

A Contextual Analysis of Selected Artworks on Peace and Conflict Resolution

Jacob Enemona ONOJA, Gambo Giles DUNIYA, A.R SALIU and Ladi Onyi Andrea AGADA
diademng@yahoo.com, gambiis@yahoo.com, ahmedsalaron@gmail.com, and
agadaladi@yahoo.com

Date: 9-2-2017

Abstract

This paper, which is a research conducted for a Ph.D. thesis, articulates and gives a synopsis of a contextual analysis of selected artworks on peace and conflict resolution in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. Peace is on the front burner of most discussions in the society today, as it leads to meaningful development, social cohesion and coexistence in the society. Authors like Shank and Schirch, Rank, and Barret, give impetus to the discussions through the various concepts and models of peace building advanced by the authors. Performing arts like Music, dance and drama have been in the paradigm of peace building, visual arts, however, which is a viable area to advance, engender dialogue and advocate for peace and conflict resolution, is being relegated, or is not properly placed in context, which is a gap in the peace building studies paradigm, and a problem which this paper aims to address and articulate. Art starts in obscurity and snowballs into the global scenes, and become referral points for peace building and conflict resolution; this is made possible through the instrumentality of symbolisms, allegories, emotional and philosophical appeal to the viewer. Symbolism, aphorisms and icons are some elements which artists use in communication of ideas and ideals. The paper arrived at a conclusion, and propagates peace in the society through the analysis and discussions advanced, the findings reached and recommendations advanced, which, among other propositions, include the inclusion of the understanding of visual arts works with symbols for peace like, the Return of Peace on the Plateau, The Future Assured, and "Justified" in peace and conflict resolution.

Keywords: Contextual, analysis, artworks, peace, conflict, resolution.

Introduction/Background of the Study

Peace and conflict resolution is a quest in the hearts of many people. Artists have created works which have served as statements on certain crisis situations, including wars, ravaging famine due to political, ethnic and religious conflicts, and also as an outrage to certain social, economic or political manipulations in the society. An allegorical story of peace in *Picture of Peace* (n.d) on the viability of using art to communicate peace in a society is hereby advanced: An artist was commissioned by a wealthy man to paint something that would depict peace. After a great deal of thought by the artist, he painted a beautiful country scene with all the trappings of peace. The wealthy man was disappointed with the painting and asked the artist to try again. After several attempts of painting other genres relating to peace, and having several disapproval from his patron, the artist finally got an inspiration, to create a new painting. In the painting, he put in a lot of thoughts and related icons to peace. The picture showed a stormy sea pounding against a cliff. The artist had captured the fury of the wind, as it whipped off black rain clouds, which were laced with streaks of lightening. The sea was roaring in turmoil, waves churning, the dark sky filled with the power of the furious thunderstorm. The focal interest was that, in the middle of the picture, under a cliff, the artist had painted a small bird, safe and dry in her nest, snuggled safely in the rocks. The bird was at peace, amidst the storm that raged about her.

The story gives a vivid picture of peace in all its facets, in the negative and positive aspects. The path to peace can be laced with turbulence and storms, however, in between the turmoil, peace can reign through the instrumentality of a few, and that is where art and the artists through their exhibits come to play their role by drawing attention to peace issues and conflict resolution efforts in the society. The background of the study traces the works of artists who have worked on peace and conflict resolution. Shabi (2013:1) and Zappella (2015:1) variously talk of Picasso's *Guernica* and Goya's work *3rd May 1808* as good examples of artists' reaction to conflict situations and how such can be addressed through artistic media. For instance, Zappella (2015:1) avers that:

Along with Picasso's '*Guernica*', Goya's '*Third of May*' remains one of the most chilling images ever created of the atrocities of war, and it is difficult to imagine how much more powerful it must have been in the pre-photographic era before people were bombarded with images of warfare in the media. A powerful anti-war statement, Goya is not only criticizing the nations that wage war on one another but is also

admonishing us, the viewers, for being complicit in acts of violence, which occur not between abstract entities like “countries,” but between human beings standing a few feet away from one another.

Conflicts are recurring issues in the society, and artists have variously responded through their arts to communicate societal ills and raise issues for dialogue and mediation on the international scene. The efforts of Nigerian artists like David West’s works, *No More Aggression* (Fig.1) and *Unanimous Wish for Peace*, and Kolade Oshinowo’s *Conflict Resolution*, are visual art exhibits noteworthy of mention in peace building and conflict resolution parlance in visual arts.



Fig. 1: No More Aggression, David-West, H., Creative Poster, 100 x 77 cm.

