

EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUTDOOR SCULPTURE IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIAN

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ABSTRACT

Public outdoor sculpture in Southwest of Nigeria is prodigious. From its emergence as an art practice in 1934, its practice has passed through six phases of great importance. Yet the practice has not been studied in appreciable scholarly depth despite constant changes in taste necessitated by religious, socio-cultural, and political complexities of the Southwest. The study traces the emergence and the development of public outdoor sculpture in the zone. It examines the development of its forms, styles, themes, materials and techniques. It also investigates various attitudes associated with the productions, uses and maintenance of the sculptures among the various stake-holders at different levels. The study covers a period of one hundred and five years between 1900 and 2005; the period marked the beginning, high development level, proliferation and decline of outdoor sculpture practice in South-west of Nigeria. Data for study were derived from oral and bibliographical records and observation of the sculptures. In all, one hundred and sixty six sculptural works were identified, with larger concentrations of the works in Lagos and Osun States. The paper observes that sculptures were mainly expressed in realism. The medium mostly used is cement and is invariably rendered in additive techniques. Themes generally expressed centres on Yoruba heroes and heroines, socio-political and economic matters. The various attitudes of all the stakeholders concerning these sculptures indicate that there is the problem of poor control of standard, abuse and lack of maintenance. Significantly, the study resolved the chronological problem associated with the emergence of public outdoor sculpture in the Southwest zone of Nigeria.

Keywords: Emergence, Outdoor sculpture, Provenance, Style, Theme

Introduction

The Southwest of Nigeria is the homeland of the Yoruba. The zone lies between latitudes 6° and 9° and longitudes 2°, 3° and 6° east (Atanda 1980:1). The zone has an estimated land area of about 181, 300 square kilometers (Onakerhoruye 2002:80-84) and a population of well over 28,000,000 (Wikipedia, 2006) inhabitants. The Yoruba who are the autochtones and the main inhabitant of the zone share boundaries with the Borgurawa and the Nupe to the North, the Edo to the East and the Igala to the Northeast. They also share boundaries with the Republic of Benin to the west as well as the Ijaw and Atlantic Ocean by the south (Bascom 1973:84, Akinjogbin 2002:8-13, Atanda 1980:1, Kalilu 1992:4 and 9). The people have developed advanced traditional religion and social-political system which used monarchical system of government.

The Yoruba cosmology stipulates strict adherence to the worship of Olodumare, the Omnipotent God, through the veneration of Orisa (divinities) and the ancestors. The pantheon of gods and various leadership positions in the Yoruba community attracted lavish use of art in religion, politics and socio-economic matters (Fagg 1990:5-27). This inspired certain and peculiar aesthetic order in art practice that is upheld across the Yoruba generational lines (Thompson 1973:19-61). As a result of regular patronage and constant practice, the people have produced the outstanding art tradition (Fagg 1990:15-27). Art still plays important roles in their life. However, as from earlier nineteenth century, artistic practices shifted in some respects from the ancient tradition to new forms due to the emergence of contemporary art. Yet, a lot of the rules in the traditional artistic practices still subsists in the modern art, especially in themes, forms and styles.

The use of art in the zone today is largely based on aesthetic benefit with less regards for the under-lining functions and without any restrictions as to who could own a particular type of art or who may order certain art for the use of Yoruba communities. Consequently, aesthetic function is the over-riding value of outdoor sculpture in southwest. Any materials can also be used for art expression even for any individual unlike in the ancient time

when material such as gold and bronze were exclusive reserves for the kings, noble men, certain cults and deities. For this reason, art has been presumptuously used in the decoration of the public environment in the zone. The most popular art object used in this respect is outdoor sculptures, which until the nineteenth century were restricted to the shrines, palaces and the homes of the nobles. In the early period of nineteenth century, outdoor sculptures were initially used in private homes, churches and grave yards until the first public sculpture was erected at Ilesa in 1934. Since then outdoor sculpture in public places has been on the increase in number and values in practice.

As rich as the practice of outdoor sculpture in the Southwest zone of Nigeria, there are a lot of problems that threatening the retention of its historical values of it. For instance, there is the lack of proper records of the works. The problem is compounded and heightened by constant replacement, and random and willful damage of the sculptures either because of technical fault, or religious and political complexities as evident in religious crisis in Ilorin and during June 12 political crisis in Nigeria as well as in 1999 political struggle in Osogbo and Ibadan respectively. These problems increase the risk in probable loss of valid data for art historical reconstruction of this art form and Nigerian art. For these reasons, the study of the works has become very important and expedient.

