

AN ANALYSIS OF PHILIP OBED GUSHEM'S PAINTINGS AND STYLISTIC IDENTITY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation titled “AN ANALYSIS OF PHILIP OBED GUSHEM’S PAINTINGS AND STYLISTIC IDENTITY” has been written by me in the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The information derived from the literature are duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree at any degree awarding institution of learning.

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Name of student

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation titled “AN ANALYSIS OF PHILIP OBED GUSHEM’S PAINTINGS AND STYLISTIC IDENTITY” by IGOMU, Oga Kizito meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts (M.A) in Art History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contributions to knowledge and literary presentations.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved family members.

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ABSTRACT

Identity is synonymous to a trademark which is patented to a product; identity makes a person look or appear unique and hence, stand out amongst a vast number of people. It is like a signature which is supposed to be privy to an individual. The research titled “AN ANALYSIS OF PHILIP OBED GUSHEM’S PAINTINGS AND STYLISTIC IDENTITY” is on the stylistic identity inherent in the paintings of Philip Obed Gushem with the aim of projecting the search for identity in his paintings which was carried out by the artist in a studio experiment research from 1994 to 1998. The research problem is the undocumented studio oriented research carried out by Philip Obed Gushem from 1994 to 1998 on a search for identity in his paintings. The scope of the study was restricted to the paintings produced by the artist from 1994 to 1998. The literature considered; review of definitions and aspects of identity, review of literature on the Zaria Art School and review of specific literature on Philip Obed Gushem’s paintings. The purposive sampling technique was used to select thirteen (13) of Philip Obed Gushem’s paintings done between 1994 and 1998. In data analysis, the historical and descriptive approaches were adopted. The paintings analysed were grouped into three categories; 1994 to 1995 which was done shortly after the completion of his Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A) degree programme in 1990. The second category was from 1995 to 1997, and the third category was produced in 1998. The research discovered that, Philip Obed Gushem draws his inspiration to paint from the environment in which he finds himself, which is the reason why his paintings studied in this work depicts the scenery and culture of northern Nigeria. Finally, this study recommends that, younger and upcoming artists be encouraged on their individual direction while relinquishing the idea or habit of copying other people’s works particularly from the internet.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The search for identity has been a conscious effort of humanity right from prehistoric times to date. It is about trying to stand out amongst many; having something unique by which one can be identified with. Rebay (2016) states that, “certain aspects of prehistoric identities entailed building blocks of how people saw themselves which include; age, gender, descent, social relationships, ethnicity, status and religion; where many of these aspects are inextricably linked to the human body”. Jarmin (2017) states: “Wouldn’t it be great if others immediately identify a work of art as yours because of the style used?” The need to establish and create a distinguishing personality of an individual, or the need to make something different in a unique way points to the search for identity. Philip Obed Gushem, hereby referred to as Gushem, is the subject matter of this study. He is a Nigerian artist who undertook a studio oriented research from 1994 to 1998 in a search for identity in his paintings. Gamble (2007) opines that, identity has many facets but prominent of all is human identity. The author states that, human identity entails how humans perceive themselves and explore relationships between people and their possessions. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2018) defines identity as “the qualities and beliefs that make a particular person or group different from others”.

Mocnik (2016) states that, “Identity is an ideological mechanism that has become particularly important during the last decades”. The author further opines that, identity is not a process, but an effect; it is the result of the psychic process of identification. Defining and representing identity whether one’s individuality or as part of a group, community or nation, is integral to human experience; belonging to a community, group, city or nation is an important component of one’s identity. Furthermore, buildings are significant expressions of group identity as they are

designed to be powerful markers of identity. Not only that, The British Museum (2015) opines that, buildings inspire community members, remind them of their group affiliations and provide a venue for festivals and rituals which are all components of identity formation. Mocnik (2016) opines that, what makes humanity unique is the complex of different identities being embodied, some of which are cultural, political, religious, linguistic, national, local and social. The author is of the view that, culture should operate as mechanism of social cohesion. Furthermore, culture is a delicate function in times when inequality is rising in most parts of the world, including those parts where a high level of social inequality was achieved in the past, such as some Western European countries like France, Germany and Netherlands. Also, the former socialist countries like the People's Republic of China, Republic of Cuba and the Republic of Vietnam. The author is of the view that, the European countries and the European Union injected the idea of 'culture' with the intention to mend the miseries of contemporary society but, has rather "culturalised" its conflicts, that is, translated them into ethnic, religious and similar confrontations. Instead of "ghetto proletariat", some European countries now say "second generation of immigrants" and in this way, 'cultural identity' seems to have become an instrument of control and discipline. The British Museum (2015) further states that "In cultural identity, adornments with clothing, jewellery and badges can be used to express identity, indicate membership and declare beliefs whether religious or political".

Background of the Study

Gushem is one of the graduates of Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He was born on the 17th December, 1958 in Gurum, Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Obed D. Gushem from Takkas, Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. He had his Primary education at Demonstration

Primary School, Gindiri, Mangu Local Government Area, Plateau State, from 1967 to 1973. His fascination for art started from his days in primary school at about the age of 11 years. His class teacher at the time gave pupils assignments to make illustrations of bible stories on paper after having taught the pupils lessons from the bible. Most of the pupils made their illustrations with renditions in lines and figures on paper such that, the illustrations had resemblance with illustrations done by the cave men. Gushem on the other hand, would draw images of humans though not schematic, but in 3-dimensional manner using colour pencil, crayon and water colour on paper. He was able to develop forms and volumes in such drawings. The various assignments given by Gushem's teacher developed his potentials in creativity. He proceeded to have his Secondary education in Gindiri at the Boys' Secondary School from 1973 to 1977. While in secondary school, this newly discovered potential was further developed upon. When Gushem was a student in Junior Secondary School, he participated in art competitions organised among the various houses where at every stage, he emerged overall best. Still not relenting, Gushem contested in the inter-house competitions when he got promoted to Senior Secondary School. At this level, he emerged second overall until his major contender who was in SS3 graduated from school, and then he assumed first position and maintained so in subsequent competitions until his graduation from secondary school in 1977. During his secondary level of education, Gushem received training from a Briton, Mrs. E. R. Mather who encouraged him and other students to participate in exhibitions organised by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Gushem was highly inspired by God created elements such as; mountains, rocks, hills or colours seen in the environment. He believes the use of colour by an artist is able to affect a person psychologically. Gushem participated in the Festival of Arts and Culture competitions and won the second and first prize positions in 1975 and 1976 respectively. He started his tertiary education and obtained a Diploma in Fine Arts in 1984 at the Department

of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University. Gushem was determined to acquire more knowledge thus, he enrolled at the same institution and obtained his First degree in Fine Art in the year 1987. He proceeded with his study to obtain a Masters degree, specialising in Painting in 1990 and by 2011, he obtained a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) specialising in Art History, all at the same institution.

Gushem took up an appointment with Ahmadu Bello University as an Assistant Lecturer on the 8th April, 1991. He has organised and participated in solo and group exhibitions within and outside Nigeria. Gushem has attended several international and local conferences, and has to his credit fifteen (15) Papers presented at various conferences and Seminars and over 40 article publications in reputable journals. He is presently a Professor of Painting and a lecturer at the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

The interface between painting and indeed, all art and society is arguably as old as both phenomena-art and society (Ikoro, 2015). Lorblanchet (2007) is of the view that, the very concept of the 'birth' or 'origin' of art may seem inappropriate since humans are by nature artists and the history of art begins with that of humanity. In other words, in their artistic impulses, humans express their ability to establish a beneficial and positive relationship with their environment. To further buttress this statement, Collins and Onians (1978) state that, man had been in existence for over a million years around 30,000BC and throughout that period, man was engaged in shaping materials and making stone tools presumably to assist him in such tasks as hunting, self-defense from enemies, preparing food, constructing shelters and making simple clothing. Both authors opine that, such fabricated materials were majorly made from various items such as stones, bones from certain animals and wood acquired from cut down trees which generally served domestic and other purposes.

The impact of colonialism on painting in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. Abodunrin and Oladiti in Ikoro (2015) capture it thus: “The development of painting in colonial Nigeria is a turning point in the history of art in Nigeria; this period marked a shift in the cultural techniques of painting from religious and decorative purpose to new forms in techniques, materials and style of painting”. Unlike the pre-colonial era, the colonial era witnessed the application of synthetic substances to create a representational, abstract picture or design on prepared surfaces such as canvas, board, paper, wall and other improvised surfaces. Ikoro (2015) states that, the artistic development during this period was bold and tedious, but steady in the face of numerous constraints created by colonial influence with European contact in Nigeria. Chukueggu (2010) states that, the British Colonial Government in Nigeria did not deem it fit to establish institutions of higher learning in the country. This was so because they felt threatened by the activities of the pro-independence politicians, who mostly acquired higher degrees from universities abroad and as a result, would obviously produce more politicians and radicals who might eventually lead a rebellion against them. The contact with the British colonial authorities between 1900 and 1938 is referred to as, the period of sowing the Seed of Formal Art Training in Nigeria (Iriwieri in Ikoro, 2015). The author further states that, this contact is what manifested in the introduction of formal and non-formal art training with the effort of AinaOnabolu (1882-1963) who initiated this transition into the practice of painting. Therefore, AinaOnabolu was one of the foremost Nigerian artists who recognised the importance of teaching art in schools, and the possibility of developing the Nigerian society through art. Banjoko (2009) explains that, despite the British colonial indifference to the development of art in the country, AinaOnabolu still lobbied the colonial authorities for the establishment of schools around the country.

