CREATION OF PLAY SCULPTURES USING GOURD FRUIT FORMS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled ***Creation of Play Sculptures Using Gourd Fruit Forms*** has been written by me. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree or diploma at any University.

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CERTIFICATION

This dissertation titled ***CREATION OF PLAY SCULPTURES USING GOURD FRUIT FORMS***, by Maikarfi Deborah, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Fine Art (MFA Sculpture) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge, visual arts practice and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Mr. Danladi Silas Ibrahim, my peace loving and patient husband.

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ABSTRACT

The gourd fruit (Calabash) is a cultural symbol in Nigeria It is also a decorative item, local musical instrument and even used as kitchen utensil. The gourd fruit form might have been used as a public sculpture to either reflect or symbolize some cultures in Nigeria, but not as yet considered to equally serve as a play sculpture. Cultural objects of this kind are rear items to young Nigerians especially in the urban areas in Nigeria. Not many people are familiar with it. They are rather more familiar with the foreign objects they see around them, particularly in their school playgrounds where they play. Reason could be due to the dependence of foreign play forms or creation of conventional play forms that are not characterized with themes that promote the cultures in Nigeria. As a result, the tendency for the lack of appreciation of Nigeria's cultural elements or cultural symbols by young Nigerians is likely to become prevalent. The aim of the study is to produce marquette for play sculptures with Nigerian indigenous elements derived from the three gourd fruit form (*Shantu, Ludayi* and *Gora)*. The objectives are to; (i) produce static play sculptures derived from the gourd fruit form (ii) create mobile play sculptures derived from the gourd fruit form (iii) use gourd fruit forms to produce play sculptures in abstract form. The method employed for this research is the Practice-Based Research. It was observed through the findings that gourd fruit forms can be transformed into the creation of play sculptures in various ways and these include the static, the mobile and the abstract play sculptures. Deriving from the inherent features of the *Ludayi*, *Shantu* and *Gora* gourd fruit forms, it also reveals how it is possible to produce a variety of functional large sized play sculptures which can serve as a symbol of cultural identity for the citizens of Nigeria.

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Definitions of Terms

Gourd Genera: Cucubita (cucurbitaceae) and Lageria. The botanical names describing two commonly grown gourd families.

Ludayi: A Hausa word describing Calabash spoon.

Shantu: A Hausa musical instrument made from long narrow cone shaped gourd.

Gora: A Hausa term describing a bottle shaped gourd, also a local musical instrument.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

It is said that all work without play makes Jack a dull boy. A child learns fast through playing. Play develops the child's psychomotor, cognitive and emotional activity and sense of developmental ability to be creative. As opined by Kellock (2015) "through play, children develop the neurological building blocks essential to further learning and growth. They form connections, build social and emotional skills, and develop positive long-term attitudes to discovery". The author affirms that "play is not an alternative to learning; it is not a diversion from learning. Rather, it provides the foundation for learning and has an important role in shaping a child's capacity for, and towards subsequent learning". In spite of this, it appears there are many schools and homes in urban and rural areas across Nigeria without or with only a few play forms. Reasons for this could be financial constraint, ignorance or sheer negligence on the negative effect it has on the growth of a child.

People generally respond or relate easily with objects they are familiar with. Eyal (2015) states that "people don't want something new, they want the familiar done differently". However, it appears as if the few play grounds in Nigerian schools, homes and recreational centres mostly have play forms created with foreign materials and designs or imported from outside the country, having the type of objects that Nigerian children are not familiar with because they are not found in their environment. As a result, it becomes difficult for them to know about their own cultural elements like the traditional

architecture and motifs, indigenous crafts which include local works in bronze casting, wood and ivory carving, leather works, weaving, tie and dye, pottery, calabash decoration and so on.

The questions posed here are; if the opinion of Kellock on learning as earlier mentioned is factual, then how could it be made possible for Nigerian children to learn about the indigenous objects in their environment while they play? Should Nigerian sculptors not be encouraged to explore the creation of play sculptures that are characterised with Nigeria's cultural elements as part and parcel of their play sculpture designs? Could the creation of such play sculptures be beneficial to Nigerian sculptors and the society at large?

It could be observed that only few Nigerian sculptors have in the past produced play sculptures that are characterised with local features that could easily be recognised by Nigerians. The effort made by these sculptors can perhaps be attributed to their yearning to localise the creation of play sculptures that are entirely different from that of the foreign. Such sculptors include Salihu Sulaiman with the sculpture titled *Giraffe* executed in (1968), El Enatsui's sculpture titled *Mask* (1981), Adedoyin Ogundipe (1988), with sculpture titled *The Giant Foot*, and John Obande's *Play Hill* (2015). Despite the play sculptures created by these sculptors, it appears more needs to be done. Whereas, Beire in Badaru and Ogunsina (2014) affirms that "Nigeria's greatest contribution to the world culture so far has been its traditional art" The author further states that "the influence of this art has been so strong that it caused something like a cultural revolution in Europe". In the same line, Irivwieri (2009) further confirms that "Europeans appreciate indigenous craft objects using some items in their homes and buying others as presents for friends

and relatives". Kashim (2013) also states that "crafts are symbols of Nigerian material culture and spiritual heritage".

It is then apparent, that these opinions be considered with high regard due to their relevance. Presently, it is also possible to note that, children in modern schools and homes especially, the urban areas in Nigeria, are unable to identify with Nigeria's cultural elements which embraces local crafts like blacksmithing, bronze casting, wood carving, leather works, weaving, tie and dye, pottery, calabash decoration and so on. The researcher in her undergraduate final year project used discarded tires, which is an industrial medium, produced a play sculpture titled *Let's Play*. However, considering the statements put up by Kashim and the other authors mentioned earlier, the researcher intends to use gourd fruit forms, one of Nigeria's local utility craft items to produce play sculptures. With the present dispensation of unconventional art materials and mixed media, such materials can be a source and a concept for transforming these materials into functional play sculptures. Smith (2014) opines that "there is much art in the creation of vibrant public play spaces; their aesthetics, their physicality and their spacial rendering push mind and body to new imaginative experiences". Unlike other conventional play forms, this play sculpture is derived from a domestic utilitarian object commonly known as calabash. Not only is it going to be used for play, the local craft form is equally meant to serve as an object for youngsters to identify and familiarize with their cultural indigenous objects which will enhance their knowledge about the diversity of Nigerian culture in this modern era. The gourd fruit family is also feared to be going extinct. It has been threatened by western influence. Commenting on calabash carving in Nigeria and in northern Nigeria in particular, Konan (1974) posits,

> ....in spite of these many ways in which calabashes are currently used in northern Nigeria, it seems likely that fewer and fewer will be seen as the years go by. In Nigeria, as in other places where gourds have flourished, the arrival of Westerners brought containers made from metal, glass and plastics. Today these materials seriously challenge the role of the calabash.

A group of gourd carvers in Nigeria however expressed their hope as affirmed by Eakin (2008) that "in the next three to five years, modern items will no longer become fashionable because they are seasonal. People will go back to using traditional items like the calabash. In the nearest future, it will definitely pick up again. It is a tradition that cannot be ignored". If Nigerian sculptors and Nigerians in general should share the same view, then Nigerian children should equally not be left to lose sight of the gourd fruit. As one of Nigeria's cultural elements, it should be ensured that the younger citizens should be exposed to using these items in different forms by creating play sculptures derived from the gourd fruit form. These factors among others are the driving force that prompts the researcher's keen interest to produce marquettes and a functional play sculpture derived from gourd fruit forms.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Despite the fact that several craft works have been executed with the calabash for both decorative and utilitarian purposes. The researcher considers the works previously done with the calabash form as undermining the use of the media for other purposes such as creating play sculptures. The problem of this research therefore is hinged on the exploration of gourd forms as maquettes for the creation of play sculptures.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to produce marquette for play sculptures with Nigerian indigenous elements derived from the gourd fruit form, while the objectives are to:

I. produce static play sculptures derived from the gourd fruit form.
II. create moveable play sculptures derived from the gourd fruit form.
III. use gourd fruit forms to produce play sculptures in abstract form.

1.4 Research Questions

I. How can the gourd fruit form be employed to produce static play sculptures?
II. In what ways can mobile play sculptures be created with the gourd fruit form?
III. What are the possibilities that the gourd fruit form be used to produce play sculptures in abstract form?