This research is an overview of outdoor sculptures in public places in the Southwest of Nigeria over the period 1900 and 2005. This work traced the origin of outdoor sculpture tradition in the Southwest of Nigeria. It sets them in chronological order, identified some art historical problems. In doing this, it identified the development of the sculpture tradition phase by phase. It also examined the forms, styles and themes of the sculptures. The media and techniques of production of the sculptures were also studied. The study also classified and analyzed the sculptures using a number of criteria. The scope of this work does not, however, cover outdoor sculptures in shrines, grave yards and the ones in individual homes and corporate buildings. Furthermore, the works referred to as public sculptures in the study are those erected at roundabouts, road junctions, road highlands and parks.

A lot of scholarship efforts have been made on the art historical study of traditional Yoruba art and contemporary art in the Southwest. The publications generally, serve as background study to this work. Published scholarly works abound on form, style, theme, technique and function of both the traditional and the contemporary Nigeria arts. Willett (1975) study on form is very important in art history of Africa. His work helps to maintain the African origin of the Ife's bronzes. This put to rest, the hitherto erroneous claims of Frobenius that the production of the bronzes was alien to the zone due to their technical supremacy. Thompson (1973:19-61), Sieber (1973:425-432), Lawal (1980:59-76), Drewal, Pemberton III and Abiodun, (1989:39 and 45) and Abiodun (1987:65-87) severally studied Yoruba aesthetics. Abiodun's study is however more outstanding. His study is similar to Thompson's who worked earlier on the same issue. He enumerates and lucidly explains the entire deep traditional thought that encapsulates Yoruba aesthetic canons.

Again, Drewal, Pemberton III and Abiodun (1989:39 and 45), Walker (1994: 91-106) discusses the issue of African artist's anonymity in their respective publications and observe that, African artists particularly the Yoruba artists are not anonymous. Abiodun states that Yoruba artists who possess the power of imagination to express traditional forms in line with the Yoruba aesthetics were known and celebrated in life and remember for generations. In line with this, Fakeye (1996:40-43) sheds light on the high status and the privileges of the artists, such as exemption from laborious communal work and acceptance to observe proceeding in the revered *Ogboni* cult in sessions and opportunity to wear cap before the Yoruba king. Carrol (1973:6-175) and William (1973:140-164) used the forms, style, theme and media of traditional Yoruba arts to study the unwritten Yoruba history. The arts of many Yoruba neighbours such as Benin, Fon, Egun, Afemia and Nupe were also studied by Gillion (1983:183 – 247). The result brought to light historical affinities of these people with communities the Yoruba.

Adepegba (2002:10-16), on Yoruba forms, style and functions of Yoruba art, observes an alignment between some aspect of Yoruba art and those of the Egyptian cultural influence on the provenance of Ife bronzes. Eyo's (1997:28-46, 500-228), Vansina (1987:21-133) and Kalilu (1995:18-42) studies are based on the African art historiography which has not been well understood. The three publications, separately discuss meaning and function of art in Africa cultural settings.

The aspects of contemporary art in Nigeria and Africa as a whole have also been well studied. Scholars such as Mount (1989), Fosu (1986), Brown (1966), Adepegba (1995) and Oloidi (1995:66-73) have separately traced the origin of contemporary art in Africa. They have also looked at the artists, art form, stylistic and thematic development of the art across different regions of Africa. Thus their study provides a good art historical background for contemporary Yoruba art and Nigerian art in general.

Lawal (1980:71) however, notes the cultural revival in art as a result of African struggle towards the attainment of political independence from the colonial masters. This he says brought to light a lot of Africaness ideas in many fronts. Its effect on art is a return to authentic African art expression in line with the contemporary issues. High point of the study is an attempt on classification of contemporary art. Adepegba (1995), Jegede (1990:29-47) Brown (1966) also made efforts at classification of contemporary art.