Source: David-West, H., No More Aggression. *Nucleus.Maiden catalogue of Works in Nigeria's National Gallery of Modern Art. Federal Department of Culture, Lagos.*

The aforementioned works have been exhibited at various times, and some in the permanent collections of national art collections, privately owned galleries, and institutions, as potent evidences of artists’ efforts on peace and conflict resolution. Saliu (1994: 8) states that an art work has little value if it is not relevant to the society in which it is produced. Art has to be relevant to the society, and so also, the artists who produced the works and exhibit same for the public to appreciate and interact with, either as an object of worship, as seen in some societies, or provoking emotional responses.

Art exhibits on conflict resolution dot various continents of the world, Africa, Nigeria and Plateau State which is the focus of this research. Examples include, the revered *Non-violence* sculpture by Carl Fredrik Reutersward, *Let Us Beat Swords into Ploughshares*, by Evgeniy Vuchetich in the United Nations Art Collections in the United State, just to mention but a few.

In Nigeria for example, the violent conflicts witnessed in some parts, and especially in Plateau State since 2001 has inspired this paper into making research effort at articulating and analysing similar efforts by Nigerian artists. Consequently, this study is concerned with the impact of art exhibits in the propagation of peace and conflict resolution using a contextual analysis of visual arts. The salient impact of art pieces on the memory of the human mind is amazing and captivating. Various continents, including Africa, have had their fair share of conflicts. Nigeria is not exempted from conflict situations. The need to delve into peace building and conflict resolution is thus paramount. According to Osaretin & Akov (2013:349), Nigeria has played host to different types of conflict, especially since the beginning of the Fourth Republic. Critical amongst these is ethno-religious conflict, whose centrifugal tendencies portend dangerous vortex for the corporate existence of the country. The Nigerian society has witnessed ethno-religious conflicts, and an area where this has become prevalent is Jos in Plateau State, Nigeria. In discussing the violent conflicts of Jos, Best (2007:14) avers that the northern and southern zones have experienced extremely violent conflict situations, adding to tens of thousands of internally displaced persons, deaths, injuries and maiming, and the destruction of properties, etc. The hostilities and the attendant rippling effects of various conflicts, which have affected the peaceful nature of the state, started as ethno-religious conflicts and political dominance by settlers, and resistance from the indigenes of the State. The conflicts which took a wide scale from 2001 and the years following, have led various authors to lend voices to ways of creating a society where peace thrives and conflict is discouraged through various efforts. This retrospective discuss forms the hub for the paper, and gives a varied perspective to the peace and conflict resolution issues.

Seidl-Fox (2014:5) and Sridhar (2014:7) variously explain how arts have been used in conflict resolution, however, dealing with the performative arts. The **problem** of this study, therefore, is that, previous efforts focused more on the performative arts, hence the relegation of the visual arts in the mediatory process of peace and conflict resolution and thus, is a gap, which constitutes the problem of this study.

The **aim** of this study is to articulate peace and conflict resolution efforts made through some selected exhibits in the visual arts, while the **objectives** of this study are to:

- i. identify works that intrinsically provoke and postulate peace and conflict issues.
- ii. examine art exhibits in relation to positive and negative peace building efforts.
- iii. analyse selected works within the context of peace and conflict resolutions.
- iv. advance the mediatory role of art works in peace and conflict situations, and
- v. document thematic contents, icons and symbols of peace, in art exhibits.

Coexistence is a strong drive required of any society. This study is **justified** in that; it is drawing the attention of people to the potency of art in propagating peace, and inclusion in conflict resolution parlance. The understanding of visual statements, icons, symbols and signs aids the proper understanding of the layman in visual dialogue.

This research is further justified, because it will increase the amount of information that will be derived from the study of this topic, and present a visual arts paradigm, on an aspect of peace and conflict resolution, which has not been researched before in Jos, Plateau State. The potency of the artists' exhibits and statements, gives credence to the peace process, and hence, the need to embark on the study.

Significantly, this study is premised on the fact that, visual arts are valuable and indispensable statement tools, yet, sometimes underutilised, particularly in peace building efforts. This study exposed and highlights the efforts that some visual artists have made in that direction, thereby lending its voice to public advocacy for peace, and also adding to the mediatory efforts, for propagating sustainable peace. According to Cohen (2003:3), artists can serve as mediators. It is also important to note that, the dearth of materials on peace building through art exhibits will be improved upon, to allow other scholars to benefit from the perspective of peace and conflict resolution through art.

As regarding the scope, a period of 10 years was considered, to mark a decade of conflict resolution efforts starting from 2005 - 2015. This research focused on the visual artworks of painting and sculpture produced by artists in Plateau State. However, only works that address peace and conflict resolution themes in Jos, Plateau State were studied. The study was centered on works of the members of Society of Nigerian Artist (S.N.A), Jos chapter, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Conceptually, this research is based on a varied description of negative and positive peace art, and the attendant effect of the imageries produced to aid peaceful coexistence in the society. Therefore, the research draws inferences from the model adopted by Shank and Schirch (2008:2) which states that:

By peace building, the authors mean a wide range of efforts to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, at all levels of society, and in all stages of the conflict. If the arts are going to be useful to the field of peace building, it is necessary to know what the arts contribute to peace building, when different art forms are appropriate in the cycle of conflict, and how the arts are so effective in their contribution to peace building.

