



**ANALYSIS OF OSIBOYE OLUWASEUN WOOD ASH
EXPLORATION: EDUCATION FOR ALL, NORTHERN
CONCEPT, THE BEAUTY OF MAYANKA 3, PATCHED
MASK, JUBILATION AND SAVE FOR A RAINY DAY**

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Abstract

Material research challenges the artist like (Osiboye Oluwaseun Opeyemi) to explore the essence of new media in creating works that excel in form, sensibility and vision. He has explored different materials like Bones; Camel and Cow, Tiles; Broken and Used, Grog, Granite Stones, Metal Scraps and of resent Wood Ash. The aim of the study is an attempt to analyse the artworks of Osiboye Oluwaseun Opeyemi that was produce using wood ash as a medium of expression, through observation and descriptive method of analysis thus generating documents for the artworks, medium (ash) and the artist (Osiboye Oluwaseun Opeyemi), while the objectives were to identify and classify the artworks base on the exploration of wood ash as a medium and other medium been explored to test for the compatibility of wood ash (Mixed Media), which include the combination of ash with metal, the combination of ash and bone and the combination of the three medium which include Ash, Bone and Metal. It was these Mixed media explorations of Osiboye Oluwaseun Opeyemi that the classifications were based upon, which led to the classification of the works into Series 1 to 4. Twelve Artworks produced out of ash were identified and classified. They are Faces 1, Faces 2, Desert Warrior 3, **Jubilation**, Coat of Many Colours, Twelve Maiden, Political Freedom, **Northern Concept**, **Education for All**, **Patched Mask**, **The Beauty of Mayanka Kano (3)** and **Save for a Raining Day**. The study chooses to identify and analyse five (5) artworks. They following were identified, reviewed pictorially and analysed. They are Northern Concept, Patched Mask, The Beauty of Mayanka 3, Patched Mask and Jubilation. It was recommended that recycling should be considered as a major course or section on its own with a full syllabus in Fine Arts. It was also recommended that ash should be adopted as a medium of expression in sculpture.

Key Words: Osiboye Oluwaseun, Jubilation, Northern Concept, Education for All, Patched Mask, The Beauty of Mayanka Kano and Save for a Raining Day

Introduction

Gone are those days whereby material for exploration in sculpture are restricted to the conventional materials like cement, clay, metal, plaster of paris etcetera. In the contemporary period material in sculpture ranges, it could be as a result of deliberate uniqueness and creativity of the artist. In another beautiful twist, every substance of pollution or waste are raw materials for another product, which could be carried out through the re-use or recycling of such material. Wood ash is one of such materials (pollutant or waste). RecAsh (n.d), did not only mark wood ash as a waste but went on to emphasize on the need to recycle it. Every pollutant, waste product or residue seems to have both upsides and downsides, in wish wood ash is no exception. It is now left for man to discover, and capitalize on the benefits and in the process reduce or eradicate the potential harm such material (waste or pollutant) is capable of causing, thus gaining materials for production and exploration in sculpture.

The exploration of wood ash cannot be over emphasized as its relevance appear in different fields of human endeavor, such as agricultural science, building and construction, traditionally in our local homes etcetera, this is since the discovery of fire by humans. Osiboye Oluwaseun attempted to explore wood ash in the area of sculpture, Fine Arts through recycling. According to the United State of Environment Protecting Agency (US EPA) (2014), recycling is the process of collecting and processing material that would otherwise be thrown away as thrash and converting them into new products.

According to Hannelore (2013), "Sculpture is the art of forming representations of objects in the round or in relief." Describing what sculpture is, Nwanoro (2016) expressed that Sculpture is one of the oldest art forms. Visual arts has different branches but sculpture is the branch that presents art works in three dimensions and has long existed as landmark, monument, architectural embellishment, cultural symbol, and independent aesthetic object. These various age long representation of sculpture serves as the bedrock for the more recent modifications of sculpture which has not only protected the environment but has developed tourism as well. In times past, one could categorically say that artists have a finite number of materials to work with but not anymore. Of late, the imagination and creativity of the artist determines the medium of expression. According to Akintonde & Kalilu (2013), other than providing aesthetic appeal, artworks have other functions such as telling stories and

preserving historical narratives. To this end, artists work with a generally accepted formula so that their works will serve the purpose it was meant to serve. This formula entails the form, style, the technique and the theme of the artwork all of which is denoted as the medium of expression as these are the elements that create the aesthetic appeal. It is in this view that the study decides to make an historical documentation of the wood ash exploration of Osiboye Oluwaseun using observation and descriptive method of analyses, thus considering the five (5) artworks out of the twelve artworks that was produce from ash. They were produced during a Tetfund sponsored Institution Based Research (IBR) Research Proposal (2022) research titled “Exploration of Wood Ash as Medium of Expression in Sculpture”. The five artworks are Education for All, Northern Concept, The Beauty of Mayanka 3, Patched Mask and Jubilation

