

**POSTMODERN TRENDS IN SET DESIGNS
OF SELECTED PRODUCTIONS IN ULTIMA STUDIOS
AND ZMIRAGE, LAGOS**

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Abstract

The need for technical input, particularly set design in the overall theatrical process cannot be overemphasised in the pursuit of an aesthetically pleasing stage performance. This is because set design (flats and platforms) is the first place of contact irrespective of the medium of production. This work, therefore, examines postmodern trends in set designs within the backdrop of emerging set design concepts and interpretations via the use of sophisticated technology (such as light emitting diode screen, green-hippo software, 3D digital model among others), in our contemporary society, using selected productions in Ultima Studios and Zmirage, Lagos. The study employs the descriptive and participant-observation methods while the interview instrument complements the two methods. The two methods enable us to study the trends, dimensions and techniques of set designs in Ultima Studios and Zmirage, Lagos. This study also relies on relevant journals, articles, textbooks and appropriate internet materials. More so, Sunnie Enessi Ododo's (2002) Representational and Presentational Performance Styles, is adopted as our theoretical framework. Our findings show that set design for the stage or screen production goes beyond physical set design method to include the virtual set design. Postmodern trends in set design such as media mapping projection set design are also recognised. We also discover that, set design is a make-believe world that requires expertise, experience and professionalism in the process of its artistic utilisation within the postmodern age. The work concludes that, technical experts in the theatre should advance with the new trends of set design for both stage and screen production by studying and learning various trends and dimensions of postmodern set design. The study recommends that postmodern set design should not be downplayed in any production either screen or stage in the Nigerian theatre.

Key words: Postmodern, Trends, Set and Design

Introduction

The importance of theatre design, particularly set design in the overall theatrical process cannot be overlooked. It contributes to the visual effects and aesthetics of any theatrical performance. As a matter of fact, theatre design is an integral component of theatre tradition all over the world. It is common knowledge that theatre is an art (building or performance) and set design (flats or platforms) is indeed one of the broad arts of the theatre. It is "both the physical structure that houses a performance and the artistic presentation that goes inside it. People, therefore, come to the theatre to watch shows for education, entertainment and relaxation" (Okeke 2015:101).

Set design is almost impossible to deemphasise in any production, because it serves as a background to the artistic interpretation of dramatic and technical concepts of theatrical performance. Set design irrespective of its kinds and forms (flats and platforms); comprises

of frame, boarder, arc, cyclorama, space, door and window flat, among other make-believe scenographic input cannot be wished away in the visual interpretation of creative concepts in any performance be it on stage or screen. This may be the reason why Charles Nwadigwé (quoted in Adegbite, 2009:27) posits that:

Set design for theatrical production is not a mere 'embellishment' but should seek to provide living, useful, and suitable environment for the characters. If set is conceived in this way, it would enhance the actor's performance, and help the audience to understand the play better.

Therefore, this paper examines postmodern trends in set designs in Ultima Studios and Zmirage, our areas of focus include concept, pattern, dimension, and equipment used together with the expertise, experience and professionalism of set designers as evident in the selected productions of Zmirage and Ultima Studios, Lagos.

Theoretical Framework

This paper employs the scenic design concepts and performance styles postulated by Ododo (2002). Ododo's the Representational and the Presentational design concepts will be appraised in relation with the subject of discourse. Ododo (2002:88) in his re-classification of the Eurocentric design styles and concepts within the African performance framework, says that:

Two basic scenic design concepts are usually identified, the representational and the presentational concepts. The former has a symbiotic relationship with Naturalistic and Realistic Performance Styles, while the latter favours Stylisation and Symbolism via expressionist, impressionist, formalist and theatricalist styles of performance.

The above citation implies that, representational set design concept seeks to create a visual and performance reality on stage that makes the audience suspend their disbelief, while in presentational set design, settings may not be realistic, but it emphasises theatricality. Therefore, these concepts will enable us to explore the following attendant features inherent in Ultima Studios and Zmirage's productions, particularly in the area of set design. These are:

- Naturalistic performance styles in relation to set design.
- Realistic performance styles in line with set design.
- Stylisation in the area of set design.
- Symbolism of the set design in the production styles.
- Expression through set design to the audience.
- Impressionism through the use of colour spectrum in the performances.
- Formalism and theatricalism through set design.

Hence, the motivation behind the adoption of Ododo's performance styles is as a result of its flexibility, adaptability and duality of aesthetics to both stage and screen methods of set design. This will facilitate our examination in the evaluation of the technical productions, especially set designs in Ultima Studios and Zmirage.

Conceptualising Set Design in the Nigerian Theatre Practice

The fact that theatre is an art (building or performance) and set design is indeed one of the broad arts of the theatre is common knowledge. Set design is an important component of the theatre, particularly in the area of theatre design and technology. Also, as we have established, it assists in the classification and careful arrangement of both technical and artistic presentation in any performance.

In foregrounding the functions of set design in the performance, Lee and Grote attest to the fact that:

Just as performer's costume and make-up work together to give a visual impression of an individual character to the audience, so performer's surroundings suggest an imaginary world for the audience. This world can be very detailed or very simple, depending on the style and the requirements of the script, stage, size, equipment and budget. But in any case, it is always imaginary, and it is always designed to give the audience information about the character (225).

In a related development, Enna Musa (qtd. in Adegbite, 2009:27) expresses the view that, the process and choice of set design is “compelled by the form, content of the play and the directorial principle, concept and approach”. Adegbite goes further to identify other factors to be considered in the process of set design. These include “genre of the production, directorial images, style of set/production, available space (stage), fund and tools. In a nutshell, the inevitability of set and set designer cannot be undermined in any theatrical, filmic and studio productions” (27). Therefore, set design is the creation of physical environment for actor, and without it, the stage performance ideas, playwright vision, directorial concept, images, approach, acting style, among other performance input may not be properly actualised.

Consequently, from the definitions of set design and its significance, we can infer that, set designer is a creative personnel; an impresario; a master; and a professional of all the aural and visual components of the production; ranging from movable or immovable set; hang or prop set; stage, sounds and or lighting effects. This is aptly captured in Gillette Michael (qtd. in Fosudo, 2006:107)'s description of scene designer as someone who “is responsible for the visual appearance and function of the scenic and property elements used in the production”.

Similarly, Wilson (2004:334) also subscribes to the fact that “scene designer is responsible for the stage set which can run the gamut from a bare stage with stools or orange or orange creates, to the most elaborate large-scale production”. Thus, no matter how simple the style, concept, genre and setting; every performance must have a set. This is because, set design not only enhances performance aesthetics, it also gives background information to the performance about to be watched. Therefore, set is the first place of contact in any performance and the set designer, irrespective of the medium, (stage, screen or studio) is a transformer; interpreter; creative artist; coordinator; teacher; carpenter; and philosopher.

Paradoxically, set design in the Nigerian theatre is the conglomeration of indigenous and Western traditions. This is rooted in the emergence of Alarinjo travelling theatre and popular Yoruba travelling theatre with their prominent disciples like Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, Duro Ladipo, Moses Olaiya, Ishola Ogunsola. This advanced the advent of university education which incorporated theatre arts in their curriculum, with the help of

Geoffrey Axworthy, Dexter Lyndersay, Derek Bullock and Martin Banham, among others. Oni and Ododo (2011: xv) submit that:

Starting from the Alarinjo fare, through the boisterous popular Yoruba travelling theatre championed by Hubert Ogunde and the literary theatre in Nigeria instituted by Geoffrey Axworthy/Martin Banham/Dereck Bullock galvanised by Wole Soyinka and his contemporaries to the present-day theatre enterprises, a quantum of technical inputs must have been made to sustain these theatre heritages.

The above submission indicates that, university education is the facilitator of technical theatre practice and professionalism in the Nigerian theatre. It also ushered in the emergence of various skilled and prominent technical designers in the Nigerian theatre practice. According to Ododo (2006:23), “design practice in the Nigeria literary theatre could be dated back to the colonial days when foreign theatrical activities in the form of drama, opera, cantata and concerts were very vibrant”. This implies that, Western experts like Geoffrey Axworthy, Dexter Lyndersay, Derek Bullock and Martin Banham handled with professional touch, the design arts of the theatre.

