

Waste Pollution: An Artist Role In Waste Management In The 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Since the advent of urbanization, issue of waste in environment, and there is a lot within the socio-economic, cultural and political context of any nation resurges with bright challenge at a global level with increasing vibrancy. This resurgence is critical to health and life discourses everywhere. This paper tried to highlight the efficacy of discarded wastes and its creativity use in the environment with governmental approach to finding a solution to it menace in the society. It also discusses relationship and role of creativity in the environment and the theory of representation in visual art. The paper also examines different works of sculptors who has in one way or the other explore different wastes object into sculptural form. One will agree that creativity and the environment are inseparable and could stand on one leg to survive. The methodology explored in this project involved both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary sources included observation, examination and review of previous works and studies related to the way each artists uses his found object to give the environment a better life. The secondary sources include images/photographs from internet and journal articles. The analysis used includes descriptive analysis, which involves the interpretation of theme and meaning of work piece.

Keywords Wastes, Waste Management, Environment, Sculpture, Recycling, Metal Sculpture

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AUTHOR'S BIO



ORIDOLA, Adeola Ibrahim, was born in the 80's and hails from Ifo Local Government, in Ogun state, where he attended his Primary School and Secondary School in Lagos (2002). In 2003-2007 he holds Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE, Fine Arts Double Major) in AOCOED now Lagos State University of Education (LASUED), he later further and obtained his 1st Degree and 2nd Degree in Fine and Applied Arts as a ceramist in Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife Osun State Nigeria (B.A 2011 and MFA 2015). He carried out his National Youth Services in Lagos at the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) Lagos. Presently he is a Ceramics lecturer at Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos.

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OLIGBINDE, Samuel Rotimi, is originally from a small urban Northern town in Ogun State and displayed an artistic talent at an early age. He fell in love with drawing and sculpture when he was a kid. His drawings are excellent depiction of the mastery of art. He attended both primary and secondary schools at Saint Bernadette and Taidob College at Abeokuta in Ogun State. Owing to his academic dexterity, prowess and ardent performance, he was admitted into Obafemi Awolowo University, in Ile-Ife into the prestigious Faculty of Environmental Design and Management where he bagged both his Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Sculpture respectively. Rotimi is one of Nigeria's contemporary artists and has worked in entirely in figural composition. His masterful use can vividly be seen in his works on two dimensions where one can easily feel the celebration of strokes and colours. The experience he had, fueled the imagery and emotional qualities of his works. His works tends to start with an idea about a specific theme of contemporary life, past historic events and environment and then he depicts them in common day to day activity. His drawings are meant to be read as an extension to the room in which the viewer is standing. He uses movement to unify the figure and introduce an element of visual drama. The realism of movement also helps to provide continuity between the space inhabited by the viewer and the imaginary space contained within the picture.



OLÚWÁ, Musediq, was born in Lagos Island to the famous Oluwa family of Lagos and Apapa, Lagos State. He attended Yaba College of Technology for his ND and HND respectively. Dotun Oluwa joined Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, now Lagos State University of Education as an Instructor in 2000 and rose to the post of Chief Instructor. In the course of his career he went to University of Lagos (UNILAG), where he bagged the degree of Visual Arts (Sculpture). He later enrolled at University of Ado-Ekiti for Post Graduate Diploma in Education (Arts and Language). He concluded his Master's of Fine Arts (MFA) at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (2015). He has worked with some renowned artists for his internship and mentoring within and outside the country. He has also mentored many to success. He is blessed with his lovely wife and children, Oluwa still works as a Lecturer in Lagos State University of Education Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos.

Introduction

Majority of the discussion in Nigeria are predominantly about discuss on politics. This has regretly led to stepping aside main issues that are pivotal to the upliftment of the nation. “It is refreshing therefore, that one of our major challenge is subtling gaining our attention back to issues affecting the human day to day activities and health in general. Though the country is not merely static but it is undergoing developmental reversal. Human being's basic needs are threefold, clothing, food and shelter, according to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy” (Greg, 2020, Pp.25). Most people whatever the class aspires to live long and be in good health. In fact, it is said that cleanliness leads to godliness. Unfortunately, the people that are tagged clean and healthy are falling down like a pack of cards, dead, then it becomes a major concern to the community.

