Plate LXXXIX), *and Bug* (Plate XC), are painted forms reflecting Alatise's diversification of interest into such mundane issues as creating forms out of the anatomical features of creatures. In *Insect Theory*, *Praying Mantis* for instance, Alatise uses triangular and angular shapes to create an exquisite abstract image of the praying mantis. A small triangle is used to denote the head. This is joined to a bigger triangle representing its body, which are all

arranged in a vertical position. Apart from the subscribed outline of the head region, the inside is left bare of any other designs. The body is however painted with red, white and black with various shapes picked out on them in flat opaquely rendered colours.

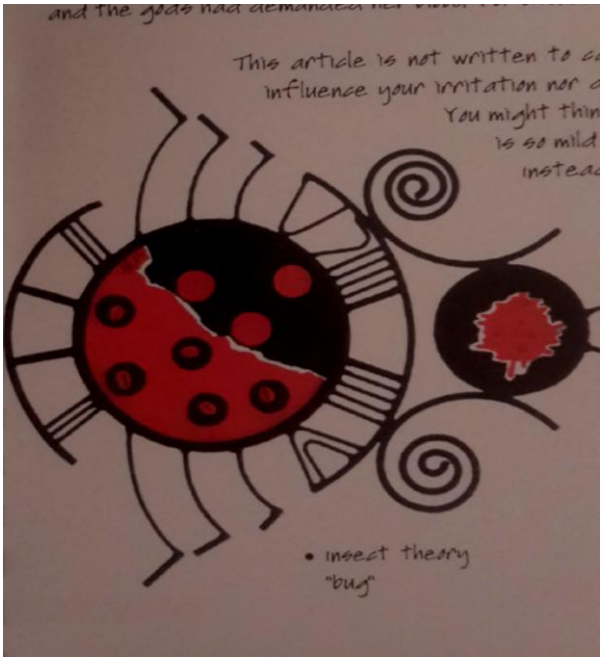


Plate XC: *Insect Theory "Bug",* Peju Alatise. *Renaissance Craft,* 2000: 17

In *Insect Theory, "bug"* (Plate XC), Alatise explores with circles and curves to produce the beautiful form of a spotted lady bird beetle. Like in the preceding painting, a smaller circle is used to define the head on which two curves representing mouthpart and antennae, have been attached. This head painted black, is decorated with an irregular red shape outlined by white. The beetle's back is decorated with red spots. Its round form is roughly split into two. On the upper part, three red spots are arranged against black. At the lower part, Alatise places five black spots having cowrie forms in them. Black lines attached to this main form represents legs. The

overall effect is a carefully well designed crafted object. Unlike the mantis in the previous work, this composition is done in a horizontal orientation

The danger posed by reckless sexual relationships is a subject that appears also in Alatise's paintings. This is visible through a number of her paintings. In *Foreplay, How safe are you?* (Plate XCI) though shown in a standing position, Alatise depicts a couple in an amorous state,

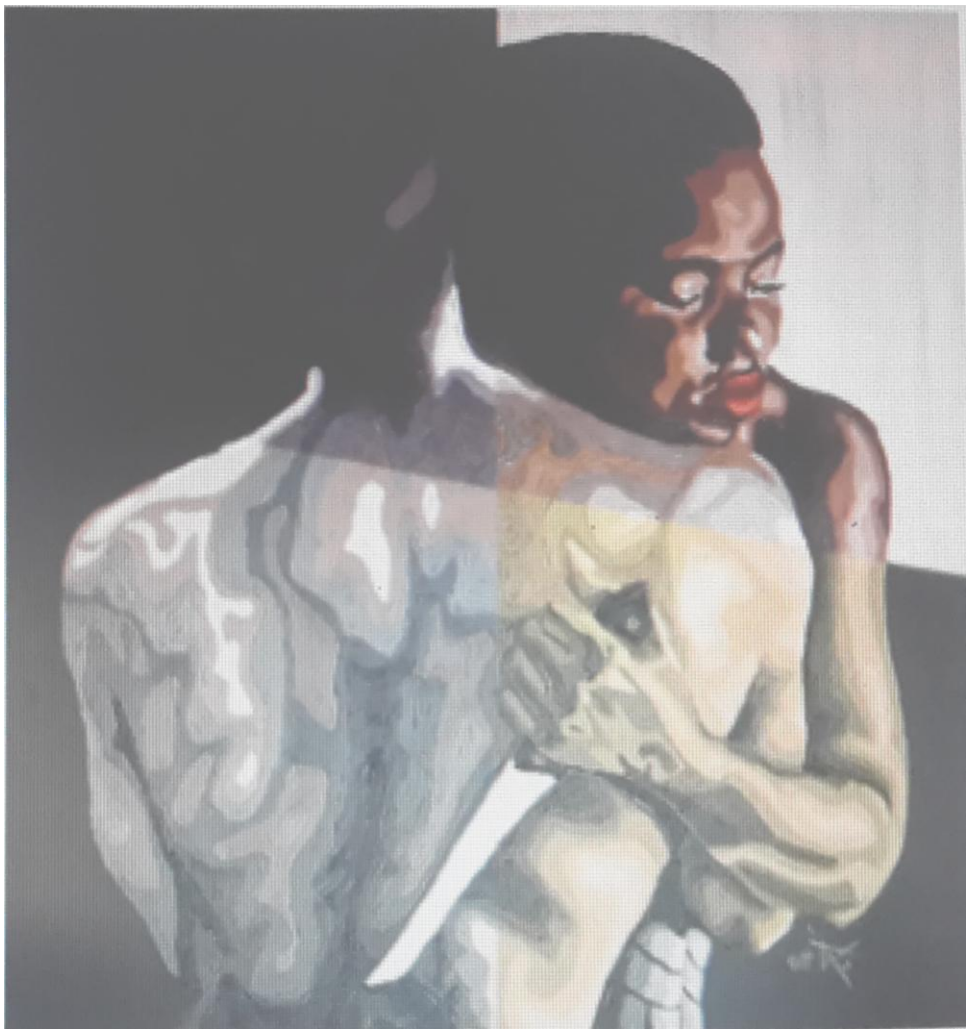


Plate XCI: .*Foreplay, How Safe are you?* Peju Alatise, 2008. © Pejualatise.com (2015).

which is suggested by their passionate embrace. The artist graphically conveys the danger behind the impropriety of foreplay by the dagger in the man's left hand, at the back of his lover. The grey and dark colours employed in painting the bodies and background serve to convey a message of impending doom. The point is clear that, the hazard of the aftermath is real. It is ever present in form of the knife that will harm the guilty parties involved.



Plate XCII: *Just One Night 1*, © Pejualatise.com (2015)

Behind the painting *Just One Night* (Plate XCII), is likewise, a story of an illicit amorous relationship. According to Alatise, the piece is an illustration of a love affair, which was never meant to be more than just a one-time adventure. She relates further that, in such encounters, the

woman usually first struggles over her inhibitions of getting intimate with the man. She then allows herself go through it. They both end up having a lot of misgivings on their minds. Alatise captures this involvement of a reclining pair, showing the effusive expression of the woman, and the unsettled look on the man's face. The artist employs a brilliant vermillion on the female figure, dominating the work, ultramarine for the male, and a muted ochre for the pillow on which the man's head lies. The impasto texture produced, combined with the rhythmic presentation of brilliant hues successfully heightens the effect of stirring tense atmosphere.

Through her writings, Alatise comments about how men usually blame their wives for their impotence. She uses the piece *Earth Stories, She put a hole in him,* 2012 (Plate XCIII)**,** to relate the tale of a fictitious man who for some time, had been experiencing impotency whenever he is with his own wife. One night, he meets a woman, who is a total stranger to him. She arouses him, and his virility is restored. The man imagines that by merely achieving that feat of rousing him, the strange woman seemed to have cast a spell on him. The entire work is composed of cloth, most of which has been rolled into strips, and other pieces folded into desired shapes.



Plate XCIII: *Earth Stories, She put a Hole in Him*, Peju Alatise, Mixed Media. 152 cm x 152 cm, 2012. © pejualtise.com (2015).

At the top is a coiled cloth forming concentric circle. Cloth coiled at the bottom right hand forming yet another concentric circle but folded a little. Between these two, a rectangular cloth with jagged ends is folded and joining these two. These pieces of loose and folded fabrics are arranged on a black background to create the shape of a pentagon at the middle. That space represents the 'hole' encircled by the arranged cloth.

In yet another associated work titled *The Spotting of Red* (Plate XCIV), Alatise recalls the ancient practice, which upholds morals in marriage. In that custom, a newly married virgin is proven chaste on the wedding night, by observing if the bed sheets are soiled afterwards. Any

new bride who does not soil the sheets with blood on her first nuptial night suffers disgrace. This practice appears to be eroding, and the artist finds it worthwhile to preserve it through her paintings.



Plate XCIV: *The Spotting of Red,* Peju Alatise. Source: Cover page, *Renaissance Craft,* 2000.

The Spotting of Red (Plate XCIV), is one of Alatise's compositions comprising of abstract forms arranged in four squares equal parts. At the intersection, Alatise places three circular shapes, painted dark brown, arranged over a small white horizontal rectangle, with a small red dot beneath the middle circle. The square at the upper left, is painted black, and has a mask painted

brown placed horizontally at the middle. At the opposite end, is a square painted in a light brown wash, with symbols picked out with white paint. The square piece at the bottom left is given the same treatment as the upper right square. The remaining square to the right has the same treatment as the upper left.

Among tales recounted to girls with the objective of keeping them in check from promiscuity, is that of Adam and Eve's 'sin' in the Garden of Eden. God allegedly placed a curse- the 'serpents curse' on the women, which manifested in form of a monthly visitor that made her unclean during that period of its visitation. Since then, women ultimately bear children through this process. The painting *Like Woman, like Fruit* (Plate XCV), which seems to be partly an anatomical study, and symbolical, captures this reality depicting the seed in form of red fruits which the artist presents as dropping from fine tubes to the womb in a woman's body."



Plate XCV: *Like Woman Like Fruit,* Peju Alatise. Source: *Silifat* (Alatise, 2006)

Alatise conveys this in her typical mode of combining a fine structural anatomical study with flowing patterns. The 'fruit' are however cunningly placed outside the body, but in a manner that leaves no doubt about their connotation. The work features the back side of a virtually nude female figure. The painting seems to be divided into two equal vertical parts. The demarcation is achieved by employing modulations blue colour at the left side, and tints of yellow and light red on the right side. The image's loins cloth, which is painted a dark red is arranged to fall from her left shoulder down to the bottom of the work, leaving her body bare down to beneath the waist.

The upper part of that left side is painted in a complete blue-black. The entire right side is in dribbled tones of browns against a lighter grey background.

An area in which Alatise also appears to have presented much visual comment, is religion. Part of her perspectives on religion is summed up in her words (Pejualatise.com, 2015):

> *Heaven, hell, evil, good; Resurrection, rapture, reincarnation, dead bones shall rise, Lily of the valley, Faith, death, Living, alive, Consciousness, unconsciousness; These are words that we hear, we use in faith based conversations that we have. And then you wonder; These words that we throw about and judge people by; How much of these words have we experienced, And how much of these words have we been instructed and told to believe without question. Blind faith; that's what they call it. We live our lives by what others think life should be.*

The *Convert of a Jagged Cross* (on p.86) one of her religion related works, conveys an aura of piety; leaving no doubt as to its focus. The story behind this image is narrated by the artist in her book *Silifat.* The convert in question is a woman who either transfers altogether, or transforms from one level of faith to the other. In the painting, the female figure intent on a religious activity, holds a string of prayer beads in her hand. It is obvious the figure is counting the beads, while the solemn face shows her engrossment in the meditation.

Alatise also explores her Grandmother's Yoruba folklores, to present her perspective on the supernatural. In Yoruba folklore, crossroads form a significant aspect of life. As humans travel through life, they encounter 'crossroads', because there is no journey without crossroads; and no crossroads ever occur, without coming across *Esu* the devil. Every crossroad represents a door for each path of life. These in turn represent decisions of going, coming, giving and taking, *et cetera*.

In Yoruba mythology also, mother earth is a very important factor to the Yoruba specifically, and African life at large. The Yoruba folklores propose that; it is from the earth man emerged. Utilitarian vessels (pots), are produced from it. Precious substances such as minerals, are also

embedded within its bowels. The earth is symbolically depicted as many things including a market place, where humans converge to purchase their vital needs. Alatise has consequently, made the earth and the supernatural, a recurring theme in a number of her paintings. Her works based on the supernatural include the paintings *Beginning of Ascension* (Plate CXIX) and *Ascension* (Plate CXX), executed in 2011. They also include the relief work *Earth Element-Orun Lo m'eni to ma-la* (meaning only heaven knows those who will go to paradise shown on p.298).

As part of her visual exposition drawn from Yoruba mythology, the mixed media work *Earth Element; Orun Lo m'eni to ma-la* represents the earth. Its swelling form (earth), is believed to be stocked with all manner of hidden valuable substances and human virtues. On this earth structure, Alatise shows emerging engraved human forms from the 'belly' of the earth. These miniature images stretching upwards in a curving manner, represent human spirits making the leap into the celestial realms after discarding their flesh. With the spirit gone, earth (the dead flesh) returns to the earth.

Elements of traditional belief on the unseen deities, is also inherent in the piece *Erin Ijesha* (see Plate CXXXIX on p.297). In traditional Yoruba folklore, 'Erin Ijesha' connotes "the day the water giving vessel fell." Alatise enacts this through a 3-Dimensional piece that is part painting, part sculpture. At the same time, she snatches the opportunity to relate a woman's unquestionable affinity to the mythical powers of water. Alatise sees in the drops tumbling down

from water source form streams which gains strength in its increasing volume, making its way to a river where it benefits and serves its people, a parallel with woman as a life force meant to be cherished.

Alatise's remarkable installations *Orange Scarf goes to Heaven* (see Plate XLVI on p. 173), and *All Scarves go to Heaven* (on p.338), are likewise an exposition on religious belief. The artist draws images from the tradition of wearing full-length veils (*burka*) by Muslim women. Wearing of the *burka* is part of the ancient custom of *purdah*, which requires the concealment of women to portray chastity. Alatise once again expresses her creative ingenuity by producing hollow veiled forms whose striking form create a mystic aura usually accompanying death. In these two examples, Alatise engages her viewer in a dialogue between what her images represent and controversies expressed by adherents of different faiths. In *Orange Scarf goes to heaven*, the message of a coloured (orange) scarf among white ones is clear; the artist believes heaven is for all kinds of believers.

Alatise's Orange scarf series are all commentaries about religion. *Orange Scarf First*, (on p.99), was a reaction to sanction by a Christian group against wearing of such brightly coloured scarf to a gathering. In some other of her paintings, it is a protest, this time from an Islamic point of view. The protest is conveyed by Silifat's mother who loudly remonstrates: "…there is no place in heaven for adulteresses and their acquaintances, do not lure my child to the path of vanity with an orange scarf" (*Silifat,* Alatise, 2006). The reason was that, Silifat's plain grey polyester veil, got torched by a fire accidentally lit by a cigarette stub. In sympathy, she is presented with pretty colourful floral patterned veils, including an orange one. However, her Muslim mother finds colourful scarves to be objects of vanity.

A social problem that has seemed to trouble Alatise so much, is the dealings of women by the society and especially the menfolk. Connected to this, child marriage is an irritating issue she has shown much concern about. That concern has inspired the artist to lend her voice on the subject using her art. She has done this via a number of paintings and installations. Some of these were produced in 2011, triggered by a particular incidence in which a Nigerian serving Senator, at that time, divorced one of his wives in order to marry an under-aged girl. Alatise protests over young girls employed as maids, who are barely older than the children they are asked to care for. She feels strongly over the fact that nobody is fighting for these young girls, not even their mothers. The artist laments that according to a Ford Foundation study, child brides in Nigeria outnumber all those in other West African countries combined. Child marriage is not illegal under Nigerian law and more than a dozen out of 36 states have not ratified the Child Rights Act of 2003, which sets the minimum age for marriage at 18. Alatise is consequently solicitous about the plight of children forced into early marriage, since even Government appears unconcerned about the matter, and even their mothers are helpless to do anything about the situation. Alatise registers her displeasure over the unfortunate matter through the painting *Nine Year Old Bride, Where is her Mother?* (Plate XCVI).



Plate XCVI: *Nine Year old Bride, Where is her Mother?* Peju Alatise, 10ft x4ftx (3.05m x 1.3m), 2011. © Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue (2012):23.

The piece is clearly expressive, as the artist uses a caricature approach to present plight of the women in a cartoon-like fashion. The considerably sizable composition measuring 10 feet x 4 feet, features only females bare from their waists upwards. Without exception, the breast of the women are shown in different forms; full, or sagging; also indicating different stages of maturity. The nine year old girl is depicted fourth from the left, her stature smaller than the other figures. The little girl's skin is rendered yellow, suggesting her ripening stage and her chest is merely dotted indicative of her undeveloped status. The artist even shows the dishevelled hair of the young girl, hinting at the possibility that she has not acquired the usual self-consciousness required of a matured woman.

The forms of these women are defined by clear black lines, in sketch-like manner, which were then filled in with lightly laid pastel like colours, all the while taking care to indicate areas of

light and dark. These images are placed against a white background. Although basically rendered in a flat and simplified manner, all other figures are painted either brown or mellow tans. The artist nevertheless endows the images with liveliness, suggesting well-rounded hips; an indication of maturity in age. The result is a set of conceptualised images, most of whom parts of their heads are not complete, and except for the girl, all other images have no facial features, suggesting their facelessness. At the same time, the artist snatches the opportunity to showcase her love for wax prints, through the colourful well patterned fabric designs of wrappers tied around the waists of the women in this picture. This work, while it makes no attempt to capture detail, nevertheless presents a meticulous impression of the pose and dress design and folds.

Alatise's criticism on the same subject is also presented in a mixed media presentation *Nine Year old Bride* (see Plate CLXI on p.300), showing headless images wrapped up behind cloth. She significantly renders them as such, indicating how inconsequential society regards them, by the treatment accorded them. These painting leaves no doubt that Alatise is an apostle advocate for better treatment of the female gender.



Plate XCVII; Peju Alatise's campaign against girl child molestation. *Source: Wrapture Exhibition Catalogue*(2013:0,126)



Plate XCVIII; Children in London during 1:54 Exhibition; Campaign against girl Child abuse. Source: 1:54 Exhibition from pejualatise.com (2015)

To further drive home her point about the girl-child abuse, Alatise wore a T-shirt during her "WRAPTURE" exhibition in 2013, with inscriptions STOP PHEDOPEHELIA IN NIGERIA, STOP SEX WITH CHILDREN (Plate XCVII). The artist also made children wear T-shirts with similar inscription at the 1:54 exhibition at London in 2014 to register her point (Plate XCVIII).

Alatise's interest in the subjugated women, has also prompted her into producing many other related works. In *Bring your Head* (Plate XCIX), which is another fairly monumental piece, the artist shows women in different sizes and skin colour; of pastel reds, blues, yellows and greys. This work is executed in a similar same manner as *Nine Year Old Bride, Where is Her Mother*



Plate XCIX. *Bring your head,* Peju Alatise, 42" x 90"(106.7cm x 228.6cm). Nike Art Gallery, Lagos. **S**ource: *Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue,* pejualatise.com (2014)

(Plate XCVI on p.243). Like the former piece, this work is another social caricature expressing Alatise's view of how the Nigerian society esteems a woman's intellect. Where the former piece contained a few angular lines, the images in *Bring your Head* are curvilinear. All of the heads are upturned oval forms, depicted with mercilessly exaggerated facial features. The manner in which the artist renders the images ends up in producing the impression of a fine, long necked handle less vases. Their hairdos hinting at the same predicament; they are all considered second-rate. Once again, Alatise seizes the opportunity to display motifs from Nigerian wax fabric on their clothing.



Plate C. *Inside, they are Broken*, Peju Alatise, Mixed Media, 10ft x 4ft (3.05m x 1.3m), 2012. Source: *Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue (*2012:22).

Inside, They are Broken (Plate C), is another of Alatise's symbolic exposition on the position of women. The story behind this is recorded in her books *Silifat* (Alatise, 2006) and *Wrapture* (Alatise, 2013). The writer explains about this in the words:

> …taken to the preacher to be repaired, he only offers words as be enduring, duty bound, down trodden, be tolerant,..(sic) .With a yellow tape of modern words, they attempted to mend her brokenness. Today, daughter walks about, bag in hand and heel to shoe, head held high…with her hairdo/headgear, bound together in colourful stripes of other people's clothing, hair and names. But inside they are broken.

The compositional approach in *Inside They are Broken* is different from the preceding. In this work, Alatise uses symbolism to convey the devious means by which, foreigners tricked the African continent, to part with its God-given 'unspoilt' treasures. The piece is a mixed media composition depicting ten female figure, each shown with a broken bottle attached to their

bodies. The bottles figuratively represent their broken virtue (the 'transparent vessel') which the 'fox' had lured them to receive in exchange for the original earthen vessel the Creator had given them. The message coming through is that; at the end, though they appear to walk tall, inside, they are actually broken.



Plate CI: *More than Human*, Peju Alatise, 2004. © pejualaise.com, 2015

The plight of women is further explored by the artist through the painting *More than Human* (Plate CI). In this piece, Alatise presents three fictitious allegorical women from her book *Orita Meta* (Cross Roads), which tells of the travails of Africa and its women. The sufferance of women is also represented by the artist in the painting *Orita Meta* (see Plate XIX, on p. 96), which chronicles the interwoven journeys of three women. This theme is also expressed through the mixed media work *Nigerian Woman*. Perhaps like Joseph Stalin's *Hands Up for Socialism*,

designed in 1930 (Microsoft Encarta, 2009), Alatise sees various hands as representing the unsung labour and contribution to be offered by combined efforts of Nigerian woman.



Plate CII: *In it Together*, Peju Alatise, 2008. Source" *Silifat* (2006).

The story behind *In It Together* (Plate CII), and *Forgiven* (Plate CIII), also chronicled in Alatise's book *Silifat* (2006), all reflect the travails of women. They get together in order to share their moments of pain. When mother and child realize they are both victims of male exploitation, they share their grief. For these two women, to forgive each other, and those who had offended them, becomes the opportunity to break the cycle of hurt. A mother says sorry for her moments of neglect, she promises to offer the victimized daughter opportunities to still forge ahead in life.

Portraying the two figures under a single veil is indicative of their mutual partaking of circumstances.



Plate CIII; *Forgiven*, Peju Alatise, 2008. Source: *Silifat* (2006).

Peju Alatise has addressed various other subjects in her paintings. One of these is cloth as covering, and as a 'material witness'. In her writings, Alatise presents cloth as one of Obatala's creatures who came as seeds sown into the earth. For that reason, cloth is considered a sacred product of the earth in Yoruba mythology. As a product of cloth, the wrapper is seen as a powerful medium for covering all human secrets, mysteries and shame. According to Alatise, material as a 'witness' speaks of cloth as tangible evidence to life's experiences and if given the power, (cloth) would attest of its encounters.

In a set of works she calls *Ipele* series, Alatise presents cloth as a form of covering for women. Traditionally, it is the manner of a Yoruba woman's adornment especially for an outing. The

Ipele refers to a narrower piece of cloth Yoruba women usually wrap over their waist on top of the usual *iro* (loose wide rectangular cloth tied around the waist as a wrapper). The painting expresses an important indigenous cultural heritage of Nigeria- the Yoruba culture. *Aso Bora* (meaning covering cloth), is also a set of her works, devoted to depicting cloth as a valuable covering material.

Alatise also offers her visual comments about other day-to-day social malaise in the Nigerian society. Expressed through a mixed media work, *Captain Red Tape* (on p. 290), represents the artist's misgivings over bureaucratic bottlenecks found within the Nigerian administrative organization. The artist is concerned that, such unpleasant processes hamper efficiency, and will in the long run, prevent meaningful advancement for the country. By composing the graphic image of a form trapped by literal red tape, Alatise employs the means of a metaphor ingeniously to effectively present an impression of her message.

One of Alatise's most remarkable social comments is conveyed via the installation *Missing* (Plate CXV). The work was inspired by the on-going issue of girls still being kidnapped and sold as sex slaves across the Nigerian borders. The practice had been going on even prior to the mass kidnapping of 234 girls from Chibok town in North eastern part of the country. That unfortunate event caught international attention and sparked the 'Bring back our girls' protest. The work comprises of 97 squared panels of 33 cm x33 cm per panel of Acrylic & Textile on canvas, which was sold out at the exhibition (Jona Quest Art, 2014).



Plate CIV; *'Missing'* Peju Alatise, Cloth panels. 2014. ©: actualite.com (2014)

The work comprises of cloth panels showing silhouettes of girls' heads. In some of the panels, the shapes are filled up by fabrics of different colours. This blankness of facial features deliberately refers to the vacuum created by these kidnapped girls. The various hairstyles depicted, is suggestive of the ages of the missing girls. Some of the panel spaces are left blank to relay the impression of 'missing' persons.

Alatise's themes could be summed up through Akintunde's (2012) declaration that, her choice of narratives vacillate between appreciating her fellow womenfolk, the travails of repressed women, the examination of feminine sexuality, lavish accounts about human dealings, religion, folktales,

Yoruba mythology, and modern day social concerns.

Nike Okundaye's Painting Media and Techniques.

An interrogation about which media and techniques are employed by Nike Okundaye in her paintings shows that: she commenced her painting with simple media. The very first colours Okundaye acknowledges using for her paintings in the late 1960s were acquired from plants. Her inspiration for these colours was acquired from the Muslim Mullahs (scholars and clerics) who used ink to do Arabic calligraphy on their slates. Okundaye combined this with her knowledge of making indigo and other dyes, which provided her with ideas of creating colours for her painting. She counted these colours to include brown pigment obtained from the Kolanut, lemon yellow and from wild ginger root. Purple was obtained from onion skin, other colours from cactus, mushroom, *agbo* (a local plant), and indigo also supplied pigment forOkundaye's early paintings. The artist remarks that for colours obtained from kola, the ones which had been eaten by worms usually provided a better hue.

Okundaye has also ventured into mixed media work quite early in her painting career. Together with Olabode Okundaye's younger sibling, the pair had produced paintings using beads and glass. They even went further to experiment with using grains and beans for mixed media painting. The issue of preservation hampered the duo from continuing with grains, as rodents and other pests kept destroying those works. The variety of implements used for applying those

pigments included all manner of improvised brushes ranging from feather quills, sharpened bamboo sticks to broom sticks. The artist recalls that, those paintings were usually on a small scale, as paper was the earliest surface upon which those works were produced.

At Osogbo in the late 1960s, Okundaye came in contact with Gouache, Pen and ink including different techniques such as brush-painting, oil colour, engraving, cardboard relief and fabric painting. The artist affirms that, water colour is her favourite medium because it is so peaceful and relaxing. Okundaye explains that she did not paint with these media, in exactly the same techniques as Olaniyi, but admits that proximity to the latter no doubt, impacted on her paintings.

Okundaye's pen and ink paintings are a remarkable genre of her work, which she has sustained over the years. Initially, feather quills sharpened and dipped into colour were her tools for this medium. She used these to produce such works *as Adam and Eve's First* Love in 1975, presented earlier in Plate XII (on p.61) and in Plate CV below. An exquisite piece of work produced with pen and ink, this lyrical work rendered chiefly in a linear manner, nevertheless recalls the luxuriant plant life typical in Olaniyi's works.



Plate CV: Details of *Adam and Eve's First Love*, Source: Cloudinary.com (2015)

Nearly a decade later (by the 1980s), Okundaye created a series of paintings with this same medium including *Village Life, 1984*. Some of these initial ink works of Okundaye were confined to using pen and monochrome colours or greys alone. Up till this point, the artist's rendering of this medium appeared to have been a meticulous penmanship characterized by creation of precise shapes, forms and images. The outcome is the appearance of etchings or engravings. The artist later began to include washes of different colours as reflected in *Untitled,* and *Fish and Family*, 2003(see Plate XLIX on p.178).

Nowadays, Okundaye prefers using a Rotring pen which has an ink pouch, or reservoir which is refillable. This type of pen is handy and more convenient because, it is neater to use. The artist admits carrying smaller paper along, while on journeys. She often makes sketches of her background patterns while travelling, most especially in traffic hold-ups. Armed with these kits,

Okundaye has produced countless paintings of landscapes, human and animal images. Some examples include *Image*s (2002), *African Traditional Instruments*, 2003 (on p. 202), *The Forest*, 2004, *Silkworm* Tree done in 2007 (on p. 182). Most of such paintings mentioned were executed on paper.

Okundaye's *Women Delegates* series of six paintings (Plate LIX on p.190) executed in 2001, were also done in the same medium as the preceding. The paintings essentially comprise of *adire* patterns worked over the background first, and images drawn and painted over with light washes in selected portions. After working on separate papers, they are mounted unto a panel. The pieces from the *Women Delegates* panel demonstrates that procedure. It is possible to see the *adire* patterns at the background, superimposed by the image, having dashes of colour on its headgear, face and cloth whereas the background remains in black and grey ink. The artist has produced various panels in this manner on different subjects. These include *Family Habitat* in six parts, 2002, and *Village series*, 2008.

As far back as 1970, Okundaye had produced pen and ink paintings on paper. The earliest of this variant of her paintings comprised of black ink drawings against a white background. From then, thin washes of different colours began to appear in Okundaye's pen and ink, as well as water colour, and even acrylic paintings. These are created by penning over all *adire* patterns with selected colour at the background, then drawing and filling in images with colours as in *Sundial Memories* (Plate CVI). *Hoping for the Best* painted in 1974 (see Plate CXLII on p.304), and *Royal Daughters* (on p.184), painted in 1975 are likewise, executed in that manner.

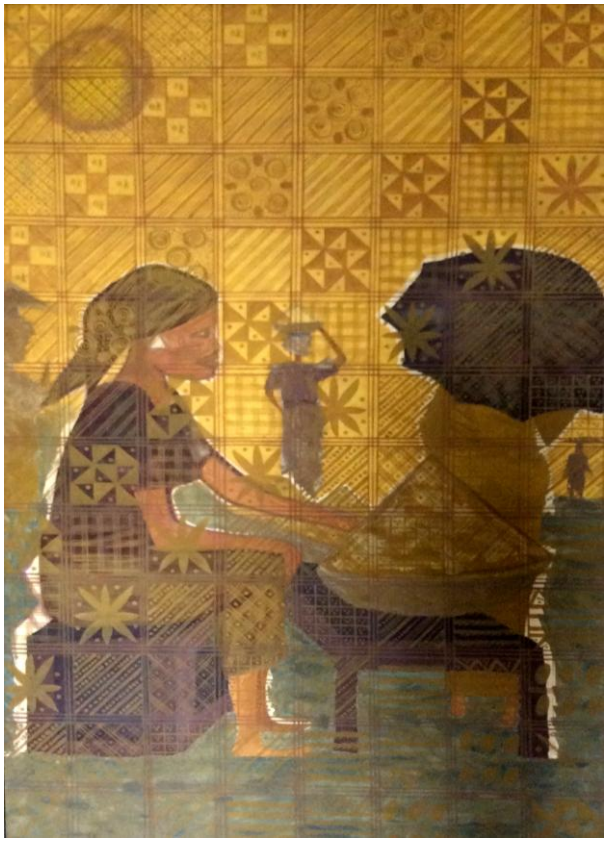


Plate CVI: *Sundial Memories*. Nike Okundaye, Pen & Ink on Canvas.33"x 54"(83.8cm x 137.1cm), 1970. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The entire background of *Sundial Memories*, is brushed over with a light wash of yellow ochre. *Adire* patterns are drawn with darker and lighter variations of that colour in a check like manner all over the surface. The few images are then subscribed unto this arrangement.

Okundaye's earliest gouache paintings were hardly accessed by this study. Some of her water colour works especially as from 2000 are however accessible. The artist has produced works independently employing this medium, but prefers mixing it with pen and ink on paper. In most instances, the artist applies the water colours as monochrome washes or blends tints of various colours harmoniously, to create a composition. An example of this is seen in *Untitled* Landscape

(Plate CVII), where she used a light blue wash as background for the work. This is a piece essentially depicting a few buildings against a landscape with a few trees at the foreground.



Plate CVII: *Untitled.* Nike Okundaye, Water colour, on paper, Undated. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The artist distinguished the sky from the foreground by varying the blues applied in those areas. At the upper part of the work, the blue is fairly deeper and she is careful to create a vertical effect of the landscapes upper region, via the direction of the *adire* patterns. From the horizon, these are arranged in a layer of square-like strips topped by triangular ones. For the ground, the artist employs tapering strips of the patterns to achieve the feeling of recession.