Nwoko (1979:13-16) and Oloidi (1995:6-79) briefly looked at the problem of poor patronage in contemporary Nigeria art. They blamed the problem on lack of professionalism on the part of the artists and call for use of aesthetic indices sensible to the indigenous clients in their art. Odiboh (1987) Folarin (1993:125-132), Ikpakronyi (1997 and 2005), Adewolo (1999) and Akintonde (2004:15-26 and 2009) publications are among the very few publications on outdoor sculpture in Nigeria. Apart from Folarin who only mentioned the unprofessionalism of sculptors briefly, their studies generally examine the origin, functions, forms, styles, themes and materials of outdoor sculpture in Lagos, Ibadan and some parts of Osun. In a similar manner, Ikpakronyi's study (1997) is based on Enugu and Owerri. All the studies constitute rich background to this study. But they have not made any critical study on outdoor sculpture development generally across the Southwest Nigeria.

Emergence and Provenance of Outdoor Sculpture

At the emergence of contemporary art in the early nineteenth century, art practice in sculpture in different forms began. Although it did not take a centre stage like painting, but the pioneering effort of Akeredolu in thorn carving, Ben Enwuwu, Felix Iduboh and many others in sculpture are quite appreciable. However, the Yoruba, being excellent in environmental adornment since the ancient time quickly engaged sculpture for the same purpose. Many sculptures were later made in the first two decades of nineteenth century. The earliest known among the sculptures is *Elerede* (plate 1), a female figure erected at Idi-Agbata, Alagbaka area of Akure. The statue was made by a local artisan whose name cannot be remembered by the Elerede family. This type of statue later became popular in Akure and in other Yoruba towns.

A later development in outdoor sculpture in the Southwest zone was noticed among the Catholics and the Anglican churches that use sculptures for church embellishment as from the 1920s (Odiboh, 1987:20). The art, used to decorate the church environment as well as for biblical teaching were usually fixed on the porches or erected in the open air in the church premises. They were also used as tomb or grave-yard sculptures. Samples of those works still abound in the Catholic Church, Lafiaji, St. Saviour Anglican Church and some churches in Lagos. The development later spread to some other churches across the Southwest with the Roman Catholic Church taking the lead. The use of outdoor sculptures in the church probably must have encouraged it in the public cemeteries. This is because larger percentages of tombs decorated with outdoor sculpture in the early period in Lagos were probably those of the Christians and elites with Christian background (plate 2).



Plate 1
Elerede, Ile Asamo, Idi Agata, cement,
height: 150cm approx., 1905, Akure.
Photograph by Musa Zaynab, 2005



Plate 2
An elaborate tomb sculpture of
St. Mathew Daniel at Ikoyi Cemetr
Photograph by Oladipo Olalekan, 2004

It was in 1934 that the first outdoor sculpture in the public environment emerged (plate 3) Oyekanmi Ogedengbe the Obanla of Ijesaland in 2006 claimed the sculpture, *Ogedenge staff*, an obelisk, was directed to be built in Ilesa by the British Home Government in honour of Ogedengbe the veteran Ijesa warlord in the Ekiti Parapo wars. By 1984 a first figural outdoor sculpture (plate 4) was already made and erected at Idumota area Lagos State (Odiboh 1987). The cenotaph locally known as *Soja Idumota* (the *Unknown Soldier*) commemorates the Nigerian soldiers who lost their lives in the Second World War.



Plate 3
The *Ogedengbe Staff*, cement and
ceramic tiles, height: 480cm, 1934, Ilesa.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 4
Cenotaph of *Unknown soldier*, bronze,
1948, Idumota, Lagos
Courtesy of Ajayi Oladele, 2007

More sculptures were later made by the first Western trained Nigerian artist, Ben Enwonwu. Amongst the sculptures made by him are; the bronze image of *Queen Elizabeth II* (made in 1955), erected in front of the House of Representative in Lagos and *Sango* (1960) in front of E.C.N. (Electric Corporation of Nigeria). Outdoor sculptures made by other artists around the same time are the water fountains in the Tinubu Square, donated to Nigerian Government by the Korean community of Lagos. There is also an *obelisk* in Abeokuta sponsored by the Western Region Government around 1964 and the cenotaph of the *Unknown soldier* commissioned by the Iwo branch of Nigerian Legion in 1965.

