

Art Management: A Versatile Tool for Managing and Developing Visual Arts Education in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Despite its rich resources, Nigeria is bedeviled by poverty and its attendant socio-economic problems. Many Nigerians still live in poverty. Poverty in Nigeria is caused by corruption and mismanagement of national resources (Offiong, 2012). The importance of management to any organization, institution or individuals cannot be over-emphasized. This paper posits that visual arts education can be advanced by introducing arts management as a course in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Arts scholarship in Nigeria today has grown beyond what it used to be, which relegated arts to obscurity and negative demeaning insinuations about the visual arts. Art discourse ought to develop the much needed synergy and understanding by touching upon issues like Art Management, Art and Religion, Art Economics, Art and Technology, Art and Media etc. art scholarship ought to transgress from remote practices to modern scholarship if art must survive. The paper examines the possibilities of developing a curriculum on arts management with the aim of packaging arts, artists and art organizations for sustainable development. The paper highlights concepts, characteristics and application of the key techniques for effective art management. It concludes by suggesting measures towards making the proposal a reality.

Introduction

For art and art organizations to experience growth and development, a conscious deliberate effort ought to be made towards harnessing resources to create enabling environment for success (Enamhe, 2012) such could be rendered in qualitative education where constant change occurs through critical thinking, reflection and action.

The 21st century is very competitive in search of the fundamentals of life. All sectors of the economy are undergoing transformation processes. Artists should understand that expertise in any field offers students the opportunity of helping to anticipate and respond to changes. Students learn that, though a job may be successfully accomplished today by performing certain task, tomorrow entirely new set of skills may be required and because businesses are always changing, workers need to find out ways of doing a given job (Bettina, 1991). The introduction of art management in the visual arts department will increase productivity in the manner that will promote the harnessing of diverse ideas, knowledge, expertise, experiences and skills which ought to effect effective and efficient resources management development as well as scientific and technological breakthrough (Ekong, 2008).

Art management has been used effectively for the advancement of art, art organizations and artists in advanced countries. In essence, in the third world countries, art management has a vital role to play in building up the visual arts. Following the progressive nature of advancement in technology, such as global telecommunication infrastructure, all due to globalization, artists must become very aggressive to stay on board. This paper tries to define arts management, visual arts, the need for art management in Visual Arts Department, fundamental elements in arts management, proposed course curriculum, conclusion and recommendations. Illustrations of students' works are included to increase visual sensitivity. Eyes will perceive visual information expelled to create necessary curiosity, a fundamental element to art appreciation.

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The Meaning of Art Management

According to Derrick Chong (2002),

Art management is a more complex term than one first imagines: art managers need to reconcile managerial, economic and aesthetic objectives. Three comments to excellence and artistic integrity; to accessibility and audience development; and to public accountability and cost effectiveness.

A scholar of art and administration, Nwamuo (2003) defined arts administration as “a continuous process of making present artistic and entrepreneurial (risk taking) decision, systematically with the best possible knowledge of their futurity and organizing the efforts needed against the box office expectation through an organized systematic feedback”. Art management is a business oriented discipline involved in project management, art strategy and supply chain techniques to control a creative process. It supports and encourages cultural creativity with the intent of building firm structures and organization for art. Having the objective of developing and maintaining a business environment in which goals are achieved. Art management is very comprehensive and elaborate at all levels of business - operational and strategic. It deals with developmental programmes in art. Art management can simply be defined as a pool of activities woven closely together to realize specific artistic objectives. It is the preoccupation in the handling, developing and effective management of arts, artists and organizations (Enamhe, 2010).

The Meaning of Visual Arts

The meaning of Visual Arts: Egonwa (2012) opines that, “visual arts are about visual culture in our time. It is concerned with everything we see, have seen or may visualize, painting, sculptures, movies, television, photography, furniture, utensil, garden, buildings, aircraft, landscape, toys, advertising, jewelry, apparel, maps, dance, websites, dreams, in short all are aspects that communicate through visual means”. On a very technical manner, he expatiates on art as the stimulation of an experience in forms and images with materials that can be seen. The visual art disciplines have their language like other disciplines. Dot, line, shape, colour, texture and form are the building blocks of that language. Artistic statement in visual form comes into being through a careful manipulation of the above elements (Egonwa, 2012) (see figure 1-9). A few works created by some students in the department have been included for our perusal.