Apparently, the significance of university theatre education in the growth and development of set design and designers cannot be overemphasised in African theatre. In an effort to trace the early Nigerian theatre designers and their contributions, which later led to the foundation and development of art and design in Nigeria theatre, Enendu (2012:58) reiterates that:

Early Nigerian theatre technicians, who later laid the foundation for the development of the art and craft in Nigeria, trained under Dexter K.W. Lyndersay, a Trinidadian and first technical director of the Ibadan School of Drama from 1967 to 1969. The group included Sunbo Marinho who practiced and taught theatrical design in the University of Ibadan for over thirty years. Dominic Asomba also taught scene designs and stage lighting, and designed for production at the university of Nigeria, Nsukka..., Segun Akinbola was the resident designer and technical director for the Oduduwa Hall, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife...Duro Oni made significant impact in giving theatrical design recognition in Nigeria stage and television production...

Oni and Ododo further observe that, Nigerian theatre has recorded quality contributions from key technical experts in its over seven decades of existence:

The early technical enthusiasm of Demas Nwoko agitated our minds on the theatrical possibilities; the technical revolution of Dexter Lyndersay and his wife, Dani Lyndersay, in Nigeria theatre concretised that possibilities; the products of these new technical awakening, like Segun Akinbola, Agbo Folarin, Sunbo Morinho, Esohe Molokwu (formerly Suinner), Sola Aborishade, Molinta Enendu, Duro Oni, Domba Asomba, etc., gave technical theatre practice a definitive direction in Nigeria conscious of a responsibility to blaze a trail for a

better design and technical theatre professionalism in Nigeria
(xvi).

Appreciating the old designers and identifying the new phase generation, Oni and Ododo agree that, the works of the old generation designers contribute significantly to the growth and development of technical theatre practice in Nigeria. They affirm that, “their own efforts produced the generation of Taiwo Adeyemi, Sunday Ododo, Akani Nasiru, Wasee Kareem, Biodun Abe, and many other proficient technical minds of which some are also our own direct descendants” (xvi).

It may be apt that, at this point, we examine the generations of technical theatre scholars in the academic setting in Nigeria, ranging from the first, to the second generation. On this, Ododo (2006:29-30) submits that, as far back as 1985 the numbers of theatre designers in the country was less than 20, irrespective of the specialisations.

There were only three professionally (sic) lighting designers in Nigeria: Dexter Lyndersay, Sunbo Marinho and Duro Oni. But in the area of scene design and construction, only a handful of people have professional training. Agbo Folarin, Akinbola Segun at Ife, Demas Nwoko at Ibadan, Setley Daze in Jos, Dominic Asomba in Nsukka, Gbade Adekoye at Lagos, Bisi Aborisade at Ibadan. The situation as regards sound is equally pathetic as only a few be mentioned. Ikem Emordi at Ibadan, Festus Adenugba, Olu Adeniregunin Lagos. Costume designers include Esohe Omoregie-Suinner at Ibadan, Danny Lyndersay at Uyo, Folabo Ajayi at Ife and Matilda Egbunike in Lagos.

The above category of designers represents the first generation. In the account of second generation, Ododo expresses further that, only few designers, even lesser than the numbers in the first generation have clearly emerged in the Nigeria theatre. The prominent among them were:

Wasiu Kareem (Z Mirage, Lagos), Biodun Abe (National Theatre, Lagos), Alani Nasiru (Port Harcourt), Sunday Enesso Ododo (Ilorin) and Bola Kujore (Lagos); Make-up:- Chucks Okoye (Ibadan), Idowu Sonubi (Lagos), Moji Bantefa (Lagos), Telma Fiberesima (Lagos), Kate Igbokwe, and Felicial Mayford (Lagos); Make-up and props:- Dike Nwachuka, Perekene Odion, Gabriel Okoye, Ifeanyi Uzoka and Dagogo Diminas-Jack (all in Lagos)...(30).

Thus, for this reason, set design has been recognised as an integral art of theatre tradition and its essence cannot be downplayed for the overall pleasing and satisfying performances.

Postmodern Theatre and Set Design

In the realisation of postmodern trends in set designs in Ultima Studios and Zmirage Lagos, the dimensions, concepts and templates of set design will be studied within the canons of postmodernism (beyond modernism) of selected productions in each of the company. In an account retrieved on 20th June, 2016 from the Saylor Foundation in the article titled *Introduction to postmodern theatre*, it has been reflected that:

Postmodernism responds to the artistic developments of the last quarter of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century. It does not view the world as an absurd, meaningless place of existence teetering on the edge of absolute destruction, but rather as a place where meaning and truth are relative and subject to different understanding and interpretations.

From the above citation, it is established that, postmodernism is an art movement that reexamines the conventional templates of most modernistic theatrical works to give place to contemporary trends in the areas of interpretation and understanding. Postmodernism also advocates for pluralism which utilises multiple ways of knowing, particularly in the phase of scenographic input.

In a related development, Leonardo (1993:76) contends on the intrinsic nature of postmodernism that, “postmodernism is often used interchangeably with post-structuralism...It has expanded to refer to any example of cultural production that violates modernist conventions, particularly those of linearity and realist representation”. This implies that, postmodernism is the historical era in which we are living, which has apparently reduced the impact of all modernist conceptions in the theatre and beyond. In collaboration with this submission, Andrius Bielkis (qtd. in KhosraviShakib, 2010:28) sees postmodernism as an “historical era corresponding to a new mode of production, a way of presenting and experiencing, very modern, if rather developed, modes of production”.

Also, Hooti and Torkamaneh (2011:1103) attempt an identification of the dichotomy between modernism and postmodernism, they submit that:

Postmodernism is a silent and non-violent revolt against the so-called rationality of modernism. Modernism enjoys totalisation of the well-framed principles; the principles, which simply get consolidated by the passage of time and move on a straight line. It believes that history is a kind of totalising of unanimous episodes, while postmodernism believes in fragmentation and segmentation. It emphasises that history is made of fragmented segments of disintegrated episodes.

In relation to the above assertion, it is evident that, the term, postmodernism can be best conceived as an art movement that seeks to consider specific features by making a comparison and or complement in characteristics term called ‘modernism’.

In his submission, Nick Kaye (qtd. in Olalusi 2014:559) believes that, “postmodern movement is not the property of any particular discipline”. This suggests that, postmodernism is a term with multidisciplinary application. In foregrounding the above citations, we could rightly put forward that, we live in a ‘pluralised society’ circumscribed by a multiplicity of style, knowledge, interpretation and understanding. This makes it quite applicable to the arts, particularly set design in the theatrical production. For this reason, it forms the focus of our discourse in our attempt to examine postmodern trends in set designs of selected productions in Ultima Studios and Zmirage, Lagos.

Zmirage Production Outfit, Lagos

Zmirage is one of the prominent and top suppliers of technical input to the entertainment industry be it for studio, stage or public show, as well as provider of sophisticated set design and lighting for corporate events in Nigeria and beyond. This reputable theatre company was founded in 1996 with the primary motive of providing modern set and lighting design in the theatre, film-making, musical concerts, corporate launches, religious programmes, government and private events for indoor or outdoor production.

In an account retrieved from zmirage.com on 6th November, 2016, we discover that Zmirage supplies equipment and design sets to shows of all types and scales, including some of the biggest shows in Nigeria, West Coast and the rest of Africa. The company continues to provide set designs with the latest tools and technology to realise the visions for a show as they have done throughout their history, and to make technology available to others outfits working on smaller or lower budgets. Above all, Zmirage provides a familiar touch offering, superb service and support as it has done for over two decades and it has been regarded as one of the leading theatre companies in Nigeria and beyond.