Between 1960 and 1979, not much was achieved in outdoor sculpture development. Only three outdoor sculptures were probably made in the period. They are the *Unknown soldier* erected in Akure in 1973, *Unknown soldier* at Oja-Jagun, Ogbomoso in 1976 (plate 5) and the *Obelisk* in front the of Akarigbo Palace, Sagamu in 1977 (plate 6). The slow development at this time might be hinged on political crisis in the early sixties and the eventual civil war of 1967 – 1971 which might have shifted the attention of the government from physical development, such as environmental beautification, to security matters. These problems must have also affected other stakeholder in the business.



Plate 5

Christopher J. A., *Unknown soldier*,
cement, height: 190cm, 1976, Ogbomoso.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 6

An Obelisk, cement, height: 450 approx.,
1977, front of Akarigbo's Palace, Sagamu.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007

From 1980 and 1990, development in public outdoor sculpture received a boost. One of the reasons for the rise is the Festival of Black Art and Culture celebrated in 1977, which vividly brought cultural revival in the black Africa and those in the Diaspora with much impact in Nigeria. The revival, encapsulated in Africaness (Lawal 1980:59-76) philosophy, had direct impact in arts generally. As a result of black culture awareness, from 1981 onward, one hundred and fifty seven outdoor sculptures were produced out of one hundred and sixty six sculptures identified to have been made in Southwest since 1934 apart from those damaged or removed without any record.

Added to the high taste in cultural issue is the transition to civilian government which brought a lot of money into circulation. This provided the needed fund for outdoor sculpture stakeholders to invest in the practice. The availability of trained indigenous sculptors also made it easier to commission outdoor sculpture with little money unlike the pre-independence days and the 1960s when heavy sum of money were expended on importation of outdoor sculpture. For instance, Chief Lisa (plate 7) of Ondo imported his bronze image from Germany at a sum of £25,000, in 1965.

Outdoor sculptures made between 1980 and 1990 are forty one. They are fairly spread across the Southwest. The sculptures with themes centres on social matters and Yoruba heroes and heroines include: *Welcome* (1983) erected at Muritala Mohammed International Airport road, Lagos, *Owa Ajibogun* made in 1986 erected in Ilesa (plate 8). Others are *Ajagunnla* (plate 9) *Iba Oluyole* (plate 10) both made in 1987 and a host of others.



Plate 7
Chief Lisa, bronze, height Life size,
1965, Ondo.
Photograph by Sola Bada, 2006



Plate 8
Joe Erigar, *Owa Ajibogun*, cement,
height: 270cm, 1986, Ilesa.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 9
Akintonde Moses, *Ajagunnla*, cement,
height: 270cm, 1987, Ila-Orangun.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 10
Tiri Oladimeji, *Iba Oluyole*, cement,
height: 300m, 1987, Beere, Ibadan.
Photograph by Trans Assurance Plc., 1996

Outdoor sculptures made between 1991 and 1999 are seventy eight. The number is higher than those made in other period and are well spread across the Southwest. When more states and local governments were created in 1991 and 1996, it appears that outdoor sculpture scheme was adopted by the government of the new state as effective means of changing the status of the state capitals to cosmopolitan cities. Col. Leo Ajiborisa openly expressed his interest in using outdoor sculpture to beautify the Osun State capital environment during the unveiling ceremony of some statues in the young state which his administration commissioned in 1991. For instance, when Osun and Ekiti States were created in 1991 and 1996 respectively, many outdoor sculptures were quickly erected in the state capitals. Chairmen of the newly crated local governments also emulated their state government in the practice. Perhaps, the acceptability of the practice by the public and its instant effective beautification impact inspired the government in the older states to also increase the use of outdoor sculpture in their respective states. In Ilorin, the Kwara State capital for example, new outdoor sculptures sprang up. Lagos, Oyo and Ondo States added more to the extant ones in their state capitals (plates 11, 12, 13 and 14) and some towns in the states. This trend continued till the end of the decade.