Shank and Schirch used this model in approaching strategic peace building, using the various art forms. The model used by Rank (2008:1) is also applicable to this study as she notes, "In Peace Studies we talk about 'negative peace' as that which is defined by the absence of war, and 'positive peace' as all the conditions that contribute to a sustainable peace. In parallel to that we have anti-war art (negative imagery) and 'peace art' (positive imagery)." The use of art to depict the state of peace and efforts towards peace building is hereby advanced.

Review of Related Literature

The literature reviewed were on works of authors like Rank (2008), Shank and Schirch (2008), Ramsbotham, et al (2011), Buhari (2015) and (Ancient-Symbols.com:2014); who variously discuss the efforts of the arts, and visual arts in peace and conflict resolution. The literature also revealed established symbols of peace, positive and negative peace imageries and the emotions art can stir in

individuals for optimal impact in the society. While Authors like; Osaretin and Akov (2013), Best (2007), Higazi (2011), and Krause (2011) highlight the crises of Plateau State and how efforts are being made at restoring peace, other literary materials on peace and conflict resolution like *Search for Common Ground* (2013), and *The European Union's Plateau Will Arise! Programme for Nigeria* (2015), emphasised the use of dialogue, media approach and drama to reduce the escalation of the conflict. In the literature reviewed of the various Civil Society Organisations and Non – Governmental Organisations, the visual arts approach was not included or thought impactful by all the groups mentioned. Perhaps, due to lack of understanding of the roles, it can play in peace and conflict resolution in Plateau State. The various articles reviewed helped to enhance the literary paradigm of the research, which is by no means exhaustive.

Research Design

The study was a qualitative research and the descriptive research approach, in which, art historical and analytical techniques were employed, based on art historical paradigms of inquiry which were essentially qualitative. According to Wyk (n.d:9), descriptive research provides an accurate and valid representation of (encapsulate) the factors or variables that pertain/are relevant to the research question.

Pilot study was conducted in Zaria and Abuja respectively. The essence of the pilot study was to validate and invalidate the instruments and tools for the research. The interview questions contained 20 questions; some were similar, and were answered in the course of a previous question. Other questions were ambiguous and had to be restructured to capture the core of the study during the field work. The pilot study helped the researcher to see the possibilities of expanding the scope of the study to cover more artists outside Jos, Plateau State, working on peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria. The pilot study revealed that, there is a varied array of works on peace and conflict resolution; however, the artists lamented the fact that, their works have not been given proper scholarly representation, which this study aims to articulate as encouraged by the pilot study.

The **collection of data** was from artworks of members of the Society of Nigerian Artists in Plateau State. These constitute the primary source, while the secondary sources constitute related literary materials on art and peace building in catalogues, brochure, books, journals, magazines, art exhibition, slides, posters and internet sources. All the information was gathered through fieldwork exercise.

Research Instruments and Tools

Interview questions were used for the oral interviews arranged and conducted with the artists. Where the artists were not available due to their schedules and other out of station engagements after repeated trials, online interview questions were sent to them through online media like the e- mails. Focused group discussion questions were also used with the S.N.A. members. Photographs were taken to enhance the discussions. Some photographs were also collected from the artists and scanned. The photographs helped in authenticating the field work claims and working *in situ* (on site). Audio recording was extensively carried out to record the dialogues with the artists on their works and philosophies of creation, which was then transcribed and scored for the analysis. Collection of exhibition catalogues and brochures, personal notes and observation of processes, helped in the analysis of the works.

Population and Sample for the Study

The population for the research are visual arts works relating to peace building and conflict resolution in Jos, the Plateau State capital. According to Jen (2010:60), Population of the study is the people or objects that the researcher is studying or has studied. In this instance, the artists' works/exhibits formed the population. A total of thirty - eight (38) works were analysed and discussed, using the deviant case of sampling, twenty – one of the works were used in the analysis and discussions section as suggested by Cohen and Crabtree (2006:1) and Balkin (2008:18) who talk about how the deviant or extreme case is used to make inquiry into selected cases or phenomena, also departing from a specified standard arising from the analysis. In this instance, twenty – one (21) works are used. In using the deviant case of sampling, all the works were sampled before extracting the 21 works for the chapter four analysis and discussions. All the works came from twenty - one (21) artists of the S.N.A. The purposive sampling as suggested by Jen (2010:68) was used, because the samples were picked and studied due to their accessibility, interest and meeting specific needs of visual arts – based approach, to peace building and conflict resolution in Jos, Plateau State.