1.5 Justification of the Study

The justification of the study is the emphasis of creating functional play sculptures that promote the values and relevance of Nigeria's cultural elements for her young citizens, which can be cost effective and encourage self reliance. Egonwa in Lamidi (2015) opines that "in the 21st century A.D, the visual art must now be studied as a reflection of culture and as something that has cultural efficacy, reproduction and mutation of culture". Nigeria is in need for foreign exchange, it will be rather suicidal to continue to rely on imported items where we can improvise. This is a way of looking inward for the purpose of developing the nation in terms of development of indigenous play sculptures in contemporary application. According to Olorukoba in Ada (2006) "innovations are required in all areas of Nigerian society, if actually the country needs progress" and urged

researchers to consider this as one of the serious challenges of their time so as to move the nation forward in the face of modern development.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The three objects selected to produce play sculptures are the long narrow cone gourd called *Shantu*, the gourd spoon called *ludayi*, and the bottle or shaker gourd called *Gora* in Hausa language.These were picked from the abundant cultural elements that are locally identified within the Nigerian cultures and natural environment. These items are limited to the *lageneria* species in the gourd family. They are further known as *Lageneria Siceraria (Molina)*. Sweetser (2016) gives a description of the characteristic features and uses from which these three indigenous utility, craft and musical instruments belonging to the *lageneria* gourd family is found.

> *Lagenaria siceraria* is a name that means drinking vessel since that is one of the many uses of these large, hard-shelled gourds. Speckled swan gourds, bottle gourds, dipper gourds, penguin or powderhorn gourds, and even one called caveman's club are all Lagenarias. Hard-shelled gourds have been grown for over five thousand years for use as containers and utensils, and the immature gourds are edible.

The gourd fruit play sculptures will be produced as marquettes, from which one of the marquettes will be blown up into a functional life sized play sculpture using suitable permanent materials like metal, concrete, fibre glass or mixed media.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is derived from Marcus Veerman's idea of play ground. Veerman is an advocate of ground-up development, educating and empowering locals to create their own playgrounds, rather than telling them what they

need or importing western designs. This means that each play ground is customised to suit the environment, community or school as the case may be. Veerman (2010) opines that "play and space for play, are not simply side issues in education, but are core in fostering a child's natural way of learning cognitive, social and emotional skills". Also, commenting on a playground project in New Guinea, Veerman's organisation and a group of researchers, Simoncini, Manson and Kingston (2015) states that "the researchers work with students, teachers and parents to ensure the playground reflects community ideas and attributes". With this in mind, the researcher sought to produce play sculptures derived from cultural forms that are suitable for Nigerian children, easy to identify and play with. Hence, play sculptures will be created to reveal items like local musical instruments, cooking utensils, which are inspired from the gourd fruit also known as the calabash.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reveals related literature and works. The chapter is discussed under two headings - literatures and works. The literature review elaborates on the following:

- **a.** Playground.
- **b.** Gourd fruit.
- **c.** Play Sculpture as a symbol of cultural identity.

The latter discusses the review of related works by some artists that illustrate play forms and some creations derived from the gourd fruit forms.

2.2 Review of Related literature

2.2.1 Playground

It is sad how the world is continually becoming a difficult place to live in for both the young and old. This is due to some factors like, economic meltdown, famine and security threats such as terrorist attacks and kidnapping. Children suffer as they are being deprived of their liberty to play during these challenging times because parents tend to be over protective, schools also fill up the youngsters with a tight school curriculum which allows only a little or no time for play. Yet it is important that there should still be room for their leisure. Children gather in a playground in order to play, and while playing they are able to exercise their bodies, socialise, and equally learn from their environment. A

playground is an activity centre, a specific place or area where children gather to play during leisure time (Beckwith, 2015).

It is also important to be particular about the kind of objects they play with as regards to the various opportunities they have to acquire vast knowledge between themselves, and the objects they play with. There is always something around for the children to play with within their environment, even in extremely war prone areas there should still be available materials for play. For example, children derive pleasure in playing with sand and mud or dirt but are usually ignored by adults. More so, if such elements like sand and mud are ignored then other available objects that are very close to humans, which are capable of creating pleasure could equally be overlooked and may not be considered as play forms. A likely object that could be neglected is the gourd form, probably because it is generally regarded as a household utensil and not considered to possess the features of a play sculpture. A play sculpture is a combination of a sculpture and playground equipment. Laris (2016) states that "play sculptures are a large-scale art designed to be both played on and interacted within. It provides different experiences than a traditional playground structure and fits well in a variety of locations".

2.2.2 The Gourd (Calabash Family)



Fig. 1, A Gourd Carver at work, Source: geogiagourdguy.com/ Gourd-Carvers-of Nigeria html.

The gourds family most commonly grown according to Lerner and Dana (n.d.) belong to two genera; *Cucurbita* and *Lagenaria.* The organic plant also commonly called calabash, has a variety of inherent types, features and forms. *Cucurbita* types are the most colourful and organic in shape. The surface may be smooth or warty, plain or coloured, and sometimes ridged, or with stripes. Armstrong (1996) similarly elaborates on the gourd fruit family. He states that,

> ..."the gourd family (cucurbitaceae) includes hundreds of species of vines bearing coiled, climbing tendrils and some of the most unusual fruits in the world. The total number of species may exceed 700, with at least 100 different genera known as "cucurbits" to gourd lovers"....."the fruits of this exceedingly divers family come in an astounding array of shapes and sizes, from tiny, marbled-sizes "jumbie pumpkins" of the Caribbean islands to giant gourds over seven feet (214cm) long. In fact, the undisputed world's largest fruit belong to this remarkable plant family". The *Lageneria* types are commonly called the bottle or dipper gourds. The fruits may be smooth, knobby or ridged. Some are only three inches long while others may be more than three feet long. Shapes vary from globe, dish, bottle, dumb bell, crookneck, or coiled.

There is a large variety of these domestic utility items called gourd locally grown and used in ancient Nigerian cities and towns; mostly in rural areas where they are naturally grown and locally carved as calabash craft. Also commenting about the diversity of the gourd species, Konan (1974) affirms that "I could be surprised almost daily by the versatility of gourds and the resourcefulness of Nigerians in using them". Another vital point to reckon with is the significant multiple meanings and purposes it serves within Africa including Nigerian cultures. The use of calabash as a household item is very common among West African nations, as it symbolizes a lot of things in the household where it is so used. However, the functions of calabash exceed the utility role it plays in the home. It is also a decorative piece as can be seen in calabash decoration which employs techniques of production like carving, painting, scraping, engraving, pyro-engraving. Other uses serve ritualistic and medicinal purposes. An example of the gourd fruits found among Nigerians as described by Konan (1974) is the calabash spoon, the cone-shaped calabashes ranging up to six feet in length are played in parades. And the bottle-shaped calabashes with loose seeds or stones inside become shakers used in traditional dances. These three gourd fruits are also called *Ludayi*, *Shantu* and *Gora* respectively in Hausa language.

Although most calabash craft works have been produced and patronized, artists that have ventured into working with it, indicate that the calabash still has inexhaustible potentials that are yet to be explored. While discussing one of his calabash works titled *Abacus* (2014), Tafida (2014) states that "this particular piece of work is a bold variation and an experiment in the vast world of art, giving dynamism and opening a new door into a planet of myriad further possibilities". As a sculptor, these varieties of shapes found in

the gourd family offer a great opportunity to explore in producing a series of models for play forms that are both aesthetic and functional. Veerman (2007) is a stern advocate of play ground ideas. He believes that play form is an integral weapon for improving children's education and one of the ways to learn and play is through sculpture forms that are produced to meet this quest.

2.2.3 Play Sculpture as a Symbol of Identity

The functions of sculpture among the people of the world over the years to date cannot be over emphasized. It basically serves monumental purposes such as promoting the aesthetic, religious, historic or cultural value of a particular place. Take for instance, the Egyptian pyramids or the Eiffel tower in France, to mention but a few, accords value to such places, either in terms of preservation of history or promoting tourism which in turn generates revenue. Therefore public sculpture serves the purpose of improving the visual landscape of a place, improves a public's quality of life, and importantly, it enhances the artistic and cultural regeneration and identify a community. Maderuelo in Raptado (2008) opines that in creating a public sculpture, it has to be aesthetical and useful. It has to have a social function. It should as well create pleasure and become a commercial centre with extensive areas for recreation and peace. Pertaining public art, Raptado (2008) states that, public art is made for the citizens and is located in his/ her environment. Galston (2015) also states that "an environmental sculptor plans a piece from the very beginning in relation to its surrounding". In the case of playground space design, Smith (2014) states that "we believe that play ground design should be a reflection of the world surrounding us".

