

Waste Materials as a Medium of Art Expression

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ABSTRACT

Expression of Art in Modern time has developed to an extent innovations and improvisations in the search of waste materials for sculpture and environmental sanitation exercise for Artists. Management of waste items has also in recent times been a major problem in our society. Efforts should be made to consistently get rid of these waste materials to avoid environmental pollution, causing ill health. Hence this paper discusses the creative re-use of some waste materials, to explore its Artistic expression on the production of a monumental Effigy known as EKUMEKU WAR, WARRIORS AND CENOTAPH with waste and unconventional materials.

Keywords: Arts, Waste Materials, Medium of Expressions and Nigeria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Expression of sculptural forms using recycled wasted objects which has led to an innovative and effective use of jacks/improvisation, through exploration in the visual art. Artists have boldly conceptualized their thought process, to accommodate various ideas, in exploiting the prospects of recycling waste thereby assisting in sanitation of our environment.

This paper delimits its presentation to Ekumeku monument sited at the entrance junction when entering into the permanent site of the Delia State Polytechnics Ogwashì - Uku which involved sculptural exploration of recycled can drinks, nails, plastic spoons, aluminum sheets, bottles covers, as materials. It does not rigidly focus on the ideas of recycled materials as a solely sculpture concept, since the use of recycled waste is a general way to visual art.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica pg125 (2010) "expression in sculpture is the communication of equity which means a lot to the Ibos". The Ekumeku monument meant a lot to the Ibos who fought the British imperialist dominance from 1804 - 1830. The statue is referred to "as an element of a study, a usage of something, which may however be a direct reference to a physical feature, depending on the medium/media and form of rendition. Material usage in sculpture in terms of recycled waste exploration, may be different in execution as the normal characteristics of form must be considered while dealing generally with visual forms.



Fig. 1: Picture Of Stages Of Ekumeku

The body of the work presented in this paper is a studio exploration in assemblage of waste cans, plastic, nails, and aluminum sheets by a careful study of the concept of how to recycle material

2. EKUMEKU WAR. WARRIORS AND CENOTAPH HISTORY

Resistance was strong in western Igboland where a series of wars were waged against the British. The Ekumeku, who were well organized and whose leaders were joined in secrecy oaths, effectively utilized guerrilla tactics to attack the British. Their forces, which were drawn from thousands of Igbo youth from all parts of Igboland, created many problems for the British, but the British used forceful tactics and heavy armaments (destroying homes, farms, and roads) to prevail. The Ekumeku, however, became a great source of Igbo nationalism.

The Ekumeku Movement is unique in Igbo history for two reasons. First, the length of time the movement endured, comprising Military campaigns over a period of thirty one years. Secondly it is the outstanding example in Igbo Civilization of an attempt to unite previously disunited states to resist the invader. You have seen that one crucial reason for Igbo defeat was the great discrepancy of scale between the average Igbo community and the colonial invader. The British decided on a preemptive strike, and in December, 1902 sent a powerful expedition which systematically destroyed a number of towns and imprisoned their leaders. This, it was assumed, was the end of the Ekumeku.. "the Ekumeku and other secret societies have been completely broken".

In 1904, the Ekumeku rose again. This time they changed their tactics, mistakenly, it would seem in retrospect, abandoning the united guerilla warfare of 1898 for the individual defense of each town. The last act of the Eureka drama began in late 1909. The occasion was a succession dispute in Ogwashi-Uku. One of the claimants, Nzekwe, the son of the last Obi, feared that the British would deprive him of his throne, and decided to fight for his inheritance. On November 2, 1909, the British sent an expedition to Ogwashi-Uku to kill everyone in Ogwashi-Uku but they failed in the expedition. The British perceived, in the whole Asaba hinterland, a sympathy with the Ekumeku, and a disposition to throw off government authority. In 1911, there was a final round-up of Ekumeku leaders in various towns that was followed, once more, by Imprisonments.

The acting lieutenant-governor of the southern provinces sent an agitated telegram to Lagos: "Whole country is above area... is the state of rebellion". Reinforcements arrived from Lokoja, and the British proceeded to a confrontation at Akegbe. We quote both the contemporary British accounts to the battle at Nkwo market.