Plate **CVIII:** *Transfiguration,* Nike Davies-Okundaye Water colour, Pen & Ink on paper, 19ins x 14ins (48.3cm x 35.5cm), 2011. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Okundaye's abstract work *Transfiguration* (Plate CVIII) produced in 2011, is rendered in the same media as with the previous work. The piece shows a faintly discernible, bigger solitary face towards the top middle, before whom a few sketchy images are arranged. They are surrounded by strips of textile motifs, creating a mesh of patterns. In this case, Okundaye employed a brownish-green as main background, but painted little portions in pink and green washes creating a pleasing contrast.

Notably also, as far back as in the 1970s, Okundaye began to use acrylic colours for her paintings. She however retained the making of patterns at the backgrounds. This can be seen in *Poetic patterns of Love* which was painted in 1975 (Plate CIX). Okundaye's treatment of pattern

in this piece, accords it the illusionistic impression of work done in relief. The painting shows a village setting, depicting huts and people involved in various activities, all of which can be taken



Plate CIX: *Poetic patterns of Love.* Nike Davies-Okundaye, Mixed Media Hand painted on Board.96 x 47in (243.8cm x 119.4), 1975. © africancrafts.com (2014).

in at a glance. The colour scheme of this painting is blue and red with highlights of yellow. The artist seemed to present two levels of perspective in this composition. The first involves the top and bottom layers. At the extreme left, a towering man painted with light blue clothing and deep blue skin, sits nonchalantly with a blue basin filled with fruits (painted in a glowing yellow and ochre) at his feet. Beneath this figure, at the extreme bottom of the canvas, a set of diminutive female figures are shown standing with children strapped to their backs. They are inscribed within a patterned space painted dark red. This forms the bottom sphere of the work. At the top middle part of the painting, stands another male figure, his head covered with a straw hat. The

middle of the work depicts a woman hanging out cloth to dry on a pole supported by two stakes on both sides. The bottom edge to the right is filled up with the roof of a hut. Behind this, is a group of three women, also having children strap to their backs.

In some of Okundaye's paitings done with acrylic colours, she sometimes incorporates other materials, thus rendering them mixed media productions as in *Mask of the Women of Old* (Plate CX on p.259). The composition comprises a background of carefully painted batik patterns in indigo, over which different kinds of interesting mask-like images are superposed. The latter are picked out in contrasting hues of sienna, greens, and white.



Plate CX: *Mask of the Women of old,* Nike Okundaye, Beads, Acrylic on canvas, 71cm x47 cm, 1986. In custody of Engineer Yemisi Shyllon's collection. Source: *Five Artists, Possibilities and Results.* Exhibition Catalogue of Five contemporary artists, Public Affairs-United States Consulate, Nigeria. (n. d.) © Lighthouse ltd. Lagos.

Okundaye's colour scheme has generally been found to be simplistic and she uses colours symbolically. For the artist, blue represents love and royalty; Okundaye explains that as being the reason behind the use of *etu* a fine blue woven cloth by Yoruba *Obas*. She sees brown as

signifying the rich oil that grows on the land, as well as the one mined from it. For the artist, yellow stands for such things as the sunflower which also produces oil. Okundaye says she employs orange to express a bright mood, while green symbolizes the verdant environment. She explains that earth tones characterize the earth itself, and the oil it carries within it. For Okundaye black signifies the ebony tree and the African beauty of its males and females.

Two major colour tendencies are detectable in Okundaye's paintings: monochromatic and polychromatic. In a great deal of her paintings Okundaye uses a limited palette. Most of paintings in this category are monochromatic, but by no means boring to look at. Her monochromatic paintings are either greys, reddish (orange), greenish or bluish. Some other paintings are worked predominantly in violet, while some are executed in cadmium red. *Expression of our Affection* painted in 2002 (plate CXI) exemplifies this trend. On the main part, this painting is composed with red ochre at the patterned background, comprising of faintly silhouetted images of women merging with the background. The profiles of two prominent



Plate CXI: *Expression of Affection*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on canvas, 48ins X 28ins (121.9cm x71.2cm), 2002. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

figures dominate the work. They have stylized head gears in the same ochre, but their faces, elongated necks, and statue-like bodies are defined by a dark sienna.

Bumper Harvest (on p.192), is a painting similarly produced with a limited range of colours; precisely predominantly monochromatic orange. Okundaye skilfully manipulates the orange with highlights of yellow colours to create a harmonious blend between images and background. Tones and shades of that colour are used to create the irregular forms of the yam pieces. The patterns which include the typical motifs found on Yoruba dyed cloth, were carefully drawn with a thin brush, and allowed to dry before the figures are painted over them. The images whose shapes are merely indicated, then lightly filled in with colour, are superimposed over a

background of batik textile motifs. This deceptively impresses that the painting ground was a batik cloth.

Similarly exemplifying her penchant for monochromatic work, Okundaye appears to favour blue for a large number of her paintings like those in the *Brain Series* seen already (on pp.192 &193), *Comfort in my Home* painted in 1971*; The Levees of my Inspiration* done in 1990; *Not Too Far from Home* in 2001 and *Women in Shadows* in 2003 for instance, are all rendered in Indigo blue reminiscent of dyed *adire* cloth. Illustrating this is, *The Umbrella of Our Heritage* (Plate CXII), done in 2002, which shows a large hall set against a checker pattern of traditional Yoruba textile motifs in blue. It is surrounded by slender silhouetted images. The only areas of contrast, are those in the middle where white was mixed with the blue to achieve light. Likewise a blue monochrome work, is *Untitled a* painting depicting a row of women done in 2009, which is executed using the same techniques. It shows a row of women all having objects as covered calabashes covered with other calabashes, pots, trays and baskets on their heads. The erect images are simplified, and fairly elongated. Darker shades of the blue are used to define shades on the figures and objects they are carrying, contrasting this with lighter tones at the background. The figures are thus, mainly rendered as silhouette forms. These are all arranged over a background of *adire* patterns.



Plate CXII: *The Umbrella of Our Heritage,* Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas, 54" X 88"(137.1cm x 223.5cm), 2002. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Like in most of her works done in this manner, the overall effect, is that of a cloth dyed with indigo blue. Another colour with which Okundaye has produced monochrome work is violet, illustrated by paintings like *My Brain is Correct, part I* (see Plate LXI on p.193).

Some of Okundaye's early paintings done with variegated colours are unsophisticated. In those works, she seemed to imitate natural colours of objects represented. An example of polychrome colour in Okundaye's early paintings is *The Folklore Teller* (seen already on p.200). The dominant hue in that work, is the severely darkened sienna at the left and right ends of the work. The outlines of the storyteller's seat is skilfully silhouetted against the dark background, making it the deepest shade in the work, The faces of both narrator and audience are completely darkened, indicative of their insignificance in the setting. The women and images behind them

are toned to a blur, suggesting distance. However brushing some subscribed blurry skeletal roof shapes at the background, Okundaye impresses that the group is sitting outside, within a compound surrounded by huts. An unseen source of light provides a glow, making the middle of the painting's lightest portion. The sparsely painted dabs of sharp yellow and orange tints, with blue on clothing of the figure stand out. By this careful choice of colours, Okundaye achieves the effect of darkness in a night scene.

In other recent polychromatic paintings, Okundaye portrays a kaleidoscope of brilliantly blended colours as in *Family Reunion* (Plate CXIII), and *The Oil Producing Village* (Plate CXIV). *Family Reunion* features a set of women's images depicting heads not clearly defined and facing



Plate **CXIII**: *Family Reunion*, Nike Davies-Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas, 17ins X 43ins (43.2cm x 109.2cm), 1998. ©Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

different directions. They are arranged in the middle of the canvas and surrounded with *adire* patterns. In both *Family Reunion*, and *The oil producing village*, Okundaye employs a medley of colours. These include a rich violet, ultramarine, magenta and a blend of cadmium red and yellow. In portions where the yellow and red mixture is painted, they blend to produce a warm

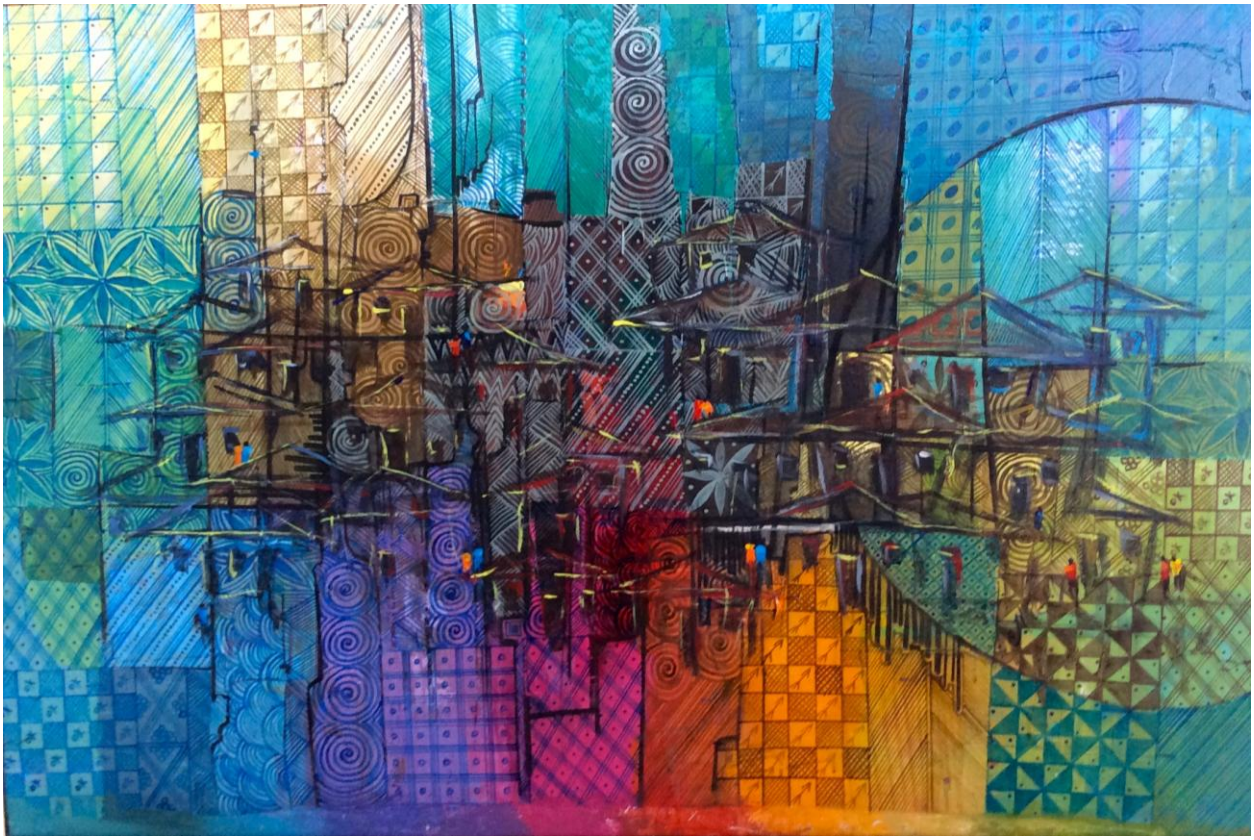


Plate CXIV: *The Oil Producing Village*, Nike Okundaye. Acrylic on Canvas, 28" X 41"(71.2cm x 104.1cm), 1999. Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

glow, as though lit from behind the work. The clearly outlined *adire* patterns in *The Oil Producing Village*, are arranged in graceful strips painted with various brilliant iridescent hues. At the right side, a circle was carved, but retaining the patterns with some diminutive human figures, mainly in pairs interspersed in this composition. The treatment of colours is similar in

both paintings. The upper parts of both paintings are painted with blue, while the middle with greys. The bottom part has violet and gradually orange towards the middle, ending up with a muffled green or yellow.

In some of Okundaye's paintings, she explores with brown tans as in untitled painting depicting multiple profile portrait, 1990. *Above the Odds, Welee O pami l'aye,* executed in 2001. *Sweet Moment* (Plate CXV) a painting produced in 1996, which mainly comprises of lightly applied washes, illustrates Okundaye's exploration with brown tans. In some portions, as

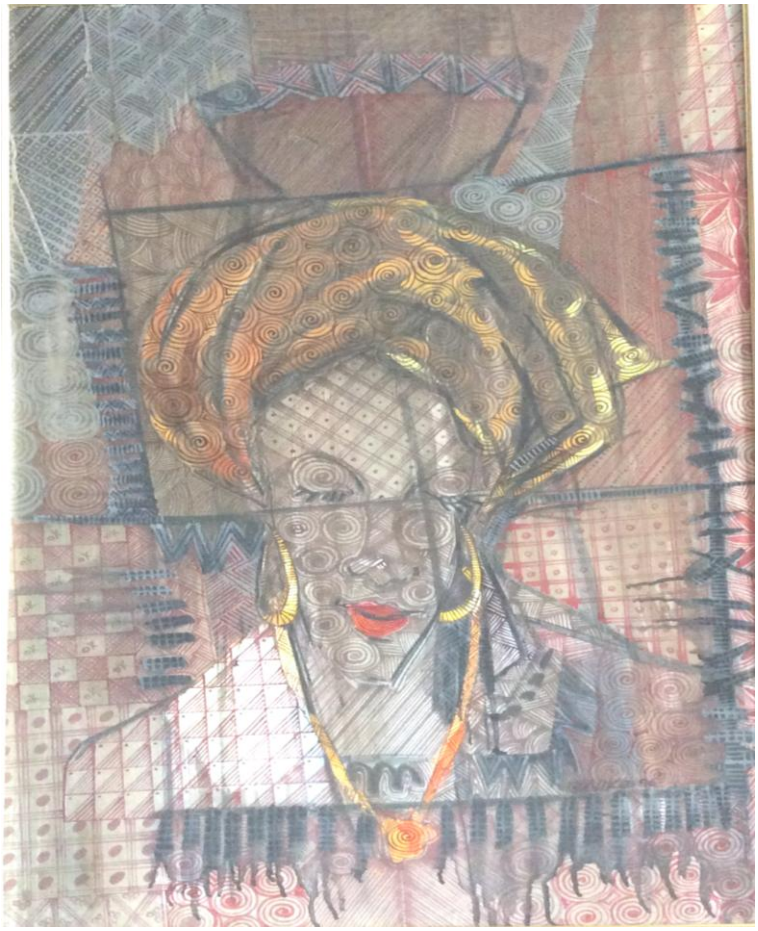


Plate CXV: *Sweet Moment,* Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas. 44" X 28"(111.7cm x 71.2cm), 1996, © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

towards the bottom, colour was deliberately allowed to dribble; enhancing the overall illusionistic effect created. The piece shows a portrait of a downwards looking well dressed woman. Her head gear, comprising decorations with concentric spirals and jewellery, are accentuated by brilliant touches of yellow, according them a golden glow. The work gives the impression of having been 'cut up' into unequal square-like strips, using black lines. Short thread- like patterns are employed as 'stiches' on boarders of these squares. The rest of the work is painted predominantly with umber, having portions skilfully worked in light red and grey.

For the tans used in some other painting like *Dancing Woman*, Okundaye explained that, she mixed the acrylic colours with *lafun* (cassava paste) one of the ingredients used for traditional Yoruba batik, to enhance the *adire alabela* appearance of the work. The artist also opted to use blue and yellow as a contrast against the main umber in the work. The head gear and wrapper of the dancing figure are painted in the same matching shade of blue. Her blouse is rendered golden by light applied in portions of ochre used for its colour.

It may however be said that, a lesser number of Okundaye's paintings are purely, mixed media work devoid of brush work. Such works include *Market Place* (Plate CXVI) produced in 2013, and *Yam Harvest* executed in 2015. They are purely bead work executed on a large scale of 8 feet x 4 feet. In *Market Place*, Okundaye captured a very busy market scene featuring mainly; seated traders some, who are backing the viewer, with containers of their goods installed at their feet.



Plate CXVI: *Market Place,* Nike Okundaye, Mixed Media
(Beads on Board) 1016cm x1560 cm, 2013. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.



Plate CXVIb: Detail of *Market Place,* showing bead work.

The main technique for producing this work, was painstakingly gluing small beads unto a hard board. The artist intimates that, it took her nine months to complete *Market Place,* and close to two years to do *Yam Harvest.* The variation of tightly pasted assorted beads is shown in plate.

Peju Alatise's Painting Media and Techniques

In trying to find out what media and techniques of painting are employed by Peju Alatise in her paintings, the study uncovered that, Alatise has experimented with a wide variety of media and methods in the course of her painting career. The choice and approach to materials in this body of works are sometimes purposeful and pre-determined; other times it is experimental. She has demonstrated what could be considered an exceptional sensitivity to surface and media revealed in her paintings produced as from 2000 till today. This is deducible from her accessed works produced in the early 2000s.

In the 16 years of Alatise's painting career, she has explored with brushwork using oil and acrylic colours. Like aforementioned, the most popular of Alatise's initial paintings are her portraits. The artist has employed oil colours and acrylics in producing these. Also, *Convert of a jagged Cross,* produced in 2008 and *Okiemute, (Time for everything*) in 2010 for instance, was produced with oil colour. In those paintings, Alatise demonstrates the ability to skilfully manipulate this medium. *Convert of a Jagged Cross* (on p.81), appears to be an exploration with red and yellow as dominant hues. The image of the female convert is an arrangement of yellow ochre with highlights of red on forehead, nose and lips. To heighten the yellow beads in her hand, Alatise painted the region beneath the chin a very dark (almost black) colour; a shade she had repeated beneath the image's yellow veil. For the background, she makes an interplay of shades and tones of red and orange in quadrangular shapes.

In the four portrait panels of *Okiemute* (see Plate XXXIX on p.163) Alatise employed finely blended greys, blue and red. In the first panel, Alatise effectively places blue against a light blue-grey background. In the second, she manipulates a dark blue image of the model against a light blue. Her third panel is a play with dark violet, set against sienna background. In the last panel, the model's scarf is painted dark blue, the body red and background light green. In all of these, she combines smooth brush work with dashes to produce lively images.

A greater part of Alatise's painted forms however, are done with acrylic colours on canvas. Most of her portraits including *The way she likes it* executed in 2004, *When Dawn Breaks*, *When the sun sets* both painted in 2005, and *Untitled* in *2009,* are among her paintings done with this medium. In most of her early portraits, Alatise seemed to have stuck to a limited palette. This can be seen in paintings she displayed in two separate exhibitions in 2000 and 2003. In those pieces, Alatise appears to have had a brief love affair with monochromatic images, set against a deep shadowed background. Even though they are so rendered, that is not to say such images are flat. Their roundness is skilfully conveyed by the artist.



Plate CXVII: *Untitled,* Peju Alatise, 132 cm x 132 cm. Acrylic on canvas 2009 Source, Art House, (2014).

Alatise's use of acrylic colour is illustrated by *Untitled,* 2009 (Plate CXVII), which belongs to her red scarf series. The piece is a portrait of a female having a red scarf on her head, set against a well-blended deep brown background. In this work, Alatise demonstrates a keen understanding of the medium, by the manner in which she successfully presents her image. In the first place, the

right side of the image is submerged into darkness. The work is then lit on the left side of face, hand, including the shoulder, with dashes of yellow and green used to highlight lips and side of face. This effectively serves to carve out the face from the background. A number of her portraits are noticeably, done in this manner. The darkest parts of these works are all painted with darkened pigments matching the colours on the faces.

Oblivion which Alatise took time in painting, from 2009 to 2012, is a diptych likewise done with acrylic, in a predominantly intermediate green tints at the upper and shades at the lower parts of the painting. The artist added embossed areas, in addition to the fact that, colours were allowed to dribble in the lower part of the work. Like earlier observed, Alatise has generally varied her colour scheme between monochromes, and polychromes. The first category of her works were done in predominantly shades, and tones of brown, with daubs of tints or variations of red and white. This is visible in works like *More Money, A little Bit of Me in Them Series, Red Lipstick Series- Joy Within, Friends of the Bride, The spotting of Red, Of All That is Left, Oya-ya, Insect Theory-Bug, Insect Theory- Praying Mantis,* and *30 Years ago- Illicit Trade I &II*; Some of her portraits done in later years like the six panels in *I'll be watching you* produced in 2009 (on p.161), were still monochromatic, and display a brushwork that blends hues in a gradual gradation producing a fine chiaroscuro effect.

Observably, colours on some of Alatise's portraits done as from 2005, are done from a more sumptuous palette, which incorporates a wider variety and manipulation of brilliant hues. This is typically expressed in such works as *Blue in the Face, Orange scarf series, Convert of a jagged Cross, More than Human, The way She likes it, Spring New Beginning, In it Together, Forgiven,* and *Foreplay, How safe is it?* The colour scheme in these works obliges the supposition that,

Alatise seems to believe in employing simple bold, brilliant sharply contrasting but harmonious colours. In some respects, this latter variety of Alatise's colour scheme, could be likened to that of Georgia O'Keefe (1887-1986) (Johnson, 2003). It must however be conceded that, where the images by the latter came out fairly 'mechanical', Alatise retains more fluidity and vibrancy in her work with her expressive brush strokes.

Another fine example of Alatise's skilful handling of brushwork using acrylic as a medium, is demonstrated in the brilliant polychrome colours of *Silver Lining* (Plate CXVIII), where she employed the conventional technique of applying wet colours with a brush to create a diptych panel. The work is rendered in predominantly red and yellow hues. Blues, and its shades are applied in portions to probably accentuate the dominance of reds and yellows. Thereby, it creates a pleasing contrast. The combined use of motifs and colours in this work, have served to add to



Plate CXVIII: *Silver Lining*, Peju Alatise, Acrylic on canvas, 36" x 48" (91.4cm x 121.9cm) per panel, 2009-2012. Source: *Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue,* 2012:48

the vibrancy of the work, at the same time affording a rhythmic balance. The end result of sumptuous colours are indeed a unifying force to the composition. The work is split into two making it a diptych, as with a number of her paintings.

Alatise has in addition, successfully experimented with combining acrylic paints and mixed materials, to create interesting paintings. The paintings *Beginning of Ascension* (Plate CXIX), and *Ascension* (Plate CXX) for instance, are executed from a combination of acrylic and mixed media.

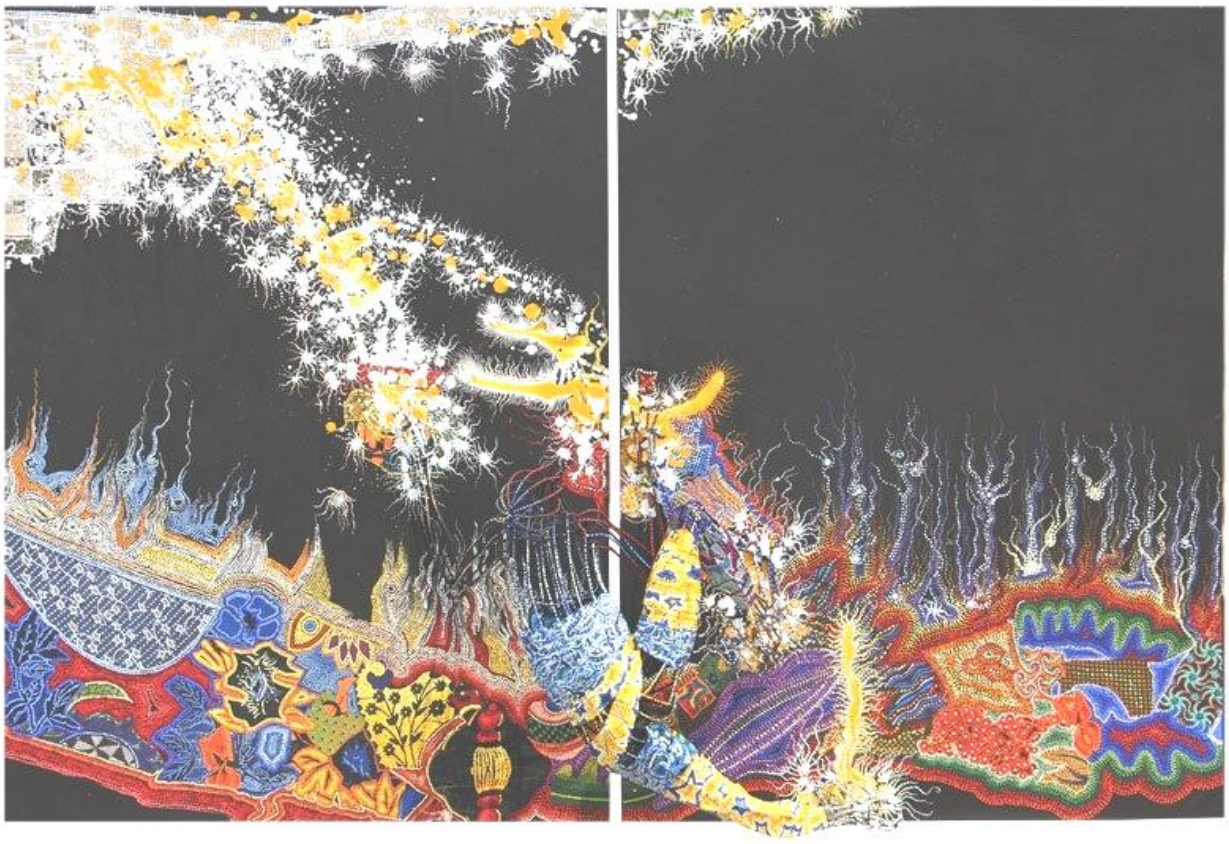


Plate CXIX: *The Beginning of Ascension.* Peju Alatise, Acrylic & Mixed Media on Canvas. 36" x 48"(91.4cm x121.9cm), 2009-2012. Source: pejualatise.com, 2015.

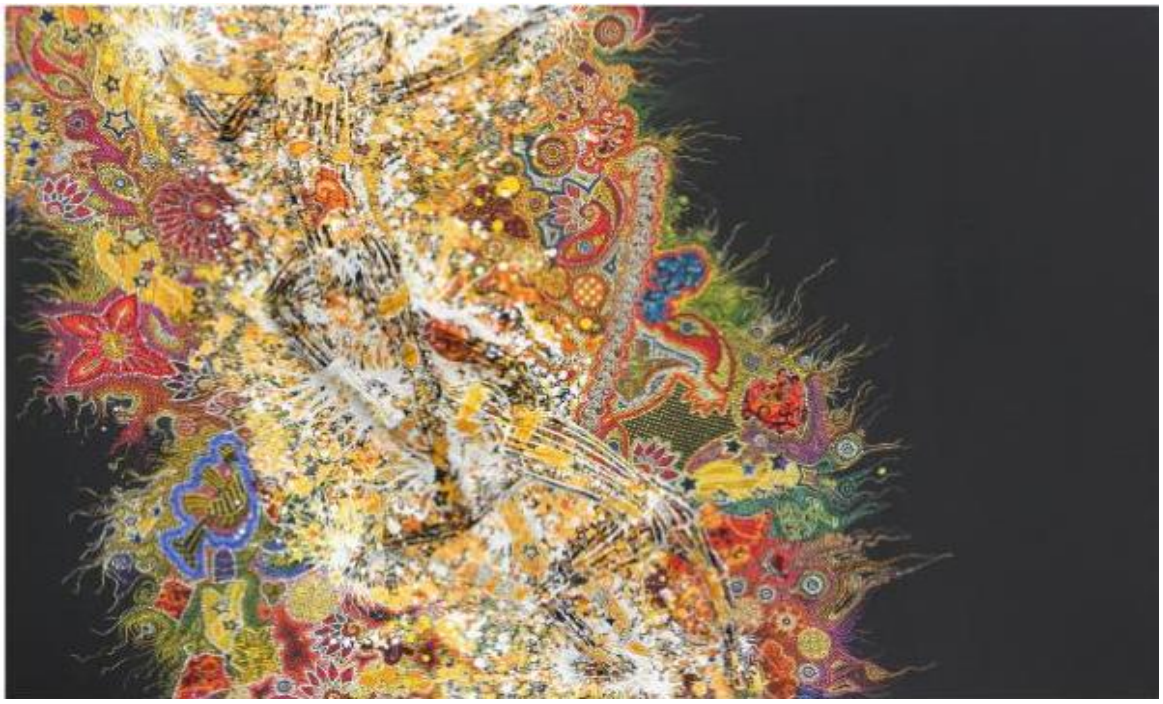


Plate **CXX:** *Ascension*, Peju Alatise, Mixed Media on Canvas, 122cm x182.9 cm. 2011.
© Art House-ng.com_LA1201/page-4.html



Plate CXXb: Side view of *Ascension.*

In the piece (Plate CXX a & b), Alatise demonstrates a keen sense of colour harmony, and ability to handle sharply contrasting hues. With highly saturated and brilliant hues, she accomplishes carefully designed intricate textile patterns, craftily combined with mixed media, over a finely laid bluish black background. The end product is opaque work, always appears finely finished. In these paintings, Alatise on the most part, works on large scale.

Some other paintings of Alatise involving a richer palette, is done with light colours. This is exemplified by such works as *Nine Year Old Bride, Where is her Mother?* executed in 2011(Plate XCVI on p.243), *Bring your Head* (Plate XCIX on p. 246), *He calls them by Numbers* (on p.337). In such works, Alatise applies colours she has blended with white on forms of her images, producing a pastel like appearance. The same style is employed in *Masquerading* (Plate CLXIII on p.338). This work is a composition with curved double lines filled in with colours. Where the previous mentioned works involved brushwork alone, the materials used for *Masquerading* include pieces of cloth.

Most of the art works displayed during the Material Witness exhibition are products of mixed media assemblage. She also counts her techniques to include mixed media collage, fabric freezing, pointillism, drip printing, moulding and sculpting. Some of the materials include exotic beads, fiberglass and metals. In some cases, she paints the forms, in others she manipulates objects and media to create images or even simulate other forms and objects. Alatise achieves most of her forms due to exploration, creative research and experimenting. That has been discovered by this study to have birthed new techniques, and unique innovations with media used by other artists.

Like it has been mentioned before, Alatise has more importantly experimented with various forms of mixed media in unprecedented ways. Mixed media work is among such of Alatise's earliest painting forms. The artist observably began with simplistic forms such as those reflected in *More Money* (Plate CXXI), in which she glued decorated hand woven round mats, cowries and linen cloth over leather. The composition is achieved by arranging two round decorated mats; one bigger than the other at diagonally opposite ends, over a rectangular white cloth. Cowries are arranged at the reverse diagonal edges of the work. Her early examples of mixed media work are also seen in *The Talis, Oriya,* and *Etched Calabash*.

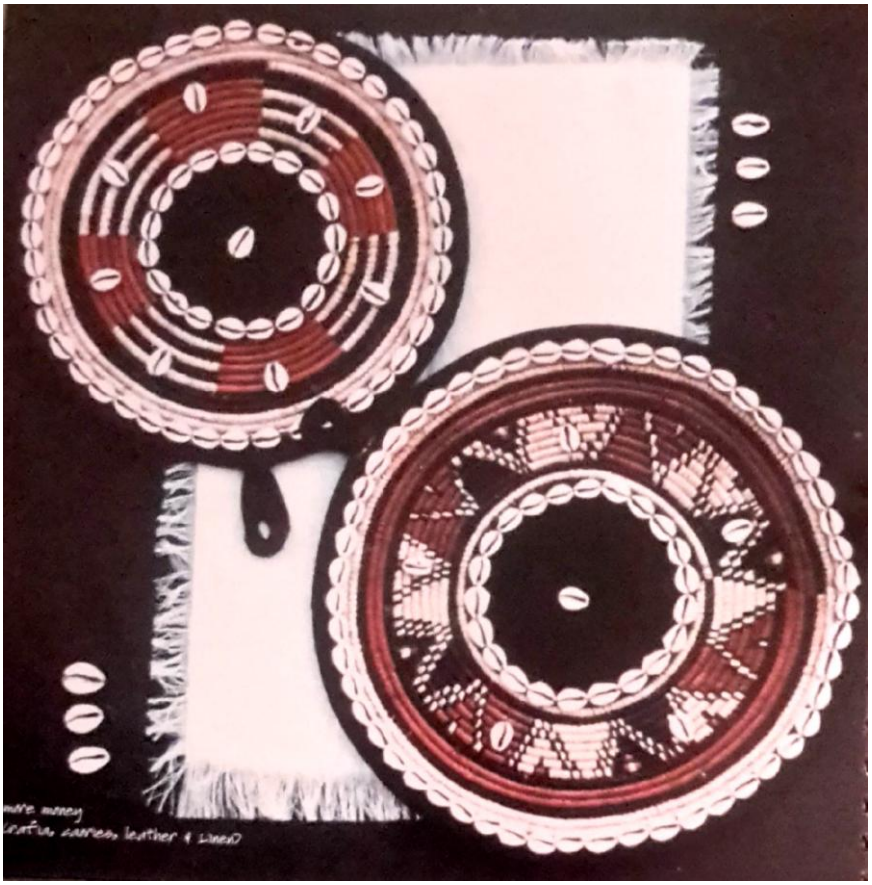


Plate CXXI: *More Money* (Mixed Media- Crafts, cowries, leather *and linen). © Renaissance Craft,* 2000: 4

Alatise began to explore with more innovative mixed media, at a later stage of her painting career. In *Ten People in euphoria* produced in 2010, which is actually in relief she creates ghostly images from a combination of grey and brown.