The illustrations will enlighten and give an idea of what happens in the visual arts department. There is so much negligence and lack of knowledge of visual culture and visual literacy. Giant strides have been made in visual culture in traditional art examples of Nok, Igbo, Ukwu, Ife, Benin are long standing treasures of Nigeria. These art works are sources of identity and the country's symbolic image described in the encyclopedia of world art. But there seems to be dearth of the knowledge of art in these contemporary days. It is very necessary to bring to fore modern art with modern applications through art education.

The Need for Art Management in Visual Arts Department

Enamhe (2012) commented that, for the last two decades art scholars have been worried about repositioning, rebranding art in Nigeria as an important contributor to evolving global changes. This outcry has been loud and clear; various studies are being undertaken to accord art and culture its proper place in the society. Dandura (2011), Remi Ademola (2001) Oni Duro (2011), Yaro Gella (2001). Nwamuo (2004), Iji (2001) from different perspectives on arts and culture share similar views in the matter. There is therefore the need to intensify the search to success whose beauty lies on its social, economic, and technical relevance to man and society. The fact is being current with what goes on and very ready to plunge into innovations proactively. Art management renders basic skills and competencies through the art manager who takes and bears the risk of the artist, art organization and audience. Management renders direction to any organization, and it is recognized as a core area, without which, completeness of the goals and objective rest on the efficiency of good management.

Suffice it to say that, for art to remain at the periphery, stems from the absence of trained managers whose function to merge all processes of production are missing. The duties of a trained art manager, the use of skills and techniques, the control of material resources, and the responsibilities for meeting the objectives of the organization. (Enamhe, 2010) the functions of the art manager cannot be debated, it is a tool to

reorganizing art, artists and art organizations. The roles and functions of art management are numerous and meant to develop art. Koontz and O'Donnell (1973) identified five managerial functions which are; planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. It is worth mentioning that each function is an exercise in coordination. Against this backdrop, the art manager ought to apply a systematic flow of knowledge to achieve results by skillful planning, marketing event management, fund raising, mounting exhibition etc. adequate interlacing of viable activities can generate developmental goals, it is the duty of the art manager to create favourable conditions for visual culture be it in the production level or in the consumption stage. The Rockefeller report of 1905 gave this very intellectual description of the new arts manager, as one who is knowledgeable in the art of his practice, that is, he must be a trained visual artists or performing artiste and not a politician, the arts manager should be a labour negotiator, a diplomat, a public relations officer, a skilled and shrewd business man, a social sophisticate, a servant of the community, a tireless leader, humble before authorities, a teacher, a tyrant and continuing student of the art (Langley, 1980). Langley emphasized that, "this is not an ordinary job, an arts administrator is powered with such roles as mentioned above, one cannot be an administrator of art without knowledge of the functions of administration".

Fundamental Elements of Arts Management

Langley propounded the following elements of arts management:

1. Creative raw material: This in visual art refers to clay, plasticine, paper mache, calabashes, wood, colour, canvas, etc.
2. A person to give life to the creative material (such as the sculptor, painter, textile, designer, ceramist etc).
3. A place to present the material (Gallery, art studio/museum/cultural centre, etc).
4. An audience to witness the exhibition.
5. Adequate funding to achieve artistic and administrative goals.

Millennium principles concerns are achievable set goals where things work out, due to appropriate placement of priorities undertaken on clear success story. Adedokun (2001) identified and enumerated the task of the theater manager which is applicable to the visual arts as, anyone who manages the theater, coordinates all economic activities, a publicity director, a match-maker who brings together the ideas, the artist, the place and the audience. He sets goals, selects plays, books in touring troops, finds money or raises funds, hires personnel, controls expenditure and controls income prospects. The task requires high sense of commitment, understanding and knowledge that no ordinary person can handle except experts in the field. To stem some of the negative impressions which are limiting factors to the growth of art such as stated by Iheanacho (2011) thus, "the culture and tourism sector and its allied cultural industry is seen as" unorganized sector "therefore, considered an "unbankable business" due to inability of art proprietors to prepare acceptable, bankable business plans. Therefore the art manager in this new millennium should run the business of art with theoretical and technical ability in the area of specialization which will create the awareness necessary to promote art.