Considering the functions of sculpture, like their foreign counterparts across the globe, there is the need for sculptors in Nigeria to ensure that they constantly and continually employ traditional elements, for example the gourd fruit forms in their creations. Jari (2011) opines that culture is simply the way of life of a particular group of people or a community, which has elements that distinguish it from another. Stoddard (2014) affirms that the phrase it takes a village to train a child, has been attributed to several African societies who have similar proverbs to this effect. This idea fosters the premise that communities also have an impact in influencing the lives of children. Again, a community often expresses its identity most clearly in the way they provide for play (Beckwith, 2015). If these opinions are true, then the question to ask is how is this evident in the playgrounds spread across schools and communities in Nigeria?

Nigeria is blessed with a lot of indigenous cultural elements such as indigenous motifs or symbols like cowries, particular animal images like lizards, tortoise, or particular geometric shapes or colours, traditional architecture, and local craft objects done in pottery, bronze casting, wood carving, and calabash decoration and so on. These uniquely serve as symbols of identity to either a particular part of the country or the whole country in general. Hence, instead of allowing Nigerian children become too familiar with having their playgrounds only equipped with foreign play sculptures, and in order to ensure that they do not forget their indigenous cultural elements due to westernization, but learn to appreciate and identify with their environment and indigenous elements. There is the need to make Nigerian cultural elements serve as sources for forms of creating play sculptures in Nigerian schools and communities. This could also be achieved by the community members working hand in hand with sculptors to express the identity of their

community and to make an impact in influencing the lives of their children by ensuring that not only in other fields of learning, play sculptures in Nigeria should also become more culturally relevant than it presently is as earlier reflected by Jari (2011), Stoddard (2014) and Beckwith (2015).

As stated in Veerman's theory of play, participation for a ground up development and education by members of the community, providing direct labour is highly encouraged. This means that, the playground project can be maintained and sustained by the members of the community. So that even in situations where the play forms are worn out or damaged, the locals would be capable of making all the necessary repairs that are needed. This provides the privilege to be able to create customized play forms by members of that community having the capacity to independently produce and manipulate customized play forms that represent their values, rather than seeking from elsewhere. For example, the assistance of a play equipment operator or specialist with sophisticated tools that cannot be locally accessed, as in the case of conventional play equipments, then becomes a problem to source for money to acquire another one. Smith (2014) affirms that play is not a luxury. It is a necessity and a right. Spaces for play need not be limited to the plastic, prefabricated swings- and- slide model, costing thousands of dollars to create.

This therefore provides an opportunity for both sculptors and members of communities to discover the available resources in stock in their local environment and incorporate them into designing and building a befitting play ground for their community. That is, proposed sculptures for the purpose of play by Nigerian sculptors should increasingly reflect the characteristic forms and features of their environment along with her cultural elements. As such the researcher is inspired to explore the creation of play sculptures

derived from the gourd fruit form which not only serve as a play object but ensuring that while children play with these play sculptures, they also become familiar and identify with an important element that is drawn from their cultural background which is the calabash.

2.3.1 Review of Related Works

Seven artists' works are selected for this review which is relevant to this research.

2.3.2 Playground in Chiang Deo, Thailand

Veerman's play forms reveals how it provides for inexhaustible opportunities for every school and or community to freely use the natural and available materials they can find in their environment to build a play ground for children. Apart from using tires, Veerman uses several other materials that are free, cheap and accessible like the natural trees, ropes, and woods, empty barrels of various sizes, dry grasses, sand, and rivers to mention just a few. Veerman inculcates the local Thailand hut house as a major cultural element in the play form which symbolizes the Thai community, as indicated in figure 2. In a similar vein, the researcher intends to explore the gourd fruit with its variety of forms, to be transformed into a functional and aesthetic play sculpture that also represents one of Nigeria's cultural symbols commonly found in her environment.



Fig. 2, Playground Ideas, Marcus Veerman,
First playground in Chiang Dao, Thailand,Mixed –media, 2012.
www.playgroungprofessionals.com/encyclopedia/p/playground-ideas.

2.3.3 "Let's Play" by Deborah Maikarfi, (2006)



Fig. 3, Let's Play, Deborah Maikarfi, Medium: Tires, 324 cm. high,
Sculpture Garden, Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, 2006.
Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi

The play sculpture in figure 3 is an undergraduate final year project by Deborah Maikarfi in the year 2006. It is 324cm in height, situated at the sculpture garden of Fine arts Department in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Looking at this play form it is not farfetched that the sculptor considered using discarded tires, an industrial material which is a very popular medium for play forms as also shown in figure 2. Probably because it is generally known that children like to play with tires. One other thing that the sculptor is able to achieve in her work is the balanced distribution of the primary colours around the play sculpture, another vital feature that attracts children's attention to an object.

Although these points are equally important for designing play sculptures for children, one important thing that was left out in the creation of this play sculpture, despite having been produced in Nigeria, is the obvious neglect to inculcate some kind of indigenous motif or pattern design from Nigeria. The sculpture could have been adorned with an additional material originally sourced from the Nigerian environment. Better still, with a symbol of some sort that is derived from the various cultural backgrounds in the country. As similarly shown in figure 2, the play sculpture was partly created with an industrial material like tires and a metal slide. Yet also attached to it, is a local Thai grass house in order for the play form to have a feel of its locality. Besides, the play sculpture was made for the children in that community. This automatically gives the children a sense of belonging and an affiliation to their environment as they play.

2.3.4 “Abacus” (2014), Tafida Samuel Wesley



Fig.4, Abacus, Tafida S.W, Calabash and Steel Pipes,
373x30x379cm, 2014, Artists collection

The artist uses rounded gourds of about the same size and then perforates them into steel pipes to produce a free standing outdoor sculpture portraying the impressionist silhouette of President Nelson Mandela as indicated in figure 4. His idea in the exploration of an ordinary organic medium like the calabash was to stretch its limit, a way of testing its durability so as to be placed outside. While in his quest to explore the calabash as a viable medium for an outdoor sculpture, the artist discovers some unique attributes associated with the fruit. He bumps into issues like its fragility, its variety of forms like the concave, oblong and oval shapes and other matters like weight, malleability, and the use of space. The artist’s exploration with the gourd fruit for exterior space is amazing.

The idea of creating a sculpture like the *Abacus* could as well be extended even into the children’s world. The title *Abacus* should perhaps ring a bell to several school children, having been a tool they use to aid them in learning how to count in mathematics. It would

therefore be more of a "fun and learn" concept. Similarly, play sculptures could be created from the gourd fruit form with possibly moveable mechanisms like the merry-go-round and swings, can equally be produced and placed in play grounds yet having a motif, pattern design that promotes Nigeria's indigenous cultural elements, which could be adapted as part of the creation of a play sculpture.

2.3.5 "Spoons", Amir Nour

The steel outdoor sculpture in figure 5 is probably derived from the natural gourd spoon. Although it is not a play sculpture, yet the composition depicts a somewhat semblance with the gourd spoon, also called *Ludayi* in Hausa language. The meticulous arrangement of this outdoor sculpture gives an example of a possible exploration that can also be done with the gourd spoon. From the centre, it depicts a rounded and thin cylindrical form that is similar to that of the full natural gourd spoon before it is divided into two for utilitarian purposes. Over the rounded part, from both the left and right sides, and extending to both extreme ends of the figure, is placed the half spoons which looks more like the divided gourd spoons that is locally used for eating. The smooth finish of the steel spoon sculpture appears to have a similar textural characteristic with that of the smooth outer surface of the real gourd spoon which is an important attribute to be adapted in the creation of children's play sculpture, to ensure that their skin does not suffer bruises while playing on the play sculpture.



Fig. 5, Spoon, Amir Nour, Bronze, 36x56x136 cm, 1975.
https://www:illinois.gov>art>portfolios

2.3.6 "Dakin Kara" (2006), Yusuf Abba

This Government commissioned work is situated in kofar Kaura junction in Katsina State. In her quest to retain the cultural elements of Katsina State, the government did not think otherwise but considers the calabash bowl (kwarya) and its spoon (Ludayi), as the proper physical forms that symbolize the culture of the people of Katstina State who are mostly Hausa-Fulani. The structure is made up of a high central pillar and four other shorter pillars surrounding it as in a square. On top of the high central pillar is a decorated calabash form facing up right and another one, but a little bit smaller in size, placed facing downwards over the other calabash. In between the two calabashes is a lid that separates the two calabashes. On top of the four pillars surrounding the calabash, is placed one ladle each faced upwards. With each ladle spoon leading to the next as motorists coming from any of the roads connecting to the junction, is able to see one ladle as they drive by the round calabash structure. The significance of this structure is the fact that the calabash bowl and spoon are promoted as cultural forms that are symbolic and represent the indigenes of the state where the structure is situated. The

researcher intends to also use a similar pattern design on the surface of the calabash because it is inspiring for the study.