A strikingly conspicuous motif in some of Alatise's work, is her peculiar kind of pointillism. Alatise intimates that, this pointillist technique was inspired by the rapidography she encountered in technical drawing as an architecture student. The remarkable thing about its use in her work, is the innovative way she has transferred it to fabrics. That is, Alatise does not just produce pointillism directly on canvas, but on pre-designed cloth within her paintings. Thereby, she creates a fresh design, or enhances the appearance of material. Detail of Alatise's pointillist work on cloth is shown in Plates CXXII, and Plates CXXIII below.



Plate CXXII: Detail of pointillist design used on Alatise's fabric Collages.
Source: *Wrapture Exhibition Catalogue*, 2013: 108



Plate CXXIII: Detail of motifs Alatise uses for some of her intricate collages, and mixed media work.

Alatise claims her initial inspiration for her Fabric collages, came from the patchwork designs of the renowned Nigerian fashion designer Ituen Ba-si. The latter used mismatched colours and prints, sewn together to create fashionable clothes. The artist borrowed these concepts from Ituen, and then took to another direction; the painter's direction which led to the birth of her fabric collage. According to her, "…The cutting of the motifs, and symbols on the wrappers mostly collected from her mother (which are observably quite modern prints), are used as collages to recreate a new visual language."

The fabric used are mostly Nigerian print from the local markets. The methods Alatise employs for her fabric collages include cutting with a scissors, twisting, folding, creasing, fastening, tying, at times sewing, painting over portions in some cases, before gluing or attaching to the background support. In order to ensure that the cloth retain permanence of shape they have been arranged into, they are stiffened by applying resin on them. The artists acknowledges she uses resins to 'freeze 'the fabrics she uses. On some of the designed wrappers, the artist applies

pointillism by waxing coloured dots over lines, floral patterns or other motifs on the fabric. This alters the appearance of the fabric considerably, giving it a brighter as well as, a new texturized look.



Plate CXXIV: *Ipele 3.*Peju Alatise, 48cm x 48 cm, 2012.
Source: *Wrapture Exhibition Catalogue,* 2013

This technique is visible in her *Aso Bora,* and *Ipele* series. *Ipele 3* (plate CXXIV), executed in 2002 for instance, displays folded and creased cloth, given a red effect at top left, yellow in the middle, and bluish at the bottom right end using the described pointillist technique. This is attached over a black support.

Alatise has replicated this technique in *Ipele II* this time on a predominantly yellowish fabric, having little red areas. A blackened cloth is folded and arranged over this, with creases highlighted by gold and silver streaks. Parts of the black cloth's white undersides are made to show in a few places. In *Ipele III* blue cloth is arranged crosswise over a set of yellow and red; a blackened piece forming part of the ensemble. These are all placed over a black background. Altogether in these pieces, Alatise strives to achieve aesthetic appeal and balanced composition through the arrangement of fabric and colours.

Distinguishing *Ipele* (cloth to be wrapped or placed over the usual Yoruba woman's wrapper, or on a headgear) Alatise produces a visual comment about cloth as a cover for the body. The collection *Aso Bora* essentially one type of her cloth collages, addresses this. In the piece *Aso Bora* (Plate CXXV), Alatise uses three different fabrics comprising of red designs at the top and at the bottom parts of the composition, and whitened with blue patterns at the middle. These were skilfully folded, creased and shaped and 'frozen' with resin to create an impression of a headless human form covered with a large wax print fabric. This assemblage was pasted unto a black vertically rectangular surface measuring 229 metres x 90 metres.



Plate CXXV: *Aso Bora,* Peju Alatise, 229cm x 90cm, 2011.
Source: *Wrapture Exhibition Catalogue,* 2013:79.

In another variant of Alatise's fabric collages, her *Smoke and Ashes* series for instance, the fabrics are sewn, folded, twisted, 'frozen' to shape. They are either subjected to burns, before or after being attached to the support. *Smoke and Ashes I,* measuring 152 centimetres x 152 centimetres, displays only distorted pieces of cloth, with scorched edges, glued flatly on the

square surface, likewise having holes created by scorching. *Smoke and Ashes II* (Plate CXXVI) is more impressive. In addition to actually attaching sewn cloth, Alatise



Plate CXXVI: *Smoke and Ashes II*, *Peju* Alatise. 152cm x 152cm 2013, ©Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

imbues them with the impression of headless three-dimensional forms, by freezing them with resin. In this work, Alatise captures fleeting motion, and exhibits a superb understanding of drapery. Colour considerations by the artist in this composition is also splendid. She places these crisply burnt dressed in off-red, bluish and yellow advancing empty headless forms, over a blue background unevenly striped, with yellow at intervals.



Plate CXXVII: *Smoke and Ashes III, Peju* Alatise. 152cm x 152cm, 2013. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The effect graphically presented, is that of pitiful-looking victims just emerging from the scene of a fire disaster. *Smoke and Ashes III* and *IV* (Plates CXXVII & CXXVIII respectively), present a more gory picture. By the depression made on fabric, he forms convey impressions of shrouds, and ghostlike empty veiled form.



Plate CXXVIII: *Smoke and Ashes IV,* Peju Alatise. 152cm x 152cm, 2013. Source: *Wrapture Exhibition Catalogue*, 2013:44

It is not out of place that, Alatise refers to these works as collage. This is because, *collage* is a picture made entirely or in part of photographs, fabric, newspaper clippings, and other found objects and materials, which are pasted or glued to the picture surface. Picasso, with whom Braque began to work closely in 1909, are credited for developing collages that included cloth

(Shiff, 2009). Shiff goes on to add that, in *Still Life with Chair Caning* done in 1912 (located at the Musée National Picasso, Paris), Picasso attached a piece of oilcloth that depicts woven caning to his work. By including pieces of cloth and other materials in his work, Picasso opened the door for any object or material, however ordinary, to be included in (or even replace) a work of art (Johnson, 2003:660).



Plate CXXIX; Details of Alatise's coiled cloth used in fabric collages.
Source: *Wrapture Exhibition Catalogue*, 2013: 36

A fascinating variant of Alatise's cloth collages, are those involving combining concentric coils with cloth like those in Plate CXXIX. This kind is dominated by cloths having floral patterns, combined with swirling lines. Two of her mixed media paintings *Scribble* and *Scrabble* are

composed of a combination of varying strips of stiffened curved cloth, pasted over abstracted geometric shapes, on painted surfaces.



Plate CXXX: *Scrabble (Signature),* .Peju Alatise, Mixed media 182 cm x 121.9 cm. 2012. © pejualtise.com (2015).

Scrabble (Plate CXXX) otherwise referred to as *Signature*, measuring 182 Centimetres x 122 centimetres, is an exquisite piece done in predominantly well blended red background. The extreme bottom left corner of the background, is filled with delicately painted floral patterns and wax print motifs in Alatise's characteristic pointillism. Towards the center, the artist created more of these, with oblong shapes filled with brilliant blues, and yellows. The artist added to this

combination, fine black curved lines. Over this, she attached thin curving stiffened strings, also blackened in a carefully juxtaposed fashion. The overall effect produced, is a fine labyrinth of floral and linear patterns.



Plate CXXXI: *Scribble*, .Peju Alatise, Mixed media,
183 cm x122 cm. Source: www.pejualtise.com (2015).

In both *Scrabble* (Plate CXXX), and *Scribble* (Plate CXXXI), Alatise simulates the impression of mesh in the first, and scrawl of writing in the latter. She arranges the forms in scribble in a more curves, whereas a square-like formation for scrabble. Beneath the folded strips of cloth

overlapping in some places, plant and floral motifs have been painted using her peculiar kind of pointillism. Parts of the composition are projections above the flat painted background.

Yet another refined variation of Alatise's cloth collages, could be seen in her cloth panels. In this form of expression, Alatise cuts and folds fabrics into mainly square pieces which are arranged to create a pleasing composition. Once more, like in some other of her cloth collages, Alatise includes pointillist effects ending up with stunning results. *All coming together* (Plate CXXXII), which she started in 2011 and concluded in 2013, illustrates her exploration with cloth panels.



Plate CXXXII: *All Coming Together*, Peju Alatise. 10c m x10cm (per panel, 2011-2012.Source: Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue, 2012:28.

In this ensemble measuring 10 centimetres x 10 centimetres per panel, and comprising of 70 pieces in all, Alatise arranges panels in a gradation of colour, ranging from exquisite peach-like coloured panels with touches of yellow greens, to green in the middle, ending with violet. At the end, she seems to scatter the remaining panels having lightly coloured patterns, but they are

actually placed in a deliberately determined formation. The panels at this outer end have darkened edges. Through this arrangement, Alatise once more proves that she is a master at compositional details.

Another of Alatise's cloth panels *Shrouded* (see Plate XLIII on p.169), which she started in 2011 and completed in 2012, showcases her ingenious creativity. In that composition, Alatise chooses to glue pieces of other designed fabrics on others. She folds these pieces into various shapes and forms which are then stiffened using resin. Most of these smaller pieces, have patterns that are actually cut-offs from those on the host panels. Some others incorporate similar cloth with contrasting features.

In some other experimentations, Alatise employed strips of various kinds of pliable materials. *Captain Red Tape* (Plates CXXXIII), executed by the artist in 2011 is one of such works. In this work, Alatise cut up canvas material into strips, which she then painted red. Some Newspaper



Plate CXXXIII. *Captain Red Tape,* Peju Alatise, Mixed Media, 7ft x 4ft (2.1m x 1.3m). 2011. Nike Art Gallery, © pejualatise.com (2015).



Plate CXXXIIIb, Side view of *Captain Red Tape*. © pejualatise.com (2015).

strips also painted red, with a few of the strippings having yellow portions, are equally incorporated as the primary compositional tool. The strips are arranged in a crisscross pattern glued together. Using this process, she depicts a fairly raised relief of a man trapped in a web of red strips.

Among other similar kinds of Alatise's mixed media work, created with strips of material, are those she made from shoelace strings. In some of these, she incorporated other materials as beads, but in others she restricted herself to strings as main tool. In 2009, Alatise produced *The other Half won't let Me* (Plate CXXXIV), exemplifying this mode of her work. Some pieces like *Purple Period, Lest I forget, 1, 2, 3…* (Plate CXXXV) produced in three panels, is done using the same technique, and so also is *Back of Eden* (plate CXXXVI) executed in 2011.



Plate CXXXIV: *The Other Half won't let Me*, Peju Alatise 3ft x 9ft (0.91m .x2.7m) 2009. ©: Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue, 2012:2&3.

The Other Half won't let Me mainly features a female torso created from shoe string, which is attached to the left side of a rectangular 3ft x 9ft board. The lower part of this image, is painted brown with streaks of yellow, red and blue on its stomach region. Its upper part, showing breast forms, are created from grey strings. First, lines of yellow, blue and red colour are dribbled down the brown painted board. Lastly, strips of white colour are allowed to dribble over the upper part of board. Over this figure, Alatise glued a thick undulating chain formed from brown beads, running from one end of the work to the other. A second chain of light grey beads also parallel to the other, comes from beneath the right breast of the form, it curves upwards ending at the top of the background support.



Plate CXXXV; *Purple period: Lest I forget 1, 2, 3* (on display during Material Witness exhibition in 2012), Peju Alatise, 48x48' per panel, 2009 -2010.Source: Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue, 2012:10.

Alatise employed the same media, and technique in producing *Purple Period, Lest I Forget,1,2,3* a triptych which took her two years (2009-2010) to complete. The work, each measuring 48"x48" per panel, is a composition showing three headless trunks of the female body. The artist made the first in brown, whereas the remaining against a red background. She also simply,

arranged strings flatly around the figures, and allowed paint to dribble in some, or drew wavy brush lines horizontally, in some.



Plate CXXXVI: *Back of Eden,* Peju Alatise. Mixed Media, 54 cm. x 108 cm, 2011.
Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue: 34. © pejualatise.com, 2015

Like preceding works, the materials from which Alatise has executed *Back of Eden* include saw dust, acrylic, and shoe string laces with resin. In the case of this work, the backside of a male figure is featured. Once again, the nude figure is headless, and is depicted as far as the thighs. The contours and biceps are skilfully indicated not just by modelling, but with lightened colour. The entire work is almost monochromatic, painted over with vermillion which gradually progresses to a brilliant orange, and finally yellow at the edges, presenting a fiery appearance. The skyline towards the topmost right of the canvas is a beautiful play of blue, with yellow and red giving the feeling of a warm morning. A patch of the same blue represents water at the bottom right. This work is indeed a marvel of skill. With the overall impression presented, the

viewer is left in no doubt that, man created in the Garden of Eden, represents the life force of the earth.



Plate CXXXVII: *Beautiful Mind*, Peju Alatise, Mixed Media, 132 cm x 305cm x 58.5cm. 2011. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

In 2012, Alatise further explored with modelling forms upon canvases. This resulted in producing some well modelled female and wrist forms in relief. Typifying the result of her stroke of genius in that direction is the mixed media work titled *Beautiful Minds* (*Like the Labalaba*-Plate CXXXVII*)*. The artist skilfully combines meshwork of stiffened twines to produce projecting butterfly-like forms painted with tones and shades of red ochre and violet. These are glued over a predominantly violet painted board on which small coloured plant forms (cut from cloth, individually painted and similarly stiffened), have been pasted.

Alatise's *Body Parts*, and *Nigerian Woman*, also illustrate those explorations, but with different media and methods. In *Body Parts* (Plate CXXXVIII), measuring 106 centimetres x 228centimetres, Alatise simply created some marvellously well-proportioned two female forms;



Plate CXXXVIII: *Body Parts*, Peju Alatise, Mixed Media, 106.5cm x 228 cm, 2012. Source: Arthouse-ng.com, 2013

one headless, the other upside down against a dominantly painted brown background. The limbs of both figures are mere stumps. The brown board is also modelled then painted, much like a marble effect, to simulate a natural ground. The artist paints a finely designed strip of colourful wax print-like plant motifs surrounded by a rich blue whose edges are decoratively jagged, over parts of the body of upright and face of upside down figure.

Alatise's penchant for depicting texture and interest in handling of materials, is also visible in the way she applies a similar approach used in *Body Parts* to *Water Element-Erin Ijesha* (Plate CXL) and *Earth Element-Orun Lo M'eni to ma-la* (Plate CXLI). In *Water Element-Erin Ijesha*

measuring 54 centimetres x 108 centimetres, the use of impasto contributes to the overall pictorial effect of the work. To achieve the natural impression of the earth, while the main warm brown colour was still wet, the artist allowed little bits of other colours run, creating a marbling effect. Over this ground, she fastened two halves of earthen pots; one at the top right, the other a



Plate CXXXIX: *Water Element –Erin Ijesha*. Peju Alatise.
Mixed media, 54 cm x 108 cm, 2011. *Exhibition* Catalogue 2012:32.

little lower down to the left. She then arranges a long, spindly, twisted form made out of cloth. This strange image seems to have been spewed from the mouth of the pots. All over the form, downwards, the artist dribbled blue and light green down to the base of the work. An impression of tumbling water is thereby impressed.

The second example *Earth Element* (Plate CXLI), likewise measuring 54 centimetres x 108 centimetres, is a piece which also exposes great skill and candour of Alatise's paintings. Alatise's disclosure that the 'earth matter' is sensibly simulated by sawdust, reveals the material she used,

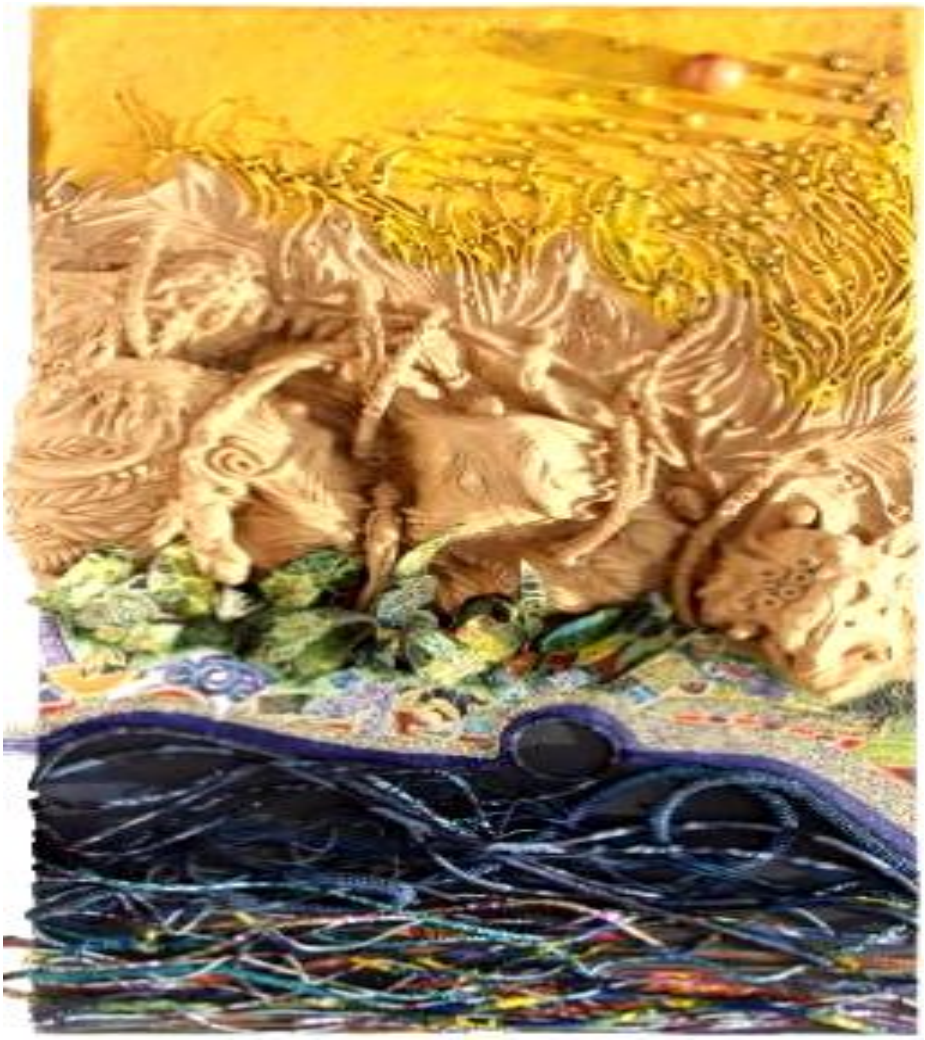


Plate CXLI: *Earth Element*- Peju Alatise. -*Orun m'eni to ma-la*
Mixed media 54 cm x 108 cm, 2012. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

otherwise the viewer would be carried away by the *Trompe l'oeil* effect produced, into thinking clay was used for this work. The sawdust was so finely ground and treated and then skilfully moulded into a relief form. Some areas are painted with golden yellow.

Three quarters of the upper part of this work, is a relief in sawdust. The relief is highest in the middle simulating the appearance of the foot of a hill, or the purported belly of the earth. On this earth, numerous spindly leaping figures with dots for heads, and techno morph motifs are carved

in relief. The latter getting smaller towards the upper parts of the work. The artist skilfully models forms of trees whose more flattened branches and leaves painted yellow, simulate embossment on coins. The leaves are also rendered as embossed dots. At the base of this relief, two female miniature figures, and at their feet are forms with the semblance of rocks, but are actually cloth skilfully wrapped to create that impression. Beneath this, a flat area decorated with floral and plant motifs picked out in blue, interspersed with ochre and yellow against a white background. At the bottom part of this work, cloth mostly deep blue, which has been rolled into fine twines whose sizes diminish towards from thick to thinner one, are glued in an arranged to simulate rippling movement of water.

Somewhat conceptually related to the preceding, is *Nine Year Old Bride* (Plate CXLII), measuring 13 feet x 5feet, and having a depth of 3ft. It is actually an installation comprising of irregular shapes, meant to address women's rights. Alatise reproduces this as a looming three dimensional forms covered with thirty-eight meters (42 yards) of fabric, draped and wound, to reveal female forms permanently frozen in resin. Alatise explains that, the creases and drapes retaining the female forms are frozen with resin, and finished in a fabric collage and pointillist painting.

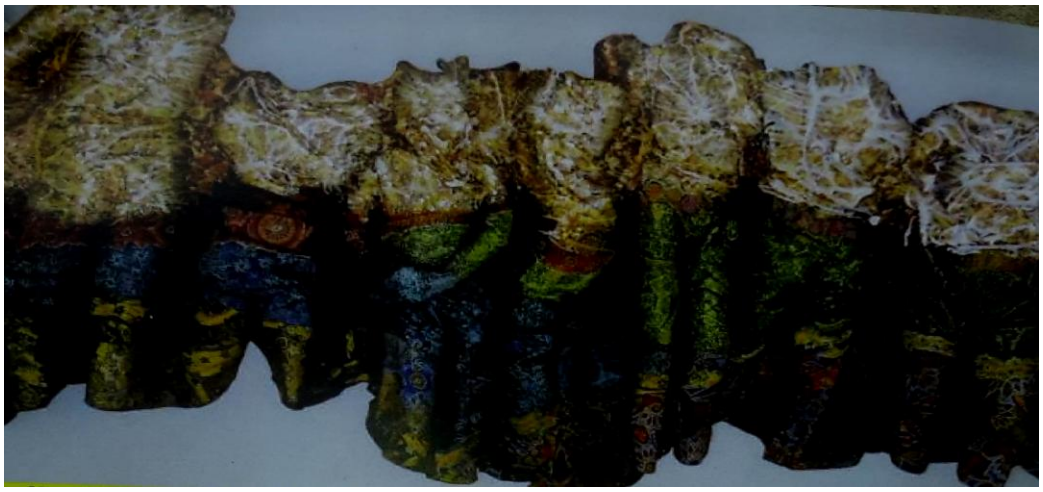


Plate CXLII: *Nine Year Old Bride,* Peju Alatise. 13 feet x 5 feet. Depth 3ft. (3.9m x 1.5m x 0.9m) Completed in 2011. Source: Back cover of *Position Visual Art Supplement* (n.d.)

Nike Okundaye's Painting Style.

Nike Okundaye has been painting in a peculiar style she has evolved, which she calls *Adire alabela.* This basically involves penning, or drawing patterns and motifs employed for her traditional Yoruba tie and dye technique (*Adire*) or batik, along with other forms and objects within a painting. The artist started doing this quite early in her painting career, and it has come to be recognized as her personal signature. It seems that Okundaye's compulsion to fill all space was inspired by her early textile training as a child. This section in addition to acknowledging the presence of such, in most of her paintings, attempted identifying other styles which her work generally assumes.

Motifs in Okundaye's *Adire alabela* style, were derived from her textile work. Stylistically, her images are easily recognizable by their mode of dressing. The Yoruba character of her female images are clearly defined by the elaborate *Buba* (wide sleeved blouses) typical apparel of Yoruba women. The dynamism of her compositions, coupled with the complexity and firm structure, result from a vivid imagination as well as a wealth of history and tradition regulating

the production of *adire* cloth. *Adire* is the traditional Yoruba hand painted cloth. Traditional *adire* designs involves a myriad of motifs, evolved by Yoruba dyers, which are full of meaning and history. These designs have with time, been combined into larger overall patterns with names that are universally recognized within the enclave of Yoruba culture.

Okundaye explains that, a pervading reason for placing these deigns in her painting is to re-establish the value of adire as art, and to increase the appreciation of this meticulously designed, hand produced textiles. In order to provide a better understanding for Okundaye's use of *adire* symbols in her painting, the artist provided the researcher with a scheme of her motifs presented in fig. 1 below.

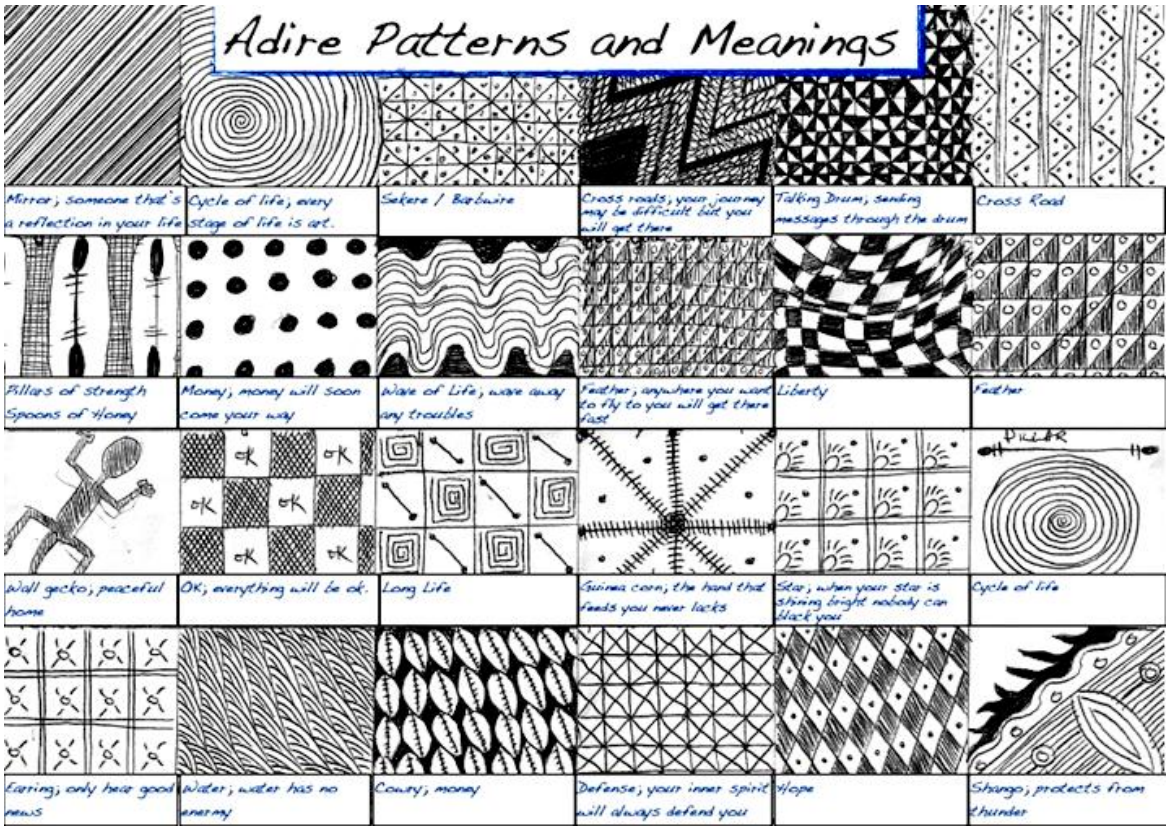


Figure 1; Motifs used by Nike Okundaye in her paintings © The artist.

Okundaye has provided the meanings of the motifs she uses in her work. The first design in figure 1, symbolizes the mirror, which is a reflection of life. The whorl or concentric circular lines which resemble marks made by the finger prints, represent the cycle of life. They signify that every stage of life is predetermined. The next set of patterns is the *Sekere* or Barb wire design, sometimes used in her paintings signifying "you cannot just cross and go". The stylized chevron (zigzag) design that has repeated seedy oval shapes arranged in parts of the design known as Grass Roots, is an expression of optimism, meaning your journey may be difficult, but you will get there. The check created by repeating uneven shaped triangles within square blocks symbolizes the Talking drum. Messages are usually sent through this medium in the traditional African society, and are also used to announce prominent individuals. The directional vertical zigzag lines with straight lines in-between them, represent cross Roads. Some other symbols include the repeated *OK* signifying the goddess *Olokun,* and traditional worship of same. An arrangement of Lozenges signifies sugar which is sweet but can burn.

Okundaye's technique also defines her style. The artist explains that, she sometimes starts the work by laying a light wash of colour over the canvas, over which she maps out a checkered pattern of repeated *adire* patterns in even squares, using a shade of the same colour. Okundaye then runs an umber paint over a portion of the work to serve as its foreground. Flat images are drawn and filled up with colour in this area. Okundaye renders her forms in this other series in two-dimensional form; she is careful to represent objects in their most characteristic shapes. For example, the tortoise or elephant whose shape and trunk are readily discernible. The bird splayed so that both outstretched wings and feet are visible.

At the onset of her painting career, Okundaye's mode of presenting forms was naturalistic and unsophisticated. The images depict the basic shapes found on objects, rendered in a flattened manner without much elaboration. She nevertheless achieves a balanced composition with arrangement of both images and colours. The simplistic rendition of forms and images in naïve naturalism is visible in paintings as *Sundial* Memories, Acrylic on canvas as early as in 1970.

Okundaye seems to have continued in this approach for about two decades, as evidenced by paintings such as *Hoping for the* Best, 1974, and *Elephant Dreams* done in 1988 (illustrated



Plate CXLIII: *Hoping for the best* Nike Okundaye,
Oil on canvas, 137cm x 75 cm, 1974. © Artnet.com (2015)

earlier on page 177. In *Hoping for the Best* (Plate CXLIII), five female figures are featured around a market stall. They are rendered flatly as silhouettes, without any modelling. The entire background was firstly painted over with yellow wash, then using thin ochre lines to create counter-check repeat patterns. The roof and pillars of the stall are denoted by brushwork with a watery orange, and faintly outlined with deeper shades of the same colour. The images were lightly painted in various shades of grey. Umber was lightly applied in horizontal strokes, and on

patterns, half-way from the bottom, demarcating the ground from the ochre sky. The viewer is enabled to take in the scene all at once, as most activity are centralised. Perspective is achieved by diminishing the sizes of women, beginning from the one at the forefront to the figure at the extreme left. The forms of the two closer women also appear to be more defined in terms of shape, and distinct colour accorded them. This manner of representing forms was still visible in *School Teacher*, painted in 1992.

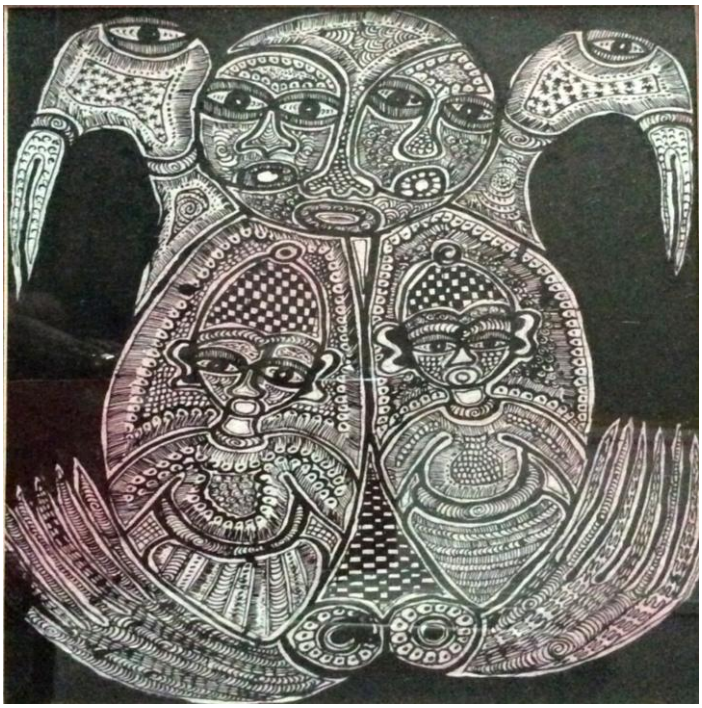


Plate CXLIV, *Village Life***,** Nike Okundaye, Pen & Ink on paper. 16.5cm x 26.5cm, 1984, © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The naturalistic trend described, is still reflected in Okundaye's pen and ink studies, like *Village Life* (Plate CXLIV) and a host of untitled works she executed with ink on paper, in 1984. Particularly, the same large eyes seen in Olaniyi's work, are still detectable in some of

Okundaye's paintings a decade after her debut in painting, showing the lingering influence of Osogbo. The *adire* patterns are neatly fitted on parts of the images, a set of two faces within a round face. On both sides two birds whose twin bodies in profile, meet at the middle, and tails sweep away upwards in opposite directions. Two figures in a frontal view, showing down to below their waists, are inscribed within the bodies of these birds. The bodies and heads of figures are ornamented with check patterns and other motifs. Cowrie shells serve as decorative boarders to different segments of the work. The overall effect is of a batik hanging. Notably, Okundaye produced a number of paintings in this style. However, elements of stylization can be seen in the work.