The War

With the invasion of Ndoni in 1870 and bombardment of Onicha-Ado (Onitsha) on November 2, 1897, the stage was set for the Ekumeku war that engulfed the whole of western Igbo region. The Royal Niger Company (RNC) commanded by Major Testing engaged Ibusa in 1898, and in 1904 it was the people of Owa/Ukwunzu against the British in a war that W. E. B. Crawford Coupland requested for more arms to crush the western Igbo communities. Owa would once again engage the British in 1906 in battle that S. O Crewe lost his own life. On November 2, 1909, it was finally the turn of Ogwashi-Uku who matched the British. In this war the British sustained many casualties with the death of H. C. Chapman.

Aftermath

Although the Ekumeku failed in 1914, but the western Igbo treasure their memory as imperishable legacy. Heroes included Dunkwu Isus of Onicha-Olona, Nwabuzo Iyogolo of Ogwashi-Uku, Awuno Ugbo, Obi of Akumazi, Agbambu Oshue of Igbuzo, Idahor of Issele-Uku, Ochei Nwayazia of Onicha-Olona, Abuzu of Idumuje-Unor, Idegwu Otokpoike of Ubulu-Uku are still remembered in Western Igboland. The Ekemeku War is one of the greatest resistances to the British empire and inspired later rebellions such as the Mau Mau of Kenya. Thrown out discarded dump into useful aesthetic images. It also by doing that examined the natural materials in sculpture and after which it came up with the exploration of cans containers with cement as adhesive.

2. THE CONCEPT OF RECYCLING WASTE MATERIALS

Recycling is a key component of modern waste reduction. It is inline with Government introduction of environmental sanitation policy which has being helping to reduce waste pollution in recent time in our society. It involves processing used material discarded things into new useful product to check waste of spreading diseases. Also by so do, it reduces energy usage, utilization of fresh materials reduces gas from decayed stuffs and water pollution.

Waste from dustbins, bushes and our surrounding makes up recyclable materials which include all kinds of packaged food, cans, drink cans kinds of metal, rubber, plastics, wood chips and saw dust from wood market, papers from industries, glasses, etc to mention but a few refuse. These materials are picked from their dumped centre. Then sorted as rejected unneeded, cleaned and reprocessed into new materials of what the society regarded as a waste. The rejected house turn out to be the corner stone of the building. 1st Peter 2:7 and Mat. 21:42. The moral reject according to Gushem (2005), refers simply to materials that society considered as to a waste, never to do well again, that are discarded or put aside, thrown away as not good enough to be kept and materials that artists have globally refused to accept as conventional means.

These found objects, in most cases are assumpt around our surroundings because we live with them. Scavenging for these found objects maybe a laborious tusk for many artist. Recycling of materials in this dispensation is a welcomed development. For the industries, manufactures, etc of products and the Artists are involved and could produce a fresh supply of goods and services to the society at large. Artist can go to the scrap market to buy things cheaply as alternative to scavenging to avoid injuries in a time of economic meltdown facing Nigerian today.

Recycling of materials in this perspective would be converted into new ones. Glass and bottles are collected, cleaned crushed and re-melted for new glasses or bottles, so are other recyclable items being processed into new products. This paper therefore interrogates this genre of Arts and draws attention to revitalize the motion that contemporary sculpture has gone beyond just serving the purpose of utility and aesthetics with red-typed materials. It has also been indirectly incorporated into modern day means of searching for new ways of identification. Hence Artist search for recirculation of waste to life. Dead materials resurrection into a new life.

Local Content Drive

Local content drive of sources of sculpture materials is a new dimension of solving problems of contemporary use of waste materials for making sculpture. This paper is an exploration of local waste contents possibly in making forms. This will contribute to the reduction of cost of materials for making sculpture. Also direct students interest out of popular uses of conventional materials alone. A Synthesis of both new and old forms of materials could certainly make sense.

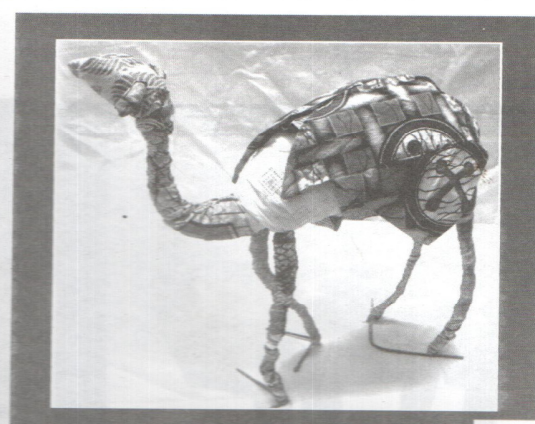
Kinetic Sculpture

Motion impact are made with un-conventional synthesis of electrical, mechanical and natural devices of which kinetic sculpture is derived. Looking for unpopular materials not in use or known for making sculpture and how to use them in studio exploration of today is my focus. How to use these materials to produce an effigy titled “the Ekumeku Warrior”. Artist are common with experimentation with all kinds of materials for expression as freely as possible. Through creative impulse into exploration of other means of making art. This study has led me to finding new ways of using the traditional known sculpture materials synthesis. It is in furtherance of new ways into kinetic sculpture that resorted to using elements of waste as a material for expression.