Fig.6, Dakin Kara, Yusuf Abba, concrete, 350 x 300 cm,
Kofar Kaura Junction, Katsina State, 2006.
Artist's collection.

2.3.7 "Play hill" (2015), John Udeh Obande

This artist is known for his series of anthill sculptures, one of them is the *'Play hill'* as indicated in figure 7. Recently, in the year 2014, in his quest to de-saturate foreign play equipments in Nigeria, he ventures into producing representational, stylized play forms derived from the anthill. The artistic concepts were inspired by hybridizing nature and art into the creation of play forms. He basically uses concrete and steel in his anthill explorations. In the *'Play hill',* the earthy colorant he applies to the cement gives a feeling of a natural anthill as it reveals the conical nature and rough texture of a real anthill which is found in the Nigerian vegetation. Although the anthill is the same world over, but in this work, the artist modifies the play sculpture by incorporating various Nigerian traditional motifs around the surface to denote a cultural representation of the play sculpture.

It has a functional slide in order for it to be child friendly and aesthetically pleasing to viewers. The play hill is also made with a stare case, a slide and an inner space for a couple of children to play with. The exploration of the anthill as play form provides an insight into how natural objects like the anthill or even an organic plant like the gourd fruit can be explored and transformed into play form sculpture. It is also transformed into play sculpture due to their natural formations like the variety of inherent shapes, forms, space, textures and other unique features, that the researcher is inspired by these formations which some will be adapted.



Fig.7, Play hill, John Udeh Obande, Concrete, 270 x 360x 450 cm
Department of Fine Art (Postgraduate Studio) 2015,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Photograph: John Obande.

2.3.8 “The Giant Foot” (1988) Adedoyin Ogundipe

The play sculpture in figure 8 is also an effort in the creation of unconventional play forms which is similar to that of figure 7. This particular artist considers the conventional made play forms as less challenging and lacking creativity and adventure. She therefore ventures into providing the solution by creating play sculptures derived from African folklores. This reveals that if such sculptures are produced, it will give rise to a variety of unconventional play forms in a different perspective other than the common ones around, which will challenge the child’s learning. One particular thing between the play sculptures in figures 7 and 8 is the fact that, the themes of the sculptures are localized to suit the African and Nigerian forms of art expression. The researcher intends to adapt a similar method on the themes of her gourd fruit play sculptures for the benefit of familiarity with the Nigerian environment and cultures.



Fig. 8, The Giant Foot, Ogundipe Adedoyin,Concrete, 530 x350x 60 cm
Ahmadu Bello University Staff School, Zaria, 1988,
Photograph: John Obande

2.3.9 Deductions

The literature review reveals that only few play sculptures characterized by Nigeria's environmental and cultural features have been created. The commonest types are however either imported from overseas or locally fabricated using steel and metal sheets and or recycled industrial materials similar to the one in figure 3. Although the tyre play sculpture has an interplay of bright colours for the purpose of attracting children, but unlike the play sculpture in figure 2. The tyre play sculpture has no architectural structure, motif or a decorative pattern design on its surface that promotes Nigeria's indigenous cultures that bears on it linear and geometric patterns that can be attributed to the Hausa/Fulani calabash decorative designs like the public sculpture in figure 6.

Although public sculptures have either been created using the natural gourd fruit or derived from the gourd fruit form in figures 4, 5 and 6. However, unlike the typical play forms commonly used in school playgrounds in Nigeria, appears to be a digression in the way the play sculptures in figures 7 and 8 were created. Both were created with concrete yet figure 7 is characterized by the anthill formation that reflects a natural feature in the Nigerian vegetation. While the play sculpture in figure 8 was inspired by the themes of the traditional folk stories. Despite the effort of these two sculptors to localize the themes of both play sculptures, none have incorporated the forms of the gourd fruit to create play sculpture. Therefore, the researcher seeks to fill this gap by incorporating the form of the gourd fruit for the creation of play sculptures. It will both be suitable for play and provide uniqueness to Nigerian playgrounds and reflect one of Nigeria's cultural symbols as well.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The focus of this research is exploring the form of the gourd fruit as a creative source for producing play sculptures. This chapter reveals the methodology employed by the researcher in the exploration of the gourd fruit, providing information about the procedures and processes used in the studio, in achieving the creation of play sculptures forms.

3.2 Research Method

The method employed for this research is the Practice-Based Research. The body of play sculptures which are sourced from the three gourd fruits (*Shantu, Ludayi* and *Gora)* are a result of explorations done in the studio. Sullivan (2006) states that visual arts research comprises practices that are theoretically robust, idea based, process rich, purposeful, and strategic, and make use of adaptive methods and inventive forms whose uniqueness is best seen as connected to, yet also distinct from, traditional systems of inquiry. Studio Practice-based Research is a form of research that aims to advance knowledge by means of practice. Clarkson (2013) asserts that practice-based research is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding which includes the invention of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, which leads to new or substantially improved intuitions. These researchers Satsi (2014), Santas (2016), Dingba (2016) and Asogwa (2016) have successfully adopted the Practice based

research in their studies. The explorative practice is therefore what the researcher engages in with the gourd fruit form.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information from a variety of sources in targeted variables that enables the researcher to answer questions and evaluate their outcomes. Data collection is the systematic approach to gathering and measuring information from a variety of sources to get a complete an accurate picture of an area of interest. Data collection enables a person or organisation to answer relevant questions, evaluate outcomes and make predictions about future probabilities and trends. (Rouse, 2016.) Data was collected using the primary and secondary sources. This entailed an in-depth observation of the three gourd fruits (*Shantu*, *Ludayi* and *Gora*). While the secondary sources of data includes pictures from digital cameras, sketches, thesis and publications.

3.4 Materials and Tools

The materials for this research are the three gourd fruits, the cone gourd (*Shantu)*, gourd spoon (*ludayi)* and the shaker gourd (*Gora)*, which some were purchased in the market and some picked in some farm lands where they grew naturally in Samaru town of Zaria in Kaduna State. The researcher engaged in the studio practice-based research and by this method, spends time observing the three gourd fruits, examining their unique visual features and forms, and making studies that are captured as preliminary sketches. Other materials used are sand, sawdust, modified acrylic adhesive (4 minutes) and metals like filler rods (2mm) and quarter rods (819mm). The tools that were used include jig saw machine, grinding machine, pliers, sand paper, and soldering iron.

3.5 Instruments of Data Collection

Observation

The data collected were set-up in the studio for critical cross-checking. At the end of the observation and exploratory study of the gourd forms, the researcher found out that the three types of gourd forms could be explored for this study.



Plate I: A collection of the selected gourds fruits, 2016,
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate II: A collection of *Shantu,* 2016,
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate III: A collection of *Ludayi*, 2016,
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate IV: A collection of *Gora*, 2016,
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.

Photograph

In plates, I-XXIV shows the studio exploring processes of the works produced. The use of the camera/photography as an instrument of data collection assists the researcher tremendously. It is essential as a series of images and working processes of the creations produced throughout the studio exploration is been captured and visually documented for reference purposes and as an integral part of the research. These researchers Ngene (2015) and Lamidi (2015) have successfully adopted photography in their studies. Similarly, the researcher considers their approach suitable for this study.

The researcher further engages in careful carving and then, the assembling of very simple, functional and aesthetic compositions of gourd play sculptures for the purpose of this study. Bolt (2006) states that "in this conception, the materials and processes of production have their own intelligence that comes into play in interaction with the artist's creative intelligence". The studio exploration of the three calabash fruits offers the researcher the experience of considering the relations that takes place within the very process of interpreting the sketches into three dimensional play forms.

Preliminary Sketches

One of the initial stages of a studio based research is when the researcher puts down visual representations and ideas on paper. Therefore several sketches in a sketch pad are required in order to capture visual thoughts, ideas, and or organise for developmental stages. Exploration in drawings gives several possibilities of visual perspectives of shapes and forms in this particular research. Series of sketches were done to illustrate the

possible juxtapositions of the three gourd fruits as either functional and aesthetic, or mobile and abstract play sculptures.