In contrast, a negligible number of Okundaye's paintings, particularly her earlier works, are done in a style which has no patterns at its background. Two of her paintings firstly; *Market place* (on p.270) is one of Okundaye's paintings which is devoid of a background textured by *adire* or floral patterns. The painting is executed in a realistic style from mixed media (beads and oil colours), a practice she might have likely picked from her association with the Oshogbo art centre. Some other bead works including *Elephant Dreams I &II* (see Plate XLVIII on p. 177), done in 1988, and *Yam Harvest*, in 2015 are the few of her paintings similarly without a background of textile patterns. They are executed in a purely naturalistic style.

Otherwise, Okundaye has also displayed a flare for stylization, and seems to have mastered the style of expressionism early on, in her painting career. As from the 1990s, Okundaye's simplistic compositions noticeably, began to take on a stylization that introduced an expressionistic leaning to her naturalistic forms. This suggests that, her paintings began to alter as she encountered

different influences. Traces of that could be seen in some of her works as *Patterns of our Heritage I* (Plate CXLV), done in 1984.

The piece shows female figures, arranged in an intricately complicated web-like mesh, composed of her *adire* patterns. In this work, the previously simplified women appear elegant, some of them are deliberately elongated, while some are diminished to almost stick-like forms. They are arranged in three clusters within what seems to be stretched skin, over a plain cadmium red background.



Plate CXLV: Nike Okundaye, *Patterns of our Heritage I*, Pen & Ink on Canvas. 41"5 x 27"(107.71cm x 68.6), 1984. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Although her work became more sophisticated, this naiveté is still noticeable on forms in *Bumper Harvest* painted in 1995 (on p.198), The *Folklore Teller* in 1996 (on p.200), *The Village Hair Stylist* painted in 1997, and *The Burden of the Village Women,* painted in 1998. These works all characterize a retention of simple naturalism in her work. Observably, from that period, Okundaye's figures seem to have gradually lost that initial simplistic naïve naturalistic appearance. More stylishly rendered and fluid images could be seen in numerous of her paintings, produced in the 1990s. The artist's dancing figures in some of her untitled works done in 1995, reflect this trend. *Sharing of joy* executed in 1998, a painting depicting the profile of a robust well dressed woman in an expressionistic realism, also exemplifies the artist's departure from the more naively presented images of her earlier works. In this set of her latter works, the textile patterns are arranged in a manner different from before; they are no longer placed on an overall check pattern. In these latter works, her images acquire a flexibility of movement.

The fluid and well-proportioned bodies of the dancers in *Ajaota, Dancing Woman, Dancing Mood* (all executed in 2003;pp 312 & 313), *Rhythm of Life* (see the plate CXLVI on p. 311) which are done in a similar fashion for instance, are reminiscent of expressionist forms in Nigerian painter, Edosa Eguigo's (b.1961) oil on canvas *Dancer,* done in 2007, and images of other Nigerian expressionists like Joe Musa. This sophistication was likewise translated unto her other images like in *Habitat of Lovers* seen already in Plate LXXIII (on p.210), which depicts a stylised hilly landscape. The structures are no longer round huts, but clearly roofing sheets an indication of the change in time. The houses are nevertheless simplified, but arranged to show a hill side. In the work, aerial perspective is effectively used to denote distance.

By the new millennium, Okundaye has continued in this expressionistic trend, and her forms becoming more and more graceful as seen in her rendering of the dancing woman in *Rhythm of Life* (Plate CXLVI), executed in 2001.

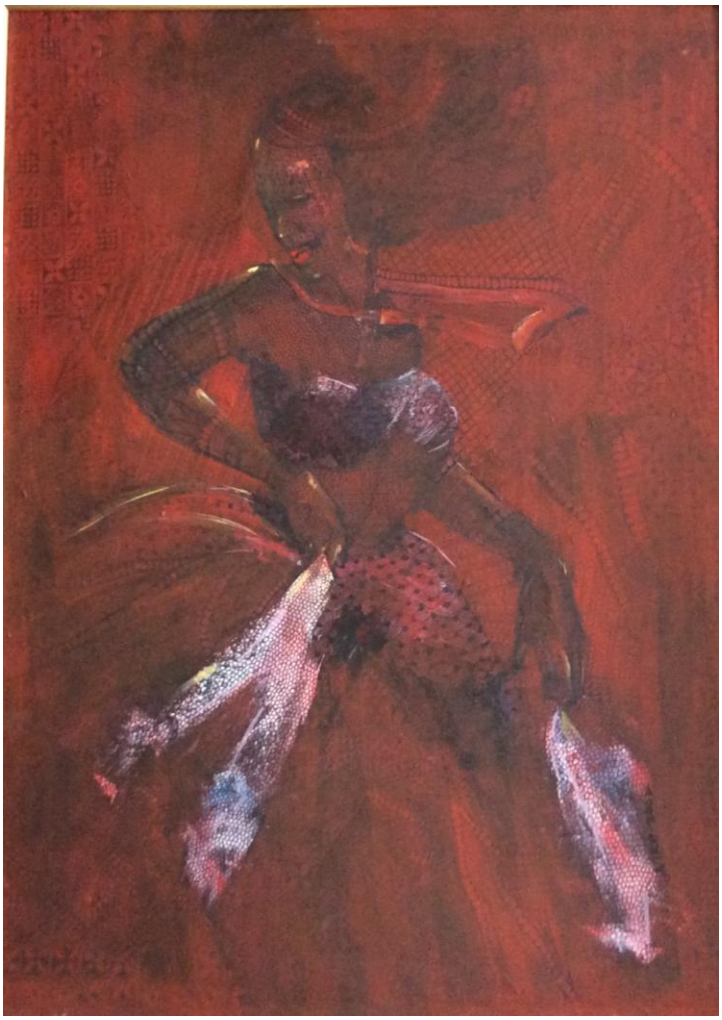


Plate CXLVI: *Rhythm of Life,* Nike Okundaye, Acrylic pen & ink on canvas 37" x 28.5"(93.9cm x 72.4cm), 2001.© Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

In this piece, Okundaye applies paint well blended cadmiums with sienna generously, creating an opaque effect. Her brushwork is no longer sketchy, and dependent on making outlines, but used

to build up finely modelled forms. The graceful movement of the dancer, the movement of hands including the swirl of her hair and dress, are achieved by well directed brushstrokes. Okundaye exhibits a perceptive dexterity in showing contrast, which she achieved by blending dashes of white in a seedy pattern, with sienna and tiny patches of blue, to create the dancer's upper covering and handkerchiefs. The artist focussed on creating an impression of the dance, and mood of the dancer, rather than showing all of her body parts like the legs.

Okundaye seems to have continued in this mode, all the while retaining her *adire alabela* within the works, as evidenced in her portrayal of another dancing figure in *Dancing Mood* (Plate CXLVII)



Plate CXLVII; *Dancing Mood*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic, Pen& Ink on Canvas, 52"x 29"(132.5cm x 73.6cm), 2003. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

In the latter piece, the artist reverted to a thinner brushwork at the Background, allowing for precise *adire* patterns to be clearly seen. In this case, the dancing figure is achieved through modelling on her clothing, showing the movement of the body.

The same treatment for *Dancing Mood* is applied to the figure in *Ajaota* (Plate CXLVIII), done years later in 2012. In this case, the artist opted for grey, as a preferred colour. In both of such

works, there is an attempt to show details on the faces of the dancers than in previous examples of her work.

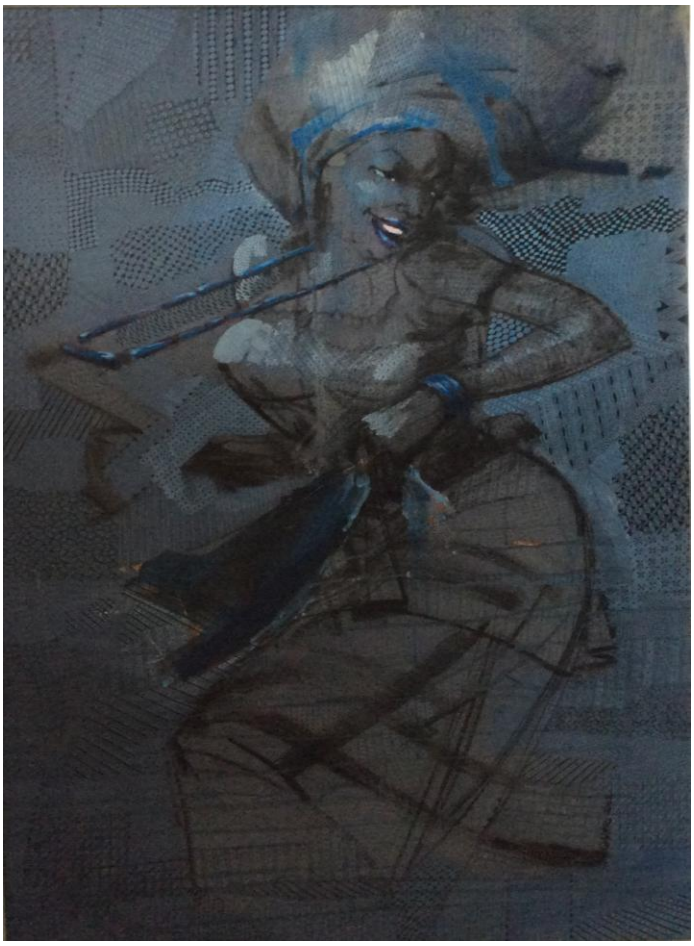


Plate CXLVIII: *Ajaota*, Nike Okundaye, Pen & ink on canvas.
46.5" X 28"(118.1cm x 31.2cm), 2012. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Some of Okundaye's paintings like the *Worshippers* (seen earlier on p. 216), are rendered in a purely expressive style. In some respects, Okundaye's paintings in this category bear resemblance to the work of Joe Musa, Edosa Eguigo and veteran Nigerian artist Kolade Oshinowo. It also recalls that of "Dutch-born American painter Willem de Kooning (1904-1997),

leading member of the abstract expressionism movement, whose work is characterized by energetic brush strokes and twisted forms, and by an ongoing dialogue between human imagery and abstraction Cernuschi (2009).” Okundaye’s expressionism is associated with de Kooning’s style, because in many respects, they similarly fit Cernuschi’s (2009) description of de Kooning’s work “…which sought to capture the spontaneous and often vigorous act of painting through the artist’s personal gestures.” Also akin to Cernuschi’s description de Kooning’s style, is a similar rendering of two figures in some of her works, seen to be “…standing in undefined surroundings”. Related in manner to the former’s work, some areas of the painting like the heads of the two female figures, reveal a tightly controlled technique, while other areas seem unfinished. However, having never studied de Kooning or his associates, the allusion of the former’s style resembling that of de Kooning or any other artist for that matter, is only coincidental. Moreover, in the artist’s other works, the surroundings of her images are fairly well defined.

Another tendency discovered about Okundaye’s manner of presenting images, in a number of her paintings, is showing a multiple profile view. This could be seen in such works as the two *Untitled* paintings she produced in 1990 (Plates CXLIX & CXLX respectively).

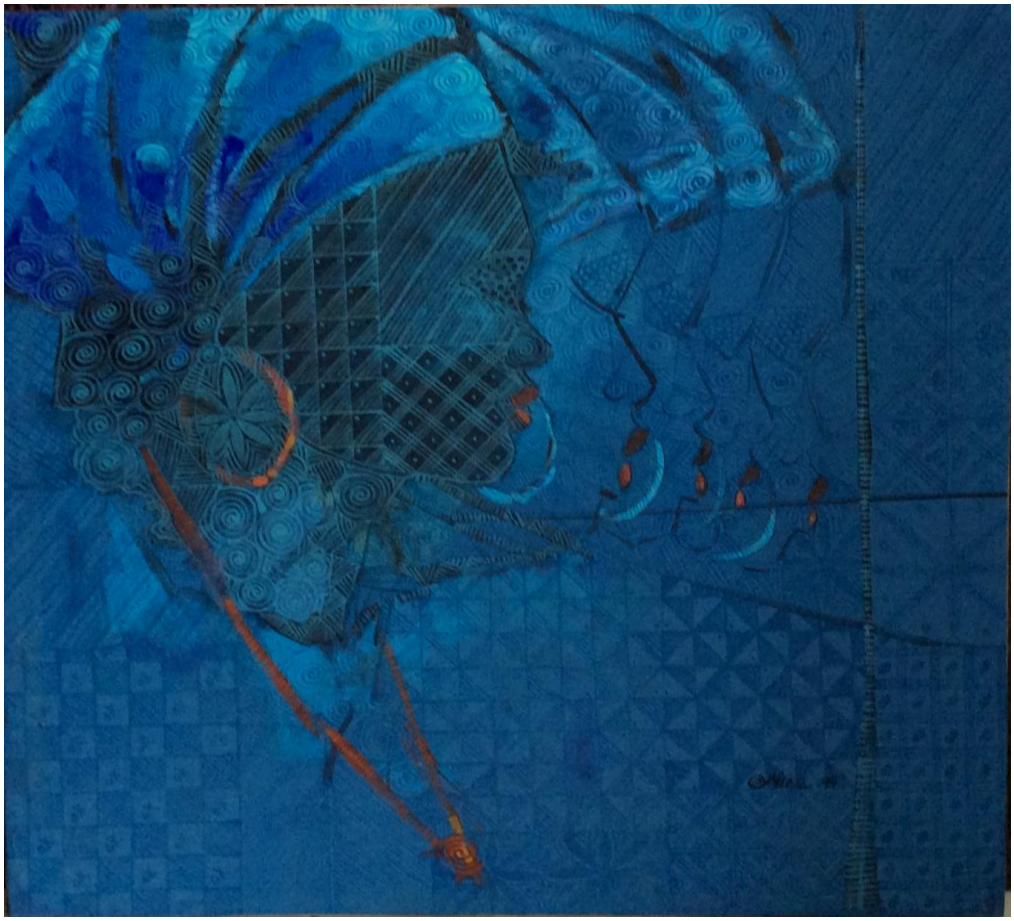


Plate CXLIX: *Untitled*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas, 27"x32"(68.6cm x 81.2cm), 1994. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos

An early example of this venture of presenting multiple profiles in a work, is portrayed in the untitled painting in Plate CL, which the artist produced in 1994. The composition depicts a compact set of five profiles arranged in diminishing order, from the left side, all facing right. The work is an entirely monochromatic exercise in blue, with the reddish brown of the first image's jewellery, and on lips of all the other figures, being the only contrasting hue. Apart from the nearest figure, whose neck is faintly defined, only parts of the faces and heads of the rest are shown. Their images are made to merge with the completely blue background of *adire* patterns.



Plate CL, *Untitled*, Nike Okundaye, Undated © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

The bodies of images in this work (Plate CL), seem to be slightly more clearly defined, and more stylized than in the preceding example. A few 'ghostlike' faces seem to float above the heads of these images. The artist employed a light wash of mauve and magenta as dominant colours in this work. A yellow wash is applied on a patch of textile patterns at the extreme top left of the work, creating a pleasant complementary effect in the composition. The inclusion of floral and motifs contributes in effecting the impression of unearthliness of these images. This introduces an element of surreal in this work.

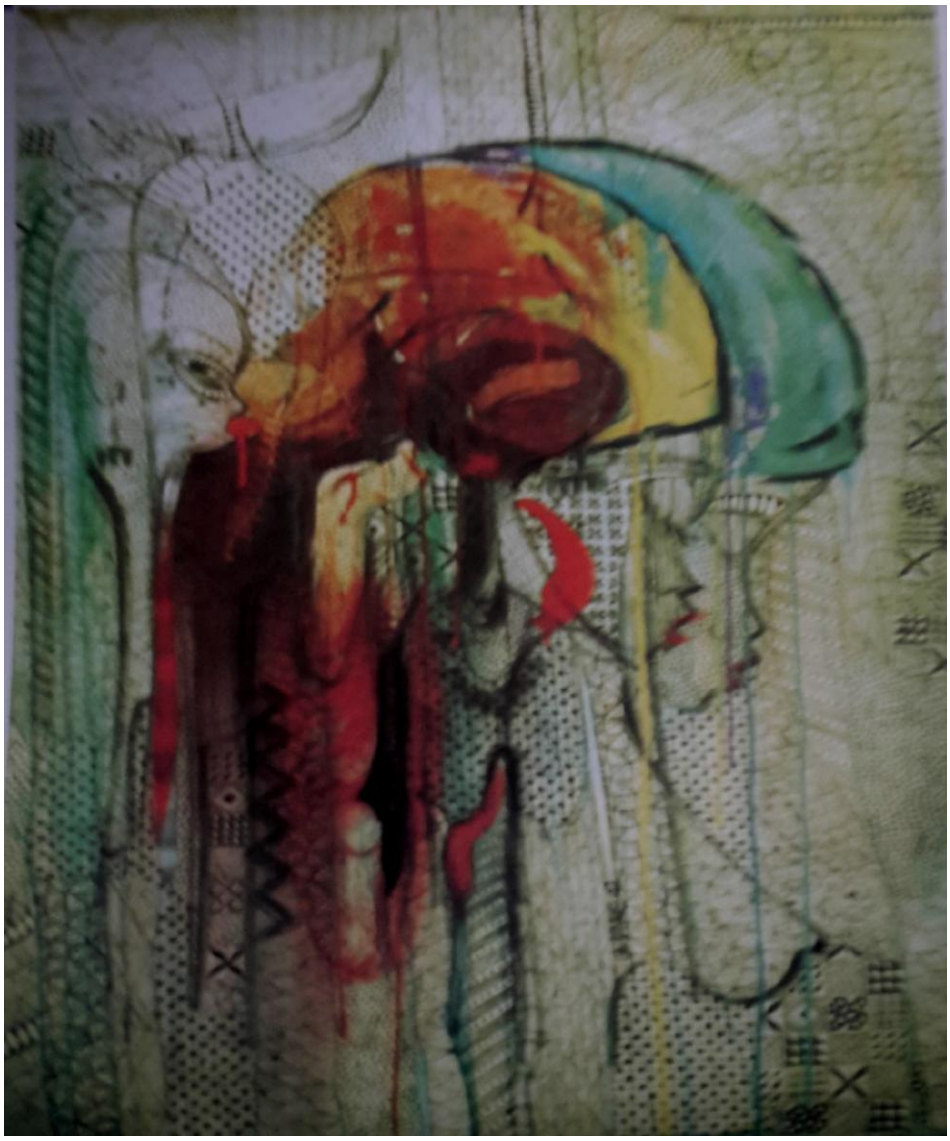


Plate **CLI:** *A Common Factor*, Nike Okundaye. Acrylic, pen & ink on canvas, 71.2cm x 101.6cm, 2008. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

By 2008 when Okundaye produced a similar work *A Common Factor* (Plate CLI), the images, all still facing right, had become further stylized. About four profiles are detectable from this

composition. The most conspicuous among these, are the last two, placed farthest to the right, in the painting. They are both shown with a simple headgear each on their heads; one yellow, the last green. The entire patterned background, is painted with a light green wash. Dashes of red on the lips of these women, and a few patches of the work is the only other contrasting hue in the work.



Plate CLII: *Group of Friends*, Nike Okundaye. Pen, ink & Acrylic, 12½"x17½" (31.8cm x 44.5cm), 2004. © GAFRAAT (2015)

Among Okundaye's exploration with multiple profiles, *Group of Friends* (Plate CLII) produced in 2004, represents a finer and more intricate composition. Three of the images face left, while

one is facing right. The work is expressed in a highly abstract form. The artist used bold lines to delineate the faces and downward sweep of heads. Their faces are embellished with smaller textile motifs, each differing from the other. The patterns are clear and distinct. Okundaye this composition via the rhythm created by directions of patterns, and colours. The colours are sombre, yet clear; ranging from the pale greens, greys, blue, black, to dashes of brown and red. It is the same style in *Untitled* (Plate CXLIX, CL on pp. 313 & 314 respectively) and *Group of Friends* (Plate CLII on p318). In such paintings, she paints the head of the first figure with a greater amount of detail, then in fashion reminiscent of ancient Egyptian art, the profile of the first face is repeated a number of times.

Abstraction similar to that obtainable within the format of abstract expressionism, also began to appear in Okundaye's paintings either in partial, or complete forms, as from the 1990s. Although one of her untitled painting done in 1997 could belong to the previous group, she introduces another dimension to the style; which is elongation of forms. The necks of the two female forms in that work, are stylishly extended, and their bodies are shown as disintegrating gently, submerging into the background. Another form of abstract expressionism, is also observable in some of Okundaye's paintings whereby, images and forms are juxtaposed within the composition.

Some of these abstract expressionist paintings combine human figures, and symbolic forms. Exemplifying this style, is the painting *Survivors* (Plate CLII), and *Market Women* (Plate CLIII). The piece clearly interprets the role of woman, as a survivor in many adverse circumstances. Although the features of a woman's head are shown, it is visible that neither natural semblance,

nor reality are targeted. Okundaye deliberately distorts facial features in this work to achieve a mask like image.

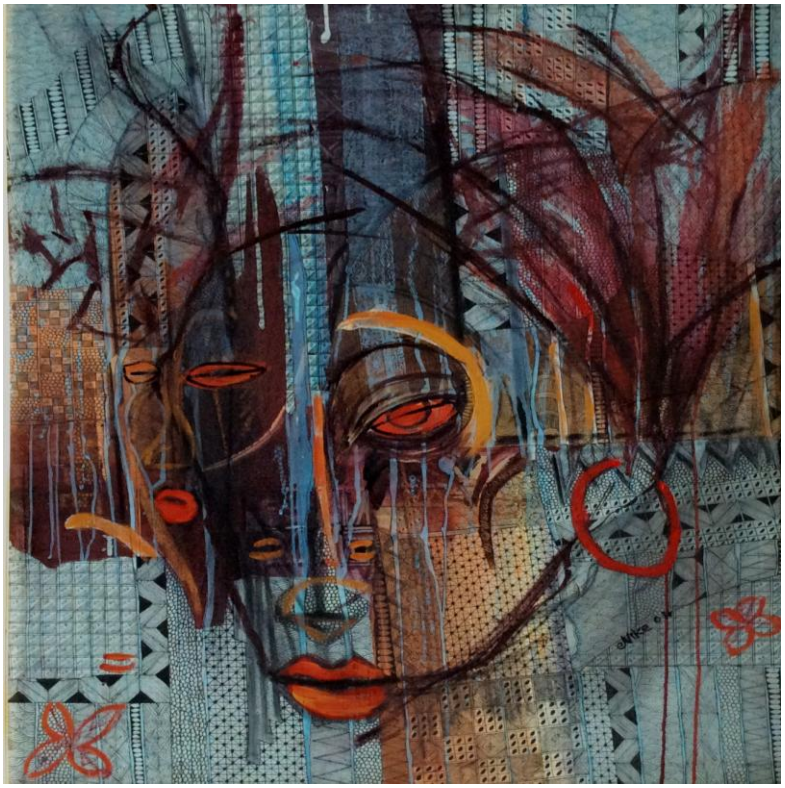


Plate CLIII: *Survivors*, Nike Okundaye, Pen & Ink on Canvas.
35.5" x27.5"(90.2cm x 69.8cm), 2004. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Over the carefully penned strips of *adire* patterns, the background is painted with a wash of blue blended with a generous quantity of white and lightly applied. The artist employed sweeping lines drawn with ink to suggest the face and headgear of the image. There are a series of eyes and lips all painted red on the image. A circular earring subscribed with red at the region of the ear. Two petal motifs are placed one at the extreme bottom left, and the other at the right. The artist

uses this means to engage the viewer's attention on the middle of the work, at the same time taking in the impression of faces within the main face.



Plate CLIV: *Market Women*, Nike Okundaye, Acrylic on Canvas, 26" x 40"(66.4cm x 101.6cm). 2008, © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

In *Market Women* (plate CLIV), a set of six heads are discernible, identifiable by the orange head gears. Apart from that, the rest of the work is a conglomeration of spiral and square-like linear

patterns in raw umber. Despite the bizarre appearance of the images in these works, Okundaye has retained her penchant for combining soft brush work, expressive curved forms, with shapes of varying sizes.

In a similar variant of Okundaye's abstract expressionism, she renders abstract images with mask-like features. *Family of Hope,* produced in 2003, is a painting done in this fashion. Produced with acrylic, Pen and Ink on canvas, the work depicts three female figures (busts), showing only faces and shoulders. All the three faces are simplified and mask-like, resembling features of the Yoruba *Gelede* mask. The figures which are all dressed in the traditional Yoruba attire of *Buba* (wide- sleeved blouse) and *Gele* (head gear), wear a solemn look. Two of them are depicted with beads around their necks. The forms overlap, and the upper parts of their shoulders are not clearly defined.

Endless Gaze into the Future is likewise one of Okundaye's paintings illustrating her works with mask-like images. The forms in this work and their arrangement are all symbolically determined. The painting is dominated at the left side by an elongated face as if, of a carved mask. This face is by no means blank as in normal masks, rather its features affect a dreamy look. The eyes seem to have life, with a flared nose and lips are painted red such that, its countenance actually conveys the impression of a gazing look. It is only this main visage that has clearly defined features. Smaller images of women, are arranged from top to bottom on the remaining space. They are not haphazardly placed, but appear to be in rows. The latter are only defined as impressions by dark shapes for heads, necks, and painted clothes. The lower parts of their bodies merge into the background. Okundaye's presentation of crowds in this work, is seemingly

impressionistic whereby, the almost abstract-forms have lost their individualities. They have been fused into simplistic miniature human forms.

Currently, in the new phase of Okundaye's abstract work, she has proceeded to create images in more abstract forms. Okundaye has replicated similar features in her untitled paintings done in a seeming crowded fashion as if without plan. It is the symbolic connotation of the motifs, and their placement on the canvas that provides meaning of the content. This is seen in *Comfort in Home, 1971, Not by chance,1990, Bearing of Fate,2001, Moment of Joy, 2001,Under the Moonlight, 2007*, which are all located at the Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.



Plate CLV: *Occasion of Truth* Nike *Okundaye*, 1990 © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos

Like the paintings listed in the preceding, a selection of Okundaye's abstract paintings are merely imbued with symbolic motifs. This is more noticeable in *Occasion of Truth* (Plate CLV) produced in 1990, which combines numerous *adire* motifs and patterns. The motifs are significant, their meanings are coded messages understood by *adire* makers.



Plate CLVI: *Symbols of Unity*, Nike Davies-Okundaye. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.

Okundaye has on some occasions, worked in the impasto technique to create purely abstract work with symbolic forms. *Symbols of Unity* (Plate CLVI) illustrates such venture. The piece,

executed entirely with grey, and touches of blue mixed with white, depicts symbols such as the northern knot, pentagram having a hole in its centre, and a few other geometric shapes. This painting is also one of her few works, without a mesh of small *adire* patterns at its background. The artist had in this case, rather used brush work to create the impression of large repeated diamond shapes, all over the background. She skilfully employed a thin brush to create an impression of thin lines in these lozenge shapes.

The artist seems to have divided the canvas diagonally into two triangular portions. At the upper part of the left triangle, a very dark paint was thickly applied in horizontal brush strokes, creating a dark mass of colour. A few patterns are drawn with a lighter grey in areas of this darkly painted portion. The lower part, is painted with also thickly mixed grey, with blue. Some patterns were likewise drawn with light grey in this part of the painting as well. The overall effect is a fine matted appearance.

On the whole, it could be said that**,** starting with uncomplicated brushwork using water colours and mixed media as beads on board, Okundaye has progressed noticeably to pen and ink, then to acrylics in the years 2000 onwards. It would seem that, beginning from the 1990s Okundaye's paintings became more varied and profuse in number. As a prolific painter, Nike Okundaye has experimented with a variety of painting styles. She began her painting career in the same simplistic naïve and naturalistic mode as the Oshogbo artists. Gradually, her scope of approach broadened. A great deal of her works like *Bumper Harvest* painted in 1995 (seen on p. 198), usually incorporate a background of patterns used by the Yoruba in batik, and *adire* making. Rather than take a strictly realist stance for her paintings, Okundaye deliberately sets out to subjectively express her feelings about any issue she is portraying in any given work. This she

does by conceptualizing her forms. It is also visible from the trends of her work that, Okundaye has been influenced by the flat shapes and bold rhythms. The artist generally simplifies her figures, and does not bother about unnecessary details. Yet every picture portrays the essence she has determined to show. With her paintings, she has joined her voice to make comments, capture the environment and at the same time contribute in perpetuating the textile arts using the visual arts.

Peju Alatise's Painting Style

A striking feature of Alatise's portraiture is the treatment of light and shade that renders them in a fashion similar to the style of Baroque painters, which was tagged *Tenebrism.* Like earlier observed about her technique in her portraiture, Alatise appears to have had a love affair with monochromatic images set against a deep shadowed background. The backgrounds upon which the faces are painted, and shaded areas are darkened. Once again, Alatise's attraction for a dark background is shown in *When The Sun Sets* (seen earlier on p. 158). In that example, and in many of her portraits, light is made to bathe one side of the face, and reflecting on a patches of the shoulders. The darkest parts of these works are all painted with darkened pigments matching the colours on the faces. Also, in a number of her portraiture, Alatise seems to be a symbolic realist who sees life from the angle of colours. *Untitled* (Plate CLVII) reflects Alatise's exploration with colours on portraiture. It is essentially a monochromatic study with brown. In this work, the artist also applied her usual play with light and darkness.

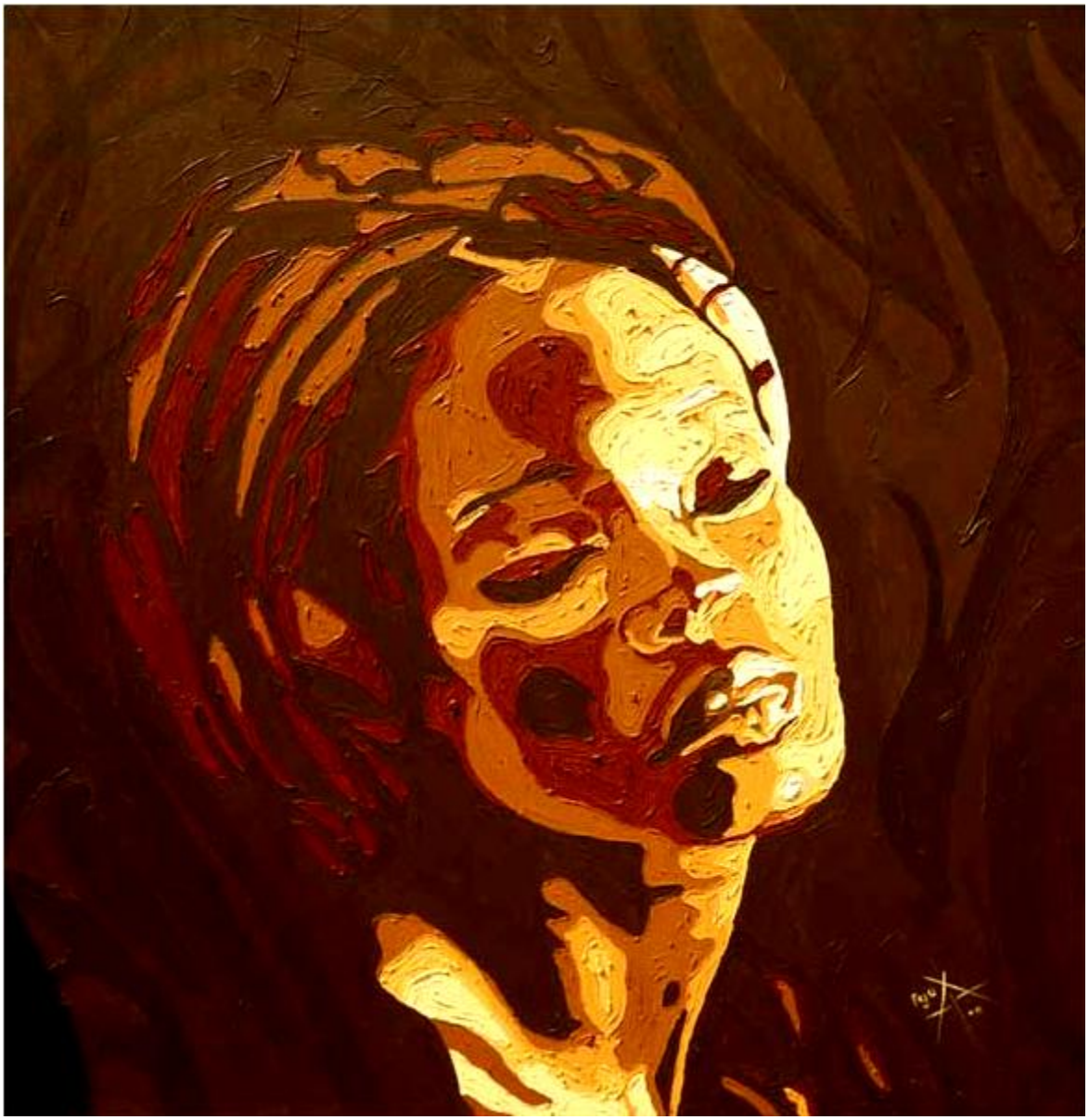


Plate CLVII: *Untitled*, *Peju* Alatise, 123cm X 122cm, 2005. © pejualatise.com

The broader area of sienna darkened in graded portions, forms the background upon which the face is painted. The masses of red shadows, contrast with the lighter toned yellow ochre used for depicting areas of light. Light is made to bathe the left side of the face, reflecting slightly on a patch of her right shoulder. Brushwork in this painting depicts strokes uneven in most instances, such as the hair and background, and the face. An expressive style was used for this work;

revealed by emphasis laid on the thickly laid colours strong brush work, and resulting rhythmic patterns created on the image and background. A hint of sulkiness is detected on this downward looking image. Her faint pout is visible in the manner of slightly pinched lips. This adds to create the effect of expressionism.