Alhaji Olateju Kareem popularly known as Wasee, a technical designer par excellence with an impeccable and astonishing personality in the industry in Nigeria and beyond, is the founder of the company. Wasee, an indigene of Ogun in South-Western Nigeria, holds Diploma and Degree in Theatre Arts from University of Ibadan as well as Certificate and Diploma in Business and Management Studies, London.

Brief Note on Ultima Studios Limited

Ultima Limited is a premium media organisation with ‘state-of-the-art’ television production studios, fully equipped with post-production facilities, and online media services situated in Lekki, Lagos State, Nigeria. The company is capable to deliver ‘end-to-end’ television programmes, mac-based post-production facilities and multi-platform distribution channels. In an interview with the Ultima resident production manager, Adeniyi (2016) expresses that, Ultima is one of the leading production companies in the Sub-Saharan region, responsible for the production of “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? Nigeria”, “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? Ghana”, and “Project Fame West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone)”. Its passion is to develop and deliver standard programmes for all its clients and world class entertainment for viewers.

She states further that; the goal of Ultima studios is to develop local quality content that meets and can subsequently surpass global standards. Driven by a passion to be the best, Ultima’s team is constantly reviewing and raising the benchmarks for creativity and the quality of production. The recent completion of “MTN Project Fame West Africa season 9” and the airing of “WWTBAM” on NTA for the last 12 seasons, attest to the acceptable standard and quality of programmes developed and produced by Ultima.

Olufemi Ayeni, also known as Femi, is the founder of Ultima Limited and has been its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer since 1989. In an account retrieved from company overview of Ecobank Nigeria Limited on 6th November, 2016, Mr Ayeni has over 30 years experience in the entertainment, media, telecommunications and banking industries. He is a graduate of the University of Lagos with an MBA specialising in Finance, and Entrepreneurial Management from Wharton Business School and University of Pennsylvania in USA.

Postmodern Trends in Set Design in Zmirage and Ultima Studios, Lagos

Zmirage is a reputable and renowned production outfit with modern touch, particularly in the area of set design locally and internationally. The company has successfully showcased creative and sophisticated set designs from stage to screen, musical concert, dance performance, film-making, studio design, public debate, corporate event, and carnival either indoor or outdoor respectively.

Zmirage has powered and managed technical services for several events and over 70 plays with the new trends to set designs that are in match with the international standard. Yekini (2016), the resident designer of the company in an interview, claims that, the company is currently in possession of sophisticated softwares and set construction materials among which are, photoshop, auto cad, corel draw, 3-D max, sketch-up, among other materials like flex, staple gun, double-edge tape, drilling machines and so on that are of international standard and suitable for any event or performance. Some of their hit performances include: *Kongi's Harvest* directed by Segun Adefila (2015), "Saro, the Musical" directed by Makinde Adeniran (2013), *Lion and the Jewel* directed by Niji Akanni (2012), *The Naming Ceremony* and *the King Must Dance Naked* directed by Bayo Odunneye (2012), *Little Drops* directed by Ahmed Yerima (2010), *King Babu* directed by Wole Soyinka (2009), and so on.

The corporate events include "Celebrating Yoruba Past, Present & Future" in Ibadan (2016), "All Africa Music Awards", Lagos (2016), "Ogun State Christmas Carol" (2016), "Channels Television 21st Anniversary" (2016), "Ondo Decides" (2016), "Miss Ecowas" (2014), "Lagos State Black Heritage Carnival" (2014), "Soyinka at 80" in Ogun (2014), "River State Carnival" (2012-2014), "Edo Decides" (2013), "Serial Leone Presidential Debate" (2012), "IBB Presidential Platform" (2011) and so on. Yekini (2016) reflects further that, if the set construction requirement is complex and cumbersome, the company also engaged carpenters and other technicians outside the company to assist in the production process. Hence, trends in stage set designs of some selected productions in Zmirage such as "Celebrating Soyinka @ 80" at Ijegba amphitheatre, Ogun State, 2014; Calabar Queen Set at "River State Carnival", 2014; "Ogun State @ 40", 2016; "Ondo Decides", 2016; and "NACOFED 2016" will be examined.

On the other hand, Ultima Studios is an acoustically designed, controlled and decorated production studio with padded materials of blue, black and torch of cream in a very serene environment coupled with sound proof materials. This aids proper diffusion, absorption, and reverberation of sounds in a fascinating proscenium space with advanced and classy set construction that gives required background and aesthetics to the programme template, pattern, content and concept.

For proper description and understanding of the set design in this production outfit in relation to concepts, functions, and qualities, this study examines two notable programmes from the studio. They are:

1. Reality Show (MTN Project Fame West Africa); and
2. Game Show (Who Wants to be a Millionaire?)

Reality Show (MTN Project Fame West Africa)

MTN Project Fame West Africa "seeks to discover raw talented musical hopefuls, who are groomed for success in an intense Academy. The contestants receive the very best professional training from capable experts. They are trained on voice, movements,

performance and songwriting” (retrieved from www.mtnprojectfame.com, 2016). More than just a talent competition, MTN Project Fame allows viewers a unique opportunity to follow day by day, the behind the scenes progress of the contestants in their quest for fame, public voting by SMS determines which contestant is eliminated on a weekly basis among others. It is currently in its 9th season.

Bello (2015:1) in his article titled “Scenodecography: The Praxis of Light-tech-driven Design in MTN Project Fame”, has this to say concerning the first international format show produced in Nigeria from dedicated studio facilities:

Project Fame is a music talent TV reality format show in which raw talents are discovered, developed and made known to popular television audience across the African continent. Started in 2008 with season 1.0 held in Kenya, the show featured contestants from West African countries like Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, the original version of this reality show, Star Academy or Operacion Triunfo in Spanish speaking countries, had been inaugurated in France and Spain in the early 2000s.

Set design, therefore, in the studio is examined in terms of programme format, template, content and context. Undoubtedly, every programme has their required design template and patterns that showcase their production signature and identity in which MTN project fame and Who Wants to Be A Millionaire cannot be left out.

Game Show (Who Wants to be a Millionaire?)

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? Nigeria, is the Nigerian version of the World renowned general knowledge television quiz show by the same name, which offers a maximum cash prize of ₦10,000,000. In fact, “WWTBAM” is sponsored in Nigeria by MTN Nigeria, and the show is currently in its 13th season. It has so far recorded just one 10-million-naira winner and several other big winners.

In an information retrieved from the millionairenigeria.com, on 6th November, 2016, it is captured that, in 2004, Nigeria witnessed the phenomenal entry of the world renowned game show, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Produced by Ultima Limited, trail blazers in the entertainment industry. The show could be tagged “Edutainment” as it not only provided a platform to educate people but bursting with relishing moments. The “WWTBAM” is a multiple-face show ranging from Children’s Special, Valentine Special, Lecturer/Student Special and Who Deserves To Be A Millionaire? Coupled with the home quiz, and online game. No doubt about it, the “edutainment” programme is must watch for every home.

Set design for “Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?” in Nigeria, however, requires expertise, experience, professional set designer, and other set construction crew by enabling the programme to be properly aligned with intending content, context and template.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, postmodern trends in set design in the two production outfits will be examined in three categories. These are:

- Physical Set Design;
- Virtual Set Design; and
- Media Mapping Projection Set Design

Physical Set Design (PSD)

This is the most popular and basic set design method which uses tangible materials for set construction. This form of design could be orthodox or classy using the following materials, such as, wood, plastic, cloth, glass, iron, brick, tree, carton, among other carpentry substances to give desired set requirement for a particular production. This design concept is usually done in accordance to the nature of the production to enhance visual and artistic interpretation of such play, programme or event. This form of design method simply connotes non digital set design. Some pictures below are typical examples of Physical Set Design (PSD):



Fig 1: PSD that favours naturalistic performance style at Ijebga amphitheatre, Ogun State “Celebrating Soyinka @ 80” on 29th June, 2014. Powered by Zmirage. Photo Credit: Sheriff Yekini.