Plate 11
Olutunde Makinde, *Adekunle Fajuyi*,
cement, height: 210cm, 1999,
Fajuyi Park, Ado-Ekiti.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2004



Plate 12
Tiri Oladimeji, *Iba Oderinlo*, cement,
height: 270cm, 1991, Mapo, Ibadan.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 13
Tolu Filani, *Tai Solarin*, fibre glass,
height: 195cm approx., 2002, Ilesa.
Yaba, Lagos.
Photograph by Sola Ogunfuwa, 2007



Plate 14
Adeola Balogun, *Obafemi Awolowo*,
fibre glass, height: 240cm, 2002,
Allen Junction, Ikeja, Lagos.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007

In the beginning of the new millennium, the tempo of the practice declined. The reason for this might be due to some initial problems confronting the new civilian government, in all the states of the Southwest. At that period, for instance, government workers' salaries have just been increased and the burden seemed too heavy on the states to bear, particularly states such as Osun, Ekiti and Oyo whose Federal Government monthly allocations were low. Peter Babalola the Chief of Staff of the Osun State Government in 2003 claimed a high percentage of their allocations were spent on salaries and other physical projects considered more expedient and imperative than outdoor sculpture. That notwithstanding, many outdoor sculptures were made particularly in Ilorin by Muhammed Lawal the Governor of Kwara State (1999 – 2003) and a few other states (plates 15 and 16). A total number of works made at this period are thirty nine. Those in Lagos, Ilorin and Ijebu-ode alone are twenty two.



Plate 15
Water fountain, cement, height: 300cm,
2002, Unity Road Junction, Ilorin.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2006



Plate 16
An abstract sculpture with *Arewa* motif,
cement and metal, height: 540cm,
1987, Garin Alimi
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2006

The Factors of the Artist, the Audience and the Patron

Artists of outdoor sculptures in the Southwest are of two types; the college –trained and the self-trained. The self-trained artists are very insignificant among the artist. Their works are mainly architectural embellishments and water fountains which they do in their road-side studios. Some group of trained artists, especially the Technical College graduates and the holder of the Ordinary National Diploma Certificate also usually operate their studios at the roadsides like the self-trained. Artists in this category are Dejo Akinlonu, Banjo, Busuyi, Kay Fam and many others.

The majority of the artists are college trained with Higher National Diploma certificate in art, Bachelor of Art and Master of Art Degree in Fine Art. Amongst the college-trained artists are: Adeola Balogun, Godstime Nwaji, Tony Emordi. Others are: Akintonde Moses, Kunle Sheriki, Obi Madu, Kelvin Nwajeogwu, Akah Bunak and a host of others. Holders of Ph.d degree who also practice are few. Those known in this category are: Biodun Sodehinde, Tiri Oladimeji and Rom Kalilu who however seldom practice and, in fact, he is the only professor in this category. Agbo Folarin, a sculptor, who is also a professor, is not included in this category because his works were only located in the Obafemi Awolowo Univeristy, Ile-Ife campus, which was not covered by the focus of this study. Even, his works were executed before he became a professor.

The college trained artists are by far the most knowledgeable in the business because of their good background in art. Many of the artists are none Yoruba serving in the National Youth Service Corps in the various towns of the Southwest. Some are lecturers in tertiary institutions who operate their studios in the same place. Some who are not holding teaching or lectureship appointments established fairly big studios while the members of the National Youth Service Corps who are artists usually operate from make-shift studios.

Many of the artists such as Tolu Filani, Tiri Dimeji, Adeola Balogun, Akintonde Moses have demonstrated high level of competence in outdoor sculpture practice (plates 9, 10, 14, and 17). Many artists are average, while some are very low in skill. The audience of outdoor sculpture cut across various public strata. The most vocal of the audiences are the artists themselves and the art connoisseurs. They appraise and appreciate the works. Ironically, critique of works has not gone beyond the faces of few newspaper, magazines, college thesis and journal articles. There has not been concerted effort toward critical appraisal of the manner of outdoor sculpture practice from any front as it is done in advanced country. Laws guiding commission, producing, erection and maintenance of outdoor sculpture are not enforced. Thus the audiences are usually embarrassed with substandard works, poor maintained works and the abuse of sculptures. This problem has generated a number of attitudes among the audience particularly among the youths. Works that are not satisfactory in themes, styles and technique are forcefully removed or destroyed. The governments are often blamed for allowing such work to be displayed in the public.



Plate17

Tolu Filani, *Herbert Macaulay*, fibre glass, height: 480cm, 1934,
Herbert Macaulay Street, Sabo, Lagos.
Photograph by Sola Ogunfuwa, 2007

Patrons of outdoor sculpture in the zone can also be divided into groups. The clients and the public whose interest the artists must consider are the patrons. Governments in some instances plays dual role in outdoor sculpture practice. They are the major patrons as well as the controlling body. But the government and professional bodies such as Society of Nigeria Arts (SNA), Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) have not done much in controlling standard, location, erection, maintenance and abuse of outdoor sculptures.