Plate **CLVIII:** *Blue in the Face*, Peju Alatise. Oil on canvas, 139.7 x139.7cm, 2008. Source: Arthouse.-ng.com

Blue in the Face (Plate CLVIII) also represents Alatise's exploration with symbolic expressionism. The painting appears to be a skilful exercise in blue and red. The skin of the

model, who is shown facing right for instance, is painted with finely modulated tones and shades of blue. The eye, spots on the cheek, and side of the face, nail of the thumb, and side of index finger are highlighted with a light blue tint. The artist exploited the use a brilliant vermillion painted in various shades and tones, to impress folds on the image's headgear. The background is rendered in a blue-violet, crisscrossed by thick blue-black lines. Alatise paints a few selected portions of the background, and the lips of the model with specks of cadmium, uniting the composition.

This expressive symbolism visible in the last two paintings, bear little relation with objective realism. It is instead, an excursion in the juxtaposition of highly saturated, contrasting colours which appear to have been applied with great verve and spontaneity. Contributing to the total symbolic effect is the use of impasto. These qualities put together, serve to make this work highly expressive and akin to paintings of the German expressionist and postmodernist Vincent Van Gogh. Alatise tends to be repetitive, which confirms her as systematic and ideological. The painter is obviously obsessed about the degradation of women such that she finds it necessary to repeat images to press home her point.

In these works described above, Alatise at times resorts to presenting calm restful images using sfumato, but on the most part, she makes bold statements with strong colours, and restless strokes which evoke feeling of playfulness. Like in the preceding, and a number of her symbolic expressive works, Alatise seems to favour a stylized broken colour-technique in some of her

paintings. This involves intricate motifs and colouration. Such of her work are a subtle harmony of tans, punctuated by highlights of sharply contrasting hues. The artist has produced a number of paintings in this style. These include *What the F***!* (Plate CLIX).



Plate CLIX: *What the F***!* Peju Alatise, Undated. Source: Liveunchained.com (2011).

In these pieces, comprising of the same image, shown cupping her face in her hands, Alatise once again surfaces with beautiful artistic expressionism. The painting depicts three profiles of the same model, whose forms are well modelled. The artist employed an array of hues, markedly different for each, to create patterns all over the body of the model. In the first piece, the play on colour is grey, with dark red and a tint achieved by mixing ochre with a large quantity of white. Some strands of decorative motifs are arranged symmetrically to the image. In the second piece, the artist opted for more brilliant hues. The model is sliced diagonally, creating two triangles. At the upper right, various shades of green are combined with orange. The interplay in the bottom

left triangle is with various shades of blue and a brilliant red. The same colours as on the first piece, are employed with a little variation on the last model, applying brilliant yellow and red instead of deep reds used in the former.

The same expressionistic style is repeated in *Desperately Labake* seen earlier on page 224, in which Alatise made an interplay with yellow and blue hues. In these works, Alatise playfully arranges uneven strips of contrasting colours, and flowing patterns on the images. Alatise employs the same expressive technique in *The Way She like it* (Plate CLX). In this piece, Alatise opts for a cool blue, grey and black for this work. Half tones are created in this work by irregular



Plate CLX: *The way she likes it*, Peju Alatise, Acrylic on canvas, 109 x 109 cm, 2004. Source: Art House-ng.com (2014)

strips of varying shades and tints of the blues and greys, which are dominant in the work. The entire painting seems to be replete with strokes of varying directions; some curving, and others undulating. The dominant blues are skilfully laid down flatly, yet in gradation showing tonal dexterity. The contrasting vibrant red on the lips, with the brown on fingers, shoulder and on some of the strips to the right of the image, are also masterfully laid down in similar strokes. In addition to this, various linear patterns and motifs, are skilfully painted within the irregular strips arranged beside the image.

As obtainable in most of these expressionistic paintings, Alatise creates tones and modelling on her figures. The effect of sharp contrasting complementary colours in her paintings, is impressive and perceivable in *When Dawn Breaks* (Plate CLXI), and *Spring New Beginning* (Plate CLXII). These two examples also represent her fascination with swirling background patterns. In *When Dawn Breaks,* the play is on the hair, cornrowed plaits and face. The left side of the face painted in contours of tints obtained from mixing red and ochre with white, a violet stripe running from upper part of face side down to the chin, is placed against a darkened blue-black background. The model's braids, are painted with the same colours used on the face. To depict light on the head, an irregular shaped pattern was painted in a colour obtained by mixing a large quantity of white with a drop of yellow ochre, giving it a creamy appearance. At the right side of this image, a fairly wide strip painted from a mixture of blue and white, runs from top to bottom, slicing as it were, the canvas, leaving a small blue-black strip at this end of the canvas. The light blue strip is decorated with flowing patterns of a deeper shade of blue. At the lower part of that strip, three braids of her hair are displayed, picked out in toned down white, outlined by violet.



Plate CLXI: *When Dawn Breaks*, Peju Alatise, Acrylic on Canvas, 121.92cm x 121.92 cm, 2005. Source: *Silifat*, 2006:16.

In *Spring New Beginnings (*Plate CLXII), the play of colour the brilliant focusses on yellow used in painting the face, and some of the tendrils against a yellow-green background. It must be pointed out that, Alatise's colours are by no means rigid, but fluidity is apparent in all of them. The overall outcome is not a distortion, but achievement of harmonious blend of imagery, and skilful use of medium. The work evokes the impression of a peaceful sleeping face (deduced so by its closed eyes) placed over this background gracefully filled with soft curling plant motifs



Plate CLXII: *Spring New Beginning,* Peju Alatise, 2005. © *Silifat* (Alatise, 2006:16)

making it look as if the figure is lying on a pillow of flowers. This decorative feature is picked out in a lightened dark green, accentuated by yellow highlights. Alatise narrates in her book *Silifat* (2006) that; the place of beginnings can only be seen in dreams. Some of Peju's images recall those of self-taught Gambian artist Momodou Ceesay (b. 1944). Like him, her paintings could be said to be similarly decorative and ornamented with a precise sense of colour harmony

coordination. Although stylistically rendered, they are elegant, brilliant details of Nigerian fabric designs on costumes.

A number of Alatise's works could as such, be said to display a localized tendency of Art Nouveau. The painting *Spring new Beginning* therefore reflects a dream-like scene, and it captures the face of a woman the curving tendrils of plant form a decorative pattern typical of the *Art Nouveau*. A relatively similar treatment is seen in the three women depicted in *More than Human* (on p.248), and on *When dawn breaks* (on p.333). Aspects of this genre of her paintings, recall the work of Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939), Czech-French poster designer and painter. The Microsoft Encarta (2009) designate Mucha, as one of the leading artists of the art nouveau period, who created poster designs characterized by sinuous "whiplash" lines, flowers on thin, twining stems, women with long, flowing hair, and elegantly attenuated lettering reflected in his *Poster for Job Cigarettes*.

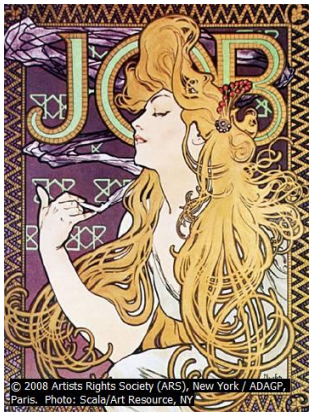


Plate CLXIII; *Poster for Job Cigarettes,* Alphonse Mucha, 1897.
2008 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP,
Paris. Photo: Scala/Art Resource, NY. Microsoft Encarta, 2009

Furthermore, Alatise's backgrounds done in this manner with flattened decorated floral patterns, recall Henri Matisse's *Red Room* painted in 1909. Such paintings could be linked to *Art Nouveau*

and *Art Déco,* a development of Arts and Crafts movements; first noticeable in 14th century church design. It is a style which flourished around the 1860s, thought to have extended into the late 20th century. The movement was known for combining decorative designs such as in the paintings of Pissaro (Johnson, 2003).

It is in addition apparent that, Alatise is not interested in rendering her images in a glossy chiaroscuro. The broken colours she employs in many of her portraiture nevertheless, still produce an effect of liveliness. Alatise ingeniously weaves into a single frame and content, figures and decoration. Despite this stylization, Alatise studies the forms of her human images from life. She attests to having used models for all of her portraits. That has erased every appearance of rigidity from her work. She nevertheless applies mechanical techniques and out of the ordinary methods to create images.

Alatise also explored with what could be termed an expressionistic style that is of linear nature, which renders such pieces to appear more like cartoons. *Nine year old Bride, Where is her Mother?* (on p. 243), *Bring your head* (on p. 246), *He calls them by Numbers* (on p.337), and *Masquerading*.

In *He calls them by number* (Plate CLXIV), Alatise reduces the body parts of images to simple basic rectangular, square or triangular forms, having rounded heads. Lines are ascribed repeatedly around the heads and bodies of these figures. The ‘faces’ are featureless except for firstly thick black horizontal line joined in the middle by perpendicular lines of the same thickness in form of T, on some. All of the heads bear crossed lines creating the impression of a wire helmet over their heads. This work is a kind of symbolic expressionistic abstraction. It is presented on two equal canvases making up the painting. Some patches resembling ‘tags’ having



Plate CLXIV: *He Calls Them by Number* Peju Alatise.
48" x 48"(121.9cm x 121.9cm). © pejualatise.com (2015).

numbers such as 1, 8,10, 24 and 31 randomly written on them, and attached to the images, are discernible in this work. Some of this numbering is on the 'bodies', while others are above heads of these lively images, signifying they are merely reckoned as numbers. Alatise decorates these simple forms with brightly coloured wax print designs.

The mixed media composition *Masquerading* (Plate CLXV), exemplifies Alatise's severely abstract works. The main visible element of the work is line. Clearly defined black lines are used to delineate the outlines of curving tubular forms filled with light washes of assorted hues, arranged over a lightly toned yellow on the left side, and blue-green painted surface on the right. This linearity in some respects, may be said to recall Obiora Udechukwu's drawings which involve strong, sweeping lines used to define outlines of images, in a somewhat similar manner.

However, typical of Alatise's mixed media works, the painted forms are combined with slender tubular forms created from sewn and stiffened yellow wax print fabrics giving them the impression of being stuffed, which are also attached unto the painted surface. Also included in this composition, are thin flexible filament. Some of these forms extend a little bit outside the rectangular boarders of the work. The artist painted black lines simulating the appearance of notched strings, at intervals on the tubular forms. On the cloth, ruffled yellow pieces of cloth are placed at intervals similar to the painted forms. By placing forms made from different materials, but having visible resemblance, the entire presentation evokes an impression of 'images' camouflaging as what they are not in the real sense.



Plate CLXV; *Masquerading*. Peju Alatise, 54" x 96" (137.1cm x 243.8cm). © pejualatise.com (2015).

Traces of art nouveau can also be seen in one of Alatise's installations *Girl Interrupted* (plate CLXVI). Alatise's renderings of these figures—imprisoned as it were in cocoons from which their wrapped forms are unfolding—made them appear like shrouds of dead people emerging from their mortuary cubicles. Like earlier said, this technique of visual trickery is known as *trompe l'oeil* (French for deceives the eye). Although not very decorative, images in *Girl Interrupted*



Plate CLXVI; *Girl Interrupted*, Peju Alatise, 2012**.** Source: Actualite.com (2014)

recalls in some respects, detail of embellishment on an early 20th century door in Milan, Italy done in the art nouveau style (Plate CLXVI).



Plate CLXVII; Detail of Art Nouveau Decoration
Mauro Pomati/Farabolafoto
Source: Microsoft ® Encarta, 2009.

Alatise's installations are either polychrome sculptures, which are abstract and decorative, or realistic presentations. *All Scarves go to Heaven* (Plate CLXVIII), and *Orange Scarf goes to Heaven* seen earlier on page 173, are installations done in the same style.



Plate CLXVIII. *All Scarves go to Heaven*, Peju Alatise, 130cm x 190cm per panel (2 panels), 2013. Source: *Wrapture the Story of Cloth*, 2013:92-3[18].

[18] Once again, the inclusion of this piece is a subjective wish to discuss the artist's use of cloth to create a kind of collage over a painted background (this time all white).

The discernible trait from *All Scarves go to Heaven* is that, they are highly expressive. Although the 'images' are empty cauls, they are powerfully evocative, and imbued with a psychological force. There is no doubt about the potency of these images, in their capacity to arouse the desired awe, project an ambience of supernatural presence, and propel the viewer to contemplate about the beyond. The sense of emptiness is meant to give the audience a moment of inflection, and spurred to question prefabricated beliefs about paradise, and who can enter it.

A number of Alatise's paintings are however, out rightly abstract. The artist's initial examples of abstraction, were simplistic. Among her unconventional forms, Alatise has produced works that are best grouped as abstract forms. Some of her early abstract forms exhibited during her Renaissance Exhibition in 2000 typify this. These include *Of All that is left,* (plate CLXIX).



Plate **CLXIX**: *Of All that is left,* Peju Alatise. © *Renaissance Craft,* 2000: 8.

The painting showcases items of craft related with an African woman's grooming. The wooden comb, and cowries (symbolizing currency) are motifs for this ensemble. Raw umber forms the background setting on which the artist arranges some of these items in irregularly shaped square pigeon holes. Red is sparingly used in portions of this work creating harmony and breaking the monotony of dark and light brown. *Life's a Highway* (plate CLXX) is another work in that



Plate **CLX**X: *Life's a Highway,* Peju Alatise. Source: *JIGIDA, African Adornment.*2003:6

collection. In *Life's a Highway,* Alatise creates what appears like a tributary of roads flowing from one end to the other. On one of the routes a chain of cowries are arranged, denoting financial dependency and economic or commercial obligations found along life's path. One of

the roads is lined up with images of human heads. Other tributaries simply have geometric shapes painted in them.

A few out of her abstract works executed in 2011 could be said to be illusionistic. *Wind Element -Like the Labalaba* (Plate CLXXI) for instance, is an abstract composition, which actually fools the senses of sight to the extent that, it evokes emotions of wings in flight as one views it. Similar to *Beautiful mind* (seen earlier on p.297), it is made in a playfully fanciful manner with cloth and stiffened transparent cellophane extensions, that visually give the impression of flapping.

Wind Element-Like the Labalaba (plate CLXXI) is a remarkable metaphorical piece of work related to one of the imaginary fables narrated in *Silifat* (Alatise, 2006). One of three young girls



Plate CLXXI: *Wind Element –Like the Labalaba.* Peju Alatise
54 cm x 108cm, 2011. © *Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue* (2013: 34).

tells of her dream to fly one day. "…The girls all like that dream and make for themselves wings from pieces of colourful fabrics and paper bags, which they will use to fly. Like the *Labalaba,* when the wind blows, they will ride on it.

Like aforementioned, at a point in her painting career, Alatise appears to have become enthralled with pointillism and texturisation of her painting surfaces. Exponents of *Onaism* and *Araism* had evolved the practice of creating intricate textured backgrounds comprising plant or floral patterns on their paintings. Alatise has taken this a step further by creating her own type of pointillism. This is a style known to have been popularised by Georges Seurat (1859-1891) who was

convinced that the truth in form and colour was achievable not by line and mixing on the palette, but by putting in pure dots of colour which the viewer's eye could then rearrange to correspond to visual reality (Johnson, 2003; 603).

Alatise has in addition diversified into abstract art that could best be described as surrealism and futurism. In addition to possessing features of surrealism, works such as *Ascension* (on p. 274), *Erin Ijesha* done in 2011 (see p. 297), and *Earth Element- Orun Lo m'eni to mala* (on p. 298), are highly texturized. They recall aspects rendered in non-realism replicated in history by such artists as Henry Moore with his *Shadowy Shelter* in 1940 (Johnson (2003). Like Moore, some of these paintings portray human figures, while others natural forms; and the outcome are usually mysterious looking shapes and forms. In either cases, such works evoke strong, if not out rightly violent, aggressive emotions. Decorative motifs whose meanings range from aesthetical to symbolic African traditional elements are incorporated in those works. The models listed in the preceding show that Alatise enjoys working in this style. It also shows that this artist does not conform to conventions of rendering pictorial reality of images, but her own conceptualized version of them.

Achievements and Contributions of Nike **Okundaye**

It must be first and foremost acknowledged that, Nike Okundaye's paramount area of artistic creativity is textile arts rather than painting. Okundaye's most remarkable attainments are related to the outstanding innovative efforts that have gone into sustaining and popularizing the traditional *adire* of the Yoruba beyond the shores of Nigeria. Secondly, Okundaye is distinguished as a multi-talented and versatile artist of many parts, who among other things drums, directs plays, dances, paints, and trains young adults to do all of the listed. Okundaye's

remarkability is mostly enhanced by the fact that ended her formal education in primary six. She is seen to have unexpectedly accomplished much, despite that early educational deprivation, including workshops and teaching Art to graduates and Doctorate students in some of the world's prestigious institutions like the Harvard University, in the United States of America.

An area in which Okundaye has recorded tremendous accomplishments is her painting career. Through that medium, Okundaye has contributed works in beadwork, batik hangings, Water colour with pen and ink, oil and acrylic paints. By virtue of Okundaye's consistent painting, she has become a painter per excellence. Her prolific painting has led the artist into participating in exhibitions around the globe. Okundaye's overall shows add up to over 102 solo art exhibitions and 36 group shows (national and international), thereby making an indelible impact on the international art community. Other achievements and contributions of Okundaye include meritorious awards, her charitable work with females and youth, of which details recorded in the literature review of this study. These accomplishments have earned Okundaye recognition as one of Nigeria's most important artists, and among Africa's most engaging personalities.

Alatise's achievements and contributions

Although Alatise informed the researcher that, she does not belong to any art association, Alatise is well connected with relevant art related groups-as Committee for Relevant Art (CORA), Art House and to individuals. Specific contributions, and achievements gathered about the artist include the following: Alatise has produced art decoration, Restoration, interior decoration for reputable public organizations and private individuals at follows: In 2002 (to date). Philips

Consulting – UBA offices, Marina-Lagos. In 2003, South African Airways, Head Office, Victoria Island-Lagos; Clay-Art showroom, Victoria Island-Lagos; and the Federal Palace Hotel suites. In 2004, the New Reception hall of Obudu Cattle Ranch. In 2005, Bedi Airstrip, Mini Airport, Obudu Cross River State ; Restoration & Interior design/art décor; and Outdoor Restaurant of Obudu Cattle Ranch. Between 2005 and 2006, she accomplished a restoration of Margaret Ekpo International Airport, Calabar, Cross River State. This included interior and exterior work involving: artistic wall to floor finishes, customized furniture supplies produced by Khameo; Maintenance of existing infrastructure, décor in all of its public spaces.

Also in 2006, Alatise's art commissions included décor for Vigeo, Osborne Office, and interior /art décor for the Nigerian Flag House at Wuse Barracks, Abuja. In 2007, it was Citiasset/Citivest, Glover Road office. In 2009, her artistic contracts included Protea Hotel, Awolowo rd. Ikoyi-Lagos; followed in 2010 by Radisson Blu/ Anchorage Leisure Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, and 2011, at the Guarantee Trust Bank, New head Office at VI, Lagos. She embarked on the Radison Blu Hotel project, which she executed in collaboration with Fidelis Odogwu. Design workshop specializing in the design and manufacture of contemporary traditional functional art, furniture and ornamental accessories. Some other unlisted commissions were executed by the artist in private homes, restaurants, hotels, hospitals, offices including renovations and art consultations.

Alatise's prolific painting has led her into holding and participating in local and international art exhibitions, many of which have been group shows including the following: Her first exhibition ever was a Group show tagged African Heritage, at the LAUTECH University, Ogbomosho, in Oyo- Nigeria in 1997. Two years later in 2004, she participated in two shows: 'The African

Renaissance – a mixed cultural performance, at the Muson Centre, Lagos; 'Calender Expo' organized by Guinness Nigeria Plc. at Harlequin Gallery, Lagos; and Reflex, Made in Nigeria. In 2006, Alatise took part in Exposition organized by Total and Elf (Nig.)Petroleum at Sandston Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa; Nigerian Export Promotions Council Presentation to President Olusegun Obasanjo, Aso Rock, Abuja. Alatise was also a participant in the 2008 display 'Stepping into Universality, organized by the Obiagus. She has in addition, participated in all Art House Auctions to date.

Besides group shows, Alatise has organized her own solo exhibitions. In 2001, Alatise formally launched into the art world, by her debut solo exhibition titled *'Oge,* Beauty of African Women' in 2001. In 2002, she held three shows including: 'African Jewellery Exhibition', Jigida Part 1; and 'The African Renaissance. Another of her exhibitions ran from December 2002 to January, 2003 at the French Cultural Centre, Lagos. In 2003, she organized another show titled 'Jigida, Celebrating African Adornments, at the Goethe Institut in October, 2003. Alatise organized a multi-media display of her works in 'Art and the Coffee Table' involving paintings, sculpture, beading, as well as- textile and metal work in ornamental furniture in 2004. A year after (2005), she carried out another show 'Beads of the Sahel' a jewellery display. Three years afterwards (in 2008), Alatise participated in a show 'Aramada, Spectacular Art in Function and Function in Art'. In 2010, Alatise embarked on her first 'Material Witness' related shows titled 'Testament.' The second 'Material Witness' followed in 2012, while the third 'Wrapture, the story of cloth' was accomplished in 2013.

As it has been mentioned earlier, Alatise is a creative person with different modes of expression. Notable among these are her literary works including: her first novel *Orita Meta- the Cross*

Roads, 1st edition, published in 2005. *Silifat* also focussing on content similar to *Orita Meta* followed in 2006. In recognition of her writing skills, she became the first runner up of the Flora Nwapa prize for Best Female Writer category in 2006; She also bagged an award from the (CORA), a group of artistes, art enthusiasts, art promoters and art writers committed to the developments of art in Nigeria who celebrated women writers the same year. Her Coffee Table book *Silifat, Twelve Seasons,* was edited in 2008; Alatise featured also, as an article writer for various Magazines in Radio Drama within the year 2008. That same year, Alatise was a Radio Drama Writer on Social awareness issues. In addition, the artist has published poems in the local (Nigerian) Newspapers. Among her literary accomplishments is *Gangan Prophecies* (Stage Drama scripts) awaiting publishing.

In view of her numerous contributions towards the promotion of painting, the visual, and other arts related areas, Alatise has been given a number of awards. These include: the Solidra Circle Award for painting. The artist as well, received a personal letter of commendation from President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, for a job well done at Obudu Cattle Ranch commissions she executed in 2006. She was a recipient of Halifield School Award for being a Role Model in 2007

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The view that the painting careers of the two prominent self-taught female Nigerian artists, Nike Okundaye, and trained architect Peju Alatise, have not received sufficient scholarly attention

became the major challenge for this study. The rationale for studying the two artists was in order to put into proper perspective, the contributions of these female self-taught artists to mainstream art in Nigeria. The aim of the research is to study and document the painting career of two self – taught Nigerian female artists; Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise.

The specific objectives are to:

1. investigate the circumstances which have inspired Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise into the painting profession,
2. examine the nature of painting forms produced by Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise,
3. contextually discuss the thematic concerns of these painters' works and
4. examine the media and techniques employed by these two self-taught female Nigerian artists for their paintings;
5. distinguish the individual stylistic traits of the two artists;
6. relate similarities and differences in the painting careers of the two artists; and
7. record some of the painting related contributions/achievements made by these self-taught female Nigerian artists within the art milieu.

The research strategies for achieving these objectives included interviews, observation, interview and gathering of data from secondary sources in texts and internet as explained in chapter three (methodology section) of this study. This involved embarking on field trips to acquire first-hand information from the artists, and observe some of the paintings available for scrutiny. Secondly, it enabled the carrying out interview with the artists using a semi-structured interview questions.

It could be said that situating the study against an eclectic conceptual framework is sensible and suitable. It has made it possible to establish following the objectives, that: the two artists are self-actualized individuals who have achieved their self-actualization via art especially through their painting as the research discovered. Secondly, as recommended by proponents of *Triopied* or triangulation methods adopted, the selected paintings of the two artists have been studied in terms of form, subject matter, media/techniques and perceptible style. Those aspects studied have enabled the researcher to apprehend vital components of painting careers of the artists understudy.

To a great extent, the study also gauged information obtained, against the backdrop of useful inputs from related literature, which have been reviewed as part of study. The various views encountered in literature, provided a clue on what was to be expected. Some of the data obtained in the research, confirmed some of the propositions of the literature engaged in this study, while some are debunked. A combination of these methods, have culminated in providing relevant answers to questions posed by the research.

Findings

From the outcomes of interviews and study carried out, the following are the major findings arrived at:

Objective 1.**Backgrounds of the two artists**-The study has established that, Nike Okundaye was born on May 23, 1951 at Ogidi in Ijumu LGA of present day Kogi State. She belongs to the *Okun* ethnic enclave of the Yoruba. Okundaye's formal education terminated when she reached primary six. She however learnt traditional Yoruba dyeing (*adire* and batik); and has proceeded to attain success as an enlightened artist, through sheer self-effort. Okundaye's successful painting career has been shaped by significant encounters with art, artists and individuals who inspired her including; her Great Grandmother (Madam Ibikunle), Taiwo Olaniyi, Susanne Wenger, Ulli and Georgina Beier, Davies, among others.

The study uncovers in addition that, Okundaye started painting seriously, at an early stage in the late 1960s, when she was about sixteen years of age. This coincides with the period when she was a house help to the Indian couple, Mr. and Mrs. Matthew at Kabba. From that time, Okundaye started making and selling her paintings, and has since been practising the art along with the textiles for which she is well known. This was even prior to settling down at Osogbo. The research reveals that; contrary to the widespread notion of Okundaye being workshop trained, neither the artist, nor any other female, attended any of the art workshops organized at Osogbo. It also establishes that, at Osogbo, it was Georgina Beier who handled the art classes organized under Ulli Beier's workshops involving the creative, literary, and performing arts. This contextual circumstances, sensibly affirm Okundaye's status as a self-taught artist, whose upbringing has impacted on her active professional painting practice. Generally corroborating data obtained from literature, the study ascertains that Okundaye is a religious individual, with religious experiences that have gendered in her a liberal-mindedness which has permeated her paintings.

The research likewise confirms that; Peju Alatise was born on June 17, 1975, at Lagos, but is an indigene of Ogun State. This determines her to originate from the Yoruba ethnic group. Alatise studied and graduated as an Architect, from the Ladoke Akintola University (LAUTECH), Ogbomosho; she had an early interest on painting; and was initially inspired by Rembrandt Van Rijn, Ai Wei, David Dale, Nike Okundaye and Bruce Onobrakpeya. The study ascertains that, the artist has never undergone any other formal training in the visual arts, and is as such, clearly self-taught. However, Alatise hails from a Muslim background, but her interaction with other faiths, has produced keenly sensitive, and almost radical creative impetus.

Objective 2: Painting Forms of the artists- Nike Okundaye's painting forms are discovered to include portraits, landscapes showing village scenes and trees, compositions with figures, animals and objects, and a negligible number of installation pieces. The study has verified that, Peju Alatise's painting forms include vastly portraiture, wide-ranging compositions with mixed-media, collages, and installations. Nike Okundaye's earliest painting forms have included embroidered pictures in the early 1960s showing Christian subjects, and later on 'ghost stories'. Embroidery is a conspicuous form of Nike Okundaye's initial pictorial efforts using colours. These are exemplified by *Untitled* embroidery done in 1968, *Sango god of Thunder* in 1971. Portraiture featuring *Pattern of Life* in 1973, her stylized *Self*- portrait executed in 2002 *Portrait of Pope John Paul* II in 1982, and *Portrait of Ronald Reagan* also in the 1980s, group portraits *Patterns of Life* painted in 2004, *Untitled* done in 2008. Landscapes and compositions featuring village and market scenes were also among her early painted forms. Installation *Quilt,* and Tree *of Life,* produced in 2006. She has collaborated with renowned Nigerian *Ona* painter, Tola Wewe to produce paintings they used in staging several exhibitions.

Peju Alatise's earliest painting forms comprise of portraiture featured in A *little Bit of me in them* series exhibited in the year 2000, along with other forms her Renaissance craft show. Portraits were also the main forms displayed in her debut solo show *Oge* Beauty of African women in 2001, and her Jigida show at the Goethe Institut in 2003. Notable portraits in the *Jigida* ensemble are: "*Labake"* from her Lipstick Series, *The way She Likes it* executed in 2004, and a significant number of portraits including *Untitled, Sunset on Ajantola*, *When the Sun Sets, When Dawn Breaks*, and *Spring, New Beginning* produced in 2005.

The study has found that, artist has also produced some paintings which could be classified as double portraits. These are exemplified by *Forgiven,* and *In it Together*, produced in 2008. Her collection of portraits also consist of a series of nine portrait panels *I'll be watching you,* produced in 2009, and *Okiemute (Time for Everything);* comprising of four panels executed in 2010. Other forms of Alatise's paintings involving figures are her compositions such as *Blue Wrapper*, 2008; *Foreplay, How Safe are you?* and *Just One Night 1*. Some of Alatise's early abstract forms exhibited during her Renaissance Exhibition in 2000 illustrate her venture into unconventional painting forms. These include *Life's a Highway*, and *Of All that is left*. Belonging also to the unconventional category, collage has been found to feature prominently among Peju Alatise's forms. Some early examples of Alatise's collages include *The Talis* displayed among her Jigida African Adornment set of works in 2003, including *Oriya*, *At home with the Senufoes*, and *Oya-Ya*.

A significant number of Alatise's painting forms are actually mixed media work. Evidently, the artist appears to have begun incorporating this among her works, right from the onset of her painting career. These included *Etched Calabash Spears from Burkina* is one of Alatise's mixed

media work showcasing five beautifully crafted miniature spear forms placed against coloured backgrounds. From 2009, the artist embarked on more refined explorations with mixed media, using different kinds of innovative media. Some of the work in that form include *The Other Half won't let Me*, *Purple period : Lest I forget 1,2,3* produced between 2009 -2010. *Some Have, Some Have Not*, 2010. A number of such paintings like *Beautiful Mind, Captain Red Tape, Back of Eden* (see plate cviii), *Nine Year Old Bride*, *Wind Element –Like the Labalaba* (plate cxxxviii), *Water Element –Erin Ijesa*, and *Ascension*, were created in 2011. In 2012, she produced *Masquerading* (plate cxviii, *Earth Element-Orun lo-m'eni-to ma-la, The Beginning of Ascension*, *Body Parts*, and *Nigerian Woman* produced in 2012 as mixed media *forms*.