Fig 2: PSD of Calabar Queen Set that enhances impressionist performance style at “River State Carnival” on 20th June, 2014. Powered by Zmirage. Photo Credit: Sheriff Yekini.



Fig 3: PSD classy stage design that supports stylistic performance on “MTN Project Fame West Africa, Season 9” on 17th September, 2016. Powered by Ultima Studios. Photo Credit: Researcher.



Fig 4: PSD classy set design that assists stylistic performance on “MTN Project Fame West Africa, Season 9” on 17th September, 2016. Powered by Ultima Studios. Photo Credit: Researcher.

Virtual Set Design (VSD)

This is a modern and non-physical form of set design which makes use of software and other digital gadgets such as photoshop, auto cad, corel draw, 3-D max, sketch-up among other graphics and animations printing materials. This design approach can only be generated through computer system such as laptop, palmtop, desktop, phone, projector and so on. Example of this method of design are graphics design, 3D design, direct image printing, animation design, chroma and superimposition as well as slide effects and so on.



Fig 5: VSD that enhances symbolism performance style at “Ogun State @ 40” on 27th, January, 2016. Powered by Zmirage. Photo Credit: Sheriff Yekini.



Fig 6: VSD that supports expressionist performance style at “Ondo Decides” on 22nd September, 2016. Powered by Zmirage. Photo Credit: Sheriff Yekini.



Fig 7: VSD that assists stylistic performance on “MTN Project Fame West Africa, Season 9” on 16th September, 2016. Powered by Ultima Studios. Photo Credit: Anthonia Adeniyi.



Fig 8: VSD that favours expressionist performance style at “Ogun State Christmas Carol” on 22 December, 2016. Powered by Zmirage. Photo Credit: Sheriff Yekini.

Media Mapping Projection Set Design (MMPSD)

In the actualisation of postmodern set designs of the selected productions in the two outfits, thus, media mapping projection set design (MMPSD) will be examined. This method is capable of providing multiple set designs simultaneously within a specific period of time with the aid of electronic gadgets. This is the combination of physical and virtual set design.

This form of design creates pleasing and satisfying visual background and effect for any performance with the support of light emitting diode screen. However, MMPLD is the

recent and postmodern form of set design generated through Giant LED Screen, LED Cloth, Gobo Cloth, as well as green-hippo software. Some examples below should be instructional:



Fig 9: *MMPSD* that assists stylistic performance on “MTN Project Fame West Africa, Season 9” on 17th September, 2016. Powered by Ultima Studios. Photo Credit: Researcher.



Fig 10: *MMPSD* that favours expressionist performance style at “NACOFED 2016” on 25th September, 2016. Powered by Zmirage. Photo Credit: Sheriff Yekini.



Fig 11: *MMPSD* that assists stylistic performance on “MTN Project Fame West Africa, Season 9” on 17th September, 2016. Powered by Ultima Studios. Photo Credit: Anthonia Adeniyi.



Fig 12: *MMPSD* that enhances realistic/impressionist performance style at “All Africa Music Awards” on 16th, November, 2016. Powered by Zmirage. Photo Credit: Sheriff Yekini.

In fact, with the illustrations above, we could rightly say that, Ododo's Representational and Presentational performance styles are considered appropriate and relevant as our conceptual framework. This is because trends to set design in the two production outfits identified as physical set design, virtual set design and media mapping projection set design are well placed within the performance framework. Also, these trends favour Ododo's performance concepts, such as naturalism, realism, expressionism, impressionism, symbolism, formalism and theatricalism which the pictures above portrayed.

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

In revalidating the place of set design and its trends within the Representational and the Presentational Performance Styles by Ododo, using Ultima Studios and Zmirage in Lagos, our findings show that set design for the stage or screen production goes beyond physical set design method to include the virtual set design. Postmodern trends in set design such as media mapping projection set design are also recognised. We also discover that, stage set design is a make-believe world that requires expertise, experience and professionalism in the process of its artistic utilisation within the postmodern age.

The study concludes that, set design is one of the important technical inputs in any performance irrespective of its forms (flat 'vertical' and or platform 'horizontal'). In fact, set design goes beyond mere aesthetics of classification, delineation, and separation of both technical and dramatic actions on stage rather it gives background and silent information about the performance to the audience. On this notion, we draw our conclusion that, without set design (flats or platforms); style, approach, concept, content, template, coupled with dramatic and other technical qualities of the performance would not be actualised.

The work recommends that postmodern set design should not be downplayed in any production either screen or stage in the Nigerian theatre. This is because set design assists pleasing and artistic presentation both technically and dramatically in any production. More so, experts in the professional calling of theatre should advance with the new trends of set design for the stage and screen production by studying and learning various trends, dimensions, and styles of postmodern design

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GENESIS: PEOPLE AND PLACES - A REVIEW.

BY:

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Abstracts:

Tutors in the Performance Arts, which comprises of Music and Theatre Arts, And the Visual Arts, seek ways of engaging younger people who specialize in the arts that we teach at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, to impact positively in their environment. One of such engagements was through the visual arts. The two hundred level students embarked on an academic journey to Makoko, a slum area in Yaba Local Government Development Area. Makoko, a deplorable community that has deprived her inhabitants of the basic amenities that could enhance the essence of a people that live in a place. This deprivation made it rather impossible for children to have access to good education as most of the parents cannot afford the school fees for a good education. More so, government-owned schools are not within reach of the children, thereby exposing these kids to highway disaster.

This study explores the features of these slum dwellers, painted them in a colorful manner representing all they are made of. The students expressed how art educators were able to situate their practice to embody place-based phenomenon. The study visualizes the residents of Makoko, mostly children, and represents them in beautiful paintings irrespective of what their bleak environment depicts. Exposing how children express their thoughts, feelings, and actively generate meaning through experience and interaction. The tool of engagement for this study was a field trip that includes taking photographs used for the paintings. The findings from the survey provide a link that promotes self-esteem in the respondents.

Keywords: Paintings, People, Places and Visual Arts, Slum.

AIM: The paintings portrayed the Makoko environment; it reveals how the human brain strives to make sense of the typical careless environment and how to see if there is an improvement from the original picture of the situation the painted.

INTRODUCTION:

PLACE

There is a famous adage 'East or West; Home is the Best' that often comes to mind whenever I found myself in a different place apart from home. I do not know who pronounced this saying, but I happen to agree with it sometimes. Irrespective of one's status, there is always a place where one belongs, and that, in a way, shapes one's perception of life. This study endeavors to look at 'place' from the viewpoint of people living within that place, using arts (paintings) as a tool to depict what this place represent as well as featuring the place as bringing out a Lilly from the mire. Through several paintings of the people of Makoko, the study was able to situate the place in paintings giving the inhabitants some form of hope.

Reiterating the words of Ogunwo, a pioneer of this concept, 'Genesis: place and people' affirms that "People make places; Places don't make people." (Ogunwo, 2019).

Margery (2014:18-19) adds further, that place shapes the feelings of residents, the individual, and the community. Sometimes the local 'voice' is co-constructed as residents discuss their attachment to place and the similar feelings they share toward their community, whether the locale is in an urban or rural area. It can be "an indigenous community, a community that bonds together in an inner-city urban setting, or a small community of people coming together socially for a special purpose (e.g., an AA meeting, church congregation) or function" (Spring, 2013, p. 3). Through experience, human interaction, and attachment, a person may develop a feeling of security and a profound 'sense of place.'

People may come with a different historical perspective of place, which also adds to the complexity of the feeling. Convery et al. (2012) contend (as cited in Shamai & Ilatov (2005) that "sense of place, often used to refer to multiple conceptualizations of place" (p. 1), which lead to a dull, unclear definition of the term. Through experience, human interaction, and attachment, a person may develop a feeling of security and a profound 'sense of place.'

Discussions and Findings

The study shows that the visual arts are simply a display. Still, it represents and has an influence upon the context from which it emerges, having the power to recreate and construct one's understanding of the Makoko people of Lagos State, Nigeria.