Nike (2021), noted that, “while first world countries have gathered over the times stock of knowledge and scientific capability which enable them to industrialize, innovate and develop their economies, nations like Nigeria have blindly failed to adopt and promote scientific expertise and technological development in all the regions except in blueprints, that would have resulted in the ability and capacity to produce high value goods”. It is dishearten that Nigeria, has been left behind in pursuit of industrial and development races because it has grossly neglected to develop its industrial infrastructure to leap frog stages in industrial growth and development. The establishment of a development state in Nigeria, driven by visionary and purposeful leadership can galvanize a discouraged followership in the journey to national industrial greatness. However, there has been only little discuss on this issue.

Plate 1:

Picture showing waste plastics (polyethylene Terephthalate)



Photograph by: Oligbinde Rotimi

Location: Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

Year: 2024

Environmental degradation is like a bad habit among the public this days (see plate 1). It is very easy to pick and very hard to drop, likewise as easy to pick up again once the individual is not prepared to fight temptations. “The nation's objective is to inculcate a subsisting eco-consciousness in its citizens, and inspire a universal willingness to participate in sustainable development” Greg, (2021). Whetto (2019) asserted that, “the environment suffers incalculable damage that threatens its existence”. When this damage is not put into check now, it causes threat to the public and could lead to extermination of the human race. The prevention of this likely self-destruction has become the concern of everybody and artists in disapora.

“One of the ways the world is trying to curb this menace is by waste management” Ogunye, (2015 Pp.44). Artists have ingenuously been converting wastes from the immediate environment to astonishing creative works of art, saving the society from the menace that waste constitute to healthy living. These artists find this ways in the environment and turn them into work of art as a means of sensitizing the public about the danger of improper disposal of wastes in our environment.

Problems Associated with Improper Disposal of Wastes in our Environment

The predicament and menace posed by this indiscriminate waste disposal practice indicates a noticeably higher risk. “And expect the government commits its resources in getting to the root of the challenge, the potential consequence could be higher than that of other challenges currently ravaging the sanitation sector” Sylvester, (2021, pp.26). By ignoring the sanitation sector seriously, the government failed to remember that when human beings, through healthy living develop a higher order of thinking, society gains an advantage in being able to anticipate emerging intimidation, they gain the ability to conceptualize instead of just perceiving. But when they fail to acquire or are deprived healthy living, they will also gain the ability to conceptualize an imaginary threat and when a group of people are convinced to conceptualize this fantasy threat, they can activate a fear response as powerfully as the real intimidation.

Lara (2021 Pp. 24) presents an account that, “air pollution is associated with increased infertility risk for couples by up to 20 percent. She added that a study conducted in China, according to the researchers, tracked more than 10,000 couples. It found out that those who experienced higher levels of particulate pollution were one-fifth more likely to fail to become pregnant within a year of beginning to try. The study, led by Qin Li of the Centre for reproductive Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Peking University, Third Hospital, Beijing, China, and published in the Environmental International Journal”. Greg (2021) also emphasized that, “household waste, although not always per se toxic or hazardous, can become a hazard if not collected or inadequately managed”. They contain carcinogen and is capable of causing loss of memory, infertility and cancer.

Emiene (2022), observed that, “when wastes are not recycled, we see people in the community burning them because not all wastes are degradable, some do not

decompose and the process release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere which in turn compounds the climate change problems the world is currently experiencing”. The black smoke that comes out of this burnt waste is called soot. Samson (2021) elucidated that “a health expert based in Port Harcourt, Dr. Edward Ekpe, warned that this soot could trigger stroke and heart failure”. When this soot is inhaled it can lead to respiratory tract infections. The tube-like structures of lungs will be affected and it is called bronchitis. Then, another is asthma. A professor of Environmental Health Biology at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State, Rosita Okechukwu, stated “that residents around dumpsites were prone to disease such as respiratory tract infections, digestive infections runny stomach and diarrhea” (Lara, 2021 Pp. 24).

Chukwuemeka (2021) confirmed that “when there is a cluster of waste in a small area, a void is being created and this could create an imbalance in the earth surfaces advancing impossibility of proffering lasting solution to overcoming wastes pollution”. He confirmed that in developed countries, it is the responsibility of the government to provide a sound environment.