Ikoro (2015) is of the view that, in discussing the history of painting in Nigeria, another major contributor to its development is Kenneth Murray who was a British Citizen. The author states that, Kenneth Murray was invited by the colonial government to modify the curriculum in the newly established Nigerian schools. Furthermore, the author states that, Murray stimulated the need for traditionalism in art as opposed to Western influence or convention, believing that the forms of representation of art particularly in painting should be more of African than European orientation. As a result, he encouraged the adaptation of indigenous elements and forms which greatly influenced the style of painting in Nigeria. Oloidi in Ikoro (2015) describes Murray as the pioneer of modernist movement of Art in Nigeria. The author further explains that, towards the end of the colonial era, Nigeria had developed two different painting styles which were championed by Onabolu and Murray. The author also explains that, Onabolu's style was characterised by the dominance of Western influences and motifs, whereas that of Murray was defined by the predominance of Nigerian traditional and indigenous influences. To further buttress this point, Abodunrin and Oladiti in Ikoro (2015) write that:

By 1950s, Nigeria had developed two different and divergent styles being championed by the pioneer, Aina Onabolu and the other by Kenneth Murray; Onabolu's style of painting is credited for his philosophical belief that, painting should be a universal language of expression which can be seen in his realistic and naturalistic tendency while Murray's style of painting is more of cultural forms and adaptations of African elements which metamorphose into individual identity.

Chukueggu (2010) explains that, the dogged pressure mounted on the British colonial authorities by Nigerians on the need to establish higher institutions in the country, as well as the demand to cater for the much needed middle level manpower of the colonial administration, forced the British colonial government to setup a two-man Higher Education Committee in 1950. The author opines that, some of the suggestions proffered by some Nigerian elites were deliberately ignored by the Committee, which composed among others, Dr J. P. Harlow and Dr W. H. Thorp.

The colonial government accepted the recommendations of the Committee and appointed a member of the panel, Dr W. H. Thorp as the Principal of the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Ibadan. The College had two campuses at Ibadan and Zaria. Furthermore, the author explains that Architecture and Fine Arts Units, formally operating at Ibadan campus were transferred to the Zaria branch which marked the inception of the Zaria Art School. Babalola (2002) explains that, the School started academic activities in 1955, and became the pioneer and formal Art School which was saddled with the responsibility of pioneering art education among higher institutions in Nigeria. Furthermore, the author states that, prominent among the initial intake of eight students to the Fine Arts programme were, Solomon Irene Wangboje (1931-1998) and Simon Okeke (1937-1969). Samaila (2004) opines that, right from inception, the Zaria Art School has produced many world-class artists, academics and administrators numbering their thousands. Babalola (2002) mentions that, most of such academics and administrators consequently established and run studios amongst other achievements around the country such as Demas Nwoko's New Culture Studio in Ibadan; Bruce Onobrakpeya was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by the University of Ibadan, Nigeria in 1989. The author mentions a Sculpture Workshop organised by the Zaria Art School, where sculptors from Yaba Polytechnic, the host school and some from Germany and Holland were in attendance. Furthermore, the author mentions that, T A. Fasuyi was the first graduate in painting from this institution in 1959. Several other notable painters in Nigeria graduated from this institution and have made local and international appearances, some of whom are, L. T. Bentu, GaniOdutokun, Jerry Buhari, Mohammed Muazu, Jacob Jari and KefasDanjuma.

Therefore, "The Search for Identity" in modern and contemporary art, explores the ways Gushem has understood and conveyed the essence of the 'self' through a selection of paintings.

It also explores the way Gushem shows human expressions, body language and dress. Thus the notion of ‘self’ is the essential quality that makes Gushem distinct from all others, on the other hand, many artists use their works to express, explore and question ideas about identity (www.moma.org). Most of the time, Gushem is identified through his works, either by the strokes of the brush or the predominant colours used. In other words, just with a glance at a painting, the artist is identified.

Jarmin (2017) opines that, it will not be proper to limit discussions on ‘identity’ to artists alone’. The author is of the view that, some people are born with their own styles and this cuts across various areas such as dance, poetry, literature; these are the ones who do not need to exert any effort in finding their voices, as styles used are specific to them. Furthermore, the author states that, “writers also have their own ways of putting stories on paper; it is certain that there is a fraction of people who are gifted with natural identity”.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher observes that, there has been documentations done on the paintings of Philip Obed Gushem which were captured in many journals, literature, thesis and undergraduate projects found in the library of the Fine Art Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In view of this therefore, the problem of this study is the undocumented studio oriented research carried out by Philip Obed Gushem from 1994 to 1998 on a search for identity in his paintings.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to project the search for stylistic identity in the paintings of Philip Obed Gushem, while the objectives are to:

- i. investigate the incitement behind Gushem's paintings;
- ii. examine the media employed by the artist;
- iii. analyse the forms and contents of Gushem's paintings and
- iv. examine the identity of the artist.

Research Questions

- i. In what way is Gushem motivated to execute his paintings?
- ii. What are the types of media employed by Gushem in executing his paintings?
- iii. What are the forms and contents inherent in Gushem's paintings?
- iv. What is Gushem's stylistic identity?

Justification of the Study

Jarmin (2017) opines that, when one sees a painting for the first time, in one way or another, there seems to be an emotional connection which is triggered by the style, in other words, the identity of the artist. There are no specific laid down guidelines to finding a connection between the individual and an artwork; it pops up in the most unexpected way, and this is to say that an artist who is able to create this feeling in the mind of a client is closing in on his or her own style. This research is justified for these reasons: Gushem seeks to sustain a connection between his paintings and viewers or possible clients; finding a unique path to discovering 'self' in his paintings and establishing the feel of originality to his art.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the findings of this study will spur creativity and the search for identity, not only in painting but in other artworks. It is also hoped that, the study will further give the painting

practice an opportunity to creating new knowledge from existing knowledge, thereby contributing to the art of painting, and invariably other areas of art such as; ceramics, textiles, graphics and sculpture. This is significant also for being, conceivably, the first available scholarly document on a Nigerian painter and the search for stylistic identity, and would serve as a repository of modern art in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study is restricted to selected paintings of Philip Obed Gushem from 1994 to 1998. The researcher chose this period because, it is within the stated time that Gushem began a Studio oriented research on the search for identity in his paintings.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the concept postulated by Jarmin (2017) which states ‘styles are like thumbprints and serve as identity’. This theory emanated from a study on a search for ‘self’ or ‘individuality’, which sought to find a voice for the individual artist. The author states that, “finding one’s voice and developing one’s own style may be a difficult journey but, as the artist persists in this quest by not relenting in producing more artworks, he may eventually discover it though, some may never discover theirs”. Richard H. Axsom, the curator of collections from MMoCA (2010) upheld this theory stating that; “for the artist, the true self is fluid and innate”. This implies that, the artist should have a style that is unique to him or her; in other words, clients or the public should see and easily attribute a displayed artwork to an artist. Identity basically has to do with the way an individual expresses himself.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this Chapter, the focus is on reviewing pertinent literature on various aspects of identity studies, as they relate to the paintings of Philip Obed Gushem, the Zaria Art School where the artist is an alumnus, and the paintings of the artist. Information sourced from related literature are reviewed under the following sub-headings:

- i. Review of various definitions and aspects of identity
- ii. Review of literature on the Zaria Art School
- iii. Review of specific literature on Philip Obed Gushem's paintings

Review of Definitions and Aspects of Identity

The sub-heading attempts to give an insight to various aspects, conceptions and definitions of identity by various authors. Lee (2016), for instance, asserts that it is difficult to define what identity is in general, as the definition becomes clearer in the case of a specific identity. The implication is, the idea of identities can be known by studying different types of identities. In order to have a good understanding of what constitutes identities, the author is of the opinion that, there is a need to review different conceptions of identity by various authors. Fearon in Lee (2016) opines that, there is no unified definition of identities in spite of the increasing interest in the search for identities in the fields of arts, social sciences and humanities. The author lists the following brief definitions from various articles:

- i. Identity is “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others”. (Hogg and Abrams, 1988)
- ii. Identity “refers to the way in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities. (Jenkins, 1996)
- iii. Identities are “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self”. (Wendt, 1992)
- iv. “The term identity (by convention) references mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other”. (Katzenstein, 1996)
- v. “Identities are.... prescriptive representations of political actors themselves and of their relationships to each other”. (Kowert and Legro, 1996)
- vi. “Identity is used to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others, on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language and culture” (Deng, 1995)

Diaz (2018) opines that, art and identity have an intrinsic relationship. The work of art not only allows the artist to identify himself or herself with his or her work, but also reflects the community to which he or she belongs. The author states: “Art has a double barreled function; art is that which the artist creates, namely the work of art: art is also, that which creates the artist because in reality, art creates much more than the artist”. Dewey in Diaz (2018) opines that, if art is a double barreled word, then the claim is that, the artist is affected by his or her transactions with his or her environment in his or her everyday experience, and goes on to transform these experiences through the creative process of making a work of art. The work of art is, to an extent, a reflection of the artist and his or her experiences. In relation to this, Banjoko (2009) defines a work of art as, the visual and non-visual representation of human thoughts. Diaz (2018)

states in a rhetorical question: “Traditionally, art has been considered to be a form of expression, or something that is pleasing to the eyes but, is this it?” Furthermore, the author considers other questions as: “Is there any more significance to art, besides placing it behind glass or hanging it on our walls? What is the relationship between art, identity and everyday experience?” The author is of the opinion that, art can be the expression of the artist who creates it, and that he or she can observe the work of art and identify him or herself with it. An artist may look at his or her work of art and admit that, he or she was inspired by elements within his or her immediate environment or his or her everyday experience. Some of such elements could be the natural scenery such as mountains, plantations, hills or rocks. Some of the everyday experiences could be activities in the home as celebrations or daily chores, bereavement, children hawking on the streets, teenagers fighting in a corner of the street, activities of politicians or road side mechanics among others. The implication is, artists have sensibility and therefore, can be aesthetically affected by any or all of the elements or experiences around them. This is to say that; artwork created by an artist is in most cases, a product of life experiences or daily encounters. Diaz (2018) states: “The work of art created by the artist reflects and transforms the elements of his everyday experience; he in turn can look at his work and see himself in it, he can see who he is as reflected in his work, the artwork becomes his identity”.