The study uses paintings as a more nuanced alternative to contemporary film, which tends to of a simplistic dystopian vision of the rural experience.

The artists observed the everyday life of the rural communities; there were both sketches and preliminary versions available, which are consistent with the finished product.

The study offers a visual alternative to how rural communities are frequently presented to the public as an interchangeable collection of villages common mostly on television. The paintings provide essential insights into the ways residents 'see' themselves, their surroundings, and their neighbors.

The study had several paintings that depict what the environment represents. In a bid to achieve community development and to ensure the curriculum we operate at the University of Lagos, Nigeria serve the purpose of reaching out to the masses; the study imbibed the antiracist multicultural education theory. This is an approach that crosses all disciplines "the people left out of the functional curriculum should be addressed including their cultural histories and encounter." (Meier, 1995:9). Supporting the assertions of Meier & Hartell (2009), there should be a law that enforces respect for persons and communities irrespective of cultural differences and environmental settlements. The people of Makoko are known to be deprived economically, this also affects them individually as the state of livelihood is low, hence, the environment is nothing to write home about. However, in the light of this study, the pictures demonstrate a level of hope for them.

The multiculturalists create cultural awareness, equity, and self-esteem; the multiculturalists wish to eradicate prejudice, misunderstanding, and ignorance (Greenlaw,

1996). In this study, we likened multiculturalism to be an idea of creating awareness and being more conscious of your environment, caring for those who lacked care, empowering the less empowered to be self-reliant and have better self-esteem. Through the arts that we teach, f

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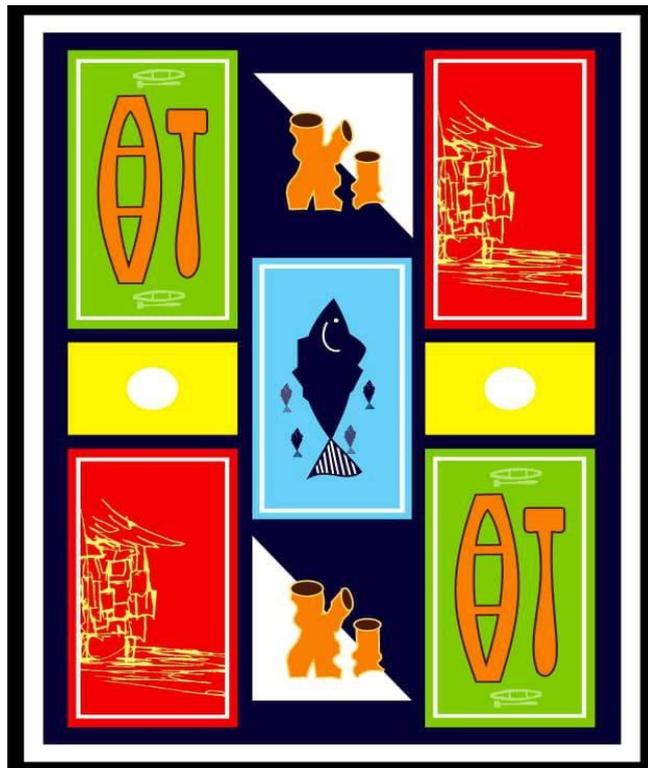


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ABATAN BOLUWATIFEV. Deprivation Graphics 28cm x 28cm 60,000, 2019

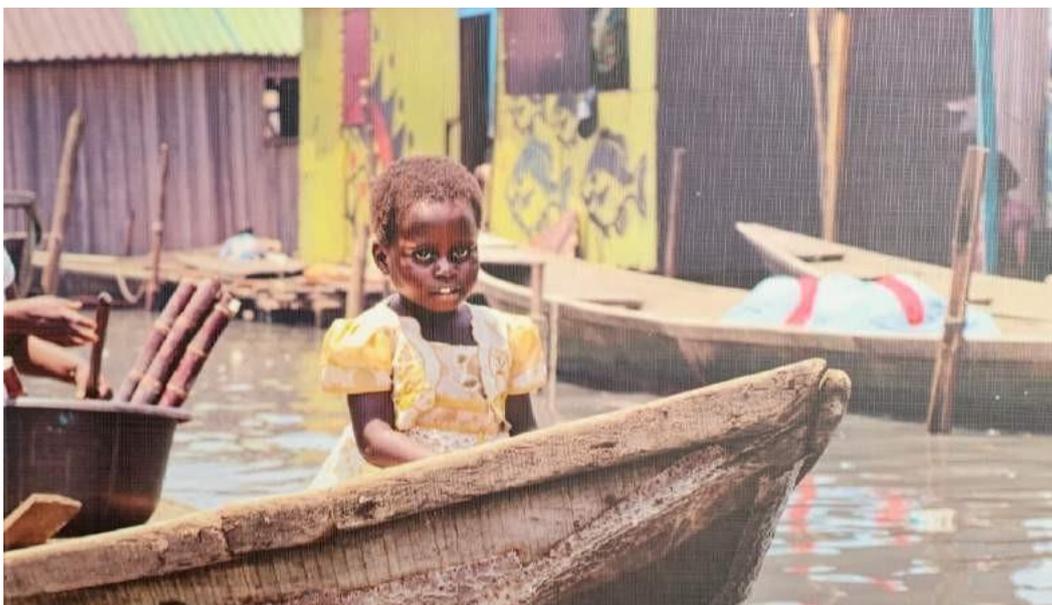


EKA EMMANUEL Break Free Graphics 30cm by 40cm 60,000 (2019)



OYENOLA AYOOLA

Inception paint on watercolour card 40.6cm x 50.8cm 65,000, (2019)



OLANREWAJU OLANIYI

Untitled photography 21cm x 26cm 50,000

2019



AKINTE OLUWAPONMILE *The Balance* Photography 42.4cm x 41.9cm 60,000 (2019).



MAKINDE D. OLUSEGUN
Metaphysika photography 40.6cm x 30.4cm 70,000
2019



SHOLANKE OMOTOYOSI A. Emotions Oil on Canvas 60.9cm x 91.4cm 86,000 (2019).



ANACHUNA V. CHIGOZIE Makoko: what,s next? Oil on canvas 91.4cm x 60.9cm 65,000 2019

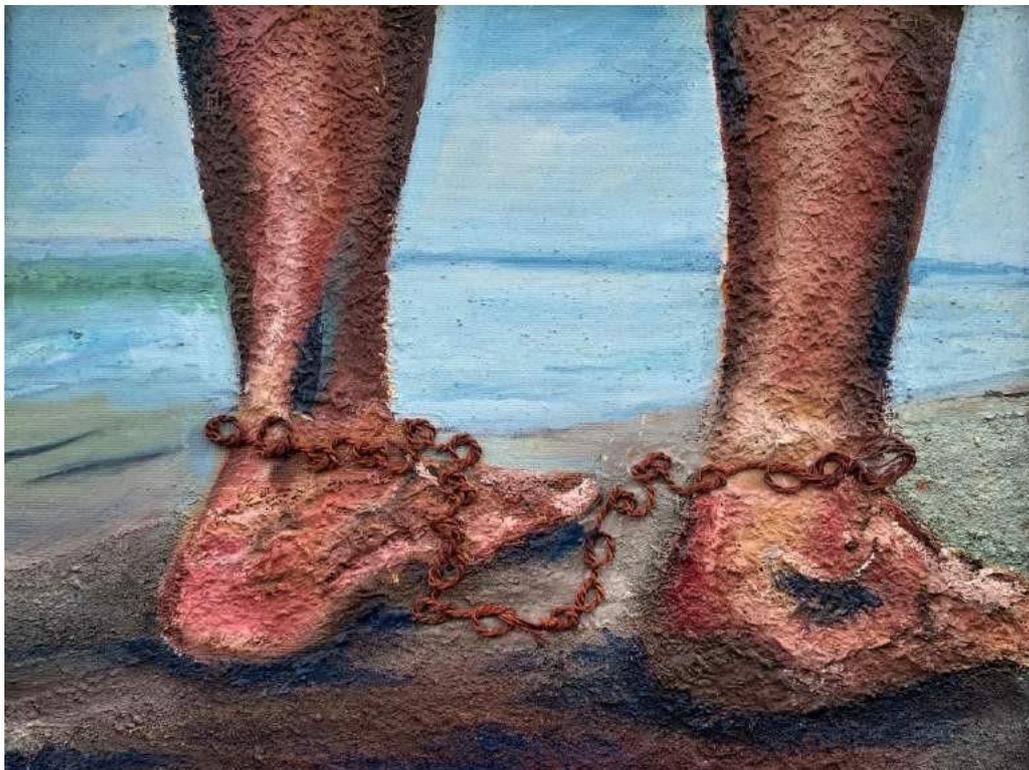


JESUNIYI GOSPEL

Oja ori omi [Trade on water] Oil on canvas

61cm x 77cm 70,000

2019



BALOGUN ADESOLA E.