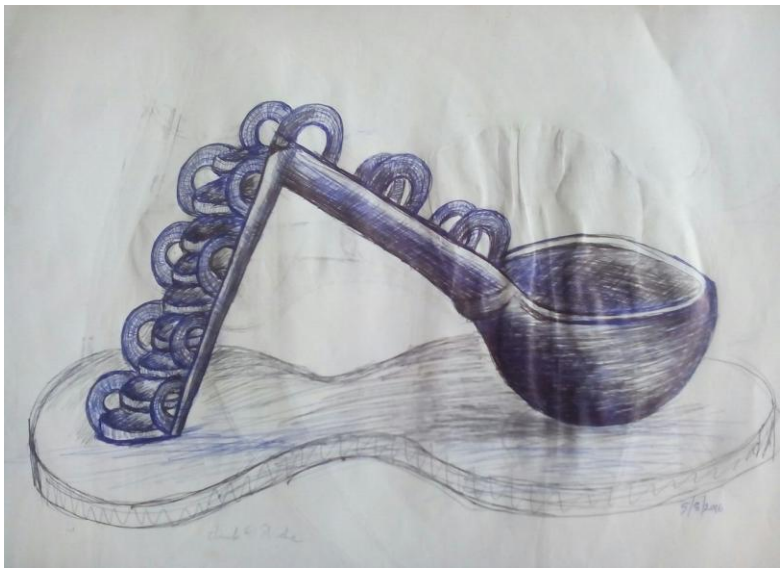


Plate V: Ludayi slide I, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on paper, 20x35cm, 2015, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.



Plate VI: ludeyi slide II, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink and pencil on paper, 30x28cm, 2015, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.



Plate VII: Hanchi Gora, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on paper, 36x29cm, 2015, Photoghraph: Deborah Maikarfi.

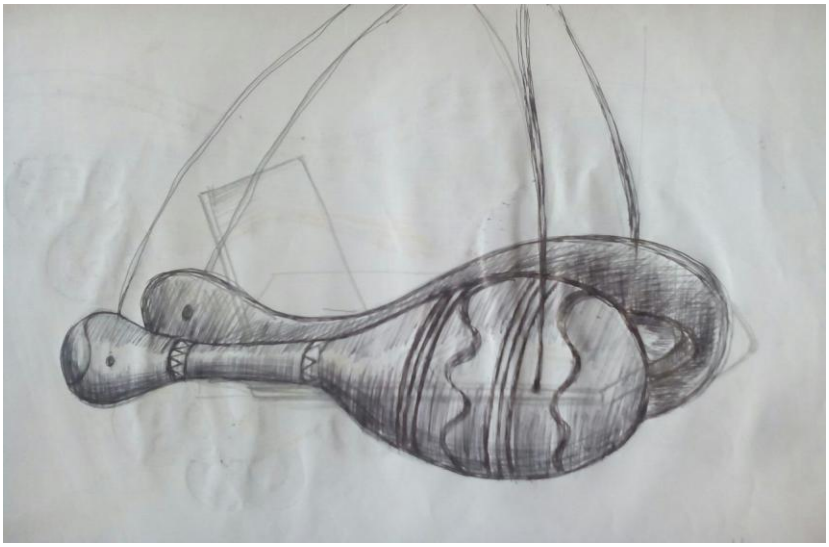


Plate VIII: Lilo III, Deborah Maikarfi, 12x26cm, 2015, Ink on paper, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.

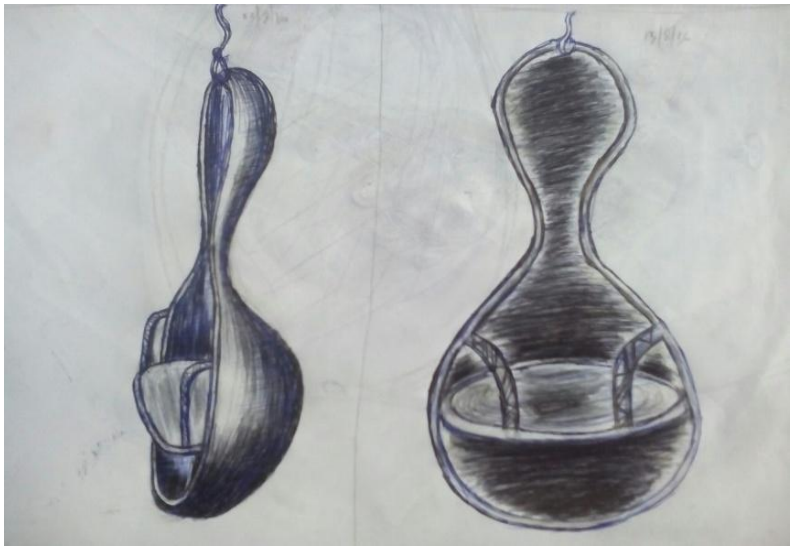


Plate XI: Lilo I, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on Paper, 20x15cm, 2016, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.

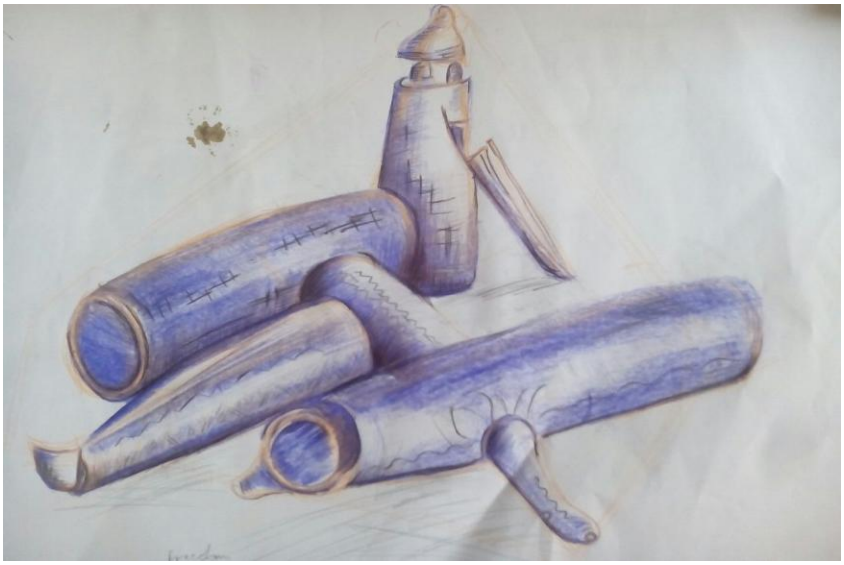


Plate X: Yanchi, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink and Pencil on Paper, 28x33cm, 2015, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.

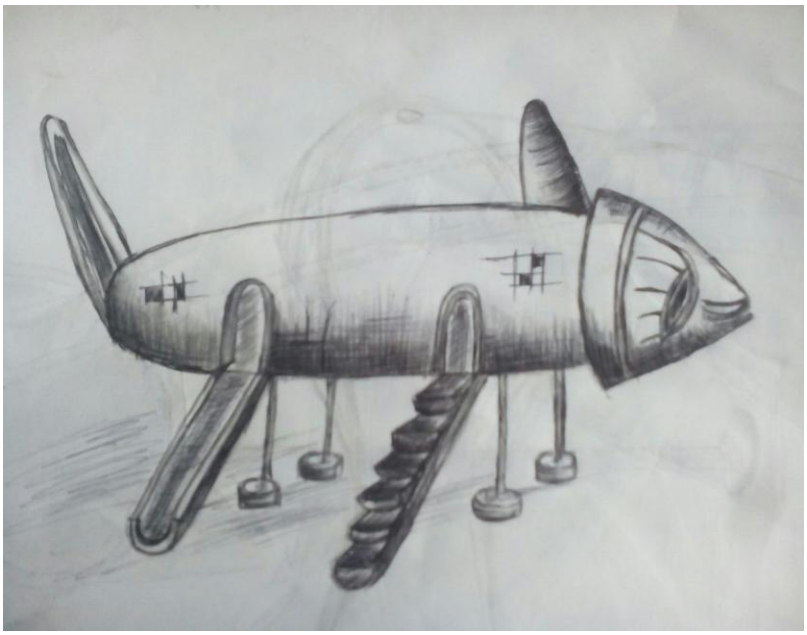


Plate XI: Jirgin Shantu, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on Paper, 14x20cm, 2016, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.