In other words, an artwork is a noticeable extension of the identity of the artist into the immediate environment or the world at large. In the terms of Karl Marx, a renowned German philosopher, “The artist is one with his works; he is far from being alienated with his work”. Diaz (2018) asserts thus, “An artist should be able to look at his works and observe his personal development over time; each works of art created by the individual artist reflects a time period, a context and a stage in his life” Therefore in his or her works of art, the artist can see the stages of

development and unveiling of his or her identity through time. The researcher observes that, the paintings of Gushem reflects and transforms elements, which are particularly from his immediate environment and his beliefs, therefore other people beside the artist should be able to identify with his works of art which are unique to him.

Facos and Hirsh (2003) observe that, the visual arts have helped in marking the national identity of a people. The authors opine that, national identity is the feeling of who someone is, particularly relating to a nation or country. Intellectuals in all disciplines strove to define unique national identities embodying what they believed to be the most essential and distinguishing characteristics of their nations. Political and ethnic entities also operate under similar pressures to arrive at a singular ‘goal’ of national identity but, the authors opine that, they differed markedly, not only in how they conceptualised what identity was, but also in the frequently contentious manner in which they attempted to express and realise it. Despite this diversity, they all turned to the visual arts – from exhibitions, folk art and architecture. The authors state that, nationalistic expression therefore became a critical component of art as from the late nineteenth century, a period more often studied as the crucible of modernism and the zenith of individual genius. Linguistics, religion, race, geography and history constituted the main arenas for the mining of national features, but even these were swarming with difficulty because of their complex intersections and overlapping; they were also burdened by religious friction and racism. The authors further state that; “art became a melting point of portraying national identity.”

Lee (2016) opines that, social identity which is one of the types of identity is the most widely used conceptual framework in the study of identities. Tajfel in Lee (2016) defines social identity as “A part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that

membership”. Tajfel (1979) opines that, social identity is defined as a person’s sense of who they are, based on their group affiliations or membership. The author proposes that, the groups such as family, social class, football teams, religious groups, social clubs and others which people belong to, are important sources of pride and self-esteem. In other words, every society is composed of some or most of these groups which members of a society take pride in being identified with. Thus, Jenkins (2008) states that, “Without social identity, there is no society”.

Wikipedia (en.m.wikipedia.org, 2018) states that, Cultural identity can be expressed through certain styles of clothing or other aesthetic markers. Furthermore, it states that, cultural identity is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person’s self-conception and self-perception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture. In this way, cultural identity is both characteristic of the individual but, also of the culturally identical group of members sharing the same cultural identity or upbringing.

Saad (2017) defines cultural identity as a set of moral and aesthetic values, along with common language that binds a society’s members, enabling the same community to build its real character through education, culture and employment which in turn affects the world, people’s role and image in it. The author observes that, there are certain unique changes that influenced the Egyptian culture and gave its identity that has developed through the years until recently whereby political, economic and social changes are attributed to the instability experienced in the Egyptian cultural identity of the 2011 revolution. The author further observes that, Culture and arts (visual arts included) embody the values of most societies, and define the basis of the good mental health of such societies. These practices build an individual and collective sense of identity and citizenship. El-kasas in Saad (2017) states that; “Culture is a kind of ‘thinking’ or

‘making’ which enables people to form and develop their identity”. Furthermore, the author gives an instance with the changes in the religious ideas that appeared in Egypt since the 80’s, and have continued to post 2011 that have also affected the Egyptian identity. Saad (2017) observes that, at the dawn of the 20th Century, Egyptians, after a long time of foreign occupation, were united in their aspiration for a modern nation, and were also searching for their national identity. The author equally remarks that, “Arts, visual arts in particular was included and was an essential way to express this identity and to express freedom from foreign domination”. It was a manifestation of the intellectual discourse led by material male and female liberals, with writers, poets, plastic and visual artists among them. Mikdadi in Saad (2017) asserts that, the arts in Egypt changed and developed, the local cinema industry was established and it flourished to the point that led the Arab territory in these fields. The author observes that, in the second half of 20th century, artists in Egypt suffered from the absence of venues which invariably restricted creativity, hence they found themselves isolated, which led many moving to Europe where they and their works were appreciated, there they also had better access to necessary materials. Such Egyptian artists returned almost annually to participate in artistic manifestations hence, they continued to have a significant impact on local trends, as they also brought a lot of encouragement to some of the small but upcoming local artists. Saad (2017) states that, Egypt’s history and its particularity always reflects on its cultural identity; cultural identity is therefore as a result of the economic, political and social aspects. The special characteristics of Egypt such as technology and multimedia also influence Egyptian visual arts, and this is somehow related to the fact that, visual arts can emphasise cultural identity. Clyn and Jupp (2011) observe that, learning visual arts helps people to understand multiculturalism and integration, the reason why an artist is usually more mature and sensitive compared to an ordinary person. As a result of the critical role visual arts play in confirming the cultural identity of a people, the authors state that:

“Visual artists should be given more space to express themselves, given that they contribute to the evolution of society and they emphasise on, and enhance its cultural identity”. Saad (2017) states:

Visual arts play a role in bringing up an individual who is able to develop objectives, achieve goals, be a well-rounded member of a society and think positively and creatively. Arts play a prominent role in confirming social values, organising the surrounding environment, developing communities on the social and economic level and showing the level of social and economic progress within a society.

Furthermore, the author is of the view that, visual arts also play an important role in improving the cultural identity of a society by giving room or a good platform for people to express themselves and point out societal issues that should be addressed. Artists also use the visual arts to protest against systems that are presumed not to work well, and to link between cultural groups, which also enhances the society’s cultural identity.

Review of literature on the Zaria Art School

This section reviews some selected literature on the Art School by some authors. The information sourced were from books, unpublished Masters in Fine Arts theses and the internet. Chukueggu (2010) states that, the British colonial government in 1952 established the Nigerian College of Arts Science and Technology with DrW.H.Thorp as the Principal of the two college campuses located in Ibadan and Zaria. The College came into existence through the ordinance No.12 of the Colonial Government Edit. Both campuses were officially declared open on the 27th of February, 1954 by the Governor-General of Nigeria Sir J.J. Macpherson. He was supported by the then Central Minister of Education, HonourableShettimaKashim.

Onobrakpeya in Rekwot (2009) states that, during the early years of the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Zaria which is now the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello

University, Zaria, a few students pursuing a same cause came under a name of ‘Zaria Art Society’. The students brought about a shift from the traditional art to modern art. According to the author, the students who were also classmates were; UcheOkeke who was the president, Demas Nwoko and Bruce Onobrakpeya. The three were the pioneer members of the Zaria Art Society. Subsequently, Yusuf Grillo, Simon Okeke, OselokaOsadebe, OkechukwuOdita and OgbonayaNwagbara who were also students, joined the pioneer members thereby, raising the number of members to eight. The author further states that, the young artists took pride in outdoor drawings done in public places like market squares.

Rekwot (2009) opines that, the Zaria Art Society helped to create a sense of pride and respect for what is beautiful, irrespective of where it originated from. Ikpakronyi in Rekwot (2009) asserts that, the society also helped to build self-identity among the artists which in turn, ceased the assimilation of foreign cultures. As a result of some of the activities of the young artists of the Zaria Art Society, the attention of some Europeans was drawn. In particular, Michael Crowder, who was the Director of the Exhibition Centre in Lagos which was under the Ministry of Information and UlliBeier, who was involved in organising workshops around the country both got the news of some of the achievements of the group. These expatriates visited Zaria in 1960 where they saw firsthand, what the students in the College were doing.

Adepegba (1998) opines that, Beier’s observation on the Zaria Art Society was that, the students’ talents began to unfold in the course of their training. The author asserts that, Beier commended the Nigerian artists and how they were chiefly concerned with establishing a new identity. Beier in Rekwot (2009) states that, “UcheOkeke was known as a collector of Igbo folklore and, much of his best works were directly inspired by it”. The author further states thus; “UcheOkeke was chiefly interested in finding a Nigerian orientation to his art, invariably in search for an identity”.