Osiboye Oluwaseun Opeyemi

Osiboye, Oluwaseun Opeyemi was born in Ososa, Ogun State. His late parents were from Ogun State, Nigeria. Osiboye was enrolled at Adeola Odutola Elementary School, Ijebu-Ode from 1987 to 1989 and Mayflower Junior School, Ikenne from 1990 to 1992 for his primary education, and Mayflower Secondary School, Ikenne from 1993 to 1997, Ijebu-Ode Grammar School, Ijebu-Ode from 1998 to 2000, all in Ogun State. He is a graduate of Sculpture from Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo with B.A. ED. Fine and Applied Arts. Osiboye had his second degree in M. A. Art History in Fine Arts in 2016 at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and presently a postgraduate student at Department of Fine and Applied Arts University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. He had his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) at Kano State Polytechnic, Kano between 2006 and 2007.

He taught briefly on a part-time basis at Federal College of Education, Kano from 2007 to 2008. Osiboye later joined the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Federal College of Education (Technical) Bichi, Kano state in 2008 as one of the pioneering lecturers where he is a Fine Art Lecturer till date and has served as the acting Head of Department (2015 - 2018) and presently a substantial Head of Department. He has to his credit, publications in reputable journals and has equally attended conferences home and abroad. He has participated in four joint exhibitions and one solo exhibition. In the field of Art, he is strongly being mentored by Dr. Muhammad

Aliyu of department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State and Prof. Efemena Ononeme of Fine and Applied Arts department, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. He is a presidential nominee member of the Governing Council of Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas Bonny Island, Rivers State. Osiboye is happily married to Mojisola and blessed with two children, Dunamis and Dominion.

Contemporary Medium in Sculpture

Engaging material technology has gone a long way in sculpture and its range of potentials provides ample research interest. The uniqueness of the art based on the peculiarities of the materials deployed in its expressions has clearly created a veritable space for its lasting impression and impact on the collective consciousness of the society. Ogene in Egiolamhen (2019) posited that “material research latently challenges the artist to explore the essence of new media in creating works that excel in form, sensibility and vision”. In contemporary times, medium in Sculpture varies and dwell more on the creativity and explorative nature of the sculptor/artist in general. According to Adeyemo and Duniya (2016), “They define contemporary sculpture as an artistic form in which hard or plastic materials are worked into three-dimensional art objects, and could be in the round (free standing), in relief on surfaces, or in environments ranging from tableaux to contexts that envelope the spectator. They push further to isolate and explain contemporary medium in sculpture sighting examples as “including clay, stone, metal, glass, wood, and randomly found objects.”

Ononeme (2010), states that, “there are abundant expressive materials in our environment looking for the attention of artists to use them”. He also defined the source of the medium by saying that, some of these potential artistic media were divinely located through the providence of God in their natural habitat while others have been used by man for various purposes and later abandoned thereby constituting nuisance in the environment. It was in this same state that the Ashes were recovered from, before attempting to recycle and reuse them into functional sculptural pieces. It could be establish that Recycling widens the ct of studio base research. It makes the scope of research to be limitless, because it gives room for research study in

formal and informal education, academic research and technological advancement etcetera.

Visual Analysis, Presentation and Discussion of Results

The observation and descriptive method of analysis was made use of on some related studio productions using majorly Ashes while Bones and Metals were introduced to make up for Mixed Media artwork in others. This method of analysis was used to describe and relate the principles of art and the elements of art as they are applied in the artworks using a formalistic approach.