Limit Mixed media

41cm x 51cm 80,000

2019



ADEBAYO MOYOSOREOLUWA

Over-sea Oil on canvas

50.8cm x 60.9cm 60,000

2019



EGUALEONA CHARLES

Tranquil State Oil on chipboard 66cm x 91.4cm 80,000

2019



ILEBIYI OLUWATOSIN
Caretaker Oil on Canvas
60.9cm x 91.4cm 100,000
2019



ODOGWU EMMANUEL
Horizon Acrylic on Chipboard 76cm x 64cm 95,000
2019



OLAYEMI M. OLAMILEKAN
Contentment Oil on canvas 91.4cm x 60.9cm 85,000



ANNA N. NWAOKOLO
Looking forward for a brighter Makoko Mixed media
27cm x 40cm 60,000
2019



OKUNLOLA MICHAEL

In my Head

Print making(linoleum) 30.4CM X 40.6CM 50,000

2019



AKINBAYO CHARLES

Makoko Survival Mixed Media 26cm X

31cm 55,000

2019



YOMI-FASHEUN SAMUEL

Greener Pasture Digital Print 61CM X 77CM

65,000

2019

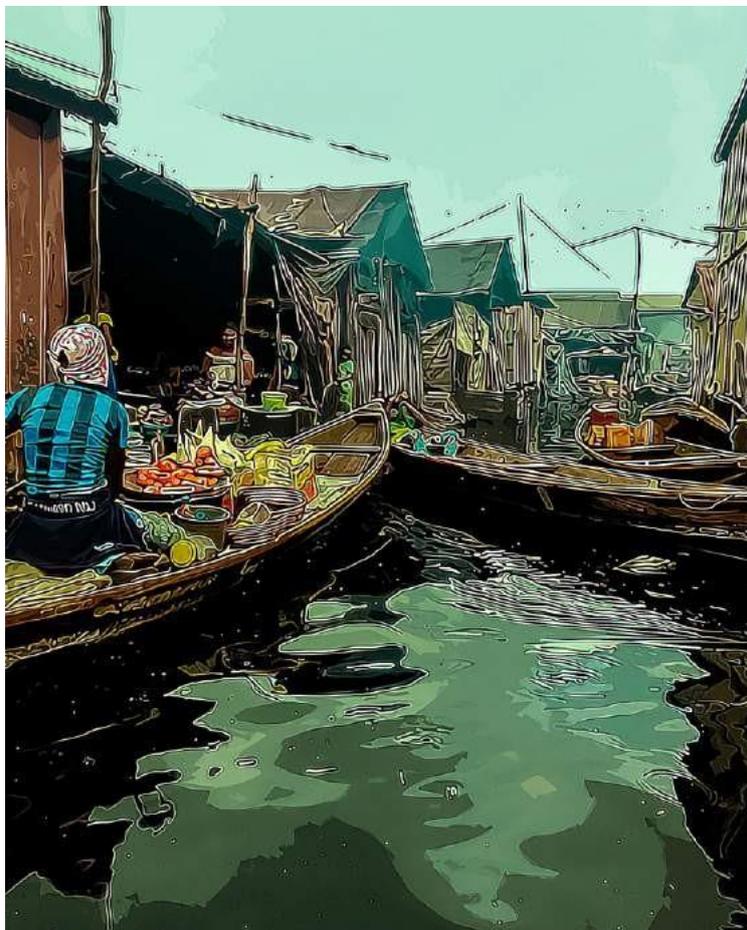


UFERE FRANCIS U.