Method of Data Analysis

This study generated qualitative data that were analysed, using the objectives of the study. The researcher draws inferences from contextual analysis of art exhibits using the descriptive (what does one see), analytical (how is the work organised), interpretation (what messages does the work communicate), at this point, personal imagination and intuition helps to interpret the work, while taking into cognisance the artist that produced the work for objective judgement, for example, the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions helped in enhancing the discussions on the works. Finally, the contextual judgement, *Art Criticism and Aesthetic Judgment* (n.d: 27-29) supports the aforementioned process of formal and contextual analysis respectively, while Duniya (2009) and Danjuma (2010) have used this process of analysis, just to mention but a few.

Field Work Report

The field work, which is an essential component of this research, was carried out on the focus group of the research, the Society of Nigerian Artists (S.N.A) and artists that have worked with S.N.A on several workshops and peace building fora. The In-depth-Interview (IDI) was used to generate data from the artists on their exhibits and their responses to peace and conflict resolution. A few of the artists were not available for the scheduled interviews, and hence, the researcher had to use exhibition catalogues and other secondary materials to enhance the discussions.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) helped to reinforce the areas not covered by the individual artists. The participants in the FGD were outgoing as observed by the researcher. It was also observed that, the group's cohesion helped to reinvigorate the interview.

The research, which is aimed at articulating peace and conflict resolution efforts made through selected exhibits in the visual arts, strives to document historically, artworks on peace and conflict resolution. A total of twenty - one (21) artists were consulted and interviewed in the course of the field study. The deviant sampling method was used to streamline the discussions on peace issues. This was used by Ewubareh (2014:19) and Gushem (2011) in their discussions. This method helped in judgmental approach to contextual analysis.

The discussions focused on answering the five research questions extrapolated from the objectives of the study.

Findings

Art starts in obscurity and snowballs into the global scenes, and become referral points raising societal issues for peace building and conflict resolution; this is made possible through the instrumentality of symbolisms, allegories, emotional and philosophical appeal to the viewer. The findings of this study, which have been extracted from the analysis and discussions, are as follows:

Identified Works that Intrinsically Provoke and Postulate Peace and Conflict Issues

This finding is in response to the research question i. *How can one identify works that intrinsically provoke and postulate peace building?* In a focused group discussion conducted with the Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA), Jos, Plateau State, the participants unanimously agreed to the use of visual arts as a potent tool to provoke and postulate peace issues. Works like *Return of Peace on the Plateau* (Plate I), used the contextual theme of peace and the Riyom rock formation with the doves, to postulate and drive emotions to peace building. The rock formation is a known landmark symbol of Plateau State, and has a semblance of the map of Plateau State from a certain perspective view, hence, using it in the visual arts, contextualises peace issues in Plateau State. The same way Picasso used localised symbols to create *Guernica*, so has Rwang used *Return of Peace on the Plateau* to call attention to the Plateau State paradigm of visual arts in peace building and conflict resolution. *Peace* (Plate II) incorporates images of worship places to advocate for peace with the Riyom rocks in the foreground to contextualise the work to Jos. In *No More Fighting* (Plate III), Gunok used relief sculpture and animal allegory to call for peace in the heat of the 2015 elections. Iwa's *Jostified* (Plate V) incorporated identified icons of peace and conflicts in a collage - like painting to stir emotion of peace. *United We Stand* (Plate VI) calls for the wholistic outlook for peace. Symbols like the feet in various directions, stand for the walk to peace to regain the Plateau of the desired dream, where there are an abundant food supply and natural mineral exploration. This is only made possible through the instrumentality of peace as engrained in the five (5) pillar points of the Plateau State Government, the first being peace, security and good governance. Works identified in the study have responded adequately to peace issues, even though few, their messages are potent with emotional and visual allegories underpinning the works.

All the works identified have titles that postulated peace and conflict issues. The elements and principles of visual arts were effectively used to tell the stories in the paintings. In some instances where abstractions are used, personal philosophies of the artists are used to discuss peace and conflict resolution. Works like *Circle of Life*, and *Market on Canvas (Palace of Oppression II)* are good peace philosophies in visual arts. The works identified also addressed socio - political, religious, and ethnic issues in Jos in the purview of peace and conflict resolution, which have been the root causes of the lingering crises in the State.

i. There is a consensus by visual arts practitioners in Jos on the use of visual arts as a potent tool which provokes and postulates peace issues. In this regard, works like *Return of Peace on the Plateau* (Plate I), used the contextual theme of peace and the Riyom rock formation with the doves, to postulate and drive emotions to peace building.