This is because the process of commissioning and production are not well controlled. Artist perceive to have a measure of competence are usually commissioned works. Rigorous screening exercises were not usually made to select the best artist for a particular assignment as observable in the Yoruba traditional art practice (Kalilu 1995:18-42). Even in the government commissions, artists are given contract in most cases, based on “man known man” not on merit. However, in very few instances merit were actually sought for. For example, production of some statues in Osogbo and Ilobu were actually competed for by five artists respectively. However, such competition cannot be compared with works like *Vietnam Memorial Monument* in USA (Grider 1990:5-9) which attracted over one thousand entries out of which only one was finally approved.

In production, to a large extent, it is the artist who determines the form, style and medium of expression. Patron seldom have input beyond a brief description of what he wants the theme, the size (usually large) and location. Works are usually done in the studio of artists and taken to location either manually or with the aid of hydraulic machines for erection. In few instances, works were made on the site. *Iba Oluyole* (plate 10) and *Iba Oderinlo* (plate 12), were made on their sites. Unveiling of statues are usually planned along with a major ceremony in the communities where they were located. Such ceremonies may coincide with annual festivals or the commissioning ceremony of major infrastructural project by government functionaries. Such ceremonies are usually well attended by dignitaries and are always very brief.

The assessment of works by the public commences immediately the veil is removed from the work. If the work is satisfactory the audience freely registers their appreciation by hailing the stakeholders in the production. If otherwise, they might simply keep quiet or speak against it in low tone or protest openly and call for its removal. The first *Ayo Ojewumi statue* erected in Ilobu and three works made by Obi administration (Osun State) erected

in Osogbo suffered this fate. However, works such as *Ajagunnla* and *Iba Oluyole* were well applauded by the public (plates 9 and 10).

Often, substandard works are allowed to remain in public environment while appropriate locations for works are not even enforced, maintenances of works by government is grossly inadequate while abuse of sculpture by some members of the public in varying manners keep increasing daily. The abuse ranges from the tying of banner and pasting of advertisements posters on works, as well as the erection of signposts around the works which usually obstruct visibility and also make the environment unkempt (plate 12 and 15).

Political and economic problems in the country have also affected peoples' corporate interest in appreciating and maintaining public property generally. In the light of this, sculptures environments are usually taken over by some members of the public for other private use. Dumping of refuse at the outdoor sculpture sites and the taken over of the environment by destitutes are all factors adversely affecting the development of outdoor sculpture. Be that as it may, the town planning control department has always blamed government for lack of political will to punish those who contravene any of the rules guiding production and maintenance of work.

Forms, Styles, Themes, Material and Techniques

The outdoor sculptures are expressed in different forms. Works were expressed in naturalism, realism and abstract modes. However, expressions of form in naturalism are also not common. Apart from the statues of *Herbert Macaulay* (plate 17) made by Tolu Filani, *Abayomi Berbers' bust of Awolowo* (Plate 18) and the early works imported to the country (plate 2, 4 and 7) that are expressed in naturalism some other works are only close to naturalism (plates 9, 10 and 13). Works in abstract expression are few and almost limited to Ilorin and Ado Ekiti (plates 15, 16 and 19). Higher percentage of the sculptures was expressed in realism.



Plate 18

Abayomi Barber, *Obafemi Awolowo*, cement, height: 95cm, 1982, Enuwa, Ile-Ife. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 19

Untitled abstract figure of the conical beaded crown height: 195cm, 1999, Ado-Ekiti. Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2006

In style, works are mostly expressed in realism. For instance, one hundred and forty one sculptures were expressed in realism while twenty two were made in abstraction and three works in naturalism. There is no definite communal convention in the stylistic expression of the sculptures like the traditional Yoruba wood carving. However, it is possible to observe individual styles among the artists. For instance, the works of Tiri

Oladimeji are usually bulky, colossal, well defined forms but less detailed (plate 10 and 12); while Adeola Balogun's works are subtle in form and expression and with well detailed, in some cases elongated form (plate 14). Tolu Filani's works are usually life size or slightly above (plates 13), elegant and graceful with a good representation of mood. Akah Bunak and Kunle Sheriks works are similar in size, (life size), subtle well defined forms, mild textured, good finishing and expressive forms (plate 20).