Solutions to Waste Management in Nigeria in View with Government Response

Waste have been recognized as a growing threat to mental health but there's lack of mental professionals equipped to handle the rising in number of people over the planet according to the American Psychiatric Association. People around the world have been protesting even though we know that a good understanding of science helps in understanding the fundamentals of curbing improper disposal of discarded wastes in the environment.

The study of waste management is very intricate and for now, poorly understood. That is why it is practically impossible to make accurate future predictions about restricting wastes. “Nevertheless, research shows what's going on in the climate, which is why there's a scientific consensus on the rise of global mean temperature degree since the 1850s and the increase in carbon dioxide emissions relative to pre-industrial era,

premised on the burning of fossil fuels by humans”(Greg, 2013Pp. 30).

Raphael (2021) Explain that, “a new study shows that solid waste can be converted into power”. He continued that, having worked in solar and wind energy systems, has realized that one of the feeblest energy systems that we can develop in Nigeria is the one that is based on gasification technology. The added advantage of using city waste is that it will clean up the cities. You don't have waste dumps anymore; so far you are able to get all these wastes, you arrange them into organic components and non-organic components. It is tends to be highly efficient in terms of savings in energy cost. More inherently you can use that same synthetic gas from the gasification plant and put it into modified diesel engine to generate electricity. The advantage of this, is the use of smaller amount of diesel (little as 10%) than when running fully on diesel.

The tradition of recycling must be inculcated in people's daily activities and consciousness. People should begin to view this as their first corporate social responsibility which they owe the society. “Parents and guardians should not only teach but show their children and other children how to properly dispose waste in the environment. It should be a collective responsibility” (Greg, 2013).Ofozie (2011), claimed that, “some of the modern waste management technique includes incinerating, recycling and re-using”. However, improper waste disposal causes flooding, because most of these wastes end up in drainage systems, thereby blocking the flow of water which results into flooding. When these materials are not used or recycled, they create a big threat to the environment as a whole, and it is the aim of this project to utilize waste. Therefore, the re-use of waste has been understudied in this study with the philosophy of recycling. Turning trash to tremendous works of aesthetic work of art, as a way of increasing existing media of expression and expanding the current scope of exploration

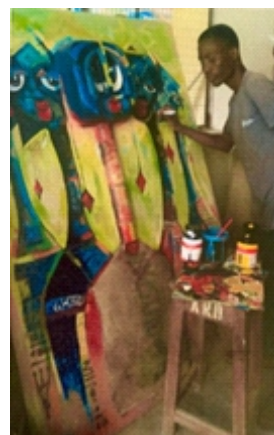
and experimentation of media and materials.

Conceptual Analysis of Various Artist Works

The industrial revolution and international trading resulting from contact with the west during the colonial and post-colonial era injected new kinds of wastes into Africa. Much of these were usually not bio-degradable. These waste included industrial, technology and waste from product packages which waste constitute another challenge to the environment. Ogunye (2015) recorded that, “in a creative response to the waste challenge, the traditional people of the post-independence era adapted and modified some of the waste for re-use”. “The waste in the society has constituted so much nuisance to the extent that millions of naira is spent every year to get rid of them. However, some artists have come out of their shells to think creatively to see how they can reduce waste pillages in the society. Some of these artists shall be discussed in this research to unravel what they have been doing to have a healthier society as they recycle wastes.”

Plate 2:

Resonation of a man's life.



Artist:Onifade Adedayo.

Medium:Mixed Media,

Dimension:72”by48”