Waste Materials as a Medium of Art Expression: A Sculptural Approach

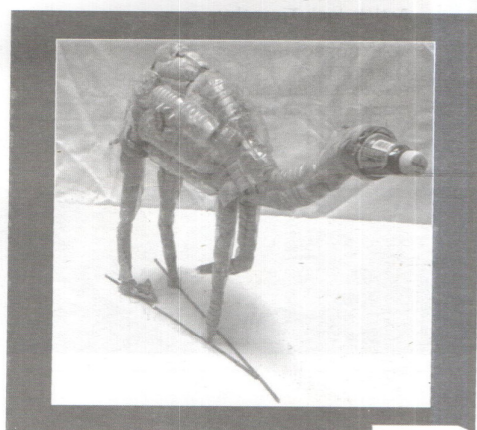


Title: **Camel**
Artist: Asema Terkimbi
Medium: Sugar Cane Shaft
Size: 100 x 60cm
Date: 2012
Photo: Lasisi Lamidi, Dept. of Fine Arts, ABU, Zaria



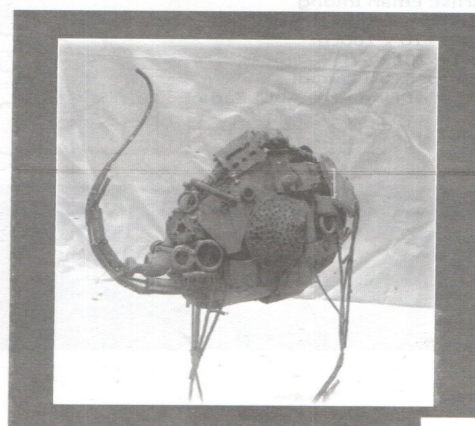
Title: **Camel**
Artist: Adasto Margaret
Medium: Fabrics
Size: 80 x 70cm
Date: 2012
Photo: Lasisi Lamidi, Dept. of Fine Arts, ABU, Zaria

Fig. 2(a) Pictures Made For Waste Materials



Title: **Camel**
Artist: Kumaga Zipporah
Medium: Plastics
Size: 90 x 60cm
Date: 2012
Photo: Lasisi Lamidi, Dept. of Fine Arts, ABU, Zaria

Plate 3



Title: **Camel**
Artist: Daniel Elias
Medium: Metal
Size: 80 x 60cm
Date: 2012
Photo: Lasisi Lamidi, Dept. of Fine Arts, ABU, Zaria

Plate 4

Fig. 2(b) Pictures Made For Waste Materials

Sugarcane chip, fabrics, plastics, metal, plantain leaves, bottle covers, thrown out, aluminum sheets, cans drinks from dustbin etc and its management became the focus. Since it has also been an issue around the environment. These issues range from the nature of waste, the appropriateness of its disposal and the place to dispose of it. While most advanced countries can be said to have developed a fairly effective means of managing waste, this can not be the case in Nigeria. Waste disposal is a big problem confronting the Nigerian society today. Its consequences therefore cannot be overruled. It certainly results to poor hygiene and ill health, flooding and other forms of environmental hazards.

The interest in using some waste materials as mentioned above for expression of sculpture is an integrated solution for reduction of these waste items which are found useful for the making of sculpture. It is interesting to note that unconventional materials are mostly issues of waste elements found in the dust bin. Artist interest in using them to improve their creative ingenuity is a welcomed development which this paper highlight a few ways to adopt normal run-out life waste adoption of mixed media materials as the vehicle for expression of traditional resistance of our people during the Ekumeku fight of 1902.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper considered the use of waste and unconventional materials as very important and necessary for Artists, particularly sculptors. Sculptors should look into the potentials and prospect of using waste materials in exploring their concept. These materials are available in our environment and can be sourced by expending little or no financial resources on them.

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