Themes expressed in the works are picked from traditional genres and social matters. They are well expressed in form and comprehensible in meaning. Themes bothering on Yoruba heroes and heroines (plate 9, 10 and 21), sports (plate 20), communal affinity with organic and inorganic matters are common.



Plate 20
Kunle Seriki, *Footballer*, cement,
height: 180cm, 1989,
Liberty Stadium Junction, Ibadan.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2006



Plate 21
Image of Beje, cement, height: 150cm,
Ijebu-Igbo
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2006

The sculptures were mostly made in cement. One hundred and thirty two of the works were made in cement, two each were made with cement and ceramic, cement and metal and found objects (plate 22) while twenty eight works were made with polyester resin. Casting, moulded cement, and welded metal are the techniques employed in the making of the works. By far, the works made in moulded cement are more than those made in other techniques. They are one hundred and thirteen while castings constitute thirty-nine out of which fundu account for only nine and fibre glass cast twenty nine.



Plate 22

Monument to Ciroma Olokada, life motorbike, 2004, Ijebu-Ode.
Photograph by Moses Akintonde, 2007

Conclusion

Since the emergence of public outdoor sculpture, the practice has continued to develop organically in various attitudes of practice. Although from 1934 to 1960, it grew gradually but dynamically in style, form and theme. After the Nigerian independence, patronage and standard of production dropped. However, as from 1980 onward, the practice increased proportionately in number and in standard. Themes expressed at this period are based on heroes and heroines in religion, politics, economy and other social matters. By 1990, outdoor sculpture practice became more popular and well spread across the Southwest of Nigeria. Between 1990 and 1999, the art was greatly proliferated. Nearly all the towns of the Southwest have at least two or more outdoor sculptures at this period. In the new millennium, the practice of the art momentarily dropped. Apart from Lagos, Ilorin and Ijebu-Ode, many towns in the zone hardly added one or two to the existing ones while others did not produce in the period.

Expressions of the works were mainly done in realism while cement is the predominant materials used for the production of works. Polyester resin was also used for some works. In technique of production additive techniques with moulded cement and casting were mainly used. The standard of the works is fair generally. However, the works of some experienced artists such as Tolu Filani, Akintonde, Abayomi Berber, Akah Bunak, Adeola Balogun and a few others are very high in standard. Location and erection of works generally are good. However, in some cases, works were not properly located and many were either erected on very low pedestals or put incongruous to proper optical viewing and enjoyment.

Commissioning of the works were not meticulously undertaken as a result of ignorance in art practice on the part of some patrons and fraudulent tendencies of government commissioning agents. As a result of this, mediocre were often given outdoor sculpture commissions. Instances of abuse of works and poor maintenance are also on the increase. Government and other stakeholders are yet to enforce appropriate operational rules for the use of outdoor sculpture.

That notwithstanding, appreciation and patronage for outdoor sculpture continue to rise. Interestingly, the government of Osun, Oyo, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun and Kwara are now embarking on good maintenance of outdoor sculpture in their state capitals. Corporate bodies particularly commercial banks in the zone have also engaged in the production of sculpture and rehabilitation of some outdoor sculptures environment. Strategically, their marks are implanted on such works as advertisement for their services and products (plates 23, 24 and 25).

Generally, outdoor sculpture practice is still developing. There is now a conscious effort towards the production of high standard work. Some favourable attitudes in patronage as well as creativity and thematic importance in the works generally, vividly laid bare the art historical values in them and point to a positive direction of development.



Plate 23

Product advancement sculpture of *Star bottle*, fibre glass, height 360cm, 1992, Anthony, Lagos.

Photograph by Sola Ogunfuwa, 2007



Plate 24

Product advancement sculpture of *Guinness bottle*, fibre glass height 300cm, 1992, Allen, Lagos.

Photograph by Sola Ogunfuwa, 2007



Plate 25

A reconstructed round-about by Skye Bank Plc., 2008 where an abstract sculpture was formally erected in 1999, Ado Ekiti.

Photograph by Moses Akintonde, 2008.

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