Year: 2019

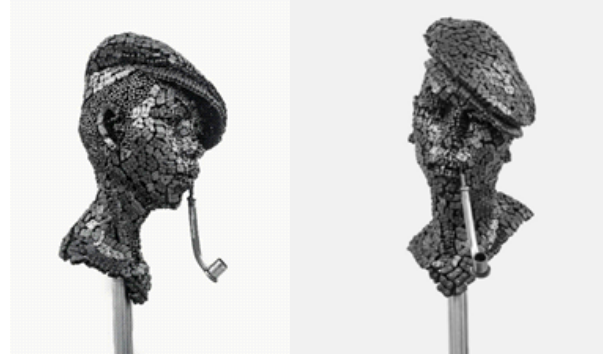
Resonation of a Man's Life

Onifade is an indigene of Ogun State who

studied Art and Industrial Design at Moshood Abiola Polytechnic. His stays at Moshood Abiola Polytechnic fuelled his love for environmental art. Onifade's works are embedded with technical and formal refinement, scrupulously painted details, and allegories that are theologically and morally consistent with time. The composition revolves around a brilliant but concealed comparison between painting and literature. The mixed media resonates with the feelings that have accumulated over the years, evoked by situations such as great family moments, and daily tasks mixed with inner thoughts of the artist's heart. The painting consists of five female abstract figures, with elongated necks, bulging eyes, big red lips, long dangling earrings (that appear diamond shaped), and their cloths embellished with different motifs. The centre female figure's head is made of the bottom of a plastic keg.

Onifade made use of discarded kegs and papers to form his composition. The plastic kegs were gotten from the environment in different colours and the bottoms of each keg were cut off to form the faces of the figures. The kegs were also painted to bring out different facial expression and contrast. Onifade make use of nails to mount the kegs onto the board to have a firm grip. The discarded papers on the other hand were first soaked in water for some weeks, after which gum was added to the paper sticking it to the board. The technique used is basically paper mache. All these were done to incorporate the African beauty of the woman to the environment, meaning what makes a beautiful environment is the woman.

Plate 3:
Amukoko



Artist: Akinrinola Ayooluwa
Medium: Motorcycle chains
Dimension: 23by8.5inches,
Year: 2022

Amukoko

Gazing sternly affront with a tilted head, with a panama half cross his head and a pipe on his mouth, the work depicts the recent trends among the smokers in the country. *Amukoko* addresses the smoking culture amidst the contemporary. Also touches the smoking lifestyle among our fathers of old. Life changes, so our response to it. Tobacco smoking with pipes was prevalent since the colonial era but that has changed with time. Tobacco leaves was the major prominent substance used by smokers with pipe then.

Ayooluwa in his discussion, noted that, we could see the intake of hard drugs among the youths of this generation at clubs and parties taking shish even among the girls. The work brings back the memories of old among the elderly who lived when smoking pipe was prevalent during the era of pipe smoking was prevalent. *Amukoko* does not justify smoking rather creating an awareness of drug intake especially among the youths. Smoking, though was not seen as intake of hard drug as some saw it as medicinal, some look at it as sign of enjoyment while some cultivated it from their friends' lifestyle. Using a younger person to depict *Amukoko* is intentional to address the issue of drug abuse in our present time which is now. The panama cap was popular and mostly used by smokers then,

while it served as a form of identity among the smokers of old.

Ayooluwa stated that, the aim of his work is to engage with and stimulate an emotional response in the viewer by combining a contradiction between initial aesthetic attraction along with the subsequent message of awareness. The research process is a vital part of my development as the images I make are based on responsiveness fact which is essential to the integrity of my work. Ayooluwa is largely concerned with establishing a unique presence in his works, which tend to confront the viewers with a steadfast stare or calm, spiritual aura, and each sculpture appears as a relic from a futuristic past.

Plate 4:
Gbengulo



Artist: Oluwa, M. Oludotun

Medium: Paper

Year: 2015

Gbengulo

In *gbengulo*, Oluwa makes use of discarded paper to make figurative expression. The figurative expression shows both facet of life, the sad side of life and the happy part of life. The sad life depicts the hungry scene about improper disposal of wastes in our environment

while the happy life shows the relief we get when we have a clean built environment.

Findings and Conclusion

The concurrent fears and health safety has recently thrown the country into a state of melee. It is a symbol of a government that has not yet come to terms with the fact that the progressive way out of problems that involve participation by citizens in the civic and democratic process is to redouble emphasis on health safety as an extremely valuable strategy for solving many of the societal ills. In reference of this, all governments at all phrase must accept the attitude of progressive sustainable environment for all the people.

It is quite regrettable that most people in government do not appreciate art, they do not know the power of art and worse still, they do not know the power of art as a tool in governance. The way issues relating to the arts are treated by those in government reveals the extent of their knowledge. As a nation we can win back the respect of other nations by the projection of our true national image through the promotion of our art and culture.

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