Proposed Course Curriculum

A proposal of this nature should be considered to ensure that visual art education is complete and total to compete favorably in any part of the world. This will invariably expand the frontiers of knowledge. Art management as offered in Visual Arts and Technology Department (CRUTECH) Calabar, is an elective course which is offered in the second year of the degree program. It is a two semester course, 3 credits unit, VAT 2106: Arts Management I, provide art managerial knowledge concerning how to cost, finish/present, preserve, promote, and store works, including intellectual property and copy right laws that protect arts, artists and art organizations. This course is to introduce students to art management which deals with developmental programs in art. Students are encouraged through the course to know how to make things happen in art. To enable students know the role of art, artists, audiences, patrons and art organizations. This course shall enable students understand the responsibilities of the art manager. They should be able to identify the various art organizations; museums, galleries, studios, cultural centres or art councils, etc. students should know how to market art works and the various marketing strategies involved. The concepts and the principles, of improving audience participation in art activities that is audience engineering and audience development. This course should expose students to legal issues in arts. Copyright laws, trade mark, right of authorship, artistic license, plagiarism. The second semester course, code VAT 2206; Art

Management II. It is an interactive course that explores the role of art organization to art development, management theories, functions of management, elements and characteristics of good management. Simple budgeting procedures and how to prepare a budget.

Recommendations

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria which offer visual arts should modify their curriculum to include art management as one of the courses. This can be implemented through the raising of awareness in conferences and similar instruments. This can be appropriated through annual conferences with related themes with the view to educating people on the relevance of the subject matter.

Secondly, in-service programmes may be organized for lecturers to create insights that will help develop views of what arts management means to art, artists and art organizations.

Conclusion

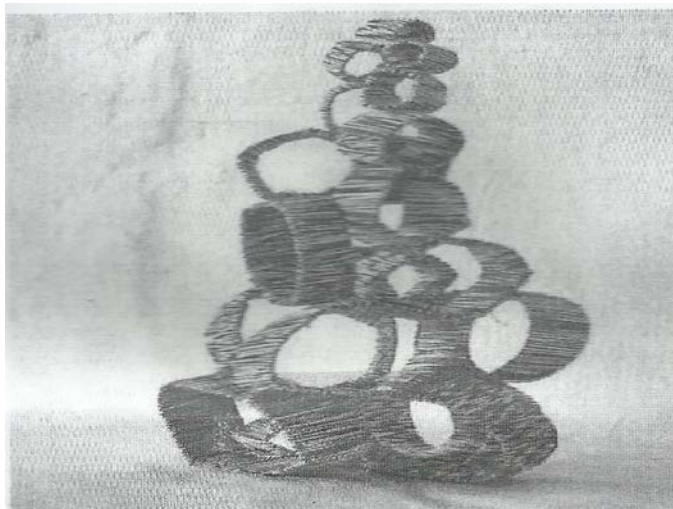
Today's society is on the fast lane and the challenges of survival are enormous. Visual arts should join its counterpart the world over by introducing arts management as a course in the department. This will give the students the opportunity to manage art or allow themselves as artists to be managed by art managers who are trained in the business. Issues militating against the development of the visual arts like not wanting to be managed should be done away with, so as to allow meaningful development. Art management is very vital to visual culture, all aspects, from the artist to the visual form and the organization that house the art. It is thus, an important course in developing art. The most effective medicine for curing poverty is education; visual arts curriculum should be modified to accommodate arts management.