Review of specific literature on Philip Obed Gushem's paintings

In this section, is a review of information gathered on the paintings of Philip Obed Gushem by some other artists and authors. The information were sourced from the internet, exhibition catalogues, unpublished Master of Fine Art (MFA) theses and unpublished undergraduate projects. Having done a perusal of various available literature and considering the paintings of Gushem, the researcher observes that, there is scanty literature on the works of the artist except in a few exhibition catalogues, unpublished undergraduate projects and postgraduate theses, magazines and newspaper reviews. For the purpose of this research, the following available literatures are reviewed:

Jari in Rekwot (2009) opines that, the metamorphosis of Gushem's paintings is affected by the landscape and various activities of Zaria City. Babalola (2002) describes Zaria as a pure, inviting and stimulating environment. The author mentions some permanent sceneries of Zaria City such as tall and lanky baobab trees, which sparsely line the road and are visible as visitors approach Zaria either by road or by rail. In addition, the author observes that, the markets had on display various fruits and wares neatly arranged on tables with the traders standing or sitting close by. Also seen hawking about, were slim Fulani women who were often dressed in their traditional attires hawking their cheese, millet balls (*fura*) and fermented milk(*nono*). Furthermore, were Fulani men who were also wearing large hats for protection from the heat of the sun, they were also dressed in their native attires and walking their cattle about as they grazed on available pasture. There were also donkeys seen heavily laden with goods and farm produce, gently plodding their way to the market along the various pathways.

The author mentions that, one sight that was pleasing to behold was the Sallah celebrations that displayed dignitaries, commoners and chiefs dressed in their attires and seated waiting for the

Emir to emerge. There was also the Durbar which is an interesting celebration, where horses were dressed in their best saddles and bridles of various colours in preparation for the ceremony. It is some of these sights, or activities seen around the environment that invariably inspire some of the paintings of Gushem. Jari in Rekwot (2009) observes that, Gushem has developed a style suggestive of a Chinese painter who believes in a divine spontaneous reproduction of observed landscapes through the use of several strokes of brush, dipped in different shades of selected number of colours. Typical of the aforementioned illustration, is one of the paintings of Gushem titled 'African forms and Images II' (Plate 1) which the researcher aligns with the illustration given of the Chinese painter.



Fig 1: African Forms and Images II, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 225 x 76cm, 1995, Artist Collection

The researcher observes that, the painting by Gushem portrays carefully selected hues in horizontal strokes, a combination of mostly yellow and dark blue. The painting done with oil on canvas, appears crowded and busy, nevertheless Jari in Rekwot (2009) states: “Gushem relies on all the qualities that a line possesses to work his compositions to agree with the basic principles of design”.

Danjuma in Rekwot (2009) states that, “Gushem sees space in painting as a given area that supports the purpose of expression; Gushem also views form in his paintings as usually abstract

and painted through the splash of colour, using a brush after which a line is used to give a clue to the beholder”. The author also notes that, Gushem views form from two major stand points: animate and inanimate forms. The animate form is particular about human and animal forms while the inanimate as the word implies, deals with landscapes and objects. Furthermore, the author opines that, Gushem achieves unity of form and space in his paintings through the use of colours of the same chrome which also forms part of his identity.

Samaila (2004) reports that, Gushem’s inspiration stems from nature and human activities, normal scenes in life and some aspects that have to do with Christian faith. The author states thus: “Gushem seems to derive pleasure in landscapes from his early days in Zaria till date”. It is obvious that, the environment in which Gushem finds himself motivates his artistic practice. Furthermore, the author opines that, Gushem sees space in painting as a given area on the support for expression. Forms are usually represented in abstract in the paintings of Gushem, this he achieves through the splashing of colour using brush strokes to define some parts of the human body which gives it form and solidity. The author states that, Gushem in his painting ‘The Messiah’ (Fig 2) reveals such fascinating brush strokes, which define figures at the foot of the cross where Jesus Christ is captioned on the old rugged cross as a perfect being, glorified into the atmosphere with the cross almost disappearing into the background in crystal white and milky colour.



Fig 2: The Messiah, Gushem, Oil on Canvas and Fabric, 70.1 x 45cm, 2000, Location Unknown

While making further analysis on the painting, the author states that, “the artist used colours of different hues to represent figures or personalities that have come to receive salvation for their sins”. The varieties of colours used in the painting are suggestive. Furthermore, the author is of the opinion that, the colours could suggest the various problems brought to Jesus Christ for purging; they could also explain the status of both great and small coming before their redeemer in solemnity of worship and for atonement.

Okungbowa in Rekwot (2009) is of the view that, Gushem stands out amongst Nigerian painters and charting a new direction that is quite distinct, intricate and perhaps revolutionary in nature. This author is of the opinion that, there is a norm which cuts across the artistic terrain in Nigeria but, Gushem’s paintings are transcendent. In another remark, the author states:

The feeling that one gets while going through Gushem’s collection of works, is that of an artist with creative favour in his bones and the knack to thread the path others fear to walk. This peculiar and distinguishing feature of Gushem is not an evidence of what is operative and obtainable today.

Furthermore, the author suggests that Gushem's sojourn into the creative world is something that is hardwired in him, and no wonder, he was considered as being stubborn by his teacher in primary school who felt young Gushem was threading a different path from what he was being taught in class. The author states, "Gushem's stubbornness and resilient intuition as it was then, was not just for the fun of it, but a way of giving vent to the creative instinct innate in him which he couldn't hold back at the time". The author further adds, "It takes the eagle's eyes of a trained and creative person to see through raw talent". In conclusion, the author reports Gushem as making this statement thus, "I felt merely scribbling lines on paper does not mean anything. I tried to visualise the human form with all the necessary appendages but the teacher didn't like it, and he tried to discourage me because he wasn't an artist. He felt I was stubborn".

Yohanna (2000) states that, "Gushem's approach in painting is to rely on visual resemblance, but his ability is to appreciate what is directly satisfying in itself". The author is of the opinion that, Gushem usually sees his subject in a multiple of angles and visions simultaneously and as such, tries to present the total essential reality of forms using multiple viewpoints. In an analysis, the author describes Gushem's painting with the theme, '11th of March, 1987' thus; a good depiction of the remains of a burnt Church, though rendered as an abstract painting. Further, the painting had an expressive character as a result of the strong sweeping brush strokes used by the artist. Also, the forms of the Church were intellectually broken down and analysed into geometric shapes with different shades of blue, green, yellow, orange and red which were skillfully applied to give a harmonious composition.

Similarly, in another of Gushem's paintings titled 'Carry Your Cross' which yet depicts the remains of a burnt Church, Yohanna (2000) states that, "The artist executed this work in a Cubist style". The cross in the painting also stands as the major structure at the center of the painting;

the building extends to the right hand side of the canvas in a diminishing order, giving an impression of perspective. The foreground portrays stylised human figures, each carrying a cross with some of the crosses stylised into curved swords. The author mentions that, the theme of the painting was derived from the Holy Bible, in the Book of Luke, Chapter 9 and verse 23 where Christ states, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me”. Further, the author opines that, the painting is a message, advising rioters that, religion is not in the senseless killings of humans, destruction and burning of places of worship rather, it is a personal affair between each individual and God. Also, the painting is a message to true followers of Christ who must take up their own cross and leave others to freely bear their crosses and worship God.

Saseun in Rekwot (2009), while analysing Gushem’s painting titled ‘Procession’ which was executed using oil on canvas, describes the artist as one that migrates from the realm of impressionism. The author is of the view that, Gushem’s depictions are rather ‘bizarre’ and sometimes almost nightmarish as the artist takes the beholder through a panoramic view of landscapes and floral vegetation. Further, the author is of the opinion that, Gushem can be best described as, ‘someone who strives to do away with stereotypes’.

Akolo (1996) opines that, Gushem was experimenting towards a search for identity. The Staff of the Painting Section of the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, displayed their works in an exhibition with the theme: ‘Paint Staff 1996’ organised in 1996 and held at AvanteGarde Art Gallery, Kaduna, Nigeria. The author opines that, the essence of the exhibition was an attempt to create awareness for artists, not only in Kaduna State but also in other parts of the country. It was the first attempt to take the exhibition outside the campus. The exhibition was

not only aimed at creating awareness for the artists, but was also aimed at enhancing the rich culture of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Modern Nigerian artists in their individual attempts at producing works of art have recorded significant progress in the field of art which has gained both local and international recognition. Rekwot (2009) opines that, the struggle in the search for freedom of expression and identity was first initiated by the Nigerian artists of 1950s and 1960s. Onobrakpeya in Rekwot (2009) similarly discusses about eight members of the Zaria Art Society who played a strong role in encouraging modern artists to carve a niche for themselves through their works, in other words to have an identity. James (2013) opines that, studies centered on the artistic developments of these various artists resulted in a handful of literature on their styles, techniques, colour scheme, themes and influences.

Having reviewed some comments and write-ups by various authors on some of the achievements of Gushem, it becomes apparent that, the artist has achieved an identity and also gained confidence in his paintings, some of which he acquired through his training at the Zaria Art School.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

This research is aimed at carrying out an analysis on the paintings of Philip Obed Gushem, with a focus on his search for identity. In order to carry out a purposeful and effective study, suitable research approaches were adopted in order to guide, assist and drive the study to a logical conclusion. Trochim (2009) states that,

Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge; it does not set out to provide solutions, rather it offers the theoretical underpinning for understanding which procedure or set of methods or so called “best practices” can be applied to a specific case.