Pharoah Goodbye Digital Painting 50.8cm x 50.8cm

65,000

2019

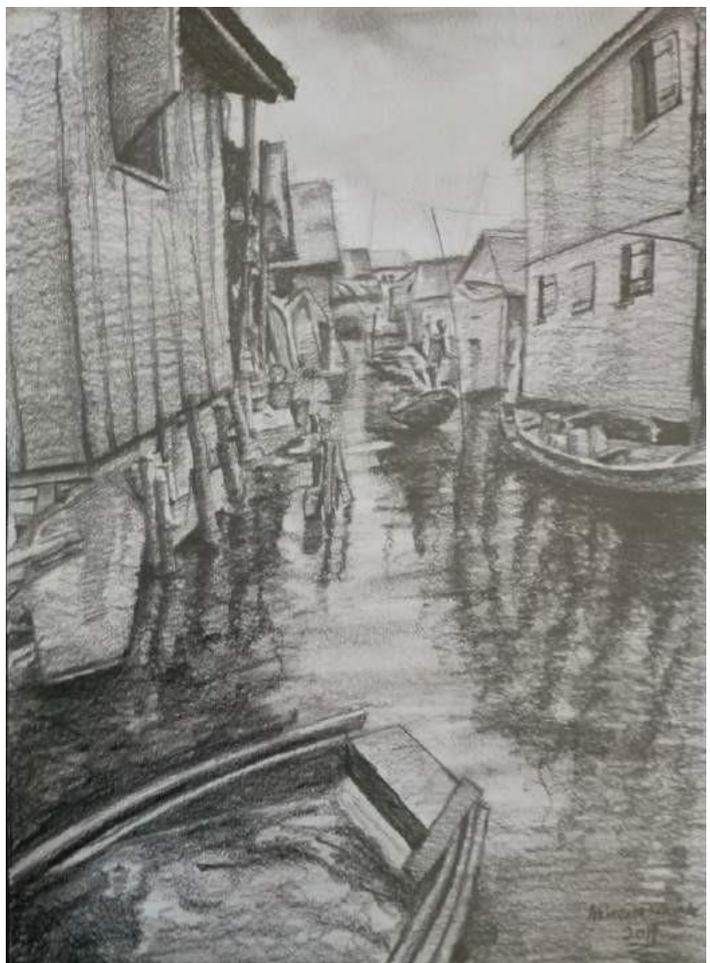


AKPEJI SAMUEL

Future Venice Graphic 40cm x 30cm

70,000

2019



KEHINDE AKINSOLA

Stepping Stone Pencil on paper 36cm

by 47cm 50,000

2019

AMAZU EBUBE

Relax

Pen on Paper 21CM X 28CM Series

80,000

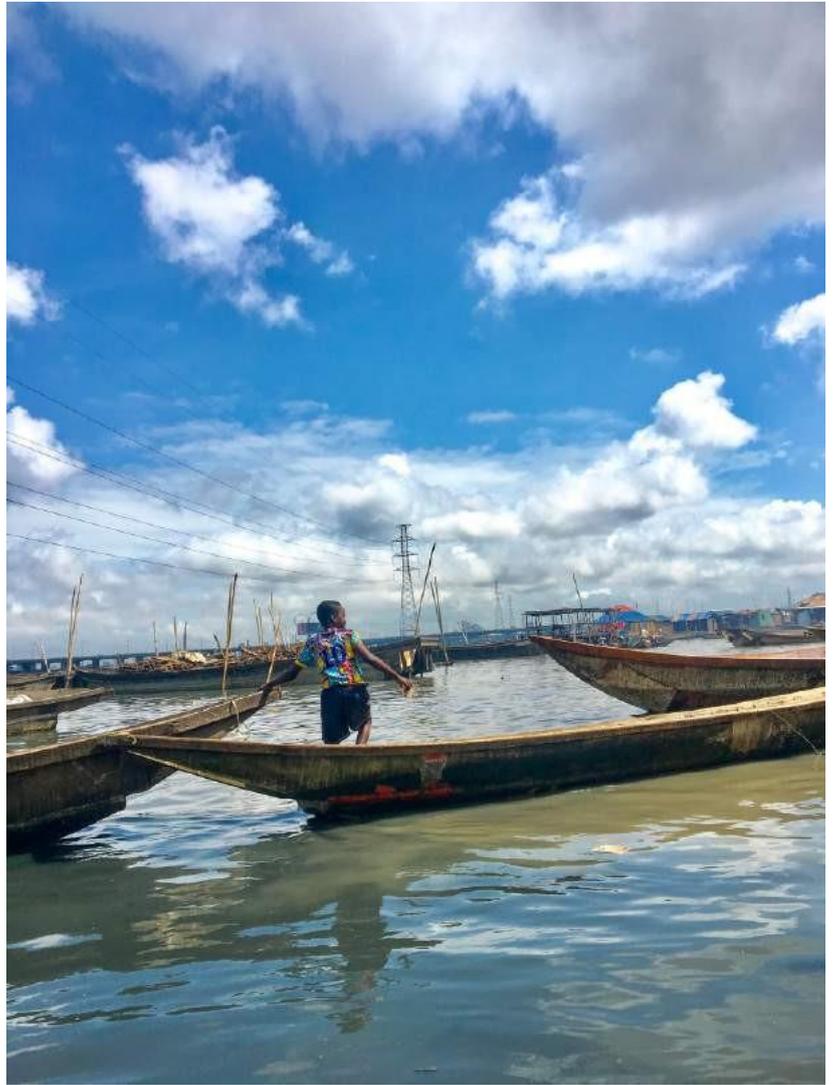
2019



ODENIYI OLAYINKA

Ghetto Love Photography 31cm x 41cm 100,000

2019



DELE LAWAL
Glee Photography 51cm x 41cm 50,000
2019



NWOSE DAMIAN
Reintegration Photography 41cm x 36cm 60,000



IBUKUNOLUWA OYEBOLA

Biobele(happiness/joy) Twine on wood 60.9cm x 91.4cm 85,000
2019

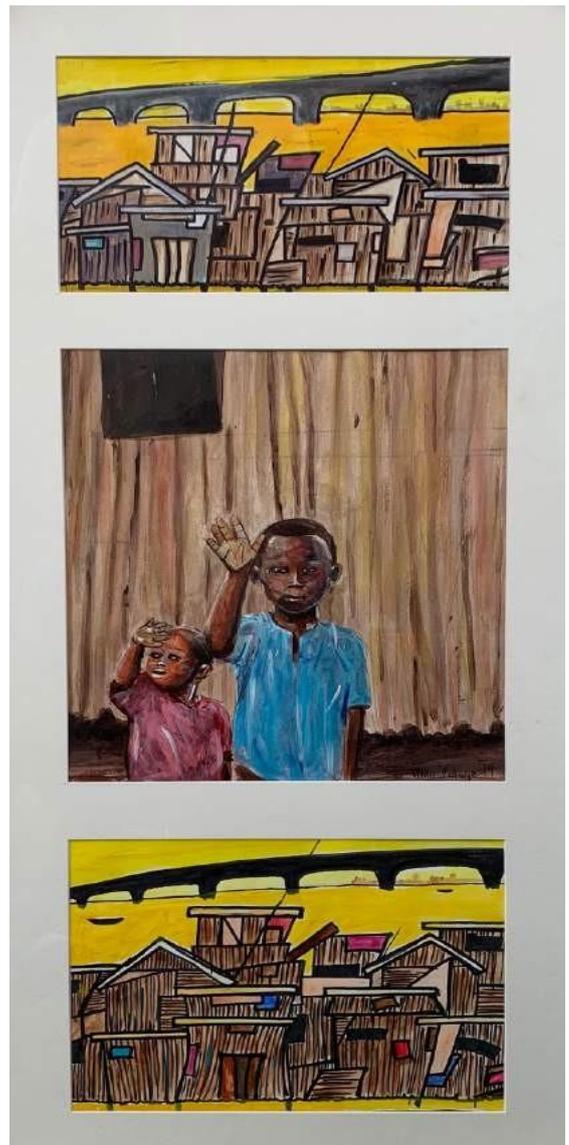


ADESEMOYE AKINTOMIDE

Embrace Fibre Glass
58.4cm x 25.4cm 100,000
2019



AKINDIPE TAOHEED A.
Oriyeyenimogun Taiselopo (innocent souls)
Mixed Media 61cm x 46cm 75,000
2019



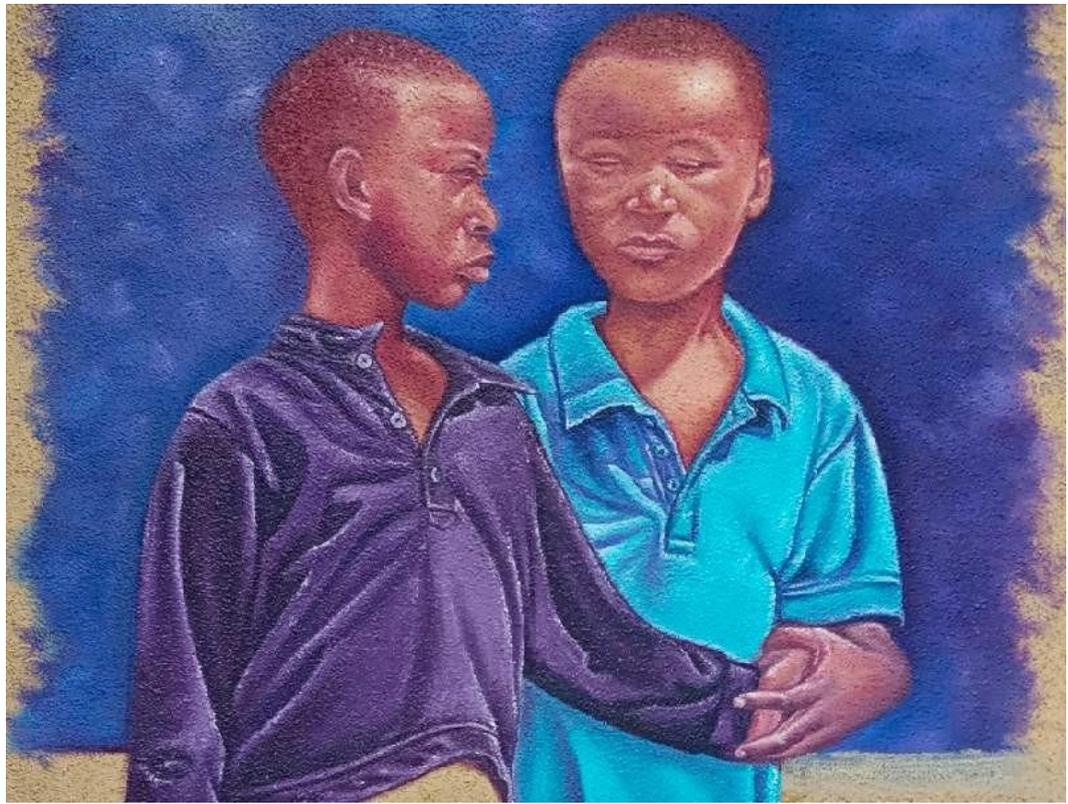
SALAMI AZEEZ O. Hope
Oil on canvas 91.4cm x 60.9cm 80,000
2019