Identification, Classification and Analysis of the Artworks Produced with Wood Ash

Twelve artworks produced out of ash were identified. They are Faces (1), Faces (2), Desert Warrior (3), **Jubilation**, Coat of Many Colours, Twelve Maiden, Political Freedom, **Northern Concept**, **Education for All**, **Patched Mask**, **The Beauty of Mayanka Kano (3)** and **Save for a Rainy day**. The study chooses to identify and analyse the five (5) highlighted artworks above. These lead the researcher to the classification of the artworks into five (5) series. The series are as follows;

- (i) Series 1: **These are works that were produced using only Coloured Ash Paste (CAPT) as a medium of expression. It comprises of Education for All and Patched Mask (Elongated)**
- (ii) Series 2: **They are artworks that were produced using Coloured Ash Paste (CAPT) and Bones (unconventional medium) only. Metals were not observed in the production of the artworks. Examples of artworks in this category are Political Freedom and Northern Concepts.**
- (iii) Series 3: **They were artworks that were produced using Coloured Ash Paste (CAPT) and Metal a conventional medium this time around. The artworks are Jubilation and Coat of Many Colours.**
- (iv) Series 4: **They were artworks that were produced using Coloured Ash Paste, Bones and Metals. Series 4 is the exploration of unconventional medium (Bone) and**

conventional medium (Metal). The artworks were The Beauty of Mayanka Kano, Faces 1, Faces 2, Twelve Maiden and Save for a Rainy Day.

Note: All the Twelve (12) artworks produce falls into one of the series. So therefore the classification above was carried among all the twelve artworks, while the highlighted artworks are to be analyzed

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Education for All



Plate 1: Education for All
Medium: Coloured Ash Paste (CAPT)
Size: 122cm by 244cm
Date: 2023

Just like any other artwork the origin of an artwork, after conception in the mind is sketch. Education for all is not an exception; it is one of the artwork that was purely a product of Ash unlike other artworks that were mixed media product. The 8feet by 4feet artwork basically comprises of Educational symbols, surrounded by human forms of different stages, colours and categories. They were rendered in different colours like gray, blue, purple, light green, red.

The colourful artwork can be referred to as a highly symbolic work of art. Observation of the center forms suggest an academic matriculation cap, a strong symbol of education, an observation of the three dimensional form place on board suggesting an academic scroll, which illustrates education especially with the

combination of the matriculation or graduation cap. At the foreground of the artwork directly under the graduation or matriculation cap is an illustration that suggests a book in a reddish colour. The academic cap, the scroll and the book are symbol for education that can easily give birth to royalty perhaps that is why the cap is rendered in purple since purple suggest royalty. As regards the human representational forms on board, they are in form of circles, rectangles, distorted triangles and rectangles. For instance the yellow symbols at the foreground of the board on the right hand side represents a male adult, the reddish symbol in between the yellow symbol (Male Adult) represent female adult while the blue symbol within the yellow symbol (Male Adult) suggests a child. Immediately after the academic cap are illustrations of a series of rectangles in chain. They suggest boys with wild chest (youths), they are represented in gray, yellow and red colours. The distorted light green rectangles with a circle drop on top to illustrate the head suggest a female youth. While the pink coloured triangles that appear to be standing on one leg with a long hand up and a short hand down thus representing the physically challenged people. It is perceived that regardless the challenges, the figures appear still excited as a result of good education. Thus summary of the work is that education is meant for all there should be no discrimination as regards the access and operation of education.

Northern concepts



Plate 2: Northern Concepts

Medium: Coloured Ash Paste (**CAPT**) and Cow and Camel Bones

Size: 26cm by 45cm

Date: 2022

The northern concept artwork above could be implying as an observation of the artist being a south westerner and having lived in the northern part of Nigeria (Bichi, Kano) for more than ten years. He perceives that the northern part of Nigeria is out rightly unique in its own ways compared to other parts of the country in terms of religious beliefs, cultural and traditional belief, political ideology, socialization etc. that always distinguish them in their ways of life. All these unique ways of the northerners was captured in a stylistic landscape that has an architectural form of an ancient traditional building in the north. This suggests that the distinct classic ways in question that gives room for togetherness, brotherhood and equality at every facet of life which has been

established for ages knowingly or unknowingly, deliberately or non-deliberately has also been passed down from one generation to another.

It is also important to know that this 26cm by 45cm piece of artwork is a mixed media production of two media. It involves Coloured Ash Paste (**CAPT**) of different colours and pieces of treated bones that could be identified as off cuts retrieved from one of the largest abattoir market Mayanka, Kano in the northern part of Nigeria. The bones were carefully and stylishly pasted with a clear epoxy adhesive in other to achieve the stylized ancient traditional architecture. At the foreground the artist was able to represent the doors of the architecture with broken pieces of bones as well. The Coloured Ash Paste (**CAPT**) appears in different colours all over the board but mostly gray which can be suggested as the true ash colour without the addition of any colour pigments but the addition of only binder and fixative. The other colours on board are black, pink, purple, dark green, mint green, yellowish green and red. This Coloured Ash Paste helps in creating a rough surface texture to the piece of artwork, thus enhancing the three dimensional effect on the work.