Plate I: Return of Peace on the Plateau, Mark Rwang, Oil on Canvas, 61 x 91.44 cm, 2014. A collection of Mr. Hamisu Rogo, Jos. Photograph: Mark Rwang.

ii. Works identified in the study have responded adequately to peace issues. Their messages are potent with emotional and visual allegories underpinning the works. Examples are *Jostified* (Plate II) *United We Stand* and *Peace*. Iwa's *Jostified* (Plate II) for example, incorporated identified icons of peace and conflicts in a collage - like painting to stir emotion of peace.

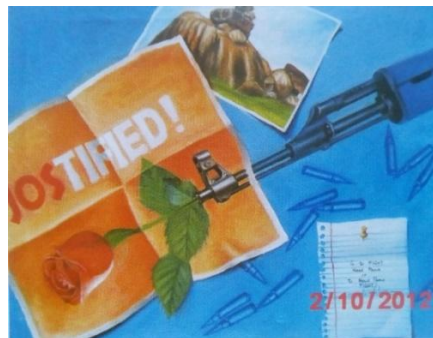


Plate II: Jostified, Aliyu Mala Iwa, Oil on Canvas, 6.12 x 24 cm, 2012. A collection of the artist, Jos.

In *Jostified* (Plate II), this painting encourages peace and love in Jos. The background blue is likened to the standard United Nations colour for peace. The Riyom rock poster is a symbol of Jos. *Jostified!*, painted in red and white to represent danger and peace, against a yellowish orange background, is an indication of future hopes and aspiration. The budding rose is to engender love, while the natural complement of the green stem and leaves, adds harmony to the composition. In nature, colours complement each other, hence, irrespective of ethnic, religious or political differences, living in love and peace can enhance beauty.

The barrel, expectedly should fire bullets and spark fire, but this painting has used it as a symbol of love, the red budding rose, to come out of the barrel, in place of the bullet. The downward tilt of the barrel also connotes laying down of arms and cessation of conflicts. Barret (2005:73) opines that, the transformation of weapons is a common technique in peace imagery. The knotted gun sculpture (see plate III) and a work of Japanese origin, which shows two rifles entwined to form a heart, a symbol of love, are good examples. Picasso once said, a painting cannot stop a bullet from being fired, however, it can warn against it being fired. This exhibit symbolically encourages peaceful living in love in the *Jostified* city of Jos.

United We Stand calls for the holistic outlook for peace. Symbols like the feet in various directions, stand for the walk to peace to regain the Plateau of the desired dream, where there is an abundant food supply and natural mineral exploration.

iii. In some instances, particularly where abstractions are used, personal philosophies of the artists and colours are used to discuss peace issues, from diverse perspectives, which include socio - political, religious, and ethnic colourations. In talking about how colours affect the mood of the viewer, Joshua (2016) is of the opinion that, certain colours like black can affect the intensity and Chroma of colours, this he used in his experimental series for market paintings to connote peace issues. Joshua has painted extensively market scenes in various styles of realism, impressionism and abstraction. He is of the view that, the market is the key driving scene to a society at peace. Commercial activities cannot thrive where there is tension, conflicts and oppression from insurgency. In using black however, which he was inspired from the charcoal market, he creates conflict points using colours like black and grey on the canvas. These colours can be depressing, and also calming at some points. In *Palace of Oppression I, II and III* for instance, Joshua contextualises the market to discuss social issues, of which peace building is key. The market is vibrant with activities when there is peace, but we find charred remains in conflict situations. The Jos Terminus market, supposedly the largest ultra-modern market in West Africa was razed down by fire. Other bombings have taken place in the Terminus market, killing several people and destroying properties. Vibrant colours of the artists, capture the charred remains which are evidence of conflicts in the society, perpetrated by the oppressors of peace.



Plate III. Market on Canvas (Palace of Oppression I), John Oyedemi Joshua, Oil on Canvas, 183 x 153 cm, 2012. A collection of the artist. Photograph: John Oyedemi Joshua.

Examined Art Exhibits in Relation to Positive and Negative Peace Building Efforts

Research question ii was. *What positive and negative peace building efforts can one find in art exhibits?*

iv. Out of the twenty – one (21) works used for the analysis and discussions, eighteen showed positive imageries and three negative imageries. Having a holistic view of the positive and negative emotions in visual art works, help in peace building efforts, the research reveals.

v. Visual arts present a unique platform for mediation that sometimes could leave a lasting impact, even after the image is removed from the exhibition. Art works raise issues of dialogue among viewers and become a viable tool for mediation in peace studies.