Adetoro (1997) opines that, for a researcher to have a good grasp of a research being carried out, there should be a proper examination of various procedures. Osuala (2005) defines research as a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems, through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Kerlinger in Muhammad (2006) describes research procedure as plans, structure and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. Similarly, Okeke and Offoma in Dogara (2016) describe research method as, the plan or procedure to be adopted in a study. Denga and Ali (1989) state that, “research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation meant to obtain answers to research questions”.

The methodology used by the researcher are discussed under the following; Research Design, Method of Data Collection, Population and Sampling, Research Instrument and Tools, Interview, Photographs and Method of Data Analysis.

Research Design

A careful analysis of the paintings of Gushem requires a cautious approach that will result in meeting the stated objectives. In view of this therefore, this study adopts the qualitative method of enquiry, using descriptive and historical approaches. Sambo in Sani (2019) states: "...a qualitative research describes social phenomena of events and things, so as to understand the effect that such events or things have on the lives of individuals, groups, societies or cultures". James (2013) observes that, descriptive approach aides a researcher to create a real and vivid picture of the artist's approach to his or her works, while the historical approach is used to interpret gathered information. Obeka in James (2013) states that, "Descriptive research is a type of research that provides full clarification of the variables being studied". In the descriptive method, the researcher made use of snapped photographs of Gushem's paintings as basis to properly expound in details the artist's search for identity. On the other hand, historical method was employed to investigate the artist's interest, expression and style overtime.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through field work using primary and secondary sources. Bernet in Rekwot (2009) states that, "Everything to be known about artworks, medium, form, content in its totality as well as other socio-cultural elements should be documented through studies". Field work, according to Egonwa (1995), is a method which a researcher uses to obtain firsthand information. The primary source was obtained through an oral interview with the artist (Gushem), while the secondary sources were gotten through available literary materials relevant to this study. This was possible by reviewing various literature sourced from the internet, journals, books and unpublished theses from the library of the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In the course of the field work, the artist was visited; observations were

made during such visit, an interview was conducted and photographs were also taken with the permission of the artist.

Population and Sampling

In order to focus on what the researcher has set out to do, purposive sampling approach was used to select thirteen (13) of Gushem's paintings which were done between 1994 and 1998. The thirteen samples are of importance to this study because; it was within 1994 to 1998 that the artist carried out a studio oriented research on 'a search for identity' in his paintings.

Research Instruments and Tools

Research instruments are important and necessary to the successful completion of a study; they are for the purpose of collating relevant information. David and Peter (2003) state that,

Research instruments are simply devices for obtaining information relevant to a research project, and there are many alternatives from which to choose; there is no single research method or instrument par excellence. Research is not a 'one-size-fits-all' enterprise, as no single research instrument is inherently superior to any other rather, all can be used well or poorly.

For the purpose of this research, the instruments used are; structured interview guides and photography. Research tools, on the other hand, are those items that serve as a means of collecting information for a study. Prabhat and Meenu (2015) are of the view that, a researcher requires many data-gathering tools or techniques therefore, whatever a researcher employs in collating relevant data are classified as tools which may vary in complexity, interpretation, design and administration. The research tools used for this study are; digital camera and smart phone audio recorder.

Interview

An interview should be a two-way activity which permits for an exchange of ideas and information between the interviewer and interviewee. Dogara (2016) states, “An interview is used in obtaining first-hand information in a study”. Ndagi in Duyil (2017) observes that, there are four main types of interview which are: structured, unstructured, non-directive and focused. For the purpose of this study an interview was conducted with Gushem in his office, using both the structured and unstructured types of questionnaire. The responses given by the artist assisted the researcher in the analysis of data collected.

Photographs

Photographs have been, and are still pertinent and valid source of collating relevant information. Dogara (2016) opines that, photographs have been in use for many years. Similarly, some pictures of Gushem’s paintings included in the study were collected from various literature and journals found in the library of the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The photographs taken were useful in obtaining detailed information, particularly on the artist’s search for identity, the focus of this study. A researcher who made use of photographs in obtaining information for his researches is Okoli (2007); Saliu (2010) also used photographs.

Method of Data Analysis

In the data analysis, the researcher adopted the historical and descriptive approaches. Jovita (2015) states that:

Historical research is not simply the accumulation of dates and facts or even just a description of past happenings, but is a flowing and dynamic explanation or description of past events which include an interpretation of these events in an effort

to recapture implications; the process involves investigating, recording, photography, analysing and interpreting events of the past.

Similarly, Duyil (2017) opines that, historical research involves a critical and objective method of inquiry and, on the other hand, descriptive approach makes a reader to fully grasp the art forms inherent in an artwork. The photographs of works collected for the study were carefully and effectively analysed. The historical and descriptive approaches have been successfully used by Muhammad (2006). Saliu (2010) also used these mentioned approaches for detailed description of some selected artworks.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, the research findings are analysed and discussed. A total of thirteen (13) paintings produced between 1994 and 1998 were analysed. This is because it was within this period that the artist started his studio experiment research on, 'A Search for Identity' in his paintings. The descriptive method played a significant role in this regard, with the outcome of his responses from the interview conducted and the photographs collected. The data collected were used to complement the analysis and discussions. Some of such data which were discussed comprised; the artist's background, sources of his inspiration and participation in the development of arts in Nigeria.

The artist's paintings are grouped into three: the first group were executed within 1994 and 1995. The paintings were done after the completion of his Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) degree programme in 1990. The paintings featured mainly human figures and landscape scenes. A predominant characteristic of the paintings with human figures is the articulate use and combination of bold and thin lines. The second group of paintings were executed from 1995 to 1997. Towards the end of 1995, one glaring characteristic of the artist's paintings is the use of vertical lines in different directions. The landscape paintings of Zaria environs were done in a non-representative manner (abstract). The third group of Philip Obed Gushem's paintings were produced in 1998. In this category were predominantly landscapes which focused on Nigerian country sides with emphasis on sceneries from some of the Northern and riverine areas of the country. Some of the paintings in this category were aimed at advancing the Hausa-Fulani

cultural convention. Some of such conventions are the nomadic life of the Fulani herdsmen in their daily chores of cattle grazing. Also captured is the typical mud house of the Hausa people.

Philip Obed Gushem's Paintings

Philip Obed Gushem has executed many paintings, but has not been sufficiently documented. In his early days as an undergraduate student in the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Gushem had mentors who influenced him. Prominent among them was a Philipino, Mr Alkanoba who was a staff of the Department of Fine Art. He engaged Gushem in a lot of outdoor paintings; he made Gushem watch him paint so as to learn certain techniques before he was allowed to paint on his own. This further developed a good rapport between Gushem and his mentor, and fortified the interest Gushem had for colours and painting as a career choice. Gushem in an interview stated, "It is Mr. Alkanoba's palette that formed part of my encouragement into painting as a choice" (Gushem: Oral Interview, 14th May, 2019). Furthermore, he states that, "Mr. Alkanoba also had a good choice of subject matter in landscape painting; this influenced my painting of transformation of selected landscapes of the savannah region".

In 1992, alongside other artists like Gani Odutokun and Jerry Buhari, Gushem had his first major exhibition which held at the Goethe Institute, Victoria Island, Lagos State in the month of April entitled 'Three from Zaria'. In the same year, Gushem took part in an international exhibition organised by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (W.I.P.O) headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland. In 1995, Gushem participated alongside artists like Emily Nelson, Nsikak Essien, Duke Asidere and Tayo Adenaike in another group exhibition titled 'New Currents'. This exhibition held at Avant Garde, Nigerian art exhibition at Russian Cultural Centre, Ikoyi, Lagos. Gushem participated in an exhibition of paintings by staff members of the Painting Section,

Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. This exhibition was titled, 'Paint staff 96', held at Alliance Francaise, Kaduna.

In an interview, Gushem (Oral Interview, 14th May, 2019) explains that, art is done in certain countries purely out of fun as a result of the conducive environment and favourable economic situation of such countries which is not so in Nigeria. In other words, any artist who intends to excel in his or her chosen specialisation should press on with persistence and passion for his or her career. Gushem was of the view that, creating a painting comes from a conceived idea by a painter capable of solving a problem someplace. Gushem in the quest for improvement in his career stated, "Any artist who shies away from objective criticism will definitely not make room for improvement, as for me I accept constructive criticism". In a bid to exploring his creativity, Gushem changed his style of painting from the naturalistic manner to abstract expressionism during his postgraduate programme in 1990. This he did while also on a search for a personal stylistic identity. It is the search for a patented way of expression that motivated him to concentrating on painting landscapes within the Zaria environs. Besides painting, Gushem developed himself in literary writing which led him to obtaining a Ph. D in Art History. He is of the view that, the literary aspect of his paintings is necessary as no one may be able to satisfactorily write about his paintings like himself who conceived the idea about what to paint. Therefore, Gushem has several of written literary journals and some co-written with some of his students. In furtherance of the search for an identity in his paintings, Gushem began a studio experiment research on a 'search for identity' in 1994.



Plate I: Corporate Lady, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 94 x 72cm, 1994, Private Collection, Kaduna

The painting titled ‘Corporate Lady’ (Plate I) depicts a female figure sitting in what looks like a thick collection of flowers rendered in purple, blue, white and shades of orange. The lady, who is the subject of the painting, is depicted with an elongated neck and a skin rendered in purple which depicts a typical dark complexion lady of African origin. Gushem depicts the lady as having a calm countenance, also having her hair palmed; a common female modern/contemporary hairstyle. The hair was rendered in purple, ochre and white.