Jubilation



Plate 3: Jubilation

Medium: Coloured Ash Paste (CAPT) and Metals

Size: 50cm by 148cm

Date: 2022

The forms of the seventeen (17) figures above suggested a distorted elongated scalene triangle with different colours. The colours are ash, dark blue, red, dark green, pink and green. Also the dispersed circular metal object, that looks like a perforated metal coin of different sizes around the board. At some spots the perforated metal coins are placed in a fabricated metal rings. They are washers of different sizes adding aesthetic to the artwork and depicting the excitement in the Jubilation. The artwork is an answer to one of the objectives of the study just like every other works of art

produced for this research; it is a mix media concept. The media is a combination of Coloured Ash Paste (CAPT) and a conventional medium (Metal).

The Beauty of Mayanka Kano (3)

It is a high relief artwork measuring 4ft by 4ft. It can also be described as a mixed media artwork that shows the compatibility of Ashes, camel and cow bones, and metals of different kinds such as metal rod and scrap metals, copper wire, bolts, nuts and washer, which were all assembled together to create the composition “The beauty of Mayanka Kano”, thus establishing the compatibility of the media.

Ashes

The colours on board are products of Ashes (**Coloured Ash Paste**); they are observed as the background of the high relief mixed media artwork. They appear in squares and vertical/horizontal rectangles. The edges of the shapes were stitched together to become one. Below it was observed that this was done to achieve the impression of one background despite the different shapes and colours involved. The patches of different colours and varying sizes came to conformity of a basic and definite shape which is square. They were stitched together with copper wire (metal) in a way that is similar to that of the Coat of Many Colours. Also similar to that of Jubilation is the use of metal rings and washer that brought about sparkles to the two artworks.



Plate 4: The Beauty of Mayanka Kano 3

Medium: Coloured Ash Paste (**CAPT**), Bones, Metals, and Cow horn
Size: 122cm by 122cm
Date: 2022

Still on the colours (**CAPT**), the colours appear around the bones and on the bones as well (**Plate 4**). The earlier discussions reflect on the colours appearing on the background of the engraved cow skull. On the surface of the bone skull as well, different colours were identified in the form of small squares and eyelid. At this junction it is important to note that the Coloured Ash Paste (**CAPT**) has a unique nature to be cool and subtle, even sharp colours are rendered cool and subtle. These appear to be a strong influence in the whole background thus suggesting a contrast between the background and the carved cow skull.

Bone

The work is made up of a full cow skull, teeth of camel and cow, carved bone rings and aesthetically carved flat bones; they are bones from camel and cow. The treated bones were given aesthetic value through carving, engraving of lines and holes which were carefully drilled on some parts of the bones and the cow skull inclusive. They were carefully arranged in a rectangular shape on the board, while engraved and sliced cow horns were placed like pillars as if to guide the cow skull, which imply social classification, a common phenomenon in the societal political leadership. This can be described as deterrent to political leadership because it does not give easy access of the people to the government of the day. Thus the political leaders will not have a first-hand access of the view and plight of the people they are meant to serve.

Theme

As the title suggests, “The Beauty of Mayanka Kano (3)” is made up of two major words “Mayanka” and “Kano”. Kano which is the capital of Kano State is the name of a major city in the Northern part of Nigeria. It was formed in 1968 from Kano province, and is characterized as a centre of commerce. Mayanka is the name of the abattoir where the researcher collected most of the bones and Ashes that were used in the exploration of the study. By implication, the theme and the artwork is an attempt to document where the bulk of the Ashes and bones used for the research were obtained and to reflect on the kind of strong commercial, agricultural and industrial activities that go on in the market (Mayanka).

The abattoir market Mayanka whose peak hours of activities falls within the early morning hours (6:00am-9:00am) has a tendency to be unsightly because of the

following reasons: different kinds of metallic cutting instrument such as knife, axe, adze and cutlass of different shapes and sizes, the presence and smell of blood almost everywhere on the floor, drainage system, the active workers in the market who are generally identified by the sharp objects that is always in their hand or close to them at every point in time, the sight and smell of urine and feces removed from the animals' intestine of the animals that are fresh and also piled up over time. The piled up bones, hoofs, horns oozes out strong uncomfortable smell, the pulling and dragging of life animals such as camel and cow here and there before tying them up to be slaughtered plus the struggle and fight for life on the part of the animals and livelihood on the part of human beings there. All of these will definitely make anyone not accustomed to the sight uncomfortable. All the above mentioned definitely renders the theme "The Beauty of Mayanka Kano" an irony when compared to what is actually happening in the abattoir. Yet in the real sense of it, the beauty can only be appreciated and accepted outside the abattoir. The beauty and positive values of the market can be outlined in a number of ways. Money is exchanged for the animals and profit and satisfaction is established on daily bases, the meat is cooked in homes for consumption as food for body nutrients, the animal waste is being used as manure on crops in the farms and gardens, or used as biogas, the blood and bones are being changed to blood meal and bone meal respectively to improve animal nutrition as well.