Exhibits like *Yet Another Mountain*, *The Pain*, *Even in Times like this*, *The Turbulence*, *the Malady and the Vulnerable* (see Plate IV) are some works that explicitly symbolise negative and positive peace images, and also provoke and postulate peace issues and symbolism. The researcher found that, the works are reactions to the various conflicts; individual artistic temperaments affected the context of the creation of works, either positively or negatively. While artists like Udubrae and Fwangkyes portrayed more of negative images to serve as a deterrent to conflicts, Rwang, Yawus, Tijjani and Shonibare used more of positive images for peace building in Plate IV, for instance, the import of the painting shows a wild riot situation of opposing forces, in a conflict. Mothers and fathers running away from a howling mob, children crying, parents moving to a dark and bleak future with lost hopes. The artist has recorded vividly, and in a painterly narrative, the turbulence of the conflict, the diseases and desperate conditions of fleeing people and the vulnerable nature of the victims of war. Some are exposed to senseless killings, rape and various untold medical conditions. This negative imagery is intended to draw attention to the positive peace building, the memories of negative incidences during wars, creates shivers in viewers, and hence, builds a positive mindset to the conflict situation, and find ways to avoid them.



Plate IV: The Turbulence, the Malady and the Vulnerable, Nyohom Fwangkyes, Oil on Canvas, 77 x 52 cm, 2014. A collection of Udubrae Art Gallery, Jos. Photograph: Researcher.

Art works can heal emotional wounds; it can also play the role of building trust in a conflict situation. The artists interviewed with respect to positive and negative peace building posited that, positive images engender trust and maintain peace, while negative images warn and serve as a bitter pill reminder of the past, so as to heal the future. This gives impetus to the assertion of Rank (2008), which serves as one of the bases for the conceptual framework of this study.

Analysed Selected Works within the Context of Peace and Conflict Resolutions

Analyses are an integral part of the descriptive approach to research, hence, in answering research question iii. *In what way can art works be analysed to show their peace and mediatory roles?* The formal and contextual analyses were used to describe and contextualise the works.

vi. Politics and insatiable quest for power have contributed to the conflict situations in Jos, and creating aesthetic nuances can evoke dialogue among people, a form of mediation for peace. John Oyedemi Joshua's oeuvres and all the other artists interviewed and studied, have made efforts at bringing peace issues to the fore in Jos, Plateau State. The documentation of these works and the academic engagements, have helped the researcher to appreciate and advance the field of visual arts in art historical discourse.

vii. There was a paucity of works in some of the years, while in some years, no work was documented. This is due to the fact that, works produced in those years of absence were not documented by the artists either by photography or exhibit in an exhibition catalogue. Also, some of the works were collected by art lovers and connoisseurs, who were either visiting Jos for tourism, or were foreigners with an interest in the visual arts. The artists were not sure of the locations and the collectors of such undocumented works.

viii. Some symbols were found accidentally by the researcher and were not intended by the artists in the creation of the works, perhaps an innate drive for peace in the artists brought about such symbols. The "V" shapes on the cactus plant and trees for example, and also the *Mpatapo adinkra* sign in some works used for mediation and reconciliation. For instance, in analysing and discussing *Local Champion* (Plate V), the tree in the exhibit, under which the chickens are enjoying the shade, branches off, at the trunk, into a "V" like shape, a symbol of peace, even though created unconsciously by the artist.

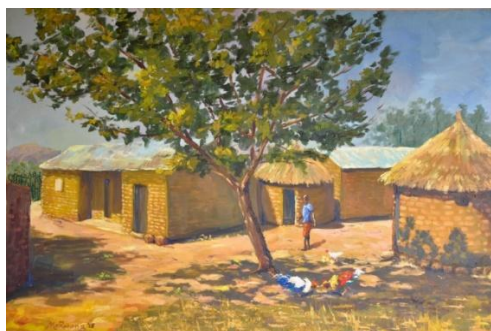


Plate V: Local Champions, Mark Rwang, Oil on Canvas, 61 x 91 cm, 2015. A collection of the artist. Photograph: Researcher.

The researcher observes that, some symbols are found in this exhibit, that was purely accidental and therefore, not the artist's deliberate creation. The use of high striking light and shades in the exhibit, draws attention to the peak of political activities, as seen in the bright colours and dark tones of the shades. All the elements and principles used in the composition, were thoughtfully arranged, to achieve harmony in the story. Commenting on the painting, the artist states that:

This painting was done in April 2015 during the electioneering campaign. The two contending parties, then were PDP and APC and I saw them as two big cocks fighting each other and hence the title is *Local Champions*. You know the acrimony that ensued during that time, was such that, even friends were becoming enemies. People were hardly talking to each other. In fact, the country was going to explode. I thought I should document the situation by painting two local champions or cocks fighting each other. As you can see, there is an attempt to use the colours of the two political parties – All Progressive Congress (APC) has white, green, blue and red. Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has red, green and white. My thinking is that at all levels of the elections; we had umpires that were indecisive at some points. You had people who were wondering should we separate the fight, or should we allow them to continue fighting? I think God played a very big role in intervening and bringing peace in this country, because I don't think in the history of this country we have ever had it this rough, it was like do or die, but no matter what happens, the society would still move on. The chicks and the hen at the background are suggesting that whoever emerges will continue to move this community forward.