In the year 1992, GaniOdutokun took interest in the paintings of Gushem after they met at an exhibiton held in Lagos. Subsequently, Gushem also got persuaded by some of the styles inherent in GaniOdutokuns’s paintings some of which are reflective in Plate I above.

At the background, the artist shows an interaction of brush strokes and colour. The top right side of the background is rendered in yellow which depicts the brightness of the sun. The bright colour also projects some lines which depict buildings. The interaction of dark colours at the foreground and bright colours at the background presents an illusion of distance. The artist further uses colours by applying a touch of red at the left side of the background and in the thick

flowers at the foreground. The painting has luminous colour scheme, it is also surrealistic in nature.



Plate II: Mask, Gushem, Oil on Board, 61 x 51cm, 1994, Private Collection, Lagos

A mask is a cover or partial cover for the face used for disguise, and a person who wears a mask is referred to as a masker. A mask is most times a sculptured face or a copy of a face made by means of a mold and usually takes various forms such as; the human face, the head of an animal, a cartoon character or sometimes a deity. It is an embodiment of a tradition, and most times used during cultural festivals by dancers or actors in a play.

Mask in plate II is a painting done by Gushem which shows an interaction of brush strokes and colour that characterise the style of the artist. In other words, the artist chooses not to paint according to nature or tradition, but rather rendered his painting in an idealised manner that conforms to his stylistic pattern. The painting further represents Gushem's consistency in style, his use of colour and composition. The subject matter which are two masks, are rendered in white, purple and yellow. The facial features are not detailed enough though with what could be seen as the eyes, the bridge of the nose and open mouths, the painting depicts stylised human

faces. At the top right side of the masks are projected shapes that look like the human fingers, the enlarged mask at the foreground has brush strokes done in white shade protruding at the top centre that look like the tail of a horse. Both masks are represented as if resting on wavy lines done in orange, white, blue and green shades. These thin brush strokes give a feeling as if the masks are floating on water. The foreground and the background are represented predominantly in dark and light shades respectively.



Plate III: The City is Not for Me, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 204 x 78cm, 1994, Private Collection, Minna

In Plate III, the subject of the painting is a man who is seen walking towards the foreground of the painting. He is depicted dressed in a gown and turban, a common traditional attire worn by men from the northern part of Nigeria. The concept of the painting is a man who has ascertained that, life in a city compared to the rural environment is different and therefore he cannot cope, thus he decides to get out of the city. Gushem tries to portray a man who dwelt in the rural community at some point in life but, wanted to have an experience of life in the urban settlement. The painting shows the subject having turned his back entirely to the urban settlement and briskly walking away, signifying a departure to the urban life.

As a trend common with Gushem, he shows an active use of brush strokes using mostly thin lines. The illusion of distance is also created as the artist depicts the subject at the foreground larger than the figures at the background that look like storey buildings from a distance. The background of the painting shows a mixture of white at the top right side which illustrates the effect of the reflection of streetlights on the buildings rendered in purple. The foreground shows predominantly a mixture of white, yellow and purple colours.



Plate IV: African Forms and Images I, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 202 x 76cm, 1995, Private Collection, Lagos

‘African Forms and Images’ (Plate IV) is an abstract painting which is a composition of repeated facial features and statues of queens which vary in size and shape. In the treatment of the facial features, Gushem depicts various countenances such as fear, anger, alertness, anxiety and inquisitiveness as a response to issues seen around. Many of the faces are depicted with facial marks on the foreheads and chins.

A characteristic of Gushem is the use of vertical lines in a number of his paintings. The artist places emphasis on the use of vertical lines in the painting, ‘African Forms and Images I’, which helps to outline the different faces. The artist also paints the heads of the various queens in a

conical shape. The composition is made with the technique of thin and thick application of colour, using brush strokes to create smooth and rough textures on the surface. The cone-like representation also applies to the queen's regalia such as crowns, gowns and veils. The painting shows an interaction of colours such as yellow, blue, ochre and a dark shade used for the vertical lines. The colours used at the foreground and background also give an illusion of distance.

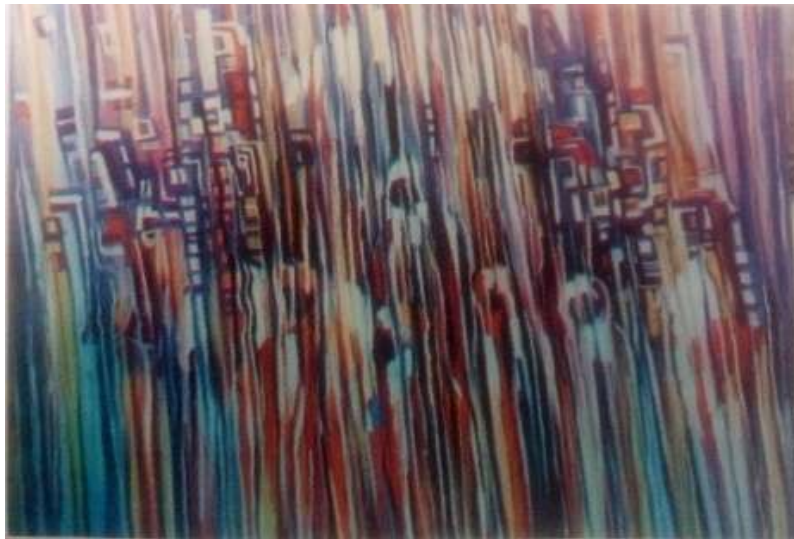


Plate V: Emir's Procession, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 204 x 78cm, 1995, Artist's Collection

In Plate V, Gushem renders the polychromatic painting in predominantly vertical lines and as such, the figures appear hidden within the lines. The tones and shades of colour in blue, ochre, red and yellow which are associated with royalty, success, achievement and wealth, are well employed to execute the painting. The artist places forms in between the vertical lines where the shapes created are filled with the various shades of colour. The vertical lines used in the painting stretched from the top of the background to the base of the foreground. Also depicted is a good interaction of colours vertically arranged side by side. Gushem also engages the use of geometric shapes particularly at the left and right flanks of the entourage.

The painting depicts an Emir and his entourage on an outing. The Emir is depicted at the middle of the painting riding on a horseback while his entourage is flanked on his left and right sides; some shown in front of him and others following from behind on foot. The horse's head and neck are shown to rise up to the neck level of the Emir who is riding on its back.



Plate VI: Return of The Traders, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 94 x 72cm, 1995, Artist's Collection

The painting, 'Return of the Traders' (Plate VI) depicts traders riding on bicycles. The concept of this painting suggests a means of survival particularly in rural areas. It portrays men who struggle to make a living in order to cater for the basic needs of the family despite the harsh economic state of the nation. The painting also depicts traders riding back home after what seems like a tough day, with the sun going down right behind them as they ride back home.

Plate VI is a polychromatic abstract painting which composed of both broad and thin vertical lines, also with forms and figures hidden between the lines. This is similar to his painting, 'Emir's Procession'. The painting also presents an interaction of brushes and various shades of colours like blue, yellow, purple, white, ochre and black. Also depicted is the use of some

geometric shapes. This painting is related in colour scheme to Gushem's 'African Forms and Images I' (Plate IV).



Plate VII: Alo School, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 60.5 x 91.7cm, 1995, Ahmadu Bello University Hotels Limited, Kongo, Zaria

Plate VII titled 'Alo School' is an abstract painting which shows Gushem's regular use of vertical lines. This painting is polychromatic in nature with blue, purple, yellow and orange presented in various shades. The artist places various forms hidden in between the vertical lines; this is a common style seen in some of Gushem's paintings. The colour yellow is used at the far end of the background of the picture plane which represents the setting of the sun. The artist uses thin strokes of vertical lines, geometric shapes and curved lines as motifs at the background.

The painting (Plate VII) depicts a '*mallam*' seen at the right side of the background, dressed in a turban and kaftan. He is depicted as standing before students in a class and holding a cane in his right hand. Also depicted are students who are seated on the floor before the '*mallam*' with their '*Alo*' which is a piece of wood used for practicing Arabic writings placed in between their laps. These students are also depicted as dressed in kaftans and caps.



Plate VIII: Three Horsemen, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 60 x 90cm, 1995, Ahmadu Bello University Hotels Limited, Kongo, Zaria

The painting, 'Three Horsemen' (Plate VIII) shows the concept of three men dressed in kaftans and turbans, riding horses in different directions. The horseman depicted at the middle is portrayed raising his right fist in celebration and chanting while the other two are depicted riding around. This painting is typical of what happens at the durbar festival which is an annual celebration in several Northern cities of Nigeria like Kano, Bauchi, Katsina, Zaria and others. The durbar is usually a colourful festival where the riders appear in various colourful regalia and their horses also dressed in various colourful costumes.

In this painting (Plate VIII), Gushem presents the forms hidden in between vertical lines presented in both thick and thin strokes. It is an abstract painting, done using various colours such as yellow, blue, purple and orange shades. Also, typical of Gushem are various motifs at the background presented in a combination of short strokes of horizontal lines and geometric shapes.