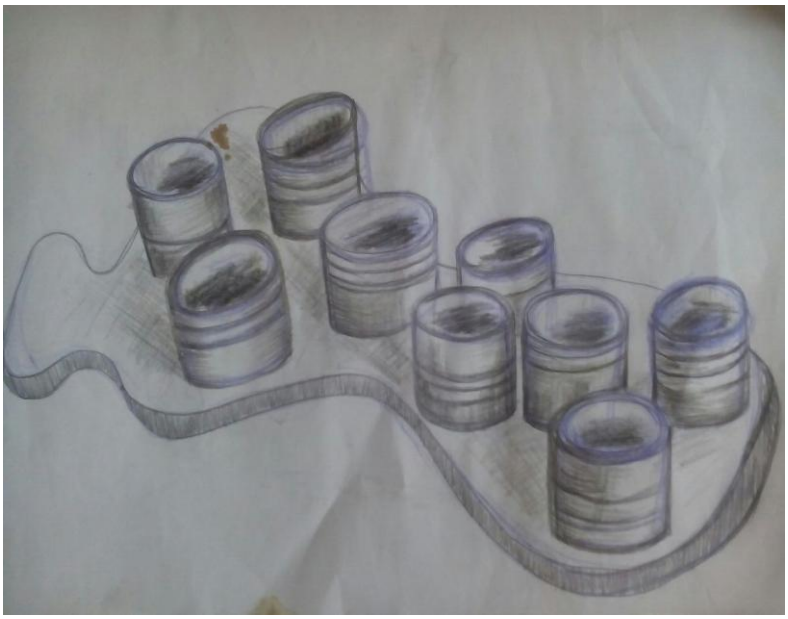


Plate XII: Suwe, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on Paper, 25x40cm, 2016. Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.

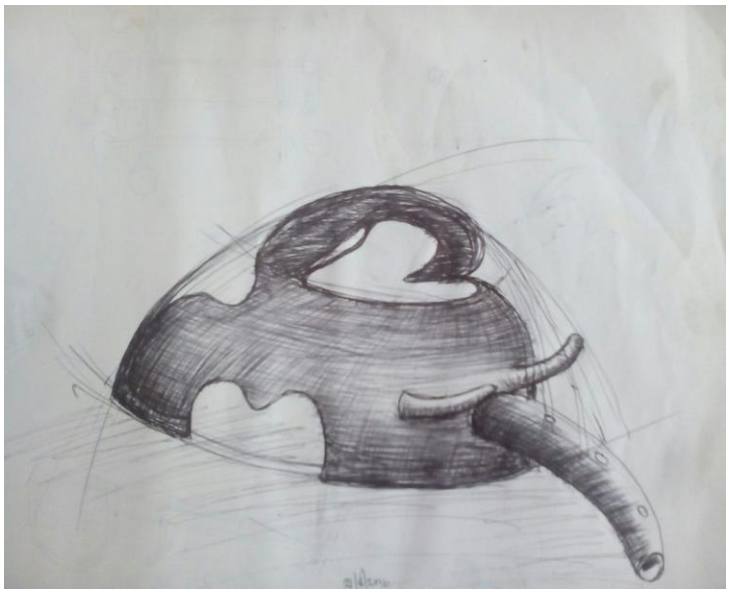


Plate XIII: Kan Giwa, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on Paper, 16x22cm, 2016, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.

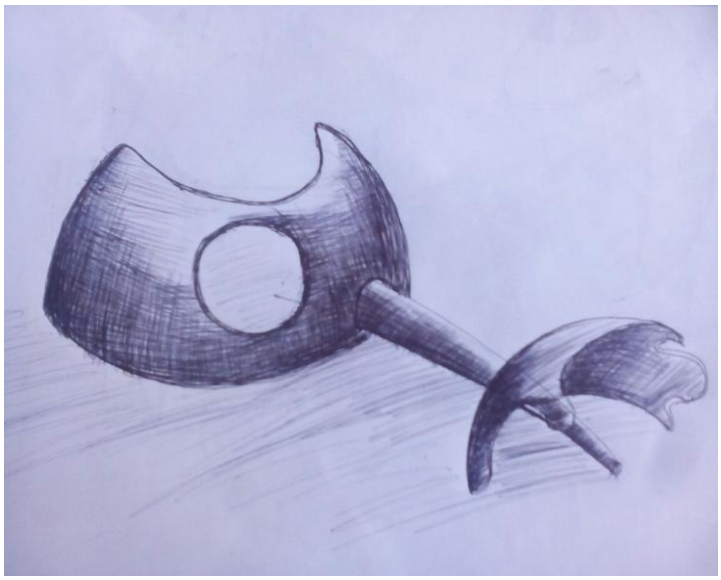


Plate XIV: Kunama, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on Paper, 10x24cm, 2016, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.



Plate XV: Filin Tsalle, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on Paper, 5x6cm, 2016, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.



Plate XVI: lilo II, Deborah Maikarfi, Ink on Paper, 20x16cm, 2016, Photograph: Deborah Maikarfi.

3.6 Studio Exploration

The techniques for the studio exploration are as follows:



Plate XVII: Washing the gourds with a little detergent in a bowl of water. Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate XVIII: Cutting a *Gora into* two parts with a grinding machine. Photograph: Geoffrey.

The three selected gourd fruits were collected and cleaned up to remove dust and dirt. Afterwards, they were cut open or into shape with either a jigsaw machine or a grinder as the case may be. In this stage, some water was applied at intervals while using the grinding machine. This is because of the sparks of smoke and fire caused by the filling disc while cutting the calabash, which begins to burn especially the inner part of the dried calabash containing the seeds. This part was thoroughly cleaned up by scraping it with an iron brush or an improvised iron sponge and sand paper. Precaution was taken by covering the eyes with goggles and nose masks because of the choky burning smell of the smoke coming out and the dust while cutting the calabash.



Plate XIX: Brushing off with a wire mesh.
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate XX: Washing a burnt gourd.
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.

Next is carving and smoothening, drilling and assembling of the gourds into desired shapes, and at the same time joining the composed work with adhesive (4 minuites). In the course of the studio exploration, the researcher discovers that some works look slightly different from their original sketches, some reasons being that, the light weight of the calabash, the organic nature and shapes of some of the calabash created the need for some further adjustments in the design as after thoughts.



Plate XXI: Smoothening the rough edges with a smooth sand paper.
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate XXII: Joining parts of the gourd forms with adhesive (4 minutes).
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.

Materials like sand and light metals are added as reinforcements to the work. For example, because children like playing with sand, the researcher decided to incorporate sand as part of the materials in the work. At the final stage, the works were finished with sand paper, painted with acrylic colour and car paint. For some other ones, a burning effect was achieved with a grinding machine, and then lacquer was coated to give the surface a shiny glossy finish.



Plate XXIII: Designing the gourd with acrylic and car paint, (Patinating stage) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate XXIV: Coating lacquer over the gourd, (Finishing stage) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.

CHAPTER FOUR

Catalogue and Analysis of Works

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reveals the catalogue and analysis of works that were executed. A total number of fifteen gourd play sculpture marquettes were produced. Five marquettes each were produced in line with the objectives of the research. The five (5) works executed in the first objective are static (immovable) and easily recognized as forms of the gourd; the works five (5) works executed in the second objective are mobile (kinetic).This objective seeks to create play forms that are moveable; while the five (5) works executed in the third objective are abstract; meaning that parts of the gourd forms were deliberately distorted and juxtaposed to create other play forms. The objective of using the three gourd fruits- *Shantu, ludayi and Gora* as Marquette is to utilize the inherent features of the gourd such as the hollow, bowl, ladle and flask which are unique and serves as natural forms that can further be used for research on other media for play sculptures.

4.2 *Ludayi Slide I* :Plates XXV-XXVI

The gourd spoon-*ludayi* does not only function as a local spoon but it also has inherent features that can be transformed into a slide for a play sculpture. In order to make a functional slide play sculpture, the bowl is placed upright on the base, while the stem or handle is diagonally lifted upright. This is because the stem, due to its curved nature is capable of functioning as a slide that flows into the bowl. At the back of the sculpture, another stem is attached to the tip of the middle stem and diagonally placed downwards to the base. Flat gourd pieces are fixed one over the other to serve as a climber or steer

case that can be used like a ladder for climbing from the ground level up to the middle stem, while pieces of the stem is cut into a letter-C like curved shape and glued on both edges of the ladder up to the middle slide to serve as a protective support and handle for a user. At the frontal part of the sculpture, a shorter stem serving as another slide is attached to the bowl leading downwards to the base which is meant to safely take a user to the ground level. The bowl is filled with sand for an added play adventure; the children can play inside the bowl, as it is natural for children to play with sand. The *ludayi* slide is also left unpainted so as to reveal the beauty of its inherent orange colour.