The work is a political statement on peace, using mediation and satire to lighten the political scene. This is also to draw attention to peace issues and to maintain its continuity in the society.

Mediatory Role of Art Works in Peace and Conflict Situations

Research question IV is. *What mediatory roles can art play in peace building efforts?* Some works that deal with mediation issues include *Banquet* (Plate V), for instance, this painting creates a forum for dialogue through feasting, which is only made possible when peace thrives and all the parties involved in conflicts meet to negotiate. This allegory is a positive peace image and mediating for peace in the society.



Plate VI: *Banquet*, Michael Ejale, Oil on Canvas, 34 x 152 cm. 2014. A collection of Udubrae Art Gallery, Jos. Photograph: Artist.

Other exhibits like *New Dawn*, *Plateau: Hope – Reborn*, *Shawl of Peace* and *Sunrise Nigeria*, play the role of mediation and advocacy for peace.

Documentation of Thematic Contents, Icons and Symbols of Peace in Art Exhibits

Documentation is an important aspect of this study; hence, presenting the documented findings enhanced understanding of the research. This finding is in reaction to research question v. *How can the icons, symbols and thematic contents of peace in art be documented?*

x. The thematic contents, which are built in the context of the creation of the works, have themes ranging from the easiest to understand titles to the very abstract and esoteric. For instance, *Return of Peace on the Plateau*, *Peace*, *No More Fighting*, *United We Stand*, and *Shawl of Peace* are more direct in the title and context, while works like *Circle of Life*, *Market on Canvas (Palace of Oppression I, II and III)*, *Sunrise Nigeria*, *Jostified*, and *Yet Another Mountain*, have esoteric themes and meanings relating to peace and conflict resolution.

xi. Icons and symbols found in some of the works, range from the conventional to the unconventional. The Riyom rock formations in some of the works help to localise the works, and draw attention to Plateau State symbolism. Symbols in terms of forms, colours and allegories are seen in some works.

The dove in realism, abstract and stylised forms, for instance, are seen in the works to connote peace, while burnings, riot situations and rowdy crowd situations draw attention to conflict situations and negative peace images. These are allegories by the artists to help in the avoidance of conflicts. The subliminal symbols of the cross, Islamic calligraphy, crescent moon and star, religious places of worship, butterfly and other animals are symbols and icons that allegorically build coexistence and religious tolerance.

xii. Celebration, commerce, development and cloud nine experiences are pieces of evidence of a peaceful society. Works like *Banquet*, *Sunrise Nigeria*, *New Dawn* and *Plateau Hope – Reborn*, are enthused with positive image allegories as a result of a peaceful society. In the same vein, works like, *Let there be Peace, No Violence* and *The Future Assured*, are forewarnings for future peace building efforts and the mediation of visual arts in the peace process.

Conclusion

A good understanding of visual arts symbols and statements in peace building, can go a long way to ending long - standing conflicts and stirring emotions for peaceful coexistence. Ronald Reagan (2016) in *Brainy Quotes* states that, “Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means”. In visual arts, the indispensable tool of visual expressions can enhance peace building efforts and aid in conflict resolutions if given the right of place as this paper postulates. Artworks and artists stand at the cross roads as mediators in the society. Art can indeed move one in many ways we never thought of before, works like *Jostified*, *Local Champions*, and *Banquet* can add to peace building and conflict resolution mediation and symbolic documentation. This study adds to the universal repository of peace and conflict resolution symbols derived from Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. The paper, therefore, recommends the following to advance the frontier of peace building and conflict resolution using visual arts – based approach.

Recommendations

This research recommends that:

1. Works that provoke and postulate peace and conflict resolution issues should be identified progressively by researchers, and artists should work concertedly to document works before they go out to collectors and connoisseurs, also, brief information on the context of the creation of works should be documented in catalogues by galleries, visual arts stakeholders and peace studies researchers to aid subsequent research efforts into visual arts in peace and conflict resolution.
2. The exhibits on positive and negative peace imageries should be placed at purpose - built peace halls and museums, to advance the efforts of visual arts and artists in peace and conflict resolution studies by the relevant cultural practitioners and government agencies like the National Gallery of Arts, as practiced around the globe.
3. Works analysed in the context of the Jos peace and conflict resolutions should be added to the working document in peace studies to enhance understanding of symbolism and allegories.
4. Mediation through the creation of peace cenotaphs and dedicated exhibition spaces and peace museums by the Society of Nigerian Artists, Jos, Plateau State, Civil Society Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations and the Government, can help to keep memories of past events, create a better today, and advance to a future, where peace is maintained and conflict is relegated to its barest minimum, with good understanding of the mediation power of the visual arts.
5. The research also recommends the gazetting of the documented visual arts icons, symbols and themes in peace and conflict resolution studies, National Gallery of Arts literary materials and peace advocacies materials to add to the rich array of a multi-disciplinary approach to peace and conflict resolution. This will draw the attention of interested relevant agencies in peace and conflict resolution studies in Nigeria and the world at large.