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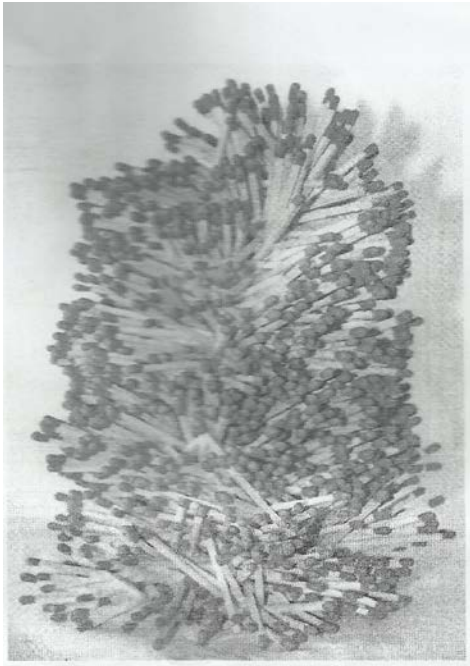
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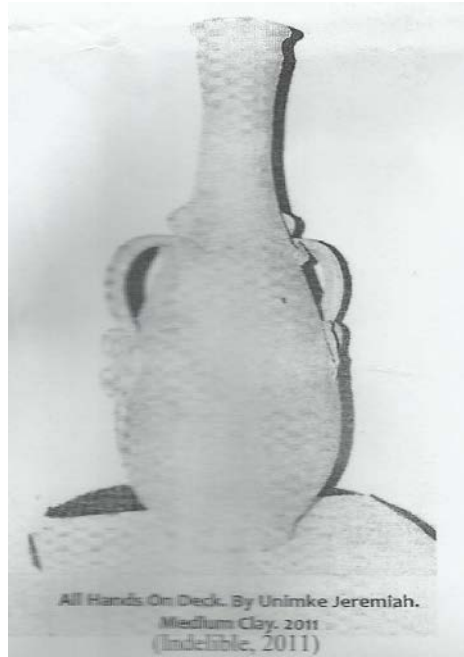
STUDENTS' ART WORKS, VISUAL ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY (CRUTECH) – CALABAR



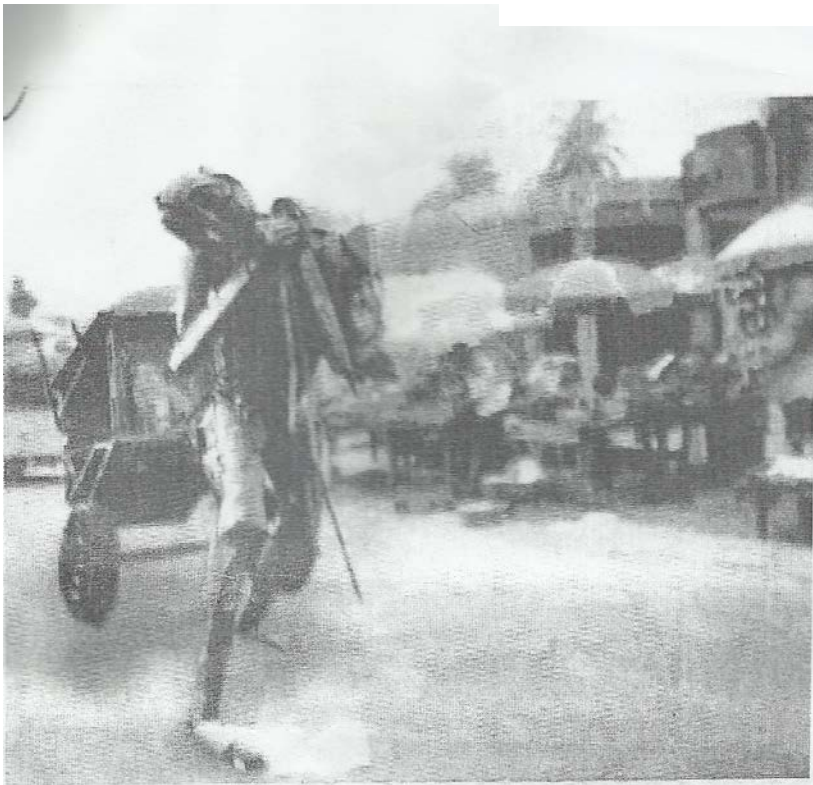
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