Plate XXV: Ludayi Slide I, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 38x33x13cm, 2016. (Front view)
Photoghraph: GeoffreyYawati.



Plate XXVI: Ludayi Slide I, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 38x33x13cm, 2016. (Back view)
Photograph: GeoffreyYawati.

4.3 *Ludayi Slide II*: Plates XXVII-XXVIII

This ludayi slide offers a more complex play experience than the one in plates XXV and XXVI. An additional *ludayi* is attached to another one in descending order giving a double slide and a double bowl sand landing experience to the user before he/ she decides

to slide to the ground level. Another play experience awaits the user as two other bowls beneath each *ludayi* bowl are placed downwards, both gourds having two different textural effects on their surfaces. The front and the back opening serve as passages while they duck their way into the bowls and play the hide and seek game. Bright contrasting colours of red and green, blue and orange are painted over the *ludayi* slide sculpture in order to attract the users and onlookers to the sculpture.



Plate XXVII: Ludayi Slide II, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 50x15cm, 2016. (Front view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate XXVIII: Ludayi Slide II, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 50x15cm, 2016. (Top view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.

4.4 *Hanchin Gora* :Plates XXIX-XXX

Plate XXIX shows a static sculpture created using the bottle gourd-*Gora* as play sculpture. The whole object was painted with a white colour, and shades and tints of the rainbow colours were adorned in a dotted-linear pattern using a small round shape as the motif over the play sculpture to give a close resemblance of the way a real shaker gourd would look like when adorned with beads as a musical instrument. Two spaces were cut open signifying the eyes of the bottle gourd or a dash board. One quarter part of the gourd flask was also cut off, leaving visibly the inner part of the gourd flax and inner passage of its long nose. Sand was filled almost reaching the inner hole so that a user can slide through into the long nose like a tunnel to the tip of the nose at the other end. Three small gourd bowls were placed beneath the base of the bottle gourd flask. This gives the flask part a lift from the ground level and cause the nose to be slanted diagonally downwards, the nose of the bottle gourd also touching the ground. The side of the bottle gourd is attached to a gourd spoon stem, flat pieces and C-like shapes were also fixed as a climber and protector similarly to the sculptures in plates XXV and XXVII.



Plate XXIX: Hanchin Gora, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 42x36x25cm, 2016. **(**Front view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate XXX: Hanchin Gora, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 42x36x25cm, 2016. **(**Top-back view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.

4.5 *Yanchi* :Plates XXXI-XXXII

The *Shantu* maze titled *Yanchi* is a problem solving game. It is an assemblage of the intricate parts of the long narrow cone gourd. Its interrelating parts, that is the cone edge, the hollow and body length of the gourd. It is vertically and horizontally placed to create a confusing network of passages with huddles at some end points by which the player is expected to experience some difficulty while trying to come up with a solution to find his or her way out of the maze. It is titled *Yanchi*, a Hausa word for freedom.



Plate XXXI: Yanchi, Gourd,
Deborah Maikarfi,
30x 40cm, 2016. **(**Front view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate XXXII: Yanchi, Gourd,
Deborah Maikarfi,
30x 40cm, 2016. (Back view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

4.6 *Jirgin Shantu:* Plates XXXIII-XXXIV

A number of foreign play designs are inspired from fairy tale stories and they are characterized with objects that appear unreal to the physical world. *Jirgin Shantu*, designed from the long narrow cone gourd, a musical instrument mostly played in the Northern part of Nigeria. This creates a fantasy of an airplane. The fusion of a local

musical instrument with an airplane to serve as a play sculpture was made possible. It has a staircase made from the handle of the spoon gourd where a user is expected to climb up into the plane and play the make belief game of a pilot taking off into the sky with passengers seated by the windows inside the tunnel of the *Shantu*. A slide was placed at the opposite side of the *Shantu* plane to serve as an exit to the ground level.



Plate XXXIII: Jirgin Shantu, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 46x26cm, 2016. (Right view)
Photography: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate XXXIV: Jirgin Shantu Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 46x26cm, 2016. **(**Left view)
Photography: Geoffrey Yawati

4:7 *Hippo:* Plates XXXV- XXXVI

This gourd sculpture is made with an idea of a moveable play sculpture; it looks like a hippopotamus head half way sank into a river. Although no engine was used to enable it move backwards and forward, the rhythmic movement was made possible by first filling sand and stones into the flask of the bottle gourd so as to have weight, and being that it is naturally round, with the slightest touch, it will move on its own. A concave gourd is placed at the top to serve as a seat where the user will seat then either place his feet over or on the two spoon gourds which also serves as the eyes of the Hippo to establish a balanced position. The long nose is meant to give the Hippo a safe landing when sliding forward to the ground.



Plate XXXV: Hippo, Gourd,
Deborah Maikarfi, 43x25cm, 2016.
(Front View) Photogragh: Geoeffrey Yawati.



Plate XXXVI: Hippo, Gourd, 43x25cm,
Deborah Maikarfi, 43x25cm, 2016.
(Side View) Photogragh: Geoeffrey Yawati.

4:8 *New Snowman*: Plates XXXVII-XXXVIII

Seesaws are games that mainly invite cooperation. A pair of players work as a team to help each other by taking turns, using weight and balance to create a rhythm of an up and down diagonal lift. This seesaw play sculpture although is inspired by the form of the snowman but has been localized using the parts of bottle gourd and gourd spoon to create it and painted bearing murals of some familiar motifs in Nigeria. Similar to the technique in plate XXXIII, the big flask which is the body, was filled with stones and sand to solve the problem of weight. A full spoon gourd was inserted at the top to serve as the head and a little curved shaped gourd for its cap. The seesaw seats were made of half gourd spoons were then inserted at opposite sides of the flask body of the gourd.



Plate XXXVII: New Snowman, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 45x 31cm, 2016. **(**Front view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate XXXVIII: New Snowman, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 45x 31cm, 2016. **(**Top view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

4.9 *Lilo I, II and III* : Plates XXXIX-XLIV

A swing is a play form that mainly invites a user to engage in handling balance, rhythm and timing control while swinging forward and away. Plates XXXIX-XLIV shows different ways the bottle and spoon gourd forms can be used to create swings. *Lilo* I is mostly covered and the form scarcely tempered with. Therefore could protect the user from the tropical sun, *lilo* II creates sounds from beneath the seat of the swing which is derived from the seeds inside the full spoon gourd. The round form of the bottle gourd in *lilo* III, can also serve as a barricade shielding the user at both sides of the swing seat.



Plate XXXIX: Lilo I, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 52x53cm, 2016. **(**Front view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate XL: Lilo I, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 52x53cm, 2016. **(**Side view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati.



Plate XLI: Lilo II, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 52x52cm, 2016 **(**Front view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawakti



Plate XLII: Lilo II, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 52x52cm, 2016. **(**Top view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawakti



Plate XLIII: Lilo III,Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 38x 40cm, 2016. **(**Front view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate XLIV: Lilo III,Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 38x 40cm, 2016. (Back view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

4.10 *Filin Tsalle:* Plates XLV-XLVI

Filin Tsale means the jumping arena in Hausa language. As the name implies, this abstract play sculpture has five steppers that were carved in the form of a foot and decorated with decorated motifs and bright colours in an ascending order. The concave shaped steppers are to function as jumpers where the users can climb through the metal ladder to the smallest stepper up to the highest in either clockwise or anti clockwise order.



Plate XLV: Filin Tsale, Gourd,
Deborah Maikarfi, 52x34x13cm, 2016.
(Front view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate XLVI: Filin Tsale, Gourd,
Deborah Maikarfi, 52x34x13cm, 2016.
(Top view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

4.11 *Suwe:* Plates XLVII-XLVIII

Suwe is a game originally played in a rectangular space that is marked on the ground, where children jump over smaller marked rectangular spaces either numbered with an even or odd number. In this case the *Shantu* pieces are placed and filled with sand to create jumpers for a rather more challenging experience than if it is only on flat ground. Another game can be played by emptying and filling the quantity of sand from one container into another one. While playing with the sand containers, the child can at the

same time appreciate the use of contrasting and harmonious hues of the primary colours being decorated on the sand containers.