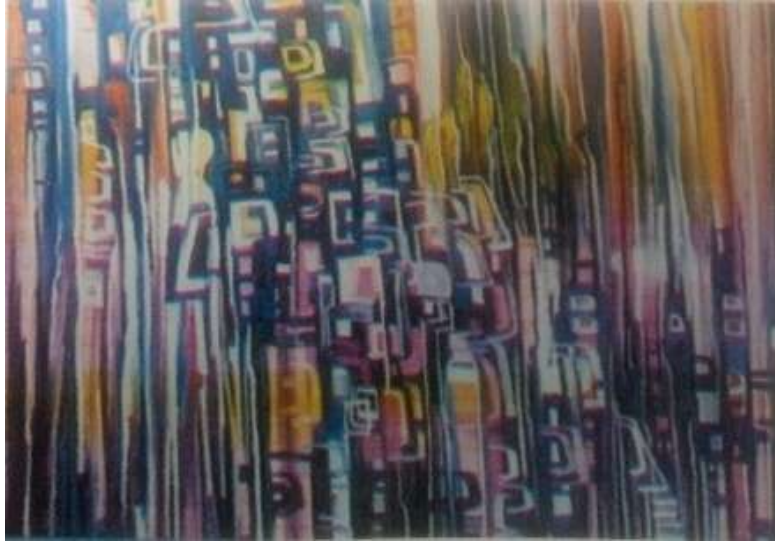


Plate IX: Man in the City, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 204 x 78cm, 1996, Artist's Collection.

In consonance with Gushem's inherent style, there is an interaction with the brush and colours like; white, yellow, blue, purple and ochre (Plate IX). The colours are used to project the use of various geometric shapes which were rendered in stylised and distorted forms. The painting also portrays the artist's shift from naturalism to abstraction. The style employed in the execution of this work is abstract expressionism. Vertical lines are depicted as running from the top of the background to the foreground with images placed within the lines. The images are presented more on the right side, while the central part is dominated by the geometric shapes. A careful observation of the painting shows that, the artist used brush strokes to execute the work creating smooth effect resulting from the blending of the colours.



Plate X: Riverine Scene, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 31cm, 1998, Private Collection, Kaduna

The painting titled, 'Riverine Scene' (Plate X) portrays two provisional shelters set up at a river bank. There are two empty canoes grounded on the left side of the river bank not far from the shelters. The environment looks abandoned which may suggest that the fishermen are resting in the shelter after the day's work.

In this impressionistic painting, the combination of colours gives an impression of a calm and cool day; the colour scheme is luminous with fairly conspicuous forms. The colours on the roof top of the provisional structures, on the leaves and branches of the trees all around the environment, on the patched surfaces of the riverbank and on the canoes seem to have been applied directly from the tubes or cans with a palette knife without prior mixing. Gushem was able to create an impression of a reflection of the provisional structures and the tall trees very close to the water. The dark colour used in-between the trees gives an impression of a thick collection of trees as of a forest. The artist does not give a detailed treatment of the leaves on the trees as they rather appear blurry giving an impression of distance. The arrangement of forms allows perspective to have its illusion of depth and distance.



Plate XI: Mountainous Landscape, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 63 x 50cm, 1998, Unknown.

Gushem's painting titled 'Mountainous Landscape' (Plate XI) depicts a water body which looks like a small stream surrounded with shrubs, trees and mountains seen at a distance. The artist creates images around the stream with cattle drinking water, while some are seen walking away. In the painting also are, pieces of rock forms depicted beside and within the water.

The use of colours is of predominantly yellow with patches at the central part of the mountain, but seen mostly around the edges of the stream which gives the feeling of a tranquil environment. The left side of the surface of the water has the impression of reflections of the trees depicted around that part of the painting. The depiction of the sky is in blue and patches of white, while the peak of the mountain is depicted as touching the sky. The artist applies the technique of aerial perspective to create the effect of distance between the mountains at the background, the stream and shrubs at the foreground. A tall tree is depicted on the right side of the bank of the stream close to the foreground. The tree appears higher than the mountain at the background, to further create the illusion of distance in the painting. The landscape is painted in a natural state with no abstract representations. The distribution of light and shades in this painting brings solidity and illumination to the work.



Plate XII: Landscape with Nomad, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 31cm, 1998, Location Unknown.

‘Landscape with Nomad’ (Plate XII) is one of Gushem’s paintings which depicts his style and technique on the treatment of shrubs and trees in landscape painting. The subject of this painting is a nomadic Fulani man wearing a hat that protects him from the heat of the sun. The man is depicted with a cow, holding a stick with which he controls the it. Gushem depicts the Fulani man as looking tired probably after walking about with his cow in search of green pasture to graze. This painting portrays the nomadic life associated with the typical Fulani man in the Northern part of Nigeria.

The artist applies balance which is a principle of design, as he achieves an equal distribution of some of the elements of design and composition of colour in the painting. The colour scheme employed is closely related to Gushem’s ‘Riverine Scene’ (Plate X) and ‘Mountainous Landscape’ (Plate XI). The subject of the painting appears larger at the foreground while the mountains at the background appear smaller, done to achieve an effect of distance. The cloud is treated in blue and patches of white, where white is laid just above the mountains to form a demarcation. The white shade above the cloud gives a feeling of continuity of the cloud. The

artist uses brush strokes to execute the work with a smooth effect achieved by blending of the colours at the background, a seemingly detailed impression of the Fulani man and his cow.



Plate XIII: Hausa Settlement, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 63 x 50cm, 1998, Private Collection, Kaduna

Gushem's painting, 'Hausa Settlement' (Plate XIII) is a realistic and naturalistic expression of what a typical Hausa settlement looks like. Hausa is one of the major languages of Nigeria and the people come from either the North East or North West which comprises the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The subject of the painting is a Hausa traditional building which is most times built with mud bricks, a lot of which are most times not painted. The artist is influenced by the Zaria environs. The artist also depicts some adult male figures dressed in kaftans and caps, an attire which is commonly worn by the northern Nigeria adult males.

The painting presents a good arrangement of forms which allows for an illusion of distance. Illumination and solidity are achieved in the painting as a result of a proper distribution of colour and forms. The artist uses yellow to give the sensation of a tranquil environment. The brush is employed to create smooth and rough textures on the surface.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The entire discussion in Chapter four of this research were attempts made by the researcher to: highlight the background, inspiration, styles of Philip Obed Gushem. Analysis of some paintings by the artist and investigation of his search for stylistic identity were also done. In this chapter therefore, the summary of research findings is presented, findings are highlighted upon which conclusion and recommendations are made.

Summary

Philip Obed Gushem had developed a distinct flair for art right from his childhood before undertaking it as a career choice when he studied and obtained a Diploma in Fine Art in 1984. He proceeded to study for a first degree (B.A) in 1987 in Fine Art, had an MFA in painting in 1990 and a Ph. D in Art History in 2011. He is currently a Professor in Painting. Gushem has further accentuated effort to make more progress through his numerous paintings executed and literary works yet, the scholarly documentation on his works and achievements are scanty. This research is centred on Gushem's search for stylistic identity in his paintings.

Chapter one of this research gives an introduction and background to the study, statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the study, research questions, justification, significance, scope of the study and Conceptual framework adopted. In chapter two, was a review of various definitions and aspects of identity, literature on the Zaria Art School and specific literature on Philip Obed Gushem's paintings 'The Messiah', 'African Forms and Images II' were focused on. Chapter

three contains methodology, procedure and approaches adopted to guide the study. The methodology used by the researcher was discussed under Research Design, Method of data collection, Research instruments and tools, Interview, Photographs and Method of data analysis while in chapter four of this study, analysis and discussion of Gushem's paintings were made. The thirteen (13) analysed paintings covered a period of four (4) years from 1994 to 1998, which also happens to be the period Gushem undertook the studio experiment research on a search for identity.

Findings

From the outcome of the study carried out, the following are the findings based on the objectives of the study.

Objective 1: Investigate the incitement behind Gushem's paintings

Research Question 1: In what way is Gushem motivated to execute his paintings?

Gushem's paintings get their motivation from the environment in which he finds himself; the Zaria environs in particular and generally, the scenery and culture of the northerners in Nigeria.



Plate XIV: Hausa Settlement, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 63 x 50cm, 1998, Private Collection, Kaduna

Objective 2: Examine the media employed by the artist.

Research Question2:What are the types of media employed by Gushem in executing his paintings?

The media used by Gushem in most of his paintings are oil on canvas. He has also explored the combination of oil on canvas and fabric.

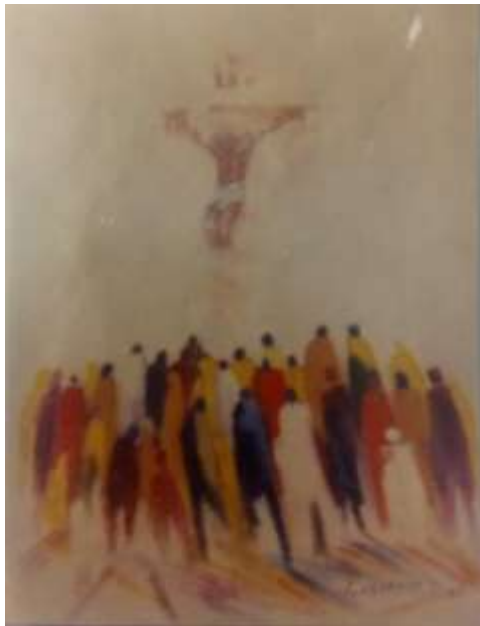


Plate XV: The Messiah, Gushem, Oil on Canvas and Fabric, 70.1 x 45cm, 2000, Location Unknown

Objective 3: Analyse the forms and contents of Gushem's paintings.