Plate 5: Cow Horns

Photo: **Osiboye Oluwaseun Opeyemi, 2022**

Also, the horns and hoofs are exported to China as raw materials thus improving the Gross Domestic Product of the country. All of these reveal that there is indeed "Beauty in Mayanka".

Patched Mask (Elongated)

In the production of an artwork apart from the medium of expression, the visible style of expression speaks volume too about the artwork to the extent of even influence the theme and nomenclature of the artwork. Style in art can be described as the way and manner in which a work of art is organized, by which a manifest constancy of formal properties is observable (Egonwa, 1994). While Dennis (1994) state that, style is an art that can never be fixed; in order to remain style, it must be 'renewed' from generation to generation, or even several times within a generation". Egonwa (1994) also made us to realize that, "a style is responsible for the distinctiveness of one formal expression from another. A style in art production could influence the medium (material), colour application or the technique used in moulding. A process could be establish as a style in an artwork or a research due to consistency or continuous exploration thus leading to means of identification of an artist or a group of artist.

In the artwork (Mask) above the style used in expressing the Coloured Ash Paste (Medium) suggest the nomenclature of the artwork (Elongated Patched Mask). This is because the Coloured Ash Paste in its case were carefully rendered as strips, gradually placed over the armature while holes and forms were blocked and at the same time they were created, to the desire of the artist.

The elongated mask is suggested to be patched mask due to the visual perception of the forms of the artwork. It seems the mask is built up of different sizes and strips of Coloured Ash Paste joined carefully joined together to make a whole. The colours of the Coloured Ash Paste used are red, yellow, green, grey, blue and purple. The mask is designed with some electrical fittings in other to add light effect to it thereby functioning as a wall lamp, most especially at night.



Plate 6: Patched Mask (Elongated)

Medium: Coloured Ash Paste (CAPT)

Size: 80cm by 26cm

Date: 2022

Save for a Rainy day



Plate 7: Save for the Raining Day

Medium: Coloured Ash Paste (**CAPT**), Cow and Camel Bones and Metals

Size: 25” by 34”

Date: 2018

This art work is a mixed media production that manifests the use of different media, along with ash. The media are ash, bone and metal; flat bar and coins. There were touches of cool colours produced from ash (Coloured Ash Paste (**CAPT**)) on the relief artwork; despite the fact that the colours are pasted in shape, the law of perspective can still be seen. The colours are grey, dark brown, yellowish grey, blue, purple, green. The dark brown object that suggests a broken traditional pot; it is actually a piggy bank that is filled up with money (coins) and broken. It suggests the advantage of a good saving habit that could improve the status of a man. The rain of the coins (money) implies the time and period the money will be made use of, that is the time the piggy bank will be broken. On the part of the bones, they were used to illustrate a typical traditional northern Nigerian kind of landscape which reflects

the triangular distorted building. These buildings suggest a stylized frontal view of a horse, while the doors and windows are illustrated with a flat metal bar.

Conclusion

The Analyses of Osiboye Oluwaseun wood ash exploration identified and selected the following artworks Education for All, Northern Concept, The Beauty of Mayanka 3, Patched Mask and Jubilation and Save for Rainy Day. The artworks were classified into four (4) groups to aid proper analysis of the selected five (5) artworks. It was mentioned that the classification was based on the medium explored and also media that reflected in the mixed media exploration of wood ash.

The mix media exploration with ash gave birth to the combination of wood ash with other medium of expression in sculpture. Medium such as treated cow and camel bones, copper wire, metal rod, metal scrap, flat metal, bolts, screw and washers were all explored. Therefore it could be implied that the wood ash exploration of Osiboye Oluwaseun Opeyemi explored the compatibility of wood ash with conventional and non-conventional medium. The metal is identified as the conventional medium, while the treated bones are the unconventional medium.

Recommendation

Considering the values and importance attached to recycling generally and specifically in Fine Arts, recycling in Fine Arts should be considered as a major course or section on its own with a full syllabus. Also it is believed that this paper will serve as a source of reference to scholars and inspiration to other artist and art critics.

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