A considerable number of these later forms of Alatise's mixed media work are classifiable as cloth collage, and cloth panels. Her *Ipele* series comprising of six different works, *Smoke and Ashes* series consisting of four different works, *Aso Bora* comprising a set of three works, as well as, *Scrabble* and *Scribble,* exemplify this category. A variant of her cloth collages include *She put a hole in him*, *She Said No,* and her Earth Stories Series- *She Let Herself Go.*

Objective 3: Painting Content of the artists - The study finds that, in Nike Okundaye's paintings, women- their sufferance, motherhood, dignity, dressing; celebration, dance; tradition and culture, portraiture, rural village life, religion were her main subject matter. It has been discovered that; in her earlier works, Okundaye seems to have been occupied with common Yoruba folklore, traditions and the rural setting. With a few rare exception like *The Quilt* (2015), and *Introspection* (2015), Okundaye hardly strays far from the traditional, and rural settings or subjects. Through her paintings, Okundaye exhibits a superb story-telling capacity, and displays action depicting flirtatious images, with spontaneous gaiety. She mirrors the rich

Yoruba life filled with celebration and festivities. She portrays fanciful images in their charming costumes of Yoruba attire.

It becomes apparent that, as Okundaye's horizon widened, she began to engage the modern world. Her portrayal of the *Brain Subject* and *My Brain is Correct I & II* is for instance, is almost a scientific exposé on a woman's mental faculty. Also noticeable in her *oeuvre*, is the repetition of subject, as if to ensure emphasis of such topics.

Peju Alatise is likewise found to engage her audience with images of women, visible in her numerous portraits of females. The stylish elegance, captured in most of these, and enduring lively poses, seem to be Alatise's focus. Behind every of her portraits, is a story about everyday women and their travails. She also reflects concern over their relegation; religion, social comments, folk-lore and religious themes as the main focus in her painting. In both her brush and mixed media work, Alatise draws her viewer's attention now and again to social issues related with religion, culture and gender imbalance.

Objective 4: Painting Media and Techniques of the artists-

Pen, ink water colour on paper, pen, ink combined with acrylics; acrylics or oil colours alone, mixed media (especially beads) on board or canvas are the main media and techniques in Nike Okundaye's work. She has produced a vast quantity of pen and ink paintings. Her brushwork, is lightly applied in most instances, producing a transparent effect. In some instances, she produces opaque work, with embossed lines showing through. Techniques such as painting with oils and acrylics in mainly impasto technique, embossed pointillism, mixed-media work with found objects, cloth, saw-dust and resin, 'freezing' of forms, cutting, pasting are techniques peculiar to At the onset of her painting career, Alatise was already a mixed media artist. Notwithstanding, in

her earliest excursion with materials, she has focused on employing conventional media such as oil and acrylics on canvas. Her insatiable inclination for exploration, led her to experimentation which has translated into an enormous channelling of ideas through composition with cloth. While most of Alatise's collage elements are adhered to supports, her method of attachment of materials goes beyond just pasting of paper, discarded objects or cloth in several cases. Her methods include construction, folding, sewing as well as gluing. The outcome of such foray were her Collages *Smoke and Ashes, Ipele*, and *Aso Bora,* all done in series; as well as *Scribble, Scrabble, She put a Hole in his heart, And she said No, Girl Interrupted,* and *All Scarves go to Heaven*, which so far, are unprecedented. It is true that other artists like Yinka Sonibare, Ndidi Dike, have towed the path of installations with cloth, Alatise's forms are however, unique. The artist uses clothing in her art as a literal and metaphorical representation of humans, and their endeavours. She details her installations with painted patterns, florals, feathers, and other found objects.

Objective 5: Painting Styles of the artists- Simplistic naïve Naturalism, symbolic expressionism, semi and complete abstraction, characterise Okundaye's paintings. Her initial paintings were also characterised by naïve organic, fluid and dream-like creatures typical of Osogbo artists. The study discovers that, Okundaye's naïve naturalism gradually evolved to expressionistic images rendered in the mode of Nigerian modern artist like Edosa Eguigo. Her manner of rendering images for the main part, is a stylized naturalism, and expressionism.

Okundaye employs a characteristic kind of delicate lines. Her images, mostly surrounded by a hazy atmosphere yet full of life, charm and playful almost lyrical movement. More pervasive in Okundaye's paintings, are the images of women, shown in various poses and with a carriage of

dignity and some as dancing images. This is visible in sophisticated appearance of her women folk, as against their earlier simplistic presentation. The rate at which she repeats this subject reflects the ever presence of dance in Okundaye's life. Sometimes her images appear somewhat more airy, feminine and sentimental.

Okundaye is careful to represent objects in their most characteristic shapes, such as the tortoise or elephant whose shape and trunk are readily discernible. The bird splayed so that both outstretched wings and feet are visible. She however incorporates motifs which are essentially symbols found within a codified set of Yoruba traditional *adire* and batik design motifs. For Okundaye, these symbols are alive and 'speak' thus their appearance in paintings are significant. Okundaye's main Style is *adire alabela,* though she has produced fewer works in realism. With a few exceptions Okundaye remains committed to using her *adire alabela* and batik patterns no matter what in most of her paintings. Rather than take a strictly realist stance for her paintings, Okundaye deliberately sets out to subjectively express her feelings about any issues she is portraying in any given work. This she does by conceptualizing her forms; in some instances, this has led to her creating elongated images of women. Another style, Okundaye has explored, is abstraction. A number of her paintings are either partially or completely rendered as abstract pieces. At a point in her painting career, Okundaye employed her fairly abstract expressionism to create a number of repetitive profiles, in the manner of ancient Middle Eastern and European paintings.

Alatise's paintings are generally characterised by symbolic and abstract realism, expressionistic, severe abstraction, and surrealistic images, with her form being fairly solidified. Alatise's symbolical presentation of women in her conceptualised works, are

intense in show the dramatic aspects of her fervent messages. A kind of expressiveness yet at the same time, clarity, characterise Alatise's paintings. She seems as much concerned with harmonious composition and the effects of light as with showing a variety of profiles. In *The Way she likes it, Inside they are broken*, the strong undulating and angular lines that break up images, the poses and background colours, give the paintings an overall stability and harmony.

Although Alatise is more of a realist, she is not a literalist. In her portraiture, Alatise adheres to the classic realism but with an expressive touch. Alatise's anatomy studies are impeccable, showing the vulnerability of her figures without being sensuous or vulgar. Her images pose with a certain focus. She has explored with various other styles like expressionism, surrealism, and abstraction. Alatise seems to have diversified more into abstract art that could best be described as surrealism and futurism. Most of her works are highly texturized. A significant number are composed as non-realistic low reliefs. Some of these portray human figures, while others natural forms; and the outcome are usually mysterious looking shapes and forms. In either cases, such works evoke strong, if not out rightly violent, aggressive emotions. Some of her paintings express turmoil that is powerful.

Objective 6: Parallels in Painting Careers of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise

Data obtained from interviews, observation and literature indicated that there are similarities and differences in the painting careers of Nike Davies-Okundaye. The first noticeable connection lies in their related backgrounds; both artists originate from the same South Western region of Nigeria. Consequently, they mutually draw from the main wealth of cultural experience. These backgrounds consist of the rich traditional Yoruba background,

which embraces deities, customs, and material culture. This would tend to imply an absolute likeness in their contextual inspiration. However, other circumstances recorded in the experience of these artists show otherwise.

Although both artists have roots in the general Yoruba ethnic group, their specific towns of origin differ. The Yoruba commonly subscribe to a similar culture, but this at times is moderated by traditions that slightly restricted to particular enclaves, within this larger regional body. Accordingly, Okundaye is *Okun*, an offspring of the rural setting of Ogidi, in the northernmost area of Yoruba land. Alatise on the other hand, is an indigene of the southern Yoruba state of Ogun, who was born and bred in the cosmopolitan city of Lagos. Such minute details undoubtedly impact upon the bearing, and consequent artistic outputs of individuals.

Another distinguishing detail between the two artists, is disparity in age. Nike Okundaye's birth in the pre-independence era, precedes Alatise's by two decades. These combined factors of age and environment of growing up, are certain to have informed the modes, and expression of their various careers. The disparity in backgrounds is first of all, noticeable in manner of induction into the painting practice. Okundaye for instance, was not privileged to acquire any formal education beyond primary school. Her only form of art training is the early link with her family members, from who she learned *Adire* techniques. She got further inspiration through her association with the Osogbo art school of the late 1960s, and tutored herself privately to become an enlightened person. It is also established that, Okundaye entered the painting scene much earlier than Alatise; almost four decades before the latter made her debut. Her appearance at the period when modern painting was still finding its footing, doubtless accounts for her profuse portrayal of rural settings, and the naïve naturalistic style of her earliest forms.

As reviewed earlier, Peju Alatise grew up in a literate environment, and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture. Like Okundaye, she initially encountered art informally at home, and through rudiments at her secondary school. While Alatise attended a rigorous university architectural course, Okundaye was only exposed to her Grandmother's private instructions and association with the Osogbo workshop trained artists. Both of them have since been exposed to international painting through interactive exhibitions, travel, and catalogues.

In the course of her educational pursuit, Alatise has acquired further inspiration from the works, and accomplishments of artists including Bruce Onobrakpeya, Nike Okundaye, David Dale, Rembrandt Van Rijn, Ai Wei Wei, and Do Ho Suh. The effect of pooling from such masters, has filtered through Alatise's works, which visibly futuristic (high-tech), and highly conceptualised. Her entrance into the painting scene from the years 2000 did not mean she is a latecomer. She came in with full force, and within a short time has achieved as much as some veteran artists had done over a long period of time.

A somewhat likeness is detected in the religious experiences of the two artists. Both of them, were born into Muslim backgrounds. At an early stage in her life however, Okundaye became a Christian, but still has close relations who are Muslim (including her daughter, Allyson Aina Davies). In addition to this background, Okundaye was not only associated with Susan Wenger the Yoruba *Osun* priestess, during her stay at Osogbo, she interacted with *Osun* worshippers, and has professed being inspired by the goddess *Olokun*.

Alatise on the other hand, has nominally remained within her first faith, and yet, interacts freely with Christians. At the same time, she draws from the fountain of Yoruba folklore and beliefs passed down by her Grandmother. Like Okundaye, she admits receiving inspiration for her

paintings through dreams. As seen in the findings, the paintings of the two artists reflect influences of these interwoven religious experiences. Spirituality pervades their paintings rendering them metaphorical statements of varying degrees of mysticism. The spiritual element in some of their allegorical messages are light, while others are more profound.

It is clear for instance that, Okundaye's religious related paintings like *The Worshippers, Christ on the Cross,* and her repeated depictions of *Olokun* or worshippers, are directed towards a show of piety. Alatise's paintings reflecting on religion matters like *Covert of a Jagged Cross, Orange Scarf* are protest commentary against the extremism fostered by some religious practices. *Orange Scarf goes to Heaven,* and *Orun lo m'eni to mala,* focus on paradise and the after world. It is only logical to think that philosophy born out of a deeply religious mind influenced both the works of Nike Davies-Okundaye and Peju Alatise.

In terms of general philosophical outlook, both Okundaye and Alatise observably share a common liberal view of life situations. The two artists, equally believe in reaching out to the less privileged, and down-trodden. An observable area of their mutual interests, is that of organizing training for other untrained artists in areas of the visual arts, and crafts. The question of how their various backgrounds has greatly impacted their painting careers, is substantiated by the preceding. It was clearly seen that having had no prior formal art training, both Okundaye and Alatise have developed their painting careers due to sheer self-effort. In the light of their achievements, and conceptual background on which the study was situated, the two artists are affirmed as self-actualized artists.

A study of the **nature of the forms** produced by Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise in their paintings generally, uncovers that; both artists have produced a variety of painting forms ranging

from portraiture, landscapes, figurative and abstract compositions, collages and installations. Okundaye's painting forms include landscapes, portraiture, figurative compositions. The first area of disparity in their painting forms, is visible in the production of portraiture. While Okundaye appears to have been less interested in making portraits, this is a form favoured by Alatise. In her few attempts in that direction, Okundaye's portraits appeared to be more of ideological, and schematic representations. On the other hand, even in her expressionistic pieces, Alatise's rendition of portraiture captures the semblance of her models.

A genre of painting which the two artists were seen to have avoided, are still life studies. This is not because they could not do them, but because they have simply focused more, on other subjects of their interest. Among their array of other painting forms, Alatise produces a greater deal of collages and installations, an area Okundaye explores with, less of the time. The production of collages is one form in which the two artists tend to clearly differ. Alatise has delved much into the prolific production of this form. She has particularly, executed two distinct kinds of collages. The first of these, are the usual kind involving pasting various items unto surfaces such as canvas, wooden panels, or hard boards. The second are her cloth collages described under her media and techniques. In contrast, apart from beadwork, which involve pasting of assorted beads, Okundaye seems not to be inclined towards making of collages.

Another distinction between their painting forms of Okundaye and Alatise is the former's prolific production of landscapes, against the absence of such in the latter's work. It might be noticeable that, Alatise incorporates plant forms in some of her backgrounds, but landscapes in their true sense are hardly the focus in her painting.

In terms of **Subject matter of the two artists**-A contextual scrutiny of the thematic concerns of painting forms produced by Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise reveals that; in some respects, their conceptions of life are similar, and their use of art is for historic illustration. It was discovered also that, both artists are clearly, idealists; they have concern over a variety issues, and use their paintings to interpret their views about them. The manner of conveying their ideologies is however, separated by a clearly defined margin. This is deduced from the fact that; one subject is common to the two artists: women and their position in the Nigerian society. This deference manifests through the manner in which majority of their paintings feature women. Alatise has produced scores of full or half-length images, and seems more interested in modern day ladies in simplistic everyday clothing, and many of her works have focused on portraiture. The emphasis of the latter is more on the attitude, and meaning behind the image. And this is contrasted by Okundaye's down to earth simplistic subjects, against Alatise's more idealised themes.

In addition a shared love for depicting women, and issues related to women. The angle from which the two artists view women issues are similar when addressing their dignity. Nike now and then, reverts to pictorial comments asserting women's sanity, their poise, and worth. Alatise's *Oge, Beauty of African Woman* undoubtedly about the decorum and nobility of women. There also, a disparity is also glaring: Alatise appears to pursue a more hard-line (but certainly not militant) approach befitting of issues at stake. Take the case of the Child Bride and Chibok Girls as case in point. Although though her representation, man's immortality is so illustrative, and leaves the audience in no doubt of its reality, Alatise's rendition of cultural issues is more through symbolic imageries, while Okundaye still concerns herself much about traditional settings.

Apart from concentrating on women, and landscapes showing fine natural settings, hills, and buildings, a sizable number of Okundaye's paintings feature animals like elephants, fish, birds, goats, and strange creatures. The focus on animals, is observably practically missing in Alatise's paintings. The level of advocacy, and promotion of women involved in their works, is fairly distinct. It is noticeable that, Okundaye imbues her women figures with an idealized poise of accomplished society personalities, whereas, Alatise's women exhibit a calm dignity without appearing regal. The latter went a step further to be fairly compelling. In both of their works, the male figure appears only in a few number of times. Even so, they are merely placed in such pictures to complement the story about the woman. This has led the researcher to resolve that; perhaps no other female Nigerian artists could be seen to have celebrated their gender more in paintings than this pair.

Love is a subject which is common to both Okundaye and Alatise. The former finds pleasure in replicating sentimental images of romantic matter. The title of her themes as *Already in Love, Cradle of Love* and *Habitat of Lovers* attest to that inclination. Her depiction of lightheaded looking women in *Already in Love,* the symbolic appropriation of flowers and scenic landscape to love also supports that view. Alatise has likewise made paintings conveying messages related to love. Similar to Okundaye, the vulnerability of women in matters of love is reflected through her Labake and lipstick series. An angle from which she presents this issue, is caution against the hazards of engaging in sex. She pursues her seemingly 'prophetic' comment in visual imagery that leaves no doubt about the message. *Foreplay, How Safe,* and *Just One Night* illustrate this.

Music makers and dancing forms which are a recurring subject in Okundaye's work, appear to be practically absent in Alatise's paintings; although the latter describes *Bata* dance and other

ceremonies in her writings. On the converse, paintings dealing directly with hard core corruption topics exemplified by *Captain Red Tape,* are to be found in Alatise's work, but missing in paintings by the former. Religion, tradition and folklore are related subjects recurring in the two artists' painting. Okundaye's rendition of these themes is more of the narrative, because her chief aim is to make plain memorials of religious procedures of traditional Yoruba beliefs, and the Christian faith. This is seen through her portrayal of crucifixion scenes, *Olokun*, *Arugba,* and *Worshippers.* Her *Folklore Teller,* is also cardinally, a historical description of a part of ancient life that used to take place in the past. In these pieces, she only emphasises those aspects of images that need to be borne in mind. Alatise, in this regard, combines both narrative and invention of the surreal, in creating her religious and folkloric subjects. By so doing, she evokes more sentiments; and a somewhat 'spiritual' participation of audience in her mystical dialogues. In Alatise's installations and mixed media works such as *Orun Lo M'eni To Ma-la*, *Erin Ijesha* the audience is brought face to face with the glaring reality of Yoruba folktale, now becoming extinct. The images leave a lasting and convincing impression.

A noticeable trait similar to the two artists is their production of paintings in series, or repetition of subject. This is obviously to strike home about such subjects. This is exemplified by Okundaye's focus on women outings, Delegates, dance, drummers to commemorate tradition, and culture; landscape paintings to make enduring records of settings within her environment. In Alatise's work, such is visible in her *Ipele* series to comment about cloth, Ascension, Scarves, in religious dialogues, *Smoke and Ashes,* for her exposition on the aftermath of crises, and pieces on *Nine year Old Bride* to draw attention to issues related with the improper handling of females, especially the girl-child.

In seeking to establish the **media/techniques** the study establishes that the two artists have mutually employed conventional media as water colour, gouache, pen and ink, oil, acrylics and bead work. Both of the artists have explored with techniques that resulted in washes, opaque brush work, and have manipulated other mixed media in creating their paintings. A common trait of Okundaye and Alatise's paintings is the use of bright colours. In many respects, the two artists are not just colourist, but tend to be monochromatic. Even though she has worked successfully with polychromes, it is also noticeable that, Okundaye often employs sombre hues, and leans towards monochromatic work. The visible categories of Okundaye's monochromatic work include; blues, greens, reds or orange, browns. Alatise is likewise, a colourist, and she also achieves monochromes, which is more noticeable in some of her portraits like the *Untitled* portrait executed with brown in 2005, *Spring New Beginning I'll be Watching You,* and *Okiemute, Time for Everything.* She however, opts for opaque colouration, with her brush-work not being, altogether smooth in many instances. The greater part of her paintings are however, done in polychrome colours.

It is also observable that, Okundaye's brush work is, rather lightly applied producing a transparent effect. It is in addition apparent that the artist purposely leaves images uncompleted seeking always to gain the effect of the whole, rather than the exactness of the part. Except for the profuse textile motifs in the backgrounds, and the linear embossments in some of her works, Okundaye's compositions could be said to be relatively sketchy surfaces flatter in comparison to those of Alatise. Compared to Okundaye, Alatise's brushwork are vibrantly textured, visibly displaying the thick impasto effect.

Like earlier seen, both Okundaye and Alatise have experimented with a wide variety of media and methods in the course of their artistic career. Some artists achieve works by random application of media. This is not the case with these two women, it is visible that much calculation goes into the making of each painting. The two artists have explored with cloth in ingenious ways to produce novel forms. The study established that, both Okundaye have carved a signature for their paintings that is distinctive, spontaneous and unique. The parallels that could be drawn from the stylistic emissions by two artists include; exploration with naturalism, expressive symbolism, and abstraction at the initial stages of their careers, and later moving on to abstraction. In that regard, Alatise's painting appears more eclectic, and fairly more dynamic, having evolved her own kind of surrealism, and elements of *Art Déco*. Okundaye has remained within the confines of fewer stylistic expressions, her *adire alabela* is unique, and her consistency in continuing in that mode is commendable.

The manner of presenting forms within their paintings reveal a marked distinguishing trait of paintings by Okundaye and Alatise. Alatise's painting for instance, demonstrate a strong tendency to depict firmly modelled forms, and the same time, a sense of decoration. In some of her portraiture, gestures and her interest for textures come through. She renders flesh as robust and lively in as many colours she deems fit. The artist shows no fear in presenting the nuances of the flesh, bringing out tones and shades where necessary. Except in a few cases where aged women were portrayed, most of Alatise's portraits and figural images depict youthfulness.

Of a truth, Alatise's human figures appear more solidified than those of Nike, but then, this is a matter of choice. The plausible explanation for such disparity possibly lie in circumstantial experiences. The predilection of one for more life-like figures and the other for simplistic

images, are perhaps be attributed to their induction backgrounds. It has been seen said earlier that Alatise's architectural training which comprises of creating three-dimensional forms, has likely predisposed the nature of her forms. Okundaye's concentration on two-dimensional pattern making might as well have determined her penchant for more flattened forms. Notwithstanding, Okundaye's images are not lacking in proportions, neither do they fail in impressing the illusion of three-dimensionality.

Through her portraiture also, Alatise has sought to find ways of expressing moods. For someone alleged to have been initially inspired by Rembrandt, Alatise's deviation from the conservative manner of portraiture is impressive. Although she captures the very essence of her images, she has avoided what could be termed the lure of attempting to capture minute photorealistic detail. Their expressiveness make them stand out as adventurous, yet they meet all standards of conventionality. Even her full figures are imbued with a sense of stability, and liveliness.

Notably, the two artists handle drapery skilfully, Alatise with voluptuous grace, whereas Okundaye's presents fairly simplified forms, at the same successfully portrays the natural features of her predominantly female images. In many cases, Okundaye's images appear somewhat more airy, feminine and sentimental than those of Alatise. Whatever the case, both artists express a profound knowledge of light and perspective, even though the manner of representing this differs to some extent.

Another analogy drawn about the media and techniques of Okundaye and Alatise has revealed a mutual employment of oil, acrylics, and beads. The techniques used for applying these media differ significantly. The two artists in some cases, favour a monochromatic approach. From works produced by the two artists so far, this tendency is more noticeable among Okundaye's

work. Brushwork is another area of marked variance between Okundaye and Alatise's paintings. Nike Okundaye visibly has a flair for making impressionistic images, linearity, and light washes in a greater number of her paintings. Alatise on the other hand, finds pleasure in creating opaque images. Their mutual employment of large canvases (some over 2 metres wide), shows a self-confidence, and boldness in handling challenging works.

Also, visible disparity is also detectable in the way the two artists render their mixed media paintings. In their Media and techniques, both have engaged in using mixed media, especially involving beads. While Nike sticks to conventional surfaces and like canvas, paper, hardboard, Alatise's scope of mixed media materials are more wide ranging delving into the use of more extensive and diversified unconventional materials. Nike Okundaye essentially limits more of her mixed media painting to beads glued on board. Though some of those bead works (especially earlier ones) represent stylized images, in some others Okundaye has strived to achieve realism in such works. Her *Market Scene, Elephants in my Dream,* and *Yam Harvest* typify this. Only a fewer of her works are collages with found materials.

Another area of distinctive deviation in the media of these two artists, is Alatise's innovative cloth collages, which Nike has not delved into. These are produced in ingenious forms including *Smoke and Ashes I, II, II & IV* in which she has created 'headless' figures against a flat background. Those pieces also show dramatic movement and unprecedented forms. The variants of Alatise's cloth collages involve painstaking twisting of cloth to create twines that are cunningly arranged to form imaginative compositions. The preceding, and Alatise's other collages with intricately built extensions, is another difference observed in the work of the two artists.

It was discovered that, the two artists have each, evolved their own peculiar painting style. A noticeable mutual trait in the paintings of both artists, is the use of textile motifs in their work. At the same time, this is also an area of contrast. Okundaye tends to restrict her use of textiles in her paintings to *adire* and batik motifs. Alatise on the other hand, employs hand painted simulated and real wax prints. This is found to be connected with their thematic focus. Essentially an '*Adire* ambassador', Okundaye emphasises that her main aim is to propagate the craft. In Okundaye's rendition of *Adire* and batik patterns, she seems to appropriate a great deal of visual semiotics of traditional Yoruba. The various motifs are symbolic codes learned by dyers, and communicate specific messages. Portrayed in paintings, these symbols carry the same messages as the actual cloth.

Okundaye and Alatise's mutual interest in decorative patterns is visible in their paintings. It is also apparent that, their images share a juxtaposition with dots, and textile motifs. Nevertheless, their stylistic modes of presenting paintings are widely divergent. It is nevertheless clear that imitation is not their motive. As it is the case with their mutually expressive painting style, their work has always a more or less decorative effect accompanying it. It is factual also that, both Okundaye and Alatise employ textile motifs in their work. One area of glaring disparity is the manner in which the textile motifs are used. In reality, their works both contain textile motifs at the backgrounds, but the manner of presentation differ. In Okundaye's paintings, the textile motifs are strictly *adire* patterns, which in most cases, pen and ink is used to draw these motifs. The result is visibly linear in nature. The objective behind such embellishment is symbolic (as seen earlier on), then to immortalize the traditional craft of *adire*, and lastly aesthetic.

The application of plant motifs-both floral appears to be mutual. Okundaye focusses on penning traditional *adire* and batik patterns in majority of her paintings, in a more or less flat manner, Alatise appears more inclined towards replicating wax print designs found in the type of fabrics worn by Nigerians. They comprise of skilfully drawn floral and plant motifs, achieved by employing her peculiar pointillist technique to create embossed dots, or simulated print designs in such paintings. The result is usually colourful, or at times, a kaleidoscopic effect, which is a decorative and at the same time, utilitarian. In that respect therefore, their painting surfaces differ; Okundaye's more flattened against the embossed, reliefs and sculptural appendages of Alatise.

For both Okundaye and Alatise, their variety of depicting images especially human forms is impressive, although it is clear that imitation of nature is not the motive in such works. There are distinguishing peculiarities observable about their manner of presentation by the two artists. Features of Okundaye's portraits are characterised by a lack of facial emphasis, they are mostly done from memory. And where features are captured, they seem generalised, not resembling particular individuals. This is not the case with Alatise, perhaps due to precision involved in her architectural background, she uses models and captures a likeness, and moods of those images represented in her portraits. Their work oscillates between simplicity and elaboration. In that regard, it is obvious that; whether expressed naturalistically, abstracted, static or in motion, both artists show a clear understanding of anatomy of their human forms. It is also observable that, there are no stereotypes in the work of Okundaye and Alatise; all forms are individualized. The personalities of their images are so lively, they seem to 'speak out' from the canvas. Conceptualization occurs in both artists' work, but in differing manner.

Conclusively, in terms of forms, media, techniques, subject and style, it is visible that, the individuality of both Okundaye and Alatise are kept alive by their sensitive departures from shared visual norms. They both employ patterns, symbols and motifs adapted from textiles, embroidery, pottery and traditional carvings and integrate them into compositions that go beyond the two-dimensionality of Yoruba tradition. Interaction at any level with the two artists reveals that for them, their paintings are not mere commodities produced to be marketed and disposed of. Each of their works possess an essence of its own. Their mutual commitment to social issues and respect for Yoruba tradition in general is striking. Their works are deeply personal, they come from within, but they have also deeply engaged the present and the past.

Objective 7: Contributions and achievement of Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise

Okundaye is first and foremost ascertained as a textile artist, which she learnt in childhood, from her Great grandmother. She is better known for the production of delectable designs of Yoruba *adire* and batik cloth. Many of her artistic exploits have consequently been textile related. These have included training a vast number of women (both young and advanced in age), and young men in *adire* making. Okundaye has also been privileged to teach this craft to within and outside the country, and deliver lectures on arts and culture to students, at Cultural Centres, embassies, and Government including doctoral students in prestigious institutions like the Harvard University. The artist has used the channel of textile training, and other crafts as a reformatory means of rehabilitating females engaged in prostitution, and providing vocation for unemployed individuals (especially women and youth). Okundaye's cultural 'ambassadorial' undertakings have included occasional involvement in welcoming international visitors, dignitaries and decorating their hotel suites. It would not be out of place to declare that, perhaps no other

Nigerian artist has singlehandedly promoted, or made more contributions in the traditional Yoruba textile industry than Nike Davies-Okundaye.

Among the remarkable contributions of Okundaye are her four textile and crafts training outlets at Osogbo, Ogidi, Piwoyi – Abuja, and her Lagos centres, where youth and women are trained without charge. The other are her galleries in the same locations, the Nike Art Gallery at Lagos being rated as the largest in West Africa. It must be said that, the edifice is not just outstanding in terms of size, but finely equipped. The significance of these centres include her philanthropic offer of charitable opportunities, for artists to exhibit at little or no cost. That practise has enabled artists especially self-taught, informal trained and debutantes, beginners, and seasoned artists to showcase their talents. It has brought about exposure for some emerging artists, and provided market for their works.

Nike Davies-Okundaye has distinguished herself as a creative and versatile artist, whose talents materialize in different successfully exhibited artistic skills and artistic expressions. She has operated as a performing artist (music, dancing, drumming), effortlessly incorporating her own *Alashunta* (Yoruba music troupe) with her other artistic activities. However, the artist harnessed a combination of innate talent with traditional cloth making skills to start painting early in her existence. Okundaye's track record makes this study deduce that, she commenced her painting career in the late 1960s, which reckons her among pioneer Nigerian artists (especially painters) to have promoted the art of modern painting in the country.

It is known that Nike started painting in the early 1960s with simple materials like water colours. Her prior experience with drawing patterns and images for batik became handy. Nike drew and painted without having any other prior tuition on the use of the media available to her.

Consequently, her earliest works were precisely what tourist clients expected; some naivety, simple images, African themes with African backgrounds. The artist carried on in this fashion even when she encountered works done by artists involved in Ulli Beier's workshop sessions. She however kept in step with the times, as her work has evolved to incorporate modern subjects presented in a less naturalistic and expressing herself in a more expressive manner.

Okundaye's contributions also manifest through the development of her own peculiar "*adire alabela"* painting style at a time when even the Nigerian movements of Contemporary art as *Ulism* from the early 1970s, *Onaism,* in the later part of 1988 and earlier 1989, and other movements as *Araism* had not fully materialised. By this innovation, Nike joined the teeming modern Nigerian artists who have introduced variety to contemporary painting styles. This is outstanding considering the fact that, Nike did not undergo a formal training that would have equipped her for what she is doing. She ought to be legitimately considered a pioneer of her style.

Since art styles are derivative or influenced from already existing traditional models and painting patterns. It is not unlikely that, some artists might have either borrowed or found inspiration from her style, which usually incorporates overall traditional Yoruba *adire* and batik patterns in the paintings. Significantly, every line and patterns she includes in a painting have been carefully thought out to produce a simple yet dynamic effect upon her compositions. She has retained a remarkable consistency in this style, with the intensity and meaning of her works remaining striking.

Aside this, Nike Okundaye has personally admitted the fact that, she has lost track of the specific figure of her paintings and number of exhibitions. The artist however affirms records of having a

minimum of over 102 solo displays, participation in more than 35 group, and above 55 shows. Although not substantiated, this study concludes that taking Okundaye's performance into consideration, only a few of Nigeria's best exhibiting artists could be said to beat her exhibition records at local or international levels. Her contributions have extended into areas as rebranding the country's image. The artist's continuous workshop training has perpetrated cultural crafts and empowered over 5,000 youth and women through the Arts Training Centres she established at Abuja, Ogidi, Oshogbo, and Lekki. Thus, Okundaye's contribution to modern painting industry and painting styles in Nigeria, is undoubtedly invaluable. In addition to these accomplishments, are the awards Okundaye has received in recognition for her artistically related activities recorded in the literature review of this study.

A broad view of Alatise's career shows that she is indeed a self-developed artist who has actualised some of her artistic aspirations via painting. Denial to study art at the initial point by her parents turned out not as deterrent for Alatise's passion for art. Alatise has not only scaled the obstacles of lack for training in the arts, but excelled beyond imagination. She has accomplished what many formal-trained painters could not have attained with their know-how. The two artists have been found to be multi-talented, expressing themselves in diverse areas of the visual and other kinds of art related forms. Alatise has through her versatile approach, interrogated the traditional concept of a painting as a flat surface surrounded by a frame. Some of her paintings can hardly be termed paintings, as their three dimensionality makes them appear more like sculptures. However, the copious painting done on them renders them to be paintings and not sculptures.

The paintings of Okundaye and Alatise without exception are masterpieces of design. They never fail to engage the viewer on their penetrating contrasting colours, and arrangement which juxtaposes images effortlessly with textile patterns. Or where patterns are not included in Okundaye's well thought out somewhat flat spatial organization, or in Alatise's modelled forms, harmony is achieved.