Research Question 3:What are the forms and content inherent in Gushem's paintings?

The identity of Gushem is the use of a combination of vertical and horizontal lines, geometric shapes in the execution of his paintings. Also, is the prevalent use of different hues of yellow in his paintings. These mentioned identities are evident in many of his paintings being analysed in this study, such as 'Corporate Lady' and 'Man in the City' (Plates I and IX).



Plate XVI: Corporate Lady, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 94 x 72cm, 1994, Private Collection, Kaduna



Plate XVII: Man in the City, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 204 x 78cm, 1996, Artist's Collection.

Objective 4: Examine the identity of the artist

Research Question 4: What is Gushem's stylistic identity?

The forms inherent in Gushem's paintings range from human forms, abstract representations, geometric shapes, thick and thin vertical and horizontal lines which usually run from the top to the base of the foreground, colour in various shades and natural sceneries. The themes of Gushem's individual paintings determine the content of such works. For instance, the painting of natural scenery titled 'Riverine Scene' (Plate X) is to encourage people to appreciate the forms

and aesthetic qualities of the environment which they find themselves. Landscape with Nomad' (Plate XII) depicts the lifestyle of the typical nomadic Fulani man from northern Nigeria.



Plate XVIII: Riverine Scene, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 31cm, 1998, Private Collection, Kaduna



Plate XIX: Landscape with Nomad, Gushem, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 31cm, 1998, Location Unknown.

Conclusion

A look at the paintings analysed in this study portrays a combination of abstraction, naturalism, realism and expressionism. In his paintings, Gushem achieves a good interaction between the brush and colours. It was observed that, many of his works were characteristic of broad and thin vertical lines which he used majorly as a demarcation of forms depicted. The artist also engaged

the use of geometric shapes in a number of his abstract paintings. His paintings studied and analysed are majorly oil on canvas. A major source of Gushem's inspiration is the Zaria environs. However, the culture of the people from the northern part of Nigeria was also a source of the artist's inspiration.

In an interview with Gushem, the researcher observes that, the theme of Gushem's paintings determined the message to be passed across. For instance, in the painting titled: 'Return of the Traders' (Plate VI), Gushem depicted the rigor that parents sometimes go through in trying to fend for the welfare of their families, most times attributed to the difficult economic situation of the country. Gushem's landscape paintings portrayed the beautiful environment people find themselves in and how it is important for people to appreciate it. Also, the landscape paintings portrayed the aesthetic values of the natural features like mountains, trees or water bodies in some communities. The artist's paintings about culture are simply to promote the unique and rich cultural heritage of Nigerians.

The researcher also observed that, Gushem's search for identity in his paintings which he undertook as a studio oriented research from 1994 was especially for the purpose of standing out among other painters. In an interview with the researcher, Gushem asks a rhetorical question: 'Why search for identity?'. He further responded that, he intended to develop a signature of his own which could be read through his artworks when seen anywhere around the world, and not necessarily having to sign on a portion of the canvas as is the norm. The artist's idea is that, his paintings should be recognised anywhere it is seen around the world as, it is the artist's voice which introduces him even when absent. Gushem got the idea from music as he states, "Every musician falls under a genre; pop, classical, jazz or reggae and is recognised by this genre all over the world or anywhere his or her music is heard". As a graduate of the Zaria Art School and

currently a lecturer at the Department of Fine Art, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Philip Obed Gushem has made significant impact on Nigerian art by the number of artists he has trained and are now contributing their own quota to the development of art around the country. The innate drive for uniqueness and creativity has further propelled Gushem to his present level in Nigerian art.

Recommendations

1. In view of the research findings on Gushem's search for identity, it is recommended that younger artists should be encouraged to search for individual creativity and relinquish the idea of copying other people's ideas most times from the internet.
2. There is need for artists to find a unique path for his or her works of art. The idea is to encourage and spur creativity in artists and give originality to artworks produced. It is hence recommended that, artists, particularly young and upcoming ones take a cue from Gushem's drive for originality and a unique signature.
3. Paintings executed by Philip Obed Gushem, particularly those which appreciate humanity's immediate environment and promotes cultural heritage should not only be kept in individual's collections for the aesthetic purposes alone. It is recommended that, such artworks be patronised more by relevant authorities in the private and public sectors of the economy whose ambition is to advocate such course. For instance, primary and secondary schools in Nigeria where subjects like Civic Education are taught can use some of these paintings as teaching aids. Murals of some of the paintings can also be done in public places as well.
4. It was observed in this research that, Gushem is highly inspired by his environment and happenings around him. This is a good way of developing themes, therefore, it is

recommended that young and upcoming artists should borrow the idea of looking around their immediate environment to get themes, as this gives a touch of originality to their works and also promotes cultural heritage of people.

Contribution to knowledge

The study has established that:

- i. Painters and other fine artists who take a keen interest in exploring their immediate environment invariably get more inspiration towards executing their works of art. This further helps to expose and promote the culture and heritage of a people through art.
- ii. An artist who makes effort to develop his or herself on more than one stylistic trait gives room for developing creative prowess, thereby not restricting his or her artwork to a particular trend but giving room for being dynamic.
- iii. There are various types of identity as stated by various authors and researchers which implies that, identity study goes beyond art but stretches to other disciplines, as it further helps to establish the feeling of who someone is, particularly relating to a nation.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. A background study shows that you started art early in life. What inspired your flair for art?
2. Among other areas in art, what influenced the choice of painting as an area of specialization?
3. An author, Samaila (2004) reports that, your inspiration stems from nature, human activities, normal scenes in life and your Christian faith. What is the attraction to these sources?
4. While practising art, are there problems you have experienced which may have been recurrent?
5. Which of your numerous executed works would you consider the most successful?
6. Why is it so?
7. Apart from painting, do you practise any other area of art?
8. Do you accept objective criticism of your art work?
9. How does this criticism affect your art practice?
10. You began a studio oriented research in the year 1994, which was a 'search for identity' in your paintings. What must have motivated this search which happens to be the focal point of this study?
11. What kind of message/statement do you make or intend to pass in your paintings?
12. Mention any contemporary Nigerian painter whose works or style must have influenced you.
13. What message or word of advice would you like to give to young and upcoming Nigerian painters?

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW ANSWERS BY THE ARTIST

1. The love for nature, also biblical stories which I read at a much younger age particularly during my primary school education.
2. The interest began during my secondary school education where I contested in various art competitions where I emerged tops on several occasions. This performance at various times motivated me towards painting.
3. Nature was created by God therefore; nature is the greatest masterpiece ever. When the colours in the environment are rightfully or wrongfully used, it affects people in various ways. Everything created by God serves as a motivation towards my art.
4. Take for instance, in countries like the U.S or U.K, painting is done mostly for the fun of it and in a comfortable environment but, the harsh weather in our country Nigeria affects an artist's productivity negatively. There are natural challenges that will face a painter but the moment that painter understands that, any painting done solves a problem somewhere then, motivation naturally should spring up.
5. There are many of my works done therefore; it might be difficult to pen a particular painting of mine. Nevertheless, 'A golf player' which I did is currently in the collection of the National Art Gallery, Abuja, Nigeria. The golfer in this painting was depicted from the front view and wasn't painted in a naturalistic manner. Forms were rendered in this painting with the illusion of movement using strokes of lines.
6. –
7. Besides painting, I developed interest in literary writing as a result of my Ph. D in Art History. I realized it's not all about painting but, painters should know about the literary aspect of their works.

8. Any artist who rejects constructive criticism of his or her works is obviously not willing to learn or develop on his or her productions.
9. Criticism normally comes in various manners but as an artist, one should wisely receive them as they come whether objective or not. The wisdom is to take-in those useful and do away with those not.
10. Simply put, to stand out amongst other artworks displayed and furthermore to develop a unique signature of mine that will be read through the artwork itself and not necessarily having to sign a portion of the canvas before a painting is recognised as mine. My painting should introduce me anywhere it is seen. I got this idea from music; all musicians fall under a genre of music which forms part of their identity.
11. Usually, the theme of my painting determines the kind of message I intend to pass across. For instance, my painting with theme 'The return of the traders' signifies a means of survival in my community where humans are seen as always struggling and hardworking. My landscape paintings portray the beautiful environments we find ourselves in, also the aesthetic values. My paintings that depict cultural costumes depicts Nigeria's rich cultural heritage.
12. During my undergraduate studies, there was a lecturer I had who was a Philipino. He was known by the name MrAlkanoba, he was also my supervisor. He took me to his studio where he made me observe him while he painted, he also engaged me in a series of outdoor paintings. To a great extent, these frequent outdoor assignments brought about a level of closeness which further influenced my choice of colours. MrAlkanoba had a good choice of subject matter particularly in the area of landscape painting.
13. My candid advice is commitment to work in any chosen profession. They need to be patient and endure life. The attitude of going to the internet to download pictures or

paintings done by other artists must be discouraged; this is an attitude of taking short cuts which is not healthy towards developing their chosen career.

APPENDIX III
THE RESEARCHER WITH THE ARTIST



The Researcher, Kizito OgaIgomu (left) conducting an interview in the office of the subject of the study, Professor Philip Obed Gushem. 14th May, 2019.

APPENDIX IV



The subject of the study, Professor Philip Obed Gushem (Right) in his office discussing with the Researcher, Kizito OgaIgomu, 14th May, 2019.