TIOLU YOLOYE
YOVO (stranger) acrylic on paper 33cm x
71.1cm 60,000
2019



OKEREKE RICHARD
On the Fence Gouache on strawboard 30cm x 42cm
75,000
2019



AJASA ABDULLAHI

Helping Hands Oil on canvas 91.4cm x 60.9cm 80,000
2019



AKINWOLE OLUWASHINAAYO

Morning Trip Pastel on Paper 69.8cm x 50.8cm 55,000
2019

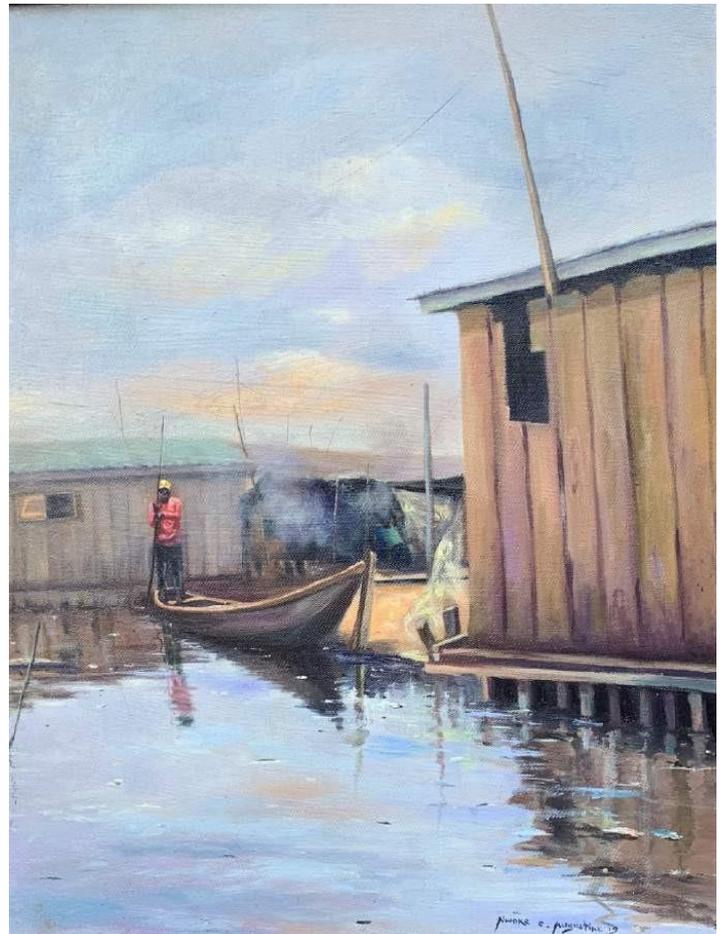


NWOKE CHUKWUKA A.

Dawn

Oil on canvas 61cm x 91.5cm 85,000

2019



AKINBOLA TOLUWA

Ehingbeti [Last Boat Stop] Photography

48cm x 56cm 100,000

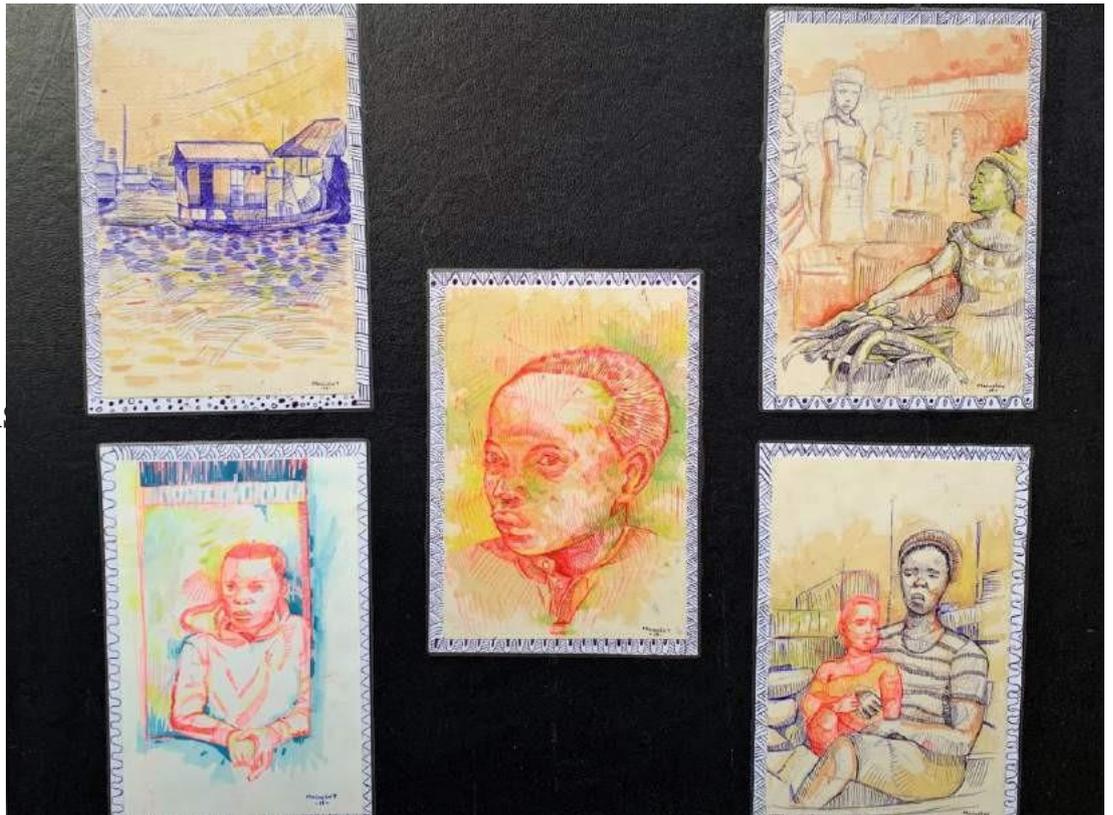
2019



MACAULEY DANIEL

Between the Lines Pen on paper 60.9cm x 91.4cm 65,000

2019



ABU OLA

Conclusions

By means of this visual representation, the visual arts students encourage viewers, especially those living in Makoko that, arts promote integration, synthesis, and inseparability, which Bresler (1995:5) considers as an essential feature of art thinking, stating that, art integration is the sole duty of the artists and this art, is left to his initiative, imagination and resourcefulness. Levinas (1987) An artist — even a painter, even a musician — tells. He tells of the indescribable. An artwork elongates and serves beyond common sensitivity. Some things that are termed trivial and often treated with contempt an artwork dignifies in an unimagined manner. This then is attributed as a supernatural intuition. Where words are loss, the painting speaks. A picture speaking a thousand words.

The work depicts different things to different viewers. The following interpretations were given by the artists who embarked on the fieldwork.

Abu Olashile's inspiration comes from realism and undying love for humanity and nature; this was a drive that propelled him without delay to embark on this assignment alongside his classmates.

Egaleona Charles represented the swampy and slummy environment of the Makoko so well to depict their source of livelihood and sustenance.

Salami Azeez, whose caption was Hope, assures the Makoko residents through his paintings that, though it was dark, that is, night time, there is Hope coming on.

Okunlola Michael's art is inspired by what happens in his environment, and he makes use of the local raw materials available around him as a medium for most of his works. This goes to show that the arts can be a source of empowerment for the residents of Makoko if they are empowered and tutored.

The work of Makinde Damilola themed; Metaphysical (beyond the physical) gives a ray of hope that there is something beyond the present slummy environment of the Makoko residents. Akinwale Shinaayo speaks on various mediums that express his inner feelings, which speaks about his environment and the present situation in Nigeria at large. He explains the early trip as the early morning trade of fishing that takes place among the residents. All of these assertions by these artists make the work of art to thrive effectively within a society, giving the society a risen hope.

Acknowledgement

I appreciate the Lecture-in-charge of Year 2 Visual Arts Students at the Department of Creative Arts Dr. Bolaji Ogunwo, who made the pictures available to me, as well as Azeez Salami the course rep.

The study was as a result of my curiosity and present research on the 'Gun' residents of Makoko, Lagos, Nigeria, in which I am using music as a means of educating the children. So I decided to illustrate the environment using the visual arts, paintings.

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