In terms of general philosophical outlook, both Okundaye and Alatise are liberal in the way they view life situations. Both artists believe in reaching out to the less privileged and down-trodden. An area of shared interests, is found in their organizing of training for other untrained artists. Both artists could be concluded to be versatile, altruistic with a host of philanthropic deeds to their credit.

Limitations of the study

The number of paintings accessed by the researcher, were subject to limitations of different nature. Firstly, for both artists, it was not possible to acquire their earliest paintings, since most of such had been disposed of a long time ago. Records of many of those were therefore, not available for scrutiny. Scantier information on the background of Peju Alatise recorded by this study was an indication that insufficient facts were obtained on the artist. Inevitably, that has created a constraint on assessing and following the chronological development of the artists, as far as the variables of the research are concerned. Secondly, the inability to physically access some of their paintings, also poses a restriction on carrying out a better assessment of their features, thus affecting the presentation of more accurate judgment on their nature.

Conclusion

An investigation into the circumstances which have inspired the artists to take up the painting profession reveals that; Both Nike Davies-Okundaye and Peju Alatise have roots in the Yoruba ethnic culture of south western Nigeria. In relating similar or contrasting features of their painting careers, it was established that; relatively similar kinds of backgrounds influence Nike Davies-Okundaye and Peju Alatise's painting careers. This has played a significant role on the kind of paintings produced by both artists. For the two artists this has been conveyed via use of motifs and elements borrowed directly form Yoruba culture. This is also reflected on the dressing of images, and sceneries represented in their work. Findings corroborate proclamation about both of them having a philanthropic outlook.

This study makes no presumption at being all inclusive. This is because, it was not possible to assess all paintings of the two artists. First of all because, it was not possible to access all of their works, as not all of their works are available for scrutiny. Secondly, detailed records of some of the paintings were not available. Some have been disposed without proper records maintained. For some of the paintings on ground, records of titles and sizes, media were not kept. In addition to this, the researcher believes that, there is still room to explore areas like collaborative work of two artists or specific areas of their paintings

Outcomes of this study impress that, self-taught female Nigerian painters are as active in their practice, as any male counterparts. They have also contributed to the modern art practice in Nigeria through their paintings, by inventing their own unique painting styles, and in other ways including and providing avenues for other artists to exhibit and also practise in art related areas. Their contributions to the art milieu in the country is remarkable, but so far not adequately publicized. These two outstanding self-taught Nigerian Female artists, without

the benefits of the high-status formal art training, have practised to the extent of surpassing even some of their male counterparts. In terms of form, content, media/techniques, and styles they have evolved, the calibre of work produced by Nike Okundaye and Peju Alatise is sumptuous enough to warrant their *oeuvre* being recorded in art history documents in Nigeria and beyond.

Recommendations

In view if the outcome of the study, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. In view of the general underrepresentation of Female Nigerian and self-taught artists in Art History documents, research about the two categories of artists (self-taught and female artists), should be encouraged among Art History scholars in the nation's institutions of higher learning, to build up the body of knowledge on them.

2. In order to forestall the problem of deficiencies related with documenting their paintings, professionals should endeavour to keep inventories of their works. Each gallery should endeavour to have a documentation unit where every work that passes through them are recorded.

3. Women Artists groups, and scholars should liaise with the relevant government bodies or organs to facilitate the participation of self-taught female Nigerian painters in more exhibitions and workshops. This will enhance exposure of other potential self- trained female Nigerian painters and artists in general, who are yet to be discovered.

4. On account of the fact that the two artists have been involved in producing paintings with other artists, further investigation into their collaborative paintings could be

carried out, to determine the nature and implication of work produced under such effort.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study:

1. debunks the claim by some art critics and art historians that, Nike Okundaye ever received any form of workshop training under Ulli Beier at Oshogbo.
2. provides literature on self-taught female artists, thereby adding to the scantily available narratives on female artists in Nigeria.
3. establishes that painting can be successfully co-authored (produced by collaboration), with the artists involved maintaining their individual creativity and originality.

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APPENDIX I

Department of Fine Arts,

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

PhD Art History Research

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This interview is meant to elicit information that will enable an assessment of painting career of two selected self-taught Nigerian female artists; specifically in the area of forms, content, style, and

contributions to Nigerian modern painting. The questions are to guide the researcher in conducting the interview.

GENERAL BACKGROUND:

1. Kindly furnish information about yourself- e.g. what is your name?
2. Please provide your date of birth.
3. Where was your place of birth?
4. What is your state of origin?
5. What is your place (Town) of origin?
6. Which local Government area do you belong to?
7. Kindly supply the names of your parents: Father's name and his occupation.
8. What is your mother's name/place of origin and occupation?
9. In what way(s) did your parents influence your painting career?
10. What is the make-up of your family (e.g. How many siblings do you have? What is your position among your siblings? In what ways have they impacted upon your painting career?
11. Mention any other persons or situations that have inspired you into going for painting as a career.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

12. Kindly mention the educational institutions you attended:

13. Primary school with dates/ period.

14. Secondary school with dates/ period.

15. Tertiary institution (s)/ area of specialization.

16. Which other kinds of schools did you attend & period?

ARTISTIC TRAINING

17. Where did you undertake your painting training? If you did not undergo any formal art training, when was your earliest encounter with painting?
18. What was the duration of your training?
19. What peculiar experiences did you encounter that have impacted your painting career particularly?
20. Which individuals would you say had much to do with your painting training?
21. In what ways did these individuals influence your painting career?

PAINTING CAREER

22. For how long have you been practising painting?
23. In what location have you been practising your painting? Mention the name of town/city and address.
24. In your estimation, how many paintings have you produced since the beginning of your painting practice?
25. Have you ever participated in any exhibition? Yes…No…
26. If yes, which exhibitions have you participated in?
27. List your solo exhibitions.
28. Mention Group exhibitions you have participated in.
29. In ways have exhibitions impacted upon your painting? Relate this to your choice of forms, subject matter and painting style.
30. What painting related workshops have you ever attended?
31. In which way have these workshops impacted upon your painting? Relate this to your choice of forms, subject matter and painting style.
32. What professional/painting related associations do you belong to?

SUBJECT MATTER & PAINTING FORMS

33. What can you say is/are the main subject matters/themes of your paintings?
34. What can you say is the main inspiration behind the choice of subject for your paintings? Possibly back each answer with examples from your work.
35. Please elaborate on these subjects of your paintings, and illustrate with specific paintings. For instance, which paintings illustrate the themes mentioned, and how do they portray this?
36. Kindly elaborate on the main forms in your paintings.
37. What are the possible explanations for the choice of forms used in your paintings? Also link your explanations to specific works.

PAINTING STYLE

38. What can you say is/ are your main painting style(s)?
39. Explain the basis for believing this to be your style.
40. Have other people identified or classified your style? If so, what is that style called?

CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN PAINTING

41. Mention and elaborate about any commissions you have ever executed.
42. What can you say has been your contribution to contemporary painting practice in Nigeria?

B: Interview with Peju Alatise- By email

My research requires me to record a little about your background. I therefore need to prove a little savvy about you, than is presented on the Internet. For that reason, I have carved out selective questions on issues that I think are not specifically treated in interviews or other articles on the net. I will as such be grateful, if you can supply me details on the following:

1. Your Town. and Local Government area of origin-
2. Father's name and Occupation:
3. It is indicated that, you took lessons in Fine Arts at your Secondary school. Kindly furnish Name /location of the school
4. Year of graduation from LAUTECH
5. You have indicated that you were inspired by Susan Wenger, Nike Davies, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Ai Weiwei, Do Ho Suh, … kindly indicate at what capacity they have inspired you- i.e., is it through physical interaction, exhibitions, or their published work?
6. Kindly mention the materials you used in your earliest painting work?
7. Have you produced genre paintings like still life, or landscapes?
8. What is the total number of paintings you think you have produced so far?
9. You have produced superb portraits, with fine anatomical handling. Did you use models in some, or all of such paintings?
10. Some of those portraits have an uneven line running across the face. What is the reason behind that?
11. As an artist, in which kind of styles would you say you have been working?
12. Four main exhibitions are listed on your website. Somewhere else, it has been indicated that you have participated in other shows. Kindly briefly mention how many (total) exhibitions you have been involved in generally?
13. You have obviously undertaken some painting commissions. Could you just mention any you have executed- namely medium used, dimensions, location and dates of murals and other major painting works for private individuals, organizations or Government?
14. You have specifically been listed among the artists who produced a new mural for the National Museum at Onikan-Lagos, when was that?
15. It has also been indicated that you have done collaborative work with other artists like Fidelis Odogwu. Apart from which other artists were involved? If possible, supply the titles, media, dimensions, and location of such pieces.
16. Briefly highlight the idea (conceptual / use of media) behind your paintings Back of Eden, Butterfly.
17. Your own version of pointillism is peculiar. Is the reason behind the embossed dots aesthetics or symbolical?
18. Would you say your use of textile motifs in some of your paintings, could be linked to trends in any art movement, say for example *Onaism*, or *Araism*?

19. Kindly mention art societies you belong to?
20. The portraits below are done in a peculiar style- what do you call that style? When these paintings were made (dates of production), Which media were used in their production? What are their dimensions? Where is the present location of these works?





Appendix II

Department of Fine Arts

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

PhD Art History Research.

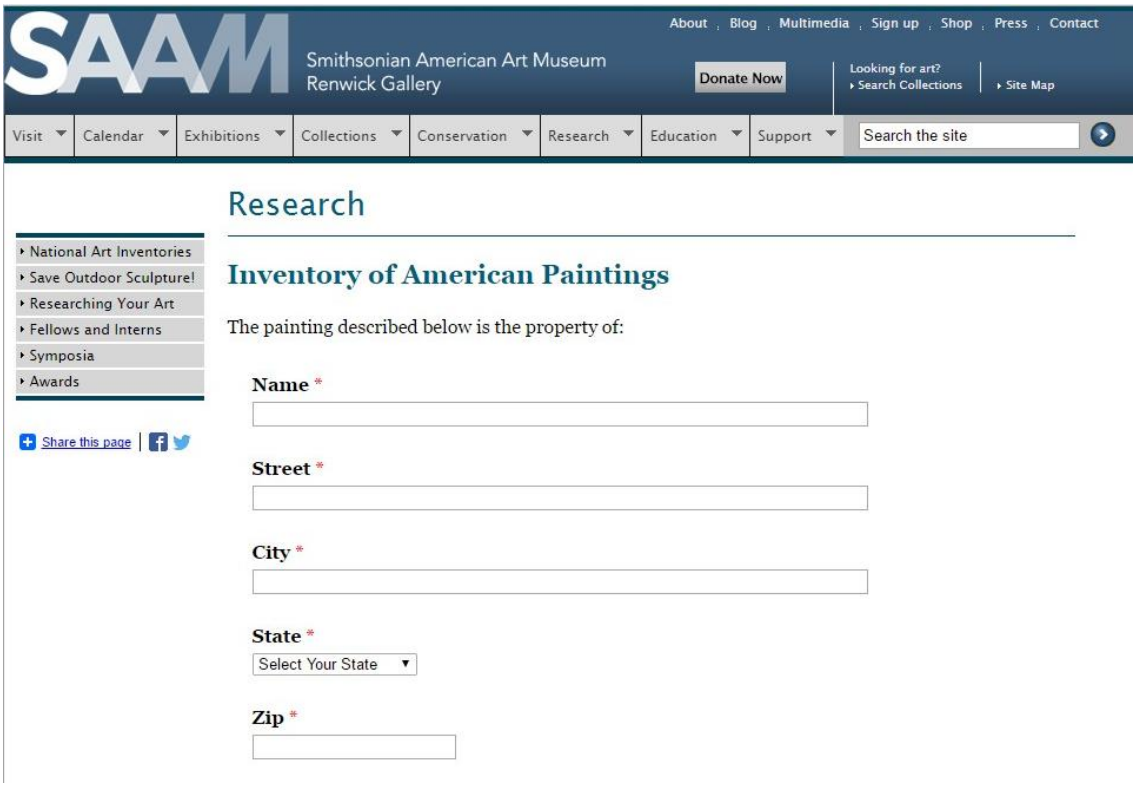
OBSERVATION GUIDE

This study is concerned with the form, content and style of selected formal and informal-trained Modern Nigerian Painters. The under listed questions are meant to provide a guideline for acquiring information about the painters' painting technique.

1. What is the title of this painting?
2. Why do you choose to title the work so?
3. What is the subject matter/theme of this painting?
4. Explain the philosophy behind this work.
5. Which technique(s) do you employ in this painting titled…
6. What do the forms in this painting represent/ e.g., human figures, shapes, objects etc.
7. What is the significance behind your choice of colours in this painting?
8. What can you say is the style you have used in this particular painting, and why?

APPENDIX III

PAINTING INVENTORIES FROM SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUMS



Smithsonian American Art Museum** **Inventory of American Paintings

Please type or print with a ballpoint pen when filling out the report.

The painting described below is the property of:

Name *

Street *

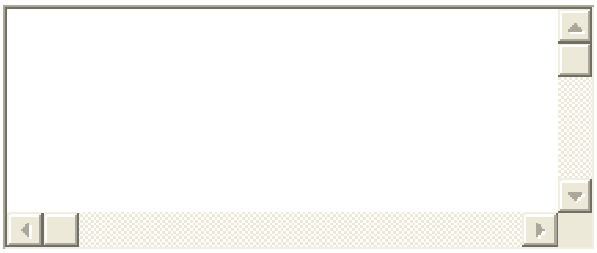
City *

State *

Virginia

Zip *

If location differs from above address, cite here



Private owner name and street address citations can be restricted; only description and city/state location of work need be entered into database. If you prefer this option check here ☐

Please provide as much as possible of the following descriptive information:

Artist * (last name, first or indicate if unknown)

Title of the work * (indicate if unknown)

Former title (if exhibited under variant title)

Execution date (if approximate, precede with circa)

Media

☐ oil ☐ pastel ☐ watercolor

☐ gouache ☐ tempera ☐ other

Support

☐ canvas ☐ paper ☐ wood panel

☐ ivory ☐ board ☐ other

Dimensions (include unit of measure)

Height Width

The above measurements are ○ actual size ○ approximate size

Check here if the work is a ○ mural ○ miniature

Inscriptions/markings

Is the work signed? ○ yes ○ no ○ unable to determine

Is the work dated? ○ yes ○ no ○ unable to determine

Please record any signature and other inscriptions and their

locations

Subject matter (briefly describe theme of painting)

Additional Information (optional)

Please provide additional information that might be helpful to a researcher, such as provenance or former owner/locations; biography of an artist or a portrait subject; historical, commission or patronage information; and major exhibitions in which the work appeared.

Your email address for notification*

ii. Smithsonian American Art Museum

INVENTORY OF AMERICAN PAINTINGS

Please type or print with a ballpoint pen when filling out the report.

The painting described below is the property of:

NAME_____

STREET_____

CITY/STATE/ZIP_____

If location differs from address given above, cite here: _____

_____

Private owner name and street address citations can be restricted; only the description and city/state location of the work need be entered into the database. If you prefer this option check here ☐ * * * * * Please provide as

much as possible of the following descriptive information:
ARTIST (last name first or indicate if unknown): _____

_____

TITLE OF WORK (indicate if unknown): _____

_____

FORMER TITLE (if exhibited under variant title): _____

_____

EXECUTION DATE (if approximate, precede with circa): _____

MEDIA

□ oil □ pastel □ watercolor □ gouache □ tempera □ other:_____

SUPPORT □ canvas □ paper □wood panel □ ivory □ board □ other: _____

Smithsonian American Art Museum

DIMENSIONS (include units of measure)

Height_____ Width_____

The above measurements are: □ actual measurements □ approximate size

Check here if the work is a □ mural or a □ miniature

INSCRIPTIONS/MARKINGS

Is the work signed? □ yes □ no □ unable to determine Is the work dated? □ yes □ no □ unable to determine

Please record any signature and other inscriptions and their locations:

_____

SUBJECT MATTER (briefly describe theme of the painting or attach photograph):

_____

_____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (optional)

Please provide additional information that might be helpful to a researcher, such as provenance or former owner/locations; biography of an artist or a portrait subject; historical, commission or patronage information; and major exhibitions in which the work appeared.

_____

_____

If possible, send a photograph of the painting with this form. The photo will be available to researchers who visit our office, and a digitally scanned image will appear in our online database.

Thank you for contributing information to the national Inventory of American Paintings. Address completed reports and questions regarding the project to:

Inventory of American Paintings Smithsonian American Art Museum MRC 970 PO Box 37012 Washington, D.C. 20013-7012 Telephone: 202-633-8380 Email: artref@si.edu

APPENDIX IV

Department of Fine Arts,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
PhD Art History Research.

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS.

Below is a sample of blocks employed for entering summaries about selected Modern Nigerian painters. One set of blocks is to be used per painting. A total of ten (10) Blocks each will be produced to cover the selected paintings of all the painters.

Name of artist……..

Address……
……

Title of work		Description
Date of production		
Medium		
Form		
Content		
Style		

APPENDIX V

LIST OF ACCESSED PAINTINGS BY NIKE OKUNDAYE AND PEJU ALATISE

Nike Davies-Okundaye's paintings

S/No	Year of production	Title of Work
1.	1967	*Village Scene* (Batik Hanging)
2	1968	*Untitled* (Embroidery)
3	1969	*Market Women* (Batik Hanging)
4.	1970	*Sundial Memories*
5.	1971	*Sango god of Thunder*
6.	,,	*Comfort in the Home*
7.	1973	*Pattern of Life*
8	1974	*Adam and Eve's first Love*
9.	,,	*Hoping for the Best*
10.	1975	*Royal Daughters*
11.	1977	*A Village in My Dreams, 1*
12.	,,	*A Village in My Dreams,2*
13.	,,	*A Village in My Dreams, 1* (Mixed Media)
14	,,	*A Village in My Dreams, 2* (Mixed Media)
15	1980	*Village Market Scene*
16.	1981	*Poetic patterns of Love*
17	1982	*Queen Amina of Zaria*
18.	1984	*Village Life*
19.	,,	*Patterns of Our Heritage*
20.	,,	*Goat (Embroidery)*
21.	,,	*Drumming*
22.	1986	*Masks of the Women of old*

23 24.	1988 ,,	*Elephant Dreams I* *Elephant Dreams II*
25 26. 27. 28	1990 ,, 	*Not by chance* *Occasion of Truth* *The Levees of my inspiration* *Untitled* (profile of a woman in brown)
29 30	1992 1992	*Untitled* (Heads of women in orange) *School Teacher*
31	1993	*Untitled* (female figures on indigo background)
32. 33. 34. 35. 36	1994 ,, ,, 	*Quitted in Love* *Untitled* (Four faces and female bodies) *Untitled* (female with fruit on head and her front) *Untitled* (Face and five other profiles on blue background) *Untitled* (four female figures on blue background)
37. 38. 39. 40 41 42	1995 ,, ,, ,, 	*Untitled* ((blue dancing woman). *Untitled* (two dancers in blue background) *Untitled* (Dancing images on reddish background) *Untitled* (Woman carrying a basin) *Drummer* *Bumper Harvest*
43. 44 45.	1996 ,, ,,	*Sweet Moment* *Folklore Teller* *Untitled* (Figures of women)
46. 47. 48	1997 ,, ,,	*An Illusion* *The Village Hair Stylists* *Untitled* (women with elongated necks against blue background)
49. . 50. 51. 52	1998 ,, ,, ,,	*Beyond Indigo, Ibadan Dun* *Sharing of Joy* *Family reunion* *The Burden of the Village Women*
53. 54. 55. 56. 57 58	1999 ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	*The Oil Producing Village* *Habitats of Love* *Untitled* (female dancers) *Dancing for Joy* *Confluence of Music* *Evening Outing*
59. 60. 61	2000 ,, ,,	*Untitled* (profile of a Female in red monochrome background) *Untitled* (Woman and child walking in a village setting) *Transfiguration*

62. 63 64.	2001 ,, ,,	*Safe Delivery* *Above the Odds* *Welee O pami (You cannot defeat me)*
65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70.	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	*Not too far from Home* *Forest* *Rhythm of Life* *Message of Hope* *Rapted in Our Heritage* *Under The full Moon*
71. 72. 73. 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81	2001 ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, 	*Portrait* *Rhythm of life* *Sundial memories* *Untitled* (Abstract-Standing female figures in red) *Untitled* (Semi-abstract Images of women, in sienna background) *Untitled,* (composition with Water colour, pen & ink on paper) *Untitled* (composition with green/brown alabela designs) *Village Portrait* *Mystery of Life* *World Beyond* *Access of Hope*

82.	2002	*The Branches of Life*
83.	,,	*The Worshippers*
84.		*Village Scene*
85.	,,	*The Water Lily of Ogidi by Night*
86.	,,	*Vision of Greatness*
87.		*Expression of Affection*
88.	,,	*Symbols of Success*
89.	,,	*Symbols of Unity*
90.		*Influence of Hope*
91.	,,	*Family Habitat*
92.		*Market Place*
93.	,,	*The Umbrella of our Heritage*
94.	,,	*Heritage At Peace,*
95.		*The Worshippers*
96.	,,	*The Igue Festival Women of Benin.*
97.	,,	*Untitled* (Row of women in Aso ebi, interacting in
98.		Monochromatic red colour)
99.	,,	*Untitled,* (composition with adire alabela designs in brown)
100		*Dancers with Joy*
101	,,	*Dancing for Joy*
102	,,	*Self-Portrait*
103		*Stitches of Affection*
104		*Eyo Festival*

105	2003	*Village Series*
106		*Family of Hope*
107	,,	*Dancing Mood*
108	,,	*Dancing Woman*
109		*First Outing*
110	,,	*Untitled* (Portrait of woman looking backwards with hand over head)
111	,,	*Fish Family*
112	,,	*African Traditional music instruments.*
113		*Women in shadows*
114	,,	*Endless gaze into the future*
115		*Her first outing (Part III)*
116	,,	*Rhythm of Hope*
117	,,	*Design of our Heritage*
118		*Tradition in Display*
119	,,	*Eyo Festival*
120	,,	*Love Dance*
121		*Dancers with JoySinging for Joy*
122	,,	*Love Dance*
123		*Onilu (Drummer)*
124	,,	*The Grace of Hope*
124	,,	
125	2004	*Show of Strength*
126		*Olokun*
127	,,	*Patterns of Life*
128	,,	*Craddle of Love*
129		*Family portrait*
130	,,	*On the Second Day*
131	,,	*Survivors*
132		*The Forest*
133	,,	*Untitled (Portrait of a woman in blue alabela background)*
134		*Untitled* (adire patterns in brown)
135	,,	*Untitled (Landcsape at Night-dark violet)*
135	,,	*Shadow of Love*
136	,,	*A Group of Friends*
137		
138	2005	*My Brain Subject*
139		*Untitled (abstract faces/ huts)*
140	,,	*Ta lo wa ninu ogba naa (Who is in the garden)?*
141	,,	*Masking the feelings (Part I)*
142		*On her outing date*
143	,,	*A gift of Life*

144	2006	My Brain is Correct I
145.		My Brain is Correct II
146	,,	No one like my Mother
147	,,	Quilt
148		Tree of Life
149	,,	Transformation
150	,,	Untitled (Woman with headgear in myriad of colours)
151		Harmless Dream
152	,,	Women of Honour
153		Glue to Love
154		Harmless Dream
155	2007	Under the Moonlight
156		Beauty is a thing of the mind
157	,,	Osun Grove of Osogbo
158	,,	Silkworm Tree
159.		Dividend of Motherhood
160	,,	Delegate at Her Best
161	,,	The Brilliant Outing
162		Dancing it out
163		People in Time
164		Untitled (adire *alabela* patterns in monochromatic brown)
165	2008	*Market Women*
166		*Already in Love*
167		*Women Delegates*
168		*A Common Factor*
169	2008	*Village Series I*
170.		*Village Series II*
171	,,	*Village Series III*
172	,,	*Untitled* (Portrait of a woman in monochromatic red)
173		*Untitled* (blue women in procession)
174	,,	*Untitled Brown* (silhouetted images)
175	,,	*Village Series III*
176		*Untitled* (Portrait of a Woman with piercing eyes)
177	,,	*Forest of the spirit saints*
178	2009	*Untitled* (Portrait of a Woman)*Celebration II*
179		*Untitled* (Abstract with interposed faces)
180	,,	*Untitled* (Abstract faces) Monochromatic red background
181	2010	*Untitled* (adire alabela patterns in Green)
182		*Trip to the Hills*

183.	2011	*Women Delegate I*
184.		*Women Delegate II*
185.	,,	*Women Delegate III*
186.	,,	*Women Delegate IV*
187.		*Women Delegate V*
188.	,,	*Women Delegate VI*
189	,,	*Untitled* (Abstract faces on Monochromatic red background)
190		*Untitled* (women weavers -Blue on grey background)
191	2012	*Self Portrait*
192	,,	*Ajaota*
193	2015	*Yam Harvest*
194	Undated	*Arugba* (Embroidery)
195		*Olokun* (Pen & ink on paper)
196	,,	*Untitled*- (images of ghost like faces between a pair of wings)
197	,,	*Untitled*- (Images of three ghost-like faces with rounded features)
198	,,	*Untitled* (Images of three ghost-like faces with angular features)
199		*Untitled*-(four faces and two crossed fish. pen & ink on canvas)
200	,,	*Untitled* (Images of Mother, child, snakehead and other faces.
201	,,	pen & ink on canvas
202		*Untitled* (village landscape, Water Colour, Pen & Ink on paper)
203	,,	*Untitled* (village landscape, Water Colour, Pen & Ink on paper)
204	,,	*Untitled* (village landscape, Water Colour, Pen & Ink on paper)
205		*Untitled (village landscape*, (Water Colour, Pen & Ink on paper)
206	,,	*Untitled* (village landscape, Water Colour, Pen & Ink on paper)
		Utitled (Images of Music instruments Water Colour, Pen & Ink On Paper)

PEJU ALATISE'S ACCESSED PAINTINGS

Peju Alatise's Paintings accessed from *Renaissance Crafts; An Anthology* Alatise (2000), whose measurement and production date details were not indicated.

S/No	Title of Work
1.	*A little Bit of Me in Them Series= Red Lipstick*
2.	*Red Lipstick Series- Joy Within*
3.	*Of All That is Left*
4.	*Clothing as a Gift Series- Behind all the Colours*
5.	*Clothing as a Gift Series- A little Bit of Ankara*
6.	*Clothing as a Gift Series-Of Sack and Mind*
7.	*At Home in the Senufoes*
8.	*Oya-ya*
9,	*Insect Theory-Bug*
10.	*Insect Theory- Praying Mantis*
11.	*Friends of the Bride*

12.	*The spotting of Red*

Paintings accessed from *JIGIDA, African Adornment* (Alatise, 2003)

S/No	Title of Work	
13	*Untitled (Showing abstract images*	
14	*A little Bit of Me in Them Series-3*	
15	*Life is a Highway*	
16	*Labake-Lipstick Series*	
17	*A little Bit of Me in Them Series-3*	
18	*Oriya*	
20	2005	*Up and Beyond*
21		*Red Lipstick (Series)*
22		*A little Bit of Me in Them Series-5*
24	Undated	*30 Years ago- Illicit Trade (images of objects)*
25		*30 Years ago- Illicit Trade (image of a woman)*

Other paintings whose dates and, or sizes were not accessed

S/No	Title of Work
25	*Orange scarf First*
26	*Orita Meta*
27	*He calls Them by Number*
28	*Masquerading*
29	*Omoluwa*
30	*Scribble*
31	*Scrabble*
32	*Just One Night*
33	*What The F***!*

Peju Alatise**'s Paintings having Dates**

S/No	Year of production	Title of Work

34	2004	*The Way She Likes it*
35	,,	*More than Human*
36	2004	*Untitled (Portrait)*
37	2005	*When the sun Sets*
38	,,	*Untitled (Portrait)*
39	,,	*Sunset on Ajantola*
40	,,	*When Dawn Breaks*
41	,,	*Spring New Beginning*
42	2006	*Seki the Altar Ego*
43	2007	*Years Gone By*
44	2008	*Convert of a Jagged Cross*
45		*Blue Wrapper*
46	,,	*Eniyan ni aso mi*
47	,,	*Blue in the face*
48		*Foreplay How Safe are You?*
49		*In it Together,*
50	2009	*I'll be Watching you*
51		*Like Woman, Like Fruit*
52	2009-2011	*The Other Half won't let Me*
53	,,	*Purple period: Lest I forget 1, 2, 3.*
54	2010	*Okiemute, Time for everything.*
55		*Some Have,and Some Have not*
56	,,	*Ten People in Euphoria*
57	2011	*Water Element –Erin Ijesha*
58	,,	*Back of Eden*
59		*Captain Red Tape,*
60	,,	*Nine Year Old Bride,*
61	,,	*Nine Year old Bride, Where is her Mother?*
62		*Wind Element-Like the Labalaba*
63	2011- 2012	*Beautiful Mind*
64		*All Coming Together*
65		*She Put a Hole in Him,*
66	2012	*Inside, they are Broken*
67	,,	*Body Parts*
68	,,	*Earth Element- Orun Lo m'eni To Ma la*
69	,,	*Ipele I*
70	,,	*Ipele III*
71	2012	*Aso Ibora*
72	,,	*All Scarves Go to Heaven*
73	,,	*Girl Interrupted*

74		*Nigerian Woman*
75	2014	*Missing*

APPENDIX VI

SELECTED PAINTINGS OF NIKE OKUNDAYE AND PEJU ALATISE

Selected Paintings of Nike Okundaye

S/ No	**Year of production**	**Title of Work**
1	1967	*Village Scene*
2	1968	*Untitled* (Embroidery)
3	1968	*Market Women*
4	1970	*Sundial Memories*
5	1973	*Pattern of Life*
6	1975	*Adam and Eve's first Love*
7	1975	*Hoping for the Best*
8	1975	*Royal Daughters*
9	1980	*Village Market Scene*
10	1981	*Poetic patterns of Love*
11	1984	*Village Life*
12	1984	*Patterns of Our Heritage*
13	1984	*Goat (Embroidery)*
14	1986	*Masks of the Women of old*
15	1988	*Elephant Dreams I Untitled*
16	1990	*Occasion of Truth*
17	1993	*(Female figures on blue indigo background)*
18	1994	*Quitted in Love*
19	1995	*Untitled (Multiple profile in blue)*
20	1995	*Untitled (two dancers in blue background)*
21	1996	*Bumper Harvest*

22	1996	*The Folklore Teller*
23	1998	*Sweet Moment*
24	1998	*Family Reunion*
25	1999	*The Burden of the Village Women*
26	1999	*The Oil Producing Village*
27	2000	*Habitat of Lovers*
28	2001	*Transfiguration*
29	2001	*Safe Delivery*
30	2001	*Rhythm of Life*
31	2001	*Message of Hope*
32	2002	*The Branches of Life*
33	2002	*The Worshippers*
34	2002	*The Water Lily of Ogidi by Night*
35	2002	*Expression of Affection*
36	2002	*Symbols of Success*
37	2002	*Symbols of Unity*
38	2002	*The Umbrella of our Heritage*
39	2002	*Self-Portrait*
40	2002	*Eyo Festival*

41	2003	*Village Series*
42	2003	*Dancing Mood*
43	2003	*Dancing Woman*
44	2003	*First Outing*
45	2003	*Untitled (Portrait of woman looking backwards with*
46	2003	*hand over head) Fish Family*
47	2003	*African Traditional music instruments.*
48	2004	*Endless gaze into the future*
49	2004	*Olokun*
50	2004	*Patterns of Life*
51	2004	*Cradle of Love*
52	2004	*Survivors*
53	2005	*A Group of Friends*
54	2006	*My Brain Subject*
55	2006	*My Brain is Correct I*
56	2006	*My Brain is Correct II*
57	2006	*Quilt*
58	2007	*Tree of Life*
59	2007	*Dividend of Motherhood*
60	2007	*Silkworm Tree*
61	2008	*Under the Moonlight*
62	2008	*Market Women*
63	2008	*Already in Love*
64	2009	*A Common Factor*
65	2011	*Celebration II*
66	2012	*Introspection*
67	2012	*Women Delegate I-VI*
68	2015	*Ajaota*
69	Undated	*Yam Harvest*
70	Undated	*Untitled (Multiple profiles)*
		Untitled (Crucifixion)

PEJU ALATISE'S SELECTED PAINTINGS

Peju Alatise's Paintings accessed from *Renaissance Crafts; An Anthology* Alatise (2000), and the internet, whose measurement and production date details were not indicated.