Plate XLVII: Suwe, Gourd,
Deborah Maikarfi, 64x23cm, 2016.
(Left view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate XLVIII: Suwe, Gourd,
Deborah Maikarfi, 64x23cm, 2016.
(Right view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

4.12 *Calabash Rainbow:* Plates XLIX-L

This abstract bottle and spoon gourd play sculpture resembles an alien space ship; it was created by using several curved handles of the spoon gourd, which was painted using the tints and shades of the colours of the rainbow, and placed over a big brown gourd flask. The handles serve as climbers, while the open round holes are to serve as openings to go under the gourd flasks for more play space and shelter or as passages to the other end of the structure. The smooth texture of the surface of the play sculpture is to ensure that a child's skin is not bruised while playing.



Plate XLIX: Calabash Rainbow, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 66x23cm, 2016. **(**Left view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate L: Calabash Rainbow, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 66x23cm, 2016. (Right view) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

4.13 *Kunnama*: Plates: LI-LII

The word *Kunnama* means a scorpion in Hausa language. This abstract play sculpture, because of its thin long narrow tunnel and wide curved head and body seemingly resemblance the form of a scorpion in its resting state. Small C-shaped pieces of the gourd were fixed over and around the openings to create more passages for play. White and black linear coloured motifs were generously painted over the orange-brown surface making it stand out from the background colour, causing an almost dazzling visual effect on the surface of the sculpture.



Plate LI: Kunnama, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 60x36x14cm, 2016. **(**Top vertical view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate LII: Kunnama, Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 60x36x14cm, 2016. **(**Top horizontal view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

4.14 *Kan Giwa* :Plates LIII-LIV

Kan Giwa means an elephant's head in Hausa language and as the name implies, the sculpture resembles the head of an elephant because of its long nose which serves as a tunnel where a child can pass through and seemingly wide ears also serving as passages and ivory nose for decoration.



Plate LIII: Kan Giwa Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 47x35x16cm, 2016. **(**Front view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



Plate LIV: Kan Giwa Gourd, Deborah Maikarfi, 47x35x16cm, 2016. (Back view)
Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

4.15 *Lilo:* Plate LV-LVI



Plate LV: Lilo, Metal, Deborah Maikarfi, 160x90cm, 2018
(Front View) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati



***Lilo:*LVI:** Lilo, Metal, Deborah Maikarfi, 160x90cm, 2018
(Back View) Photograph: Geoffrey Yawati

Plates LV and LVI is titled Lilo. It reveals a completed functional large size swing of *Lilo I,* which takes the form of the *Gora* or bottle gourd. They are metal scraps because most parts of the swing that make up the parts of the Gora form were metal found objects bought from the metal scrap market in Zaria metropolis. Two circular metal scraps that have the shape of a basin made up the major body parts of the bottle gourd. The edges were cut into strips and then filed to give it a smooth finish. The edges were welded together before it was continuously hit with a sledge hammer to create a required curve to form the oval form like that of a real bottle gourd. It was reinforced with 10mm metal rods, around and across the metal basin to maintain the oval form of the bottle gourd. Then the seat and back rest was welded into the body of the bottle gourd.

As part of the finishing processes, lighter metal rods (quarter and filler rods) were welded over the back side of the bottle gourd form which carried with it different patterns of motifs to serve as decoration similar to the way calabashes are usually designed. Then it was filed with a grinding machine to make the entire body safe against injury. The whole work was painted with a cream colour to resemble a real calabash, and then the seat, back rest; handle and the motifs were painted with the primary colours for attraction and black colour at interval spaces to give it some contrast. Two string metal chains were put above the handles of the bottle gourd to ensure a balanced placement of the swing on an already standing pole. The completed swing is 160 x 90 centimetres. It is situated at the Department of Fine Art (Postgraduate Studio) of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings, Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Nigeria as a country is blessed with a large variety of the gourd fruit species, Samaru, Zaria and its environs, from where three gourd fruits were selected for this research. They are the gourd spoon called *ludayi*, and the long narrow cone gourd called *Shantu*, the bottle gourd also known as *Gora* in Hausa language. This chapter discusses the concluding part of the research which includes the recommendations and findings of the researcher.

5.2 Findings

Several findings and observations from this research are stated below;

i. The researcher recorded the situation where the gourd as a media is not flexible, nor is it plastic like clay or malleable like metal; therefore was incapable of achieving some curved shapes, this restricted the way the researcher intended to manipulate the form of the gourd to create the marquettes. Given the inherent nature of the *Shantu*, *Ludayi* and *Gora*, it was observed that it is possible to produce static gourd play sculptures. For instance in plates XXV and XXXI, which are based on the bowl and ladle of the *Ludayi* and the hollow of the *Shantu*, for slide and maze play sculptures.

ii. In the course of the study it is also found that it is possible to create mobile play sculptures by cutting the gourds into the desired form and hang it with ropes to

serve as swings, like in plates XXXIX-XLIV. As for the mobile sculptures in plates XXXV- XXXVIII, the researcher was confronted with the very light nature of the gourd where there was the need to create balance and weight, and so had to improvise by stuffing in sand and stones into the flask of the gourd, which helped achieve movement. Therefore, the bottle gourd and the spoon gourd make it possible to produce swings and seesaws that are unique to the form of the gourd.

iii. The gourd fruit as a media does not withstand heat. When cutting it with a grinding machine it gets flammable, burning some delicate parts of the gourd and exhumes smoke which could be harmful to the user. However, the researcher resolved to think out of the box and decided to use the accidentally broken and burnt pieces of the gourd to create the abstract play sculptures, like in plates XLV-LIV.

iv. Due to the hard and in absorbent nature of the surface of the gourd, using a soldering iron or an ink to decorate some motifs and patterns was unattainable. Although the researcher later resolved to use a grinding machine and, or paint as alternate means for decorating the surface of the gourd forms. The study revealed that a functional life size gourd play sculpture, derived from any of the fifteen gourd fruit marquttes, is equally achievable. Which could be produced using other permanent materials like concrete, metal, wood, fibre glass or mixed media.

5.3 Summary and Conclusion

The study concisely reveals that the gourd fruit forms that are originally used as household utensils and musical instruments can be transformed into the creation of play sculptures. The gourd play sculptures can as well serve as symbols of cultural identity for

Nigerian children to bridge the gap for their lack of appreciating Nigeria's cultural elements due to modernization. Artists' creations are known to be inspired by the environment and cultures of the people around them and cultural objects are equally used by artists to communicate their ideas.

However, it is a thing of concern to see that there is still a scanty representation of Nigeria's symbols of identity in school playgrounds and recreational centres in Nigeria. The danger to this is the fact that while they play, young people will be deprived of learning to appreciate the objects that serve as symbols of cultural identity in the various cultures in Nigeria. This could be avoided if more artists begin to create play sculptures derived from the objects that are identified as Nigeria's cultural elements.

In the course of the study, it was observed that gourd fruit forms can be transformed into the creation of play sculptures. The gourd maquettes could be blown up into life size play sculptures, in more permanent materials like concrete, metal, fibre glass, raffia canes, wood, mixed media and so on, on which the children can interact with as they play. Deriving from the inherent features of the *Ludayi*, *Shantu* and *Gora* gourd fruit forms, it has shown that gourd play forms can be created in various ways and these include the static, the moveable and the abstract play sculptures. Nigerian children will get the opportunity to play with and discover through textures and details, the unique inherent features of the gourd form; the hollow of the *Shantu*, the ladle of the *ludayi* and the flask of the *Gora* and so on. As they crawl, jump, run, climb, slide and swing on the gourd play forms, learning is taking place as they play.

Although the gourd surface already has its inherent colour, yet the idea of the use of colours on the surface of the gourd sculptures also serves as decoration which beautifies the play sculptures. It also reflects an attribute of some cultures in Nigeria, like the Fulani's, who adorn their gourd containers with bright colours. Children seem to be attracted to objects that bear on them bright colours, therefore the use of colours was necessary.

5.4 Recommendations

Nigeria is rich with numerous cultural objects that are either embraced as symbols of identity by a particular community or all cultures found in Nigeria in general. In order to further reveal the inherent qualities and potentialities of the cultural objects for play sculptures, it is recommended that rigorous research similar to this one should be explored using the gourd fruit form (calabash).

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

Having done works from the gourd fruit forms of the *Shantu*, *Ludayi* and *Gora*. The study therefore developed that:

i. an indigenous functional play sculpture derived from the gourd fruit form can serve as an alternative for the foreign play forms.
ii. the gourd forms serves as motifs and symbols in advancing studio practice in sculpture .
iii. the marquettes can be suitable for developing indigenous play sculptures in contemporary application.

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