S/No	Year of production	Title of Work
1	Undated	*A little Bit of Me in Them Series- Red Lipstick*
2		*Red Lipstick Series- Joy Within*
3	,,	*Of All That is Left*
4	,,	*Insect Theory-Bug*
5		*Insect Theory- Praying Mantis*
6	,,	*Friends of the Bride*
7	,,	*The spotting of Red*
8		*Life is a Highway*
9	,,	*Life is an Enfoldment*
10	,,	*Scribble*
11		*The Talis*
12	,,	*Oriya*
13		*30 Years ago- Illicit Trade (images of objects)*
14	,,	*Orange scarf First*
15	,,	*Orita Meta*
16		*He calls Them by Number*
17	,,	*Bring Your Head*
18	,,	*Masquerading*
19		*Scrabble*
20	,,	*Just One Night*
21	,,	*The Way She Likes it*
22		*More than Human*
23	,,	*Untitled (Portrait)*
24		*When the sun Sets*
25	,,	*Sunset on Ajantola*
26	,,	*Blue Wrapper*
27		*When Dawn Breaks*
28	,,	*Spring New Beginning*
29	,,	*Years Gone By*
30		*What The F***!*
31	,,	*Portrait of Funke*
32		*Like Woman, Like Fruit*
33	,,	*Convert of a Jagged Cross*
34	2004	*Blue in the face*
35		*In it Together*
36	Undated	*Foreplay How Safe are You?*
37	2009	*Forgiven*
38	2009	*I'll be Watching you*
39	2010	*The Other Half won't let Me*
40 41		*Okiemute, Time for everything.*
42 43	2008	*Purple period: Lest I forget 1, 2, 3.*
44 45		*Silver Lining*
46 47	,,	*Shrouded*
48 49		*Back of Eden*

50 51		*Captain Red Tape*
52 53	2009	*Nine Year Old Bride*
54 55		*Nine Year old Bride, Where is her Mother?*
56 57	,,	*Beautiful Minds*
58 59		*Water Element –Erin Ijesha*
60 61	2010	*Girl Interrupted*
62 63	2009-11	*Wind Element-Like the Labalaba*
64 65		*Ascension*
66 67		*The Beginning of Ascension*
68 69	2009-2012	*All Coming Together*
70	Undated	*Inside, they are Broken*
	Undated	*Earth Stories- She Put a Hole in Him*
	Undated	*Body Parts*
	2014	*Earth Element- Orun M'eni To Ma-la*
		Ipele I
		Aso Bora
		Orange Scarf goes to Heaven
		All Scarves Go to Heaven
		Smoke and Ashes I
		Smoke and Ashes II
		Smoke and Ashes III
		Smoke and Ashes IV
		More Money
		Untitled (Red Scarf)
		Desperately Labake
		Missing

APPENDIX VI

PAINTING FORMS OF NIKE OKUNDAYE AND PEJU ALATISE

Nike Okundaye's painting forms

S/No	Title of Work	Year of production	Form
1.	*Sango god of Thunder*	1971	Embroidery
2.	*Goat*	1984	
	Arugba Osun	Undated	,,
1.	*Untitled* (Heads of women in orange)	,,	Portraiture
1	*Not by chance*	1990	Composition with human forms
2	*Occasion of Truth*		
	Untitled (profile of a woman in brown)	,,	
3	*Untitled* female figures on indigo background	,,	
	Quitted in Love		
4	*Untitled* (Four faces and female bodies)	1994	
5	*Untitled* (female with fruit on head and her front)	,,	
6	*Untitled* (Face and five other profiles on blue background)	,,	
7	*Untitled* (four female figures on blue	,,	
8	background)	,,	
9	*Untitled* (*(*blue dancing woman).		
	Untitled (two dancers in blue background)		
10	*Untitled* (Dancing images on red background)	1995	
	Sharing of Joy	1995	
11	*Untitled* (Woman carrying a basin)		
12	*Drummer*	1996	
	Sweet Moment		
13	*Safe Delivery*	,,	
	Untitled (Women Figures)	1997	
14	*An Illusion*	1998	
15	*Untitled* (women with elongated necks against blue background)	,,	
16	*Beyond Indigo, Ibadan Dun*	1999	
17	*Untitled* (dancers)	2000	
	Untitled (profile of a Female in red	2001	
18	monochrome background)		
19	*Above the Odds*		
	Welee O pami (You cannot defeat me)		

PEJU ALATISE's PAINTINGS FORMS

S/No	Title of Work	Year of production	Form
1.	*A Little Bit of Me in You1,2,3,4*	*2000*	Portrait
2.	*Orange Scarf*		
3.	*Orange Scarf first*		
4.	*Red Lipstick Series*	*2004*	
5.	*The Way She Likes it*		
6.	*More than Human*		
7.	*Untitled*	*2005*	
8.	*Sunset on Ajantola*		
9.	*Spring New Beginning*	,,	
10	*Desperately Labake*	*2005*	
11.	*Up and Beyond*		
12.	*When the Sun Sets*	,,	
13.	*When Dawn Breaks*	,,	
14.	*Portrait of Funke Blue*	,,	
15.	*Wrapper*	2007	
16.	*Convert of a Jagged Cross*	2008	
17.	*Saturday Morning*		
18.	*I'll be watching You*	2009	
19.	*Okiemute*		
20.	*Labake*	2010	
21	*More than Human*		
22	*Orange Scarf goes to Heaven*	2011	Installations
23.	*All Scarves go to Heaven*	2012	
24	*Shrouded*	2013	
25	*All coming Together*		
26	*Missing Nine Year*	2011	
27	*old Bride*	2011-2012	
28	*Earth Stories:Fire, Alagbada Ina*	2014	
29	*Ipele I*	2011	
30	*Ipele II*	2011	
31	*Aso Bora*	2012	
32	*Aso Bora*	2012	
33	*Girl Interrupted*	2012	
34	*Earth Stories: She said No*	2012	
35		2012	

	Earth Stories: She put a hole in him *Earth Stories: She let herself go* *Earth Stories: Before there was man* *Smoke and Ashes I* *Smoke and Ashes II* *Smoke and Ashes III* *Smoke and Ashes IV* *Missing* *Desperately Labake* *The other half won't let me* *Half of the story* *Some have, some have not* *Purple Period, Lest I forget 1,2,3* *Some have, Some have not Beautiful Mind* *Nigerian Woman*	 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2014	Cloth Panels Cloth collages
42 43 44	*The beginning of Back of Eden* *Captain Red Tape Ascension* *Ascension* *Scribble* *Scrabble* *Wind Element- Like the labalaba* *Water Element-Erin Ijesa* *Fire Element(Orun lo m'eni to mala)* *Body Parts* *Masquerading*	2009 ,, ,, 2010 2009- 2010	Mixed Media Mixed Media

APPENDIX VII

PAINTING SUBJECT MATTER OF THE ARTISTS

i. Nike Davies-Okundaye's Painting Subject Matter.

S/No	Title of Work	Year of production	Subject Matter
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	*Village scene* *Sundial Memories* *A Village in my Dreams I* *A Village in my Dreams II* *A Village in my Dreams I* (Mixed Media) *A Village in my Dreams II* (,,) *Under the moonlight* *Royal Daughters*	1967 1970 1977 1977 1977 1977 2007	Celebrating rural life
1 2 3 4 5	*Market Women* *Village Market scene* *Cocoa Farmer* *Market Woman* *Market Place*	1969 1980 2008 2014	Market Scenes
1 2 3 4	*The Water lily of Ogidi at Night* *Untitled (Landscape)* *Village Series* *Silkworm Tree*	2002	Landscape
1 2 3	*Elephant Dreams* *Fish Family* *Baby Bird*		Celebrating Animals & Creatures
1 2 3	*Untitled (Portrait)* *Pattern of Life* *Self-Portrait*		Portraiture
1 2	*Sango God of Thunder* *Folklore Teller*	1971 1996	Folklore
1 2 3 4 5	*Royal Daughters* *Bumper Harvest* *The Village Hair Stylist* *Tradition in Display* *Yam Harvest*	1975 1995 1997 2003 2015	Celebrating Traditions

1	*Adam and Eve's First Love*	1975	Religion
2	*The Worshippers*	2002	
3	*Olokun*	2007	
4	*Olokun*	2007	Religion
5	*Oshun Grove of Osogbo*	2009	
6	*Forest of the Spirit Saints*	Undated	
7	*Untitled (showing Crucifixion)*	Undated	
8	*Arugba Osun*		
1	*Celebration II*		Ceremonies & Festivals
2	*Eyo Festival*		
3	*Rhythm of Life*		
1	*Women delegate I-VI* (6 works)	2001	Celebrating Women
2	*Patterns of Life*	2001	
3	*Above the Odds*	2001	
4	*Welee O pami (You can Never Defeat ME)*	2002 ,,	
5	*Symbols of Success*	,,	
6	*Vision of Greatness*	2003	
7	*First Outing*	2005	
8	*My Brain Subject*	2006	
9	*My Brain is Correct I*	,,	
10	*My Brain is Correct II*	2007	
11	*Delegate at Her Best*	2007	
12	*Dividend of Motherhood*	,,	
13	*Portrait of a woman*	2007	
14	*The Branches of Life*	2007	
15	*Safe Delivery*	2008	
16	*A Common Factor First Outing*	2009	
17	*Transfiguration*	2011	
1	*Habitat of Love*	1999	Love
2	*Expression of Affection*	2002	
3	*The Cradle of Affection*	2004	
4	*Already in Love*	2008	
1	*Family Reunion*	1998	Celebrating the Family/ Home
1	*Hoping for the Best*	1970	Hope
2	*Message of Hope*	2001	
3	*Survivors*	2004	
1	*African traditional Instruments*	2003	Music

1 2	*Dancing Mood* *Ajaota*	2003 2012	Dance

Peju Alatise's Painting Subjects

S/No	Title of Work		Subject
1 2 3 4	*Earth Stories –Alagbada ina* *Water Element-Erin Ijesha* *Fire Element (Orun lo m'eni to mala)* *Friends of the Bride*	2011 ,, 2012 Undated	Tradition & Folklore
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	*Convert of a Jagged Cross* *Orange Scarf* *Oblivion* *The Beginning of Ascension* *Ascension* *Back of Eden* *Orange Scarf Goes to Heaven* *All Scarves Go to Heaven* (Installation)	2008 2009-12 2009-12 2011 ,, 2012 ,,	Religion
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	*The spotting of Red* *Red Lipstick Series- Joy Within* *Labake-Lipstick Series Red Lipstick (Series)* *A little Bit of Me in Them Series= Red Lipstick''* *A little Bit of Me in Them Series-3* *A little Bit of Me in Them Series-4* *A little Bit of Me in Them Series-5* *A little Bit of Me in Them Series-5* *The Way She Likes it Orita Meta* *Blue in the face*	Undated ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, 2004 2006 2008	Celebrating Women

	More than Human *Earth Stories- She said No* *Earth Stories- She Let Herself Go* *I'll be watching You* *Okiemute, Time for Everything Nine Year Old Bride* *Nine Year Old Bride, Where is Her Mother* *Nigerian Woman* *When the sun Sets* *Up and Beyond* *When Dawn Breaks* *Omoluwa* *Untitled (Portrait) Earth Stories- She put a Hole in Him* *Inside They are Broken* *Missing*	
	Scribble *Scrabble* *Life's an Enfoldment* *All Coming Together* *Beautiful Minds*	Aesthetics
	Insect Theory-Bug *Insect Theory- Praying Mantis*	Creatures
	Shrouded *Aso Bora* *Ipele I* *Ipele II* *Ipele III*	Celebrating Cloth
	The Talis	Mystery
	Captain Red Tape	Corruption

APPENDIX VIII

MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES OF NIKE OKUNDAYE

S/No	Title of work		Medium
1 2.	*Sango god of Thunder* *Goat* *Arugba Osun*	1971 1985 Undated	Embroidery
1 2 3 4 5	*Adam and Eve's first Love* *Untitled* (Cruxifixion) *Untitled* *Untitled* *Fish Family*	1974 -1975 Undated ,, 2003	Pen and Ink on canvas
1	*Trip to the Hills*		Pen & Ink with *Adire Alabela*
1 2 3	*Women Delegates I-IV* *The Forest* *Silkworm Tree* *Village series*	2011 2004 2007 2008	Pen and Ink with water colour on paper
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	*Royal Daughters* *Quitted in Love* *Drummer* *An Illusion* *Beyond Indigo* *Rhythm of Life* *Above all Odds* *Wele O pami* *Safe Delivery* *Pattern of our Heritage* *Dancing Mood* *Craddle of Affection* *Dancing Woman* *First Outing* *Survivors* *Sundial Memories* *Show of Strength* *Grove of Osogbo* *A Village in My Dreams 1&2* *Symbols of Success* *Market women* *Already in Love* *Village Life*	1975 1994 1995 1997 1998 2001 2001 2001 2003 2003 2003 2004 ,, 2004 ,, 2007 2008 ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	Pen, Ink & Acrylic on Canvas

1 2 3 4 5 6 7	*Folklore Teller* *The Water lily of Ogidi at Night* *Patterns of our Life* *Tree of Life* *Royal Daughters* *Poetic patterns of Love* *Masks of the Women of old*	1996 2002 2004 2006 1975 1981	Acrylic & *Adire alabela*
1 2	*A Village in My Dream I& II* *Elephant Dreams I & II*	1977 1988	Beads on Board
1 2	*Quilt* *Tree of Life*	2006 2006	Installation

MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES OF PEJU ALATISE

S/No	Title of work	Year of Production	Medium
1	*Silver Lining*	2009-12	**Oil on Canvas**
2	*Oblivion*	2010	**Pen and Ink on canv**
3	*Orange Scarf*	Undated	
4	*Orange Scarf first*	2000	Oil on Canvas
1	*The Way She Likes it*	2004	Acrylics on Canvas
2.	*Untitled*	,,	
3	*Sunset on Ajantola*	,,	
4	*When the Sun Sets*	,,	
5.	*When Dawn Breaks*	2005	
6.	*Convert of a Jagged Cross*	2008	
7.	*I'll be watching You*	2009	
8.	*Okiemute*	2010	
1	*Oriya*	Undated	Mixed Media
2	*More Money*	,,	,, ,,
3	*The Talis*	,,	,, ,,
4	*The Spotting of Red*	,,	,, ,,
5	*Life is an Enfoldment Scribble*	,,	,, ,,
6	*Scrabble*	,,	,, ,,
7	*Masquerading*	,,	,, ,,
8	*The Other Half Won't Let Me*	,,	,, ,,
9	*They Know Not What They Do*	2010	,, ,,
10	*Back of Eden*		,, ,,
11	*Beautiful Mind*	,,	,, ,,
12	*Inside They are Broken*	2012	,, ,,
13	*Earth Stories-Alagbada Ina*	2012	,, ,,
14	*Nine Year Old Bride*		,, ,,
15	*Aso Bora*		,, ,,
16	*Ipele I,II,III*		,, ,,
17	*Smoke and Ashes I,II,III&IV*		,, ,,- Cloth
18	*Orange Scarf Goes To Heaven*		,, ,, Cloth
19	*Girl Interrupted*		
20	*All Scarves Go To Heaven*		,, ,, Cloth
21	*Shrouded*		,, ,, Cloth
22	*Captain Red Tape*		,, ,, Cloth
23	*All Coming Together*		,, ,, Cloth
24	*Missing*		,, ,, Cloth
25	*Body Parts*		,, ,, Cloth
26	*Water Element-Erin Ijesha*		,, ,, Cloth
27	*Earth Element- Orun Lo M'eni*		,, ,, Cloth
28	*To Ma-la Wind*		,, ,,Cloth

29	*Element- Like The Labalaba*		,, ,, Modelling & Painting		

APPENDIX IX
PAINTING STYLES OF THE ARTISTS

Nike Okundaye's Painting Style

S/No	Title of work	Year of Production	Painting Style
1	*Untitled* (Showing crucifixion of Christ)	Undated	Naturalism
2	*Untitled* (Embroidery)	1968	
3	*Sundial Memories*	1970	
4	*Sango god of Thunder* (Embroidery)	1971	
5	*Adam and Eve's First Love*	1975	
6	*Royal Daughters*	1975	
7	*A Village in My Dream I& II* (Bead work)	1977	
8	*A Village in My Dream I& II*	1977	
9	*Goat* (Embroidery) *Elephant Dreams I & II*	1984	
10	*Bumper Harvest*	1988	
11	*The Water Lily of river Ogidi at night*	1995	
12	*Design of Our Heritage*	2002	
13	*Forest of the Spirit Saints*	2003	
14	*No One Like My Mother*	2009	
		Undated	
1	*Untitled* (Village Scene)	1996	
2	*The Folk lore Teller*	1996	
3	*The Village Hair Stylist*	1997	
4	*The Burden of the Village Women*	1998	
5	*Sharing of Joy*	1998	
6	*Safe Delivery*	2001	
7	*Rapted in Our Heritage*	2001	
8	*The Worshippers*	2002	
9	*The Branches of Life*	2002	
10	*Expression of Affection*	2002	
11	*Market Place*	2002	
12	*Her First Outing*	2003	
13	*Rhythm of Hope*	2003	
		2003	

14 **15** **16** **17** **18** **19** **20** **21** **22** **23** **24**	*Tradition in Display* *On the Second Day* *Olokun* *On Her Outing Date* *A Gift of Life* *My Brain is Correct I&II* *A Delegate at Her Best* *People in Time* *Dividend of Mother hood* *Dancing it Out* *Osun Sacred Grove of Osogbo*	2004 2004 2005 2005 2006 2007 2007 2007 2007 2008 Undated	
25	*Baby Bird*		**Expressionism**
	Comfort in the Home *Patterns of our Heritage* *The Oil Producing Village* *Transfiguration* *Family Reunion* *Influence of Hope* *Not Too Far from Home* *Vision of Greatness* *Heritage at Peace* *The Umbrella of our Heritage* *Women in Shadows* *Family of Hope* *Endless Gaze into the Future* *Show of Strength* *Masking the Feeeling (Part I)* *A Common Factor* *Message of Hope* *Untitled* *Untitled*	1971 1984 1998 2000 2001 2001 2002 2002 2003 2003 2003 2003 2003 2004 2005 2008 2009 2011	**Abstraction**

Peju Alatise's Painting Styles

1 **2**	*I'll be watching you* *Looking Up*	2009	**Realism**
1 **2**	*Orange scarf* *Orange scarf first*	Undated	**Symbolic Realism**

1	*A little Bit of Me in All of Them*	Undated	**Expressionism**
	(Series); Joy Within,	Undated	
2	*A little bit of me in all of them*	2008	
	(Series), Red Lipstick	Undated	
3	*Blue in the face*	Undated	
4	*Portrait of Funke*	Undated	
5	*Omolabake*	Undated	
6	*Labake- Lipstick Series*	Undated	
7	*Desperately Labake*	Undated	
8	*What the F***!*	Undated	
9	*Just One Night 1,*	Undated	
10	*Foreplay, How Safe are you?*	2005	
11	*Untitled,*	2005	
12	*Portrait of Funke*	Undated	
13	*Sunset on Ajantola*	2005	
14	*When The Sun Sets*	2005	
15	*Years Gone By*	2007	
16	*30 Years Illicit Trade*	Undated	
17	*Saturday Morning,*	Undated	
18	*Forgiven,*	2008	
19	*In it Together,*	2008	
20	*Blue Wrapper,*	2008	
21	*Convert of a Jagged Cross*	2008	
22	*Okiemute (Time for Everything)*	2010	
1	*Orita Meta*	2004	**Expressionism**
2	*More than Human*	2005	
3	*Spring New Beginning*	2005	
4	*When Dawn Breaks*	2005	
5	*Girl Interrupted*	2012	
1	*Purple period :Lest I forget 1,2,3*	2009-10	**Abstract Expressionism**
2	*Back of Eden*	2011	
3	*Captain Red Tape*	2011	
4	*Water Element –Erin Ijesha*	2009 -2012	
5	*The Beginning of Ascension*	2009 -2012	
6	*Ascension*	2012	
7	*Orange Scarf Goes to Heaven*	2012	
8	*Nigerian Woman*	2012	
9	*Smoke and Ashes series*	2013	
10	*30 Years Illicit Trade I*	Undated	
11	*30 Years Illicit Trade II*	Undated	
1	*Half of the Story*	2009	**Abstraction-cartoon-like**
2	*9 Year old Bride, Where is her*	2011	**images**
3	*Mother Bring your head*	2011	
	He Calls them by number	2011	

4	*Masquerading*	Undated	**Abstraction**
6	*Oriya*	Undated	
7	*Scribble*	,,	
8	*Scrabble*	,,	
9	*The Spotting of Red*	,,	
10	*More Money,*	,,	
11	*Friends of the Bride*	,,	
12	*The Talis*	,,	
13	*Silver Lining*	,,	
14	*Oblivion*		
15	*The other half won't let me*	2009-2012	
16	*Some Have, Some Have Not*	2009-2012	
17	*Ten People in Euphoria*	2009	
18	*Beautiful Mind*	2012 2010	
19	*Shrouded*	2011	
20	*Earth Stories Series, Alagbada – Ina*	2011	
21	*Critical Hands that holds the Mass*	2012	
22	*Inside they are Broken Body Parts,2012*	2011-2012	
23	*Earth Element-Orun lo-m'eni*		
24	*toma-la 2012*	2012	
25	*Earth Stories, And She said No, Earth Before there was Man.*	2012	
26	*All Coming Together.*		
27	*Wind Element –Like the Labalaba*		
28	*Earth Stories Series- She Let*		
29	*Herself Go*		
	Life is an unfoldment		
30	*Ipele series*		
31	*Missing*	2014	

Appendix XI

CATALOGUE OF PAINTINGS BY NIKE OKUNDAYE, PEJU ALATISE, AND OTHER RELATED PAINTINGS ACCESSED BY THE STUDY.

a. Nike Davies Okundaye



***Market Women**, Adire alabela* 148cm x 3 cm, 1969. © Nike Art Gallery,Lagos



***A village in my Dream I & II**, 1977* In custody of Mr. Etuk, Asso Villa, Abuja



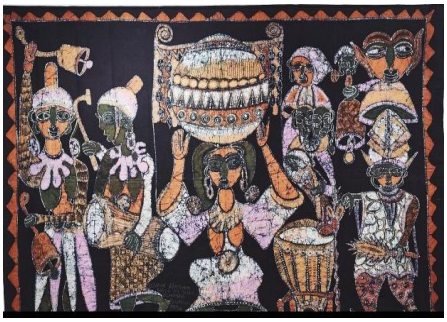
***A village in my Dream I**,* Mixed Media (Beads on Board) 1977



A village in my Dream II, Beads on Board. 137 cm x 84 cm. **1977**© Nike Art Gallery,Lagos



Arugba, Batik Hanging on Cotton, *Undated* © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Arugba, 1978



***Cocoa Farmer**, Adire alabela* with indigo. 103cm x 90cm,1980.© Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Queen Amina of Zaria adire alabela with indigo. 102 x 91cm, 1982.© Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



***Untitled**,* Pen & Ink on paper, Undated



Untitled, Pen & Ink on Paper, Undated.



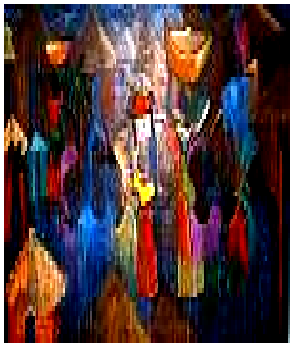
The Levees of My Inspiration, Acrylic on canvas (Adire Patterns) 53" x84" 1990.© Nike Art Gallery



School Teacher, *Adire alabela* on canvas,105 cm x 86 cm. 1992. © Nike Art Gallery,Lagos



School Teacher, Adire *alabela* on canvas,105 cm x 86 cm. 1992. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



The Burden of the Village Women, Mixed Media (oil & Beads on Board), 48" x 96" © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Untitled, Acrylic on canvas, 53" x 28". 1994. © Nike Art Gallery



Untitled. Acrylic on Canvas, 28" x 28", 1994 © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.



Untitled, Acrylic on canvas, 54" x 47",1994. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.



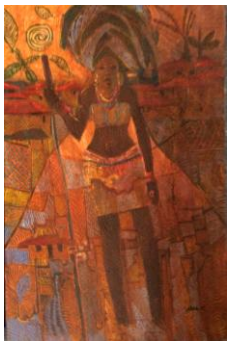
Untitled, Acrylic on canvas, 44" x 28",1995 © Nike Art Gallery,Lagos



Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas. 64" x 47", 1995, © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.



Untitled, Acrylic on canvas. 39" x 28" 1996**.** © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos.



The Illusion, Acrylic on canvas, 42.5"x 29.5"1997. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



The Village Hair Stylist. Mixed Media (Beads & Oil) on Board. 48 x 96. 1997 © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Untitled, Acrylic on canvas, 52" x 27".1997, © Nike Art Gallery Lagos.



***Sharing of Joy*, 2** Acrylic on canvas 36 x 23, 1998. © Nike Art Gallery Lagos.



Beyond Indigo-Ibàdán dún Acrylic on canvas, 48" x 96" 1998. © Nike Art Gallery Lagos.



Evening Outing, Pen, ink & Watercolour on paper. 17½" x 12½". 1999.© Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Confluence of Music, Water colour,Pen & ink on paper 44.5cm x 31,8cm,1999. 36". © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Untitled Acrylic on canvas, 40"x © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Untitled, Acrylic on canvas, 28" x 27"2001. ©Nike Gallery, Lagos



Untitled. Acrylic on canvas, 39" x 25"2001© Nike Art Art Gallery, Lagos



Under the full moon Acrylic on canvas,30"x 25"2001© Nike Art



Untitled, Acrylic on canvas. 2001, © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Against the Odds. Pen, Ink & Acrylic canvas, 27" x 76" 2001



(Welee pami laye)You Can Never Defeat Me. Mixed Media Media. 43" x 28 "2001.



Rapted in our Heritage Acrylic, pen & ink on 28" x36" 2001. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Heritage at peace, Acrylic, pen & ink on Canvas © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Forest , Acrylic on canvas © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Fish of Like Minds , Water colour, pen & ink on paper 44.5cm x 31,8cm © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Mystery of Life Water colour, pen & ink on paper 44.5cm x 31,8cm,2001 © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Access of Hope Water colour, pen & ink on paper, 44.5cm x 31,8cm 2001© Nike Art Gallery. Lagos



Self Portrait, Water colour, pen & ink on paper, 44.5cm x 31,8cm, 2001, © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Happy Hour Water colour, pen & ink on paper 31.8cm x 44.5cm, 2001. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



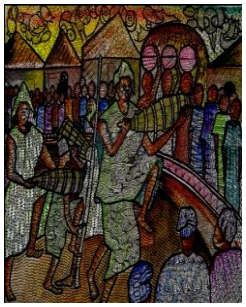
Stitches of Affection Water colour, pen & ink on paper, 44.5cm x 31,8cm



World Beyond Water colour, pen & ink ink on paper. 44.5cm x 31,8cm,2001.



Jubilation Water colour, pen & ink ink on paper, undated © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos



Jubilation Water colour, pen & ink ink on paper, undated © Nike Art Gallery,Lagos



Dancers with Joy Water colour, pen &ink on paper, 44.5cm x 31.8cm, 2001.



Village Series Water colour, pen & ink on paper



Village Series Water colour, pen ink on paper



Village Series Water colour, pen & ink on paper



Village Series, Water Water colour, pen & ink on paper.

© Nike Art Gallery Lagos



Village Series, Water colour, pen & ink on paper. 2003.
© Nike Art Gallery Lagos

Village Series, Water colour, pen & ink on paper. 2008



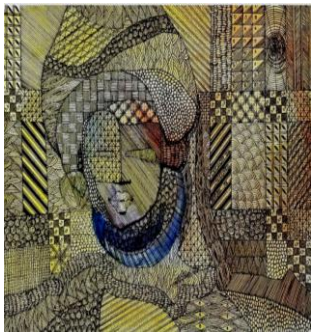
Onilu Drummer ***Love Dance*** ***Singing for Joy*** ***Shadow of Love*** ***Eyo Festival*** Water colour,

Water colour, pen & ink on paper | Water colour, pen & ink on paper | Water colour, pen & ink on paper | Water colour, pen & ink on paper | pen & ink on paper © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos


Harmless Dream Water Colour, pen & ink on paper. 44.5cm © Nike Art Gallery,


Women of Honour, Water Colour, pen & ink on paper, 44.5cm x 31.8cm © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos


Glue to Love, Water Colour, pen & ink on paper. 44.5cm © Nike Art Gallery


The Grace of Hope, Water Colour, pen & ink on paper, 2003. © Nike Art Gallery, Lagos


Untitled, Acrylic on 42" x 38", canvas 2005 © The Shop Nikeart. com (2014)


Beauty is a thing of the Mind Acrylic on canvas 46" x26 " 2009© The Shop Nikeart.com (2014)


Untitled Acrylic on canvas 57" x 28",2006 © The Shop Nike art.com (2014)


Untitled Best Acrylic on canvas 42" x 33" 2007© The Shop Nikeart.com (2014)


Untitled


Untitled, Acrylic on canvas 57" X 27",2007


A Delegate at Her Best Acrylic on canvas 33"x 40", 2007 \


Untitled Acrylic on canvas


Untitled Acrylic on canvas


Untitled Acrylic on canvas




Plate LXVII, Nike Okundaye, *Untitled*, 1997 Acrylic on canvas 39 x 28 ins

PEJU ALATISE'S PAINTINGS AND RELATED WORKS






"*Labake" Lipstick Series,* © *JIGIDA, African Adornment*(2003: 7

A little bit of me in all of Them 4, © *JIGIDA, African Adornment*(2003: 6

A little bit of me in all of Them 4, © *JIGIDA, African Adornment*(2003):13

A little bit of me in all of Them 5, © *JIGIDA, African Adornment*(2003):15





Up and Beyond © *JIGIDA, African Adornment* (2003):13

Untitled **(Triptych)- Orange scarf series** **pejualatise.com, 2015:28**

Critical Hands that hold the Mass





SaturdayMorning



Looking Up. ©" Silifat



Desperately-Labake-



Seki The Altar Ego ©*Silifat*,2006 © *pejualatise.com*



Some have, and some Have Not. Mixed Media on Board.122 x 244 cm. © arthouse.com

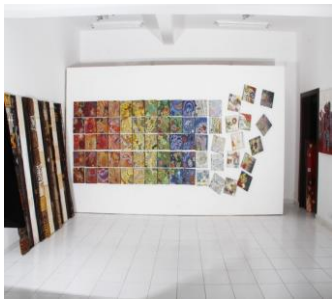


Ten people in African arts with Taj.blog spot.com



Euphoria,* 2010.** ***Half of the Story 54cm x54cm, 2009, Material Witness Exhibition catalogue (2012:12).







All coming together



Purple period, lest I forget 1,2,3…



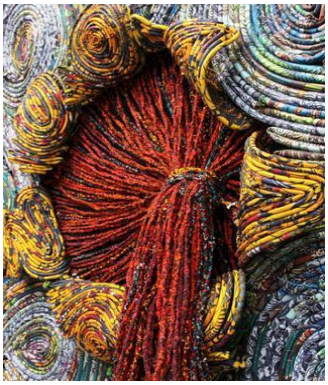
Side View of Scribble.



Earth Stories: She Let Herself go 214cm x 168cm, 2013 © *Wrapture* (2013: 66



Earth Stories: Before there was Man.340cm x 300cm2013. *Wrapture* (2013: 70



Earth Stories: She Said No 168cm x 214cm, 2012 *Wrapture* (2013: 65



Ipele II, 122cm x 122cm,2012. *Wrapture* (2013:76



Ipele III, 122cm x 122cm,2012. *Wrapture* (2013: 77



Side view of Girl Interrupted



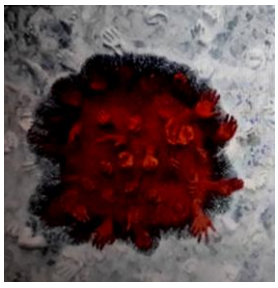
Hands Up for Socialism © Microsoft Encarta



Side view of Water Earth and Fire Elements.



Oblivion, Acrylic on Canvas. 36" x 48" 2009-12,*Material Witness Exhibition Catalogue* 2012*:* 48







Nigerian Woman, Mixed Media on Canvas, 170x170cm x 30 cm.2012 Art House-ng