References

- Art Criticism and Aesthetic Judgement*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 29, 2016, from <http://rolla.k12.mo.us/uploads/media/Chap02.pdf>
- Balkin, R. (2008). *Qualitative Research*. Retrieved June 13, 2016, from http://www.balkinresearchmethods.com/Balkin_Research_Methods/Research_Methods_and_Statistics_files/Qualitative%20Research.pdf
- Barrett, C. (2005). *Images and Symbols of Peace*. Retrieved June 29, 2015, from The Peace Museum, Bradford, UK: [http://www.museumsforpeace.org/attachments/article/5/06%20clive%20barrett%20\(6\)%2072-77.pdf](http://www.museumsforpeace.org/attachments/article/5/06%20clive%20barrett%20(6)%2072-77.pdf)

- Best, S. G. (2007). *Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State, Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Brainy Quotes. (2016). Retrieved June 29, 2016, from Peace Quotes: http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/topics/topic_peace.html
- Buhari, J. (2015). *Inaugural Lecture [The] Visual Arts as Knowledge Production*. Zaria: Yaliam Press Ltd.
- Cohen, C. (2003). *Engaging with the Arts to Promote Co-existence*. Retrieved August 21, 2015, from <http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts/pdfs/EngagingArts.pdf>
- Cohen, D. and Crabtree, B. (2006). *Qualitative Research Guidelines Project*. Retrieved June 13, 2016, from <http://www.qualres.org/HomeSamp-3702.html>
- Danjuma, K. N. (2010). *A Comparative Study of the Paintings of Gani Odutokun and Jerry Buhari*. Zaria: Unpublished PhD dissertation, Fine Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University.
- Duniya, G. G. (2009). *Modern Nigerian Art: A Study of Styles and Trends of Selected Artists in the Zaria Art School*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Fine Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna-Nigeria.
- Ewubareh, L. (2014). *Promoting Peace Building and Conflict Transformation through Art-based Approaches: The Case of Koko and Opuama Communities in the Niger Delta*. Retrieved November 19, 2015, from <http://ndlink.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PROMOTING-PEACE-BUILDING-AND-CONFLICT-TRANSFORMATION-THROUGH-ART.docx>
- Eyo, E. (1977). *Two Thousand Years of Nigerian Art*. Lagos: Federal Department of antiquities.
- Gushem, P. O. (2011). *Paintings of Kolade Adekunle Oshinowo from 1986 - 2006*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Fine Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Higazi, A. (2011). *The Jos Crisis: A Recurrent Nigerian Tragedy*. Retrieved July 30, 2015, from FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFUNG: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/nigeria/07812.pdf>
- Introduction To Qualitative Research. 1st Edition.* (2015). Retrieved June 30, 2015, from https://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/BPL/Images/Content_store/Sample_chapter/9780632052844/001-025%5B1%5D.pdf
- Jen, S. U. (2010). *Fundamentals of Research Methodology*. Yola: Paraclete Publishers.
- Joshua, J. O. (2016). Charcoal Market: Palace of Oppression. *International Journal of Innovative Language, Literature & Art Studies* 4(1):Jan.-Mar. 2016, 35-37.
- Joshua, J. O. (2016, July 10). Market on Canvas (Palace Of Oppression I,II,III). (J. Onoja, Interviewer)
- Krause, J. (2011). *A Deadly Circle: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria*. Geneva: Geneva Declaration Secretariat.
- Osaretin, I., Akov, E. (2013). Ethno-Religious Conflict and Peace building in Nigeria: The Case of Jos, Plateau State. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. Doi:10.5901/ajis/2013.v2n1p34, 1.
- Picture of Peace.* (n.d.). Retrieved November 27, 2015, from Inspirational Christian Stories and Poems Archive: <http://www.inspirationalarchive.com/texts/topics/peace/pictureofpeace.shtml>
- Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T., and Miall, H. (2011). *Conflict Resolution in Art and Popular*. In *Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 3rd Edition*. Polity.
- Rank, C. (2008). *Promoting Peace Through the Arts: The Role Of Anti-War and Peace Art*. Retrieved June 20, 2015, from Arts and Peace: http://escolapau.uab.cat/img/programas/musica/peace_through_arts.pdf
- Saliu, A. R. (1994). *The Study of the Decorative Arts of The Ebira*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Fine Arts Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Search for Common Ground. (2013). *Preventing Inter-Religious Violence in Plateau*. Retrieved July 14, 2016, from https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/NGR_EV_-Preventing-Violence-in-Plateau-State-Evaluation_FINAL-2013_names-removed.pdf
- Seidl-Fox, S. (2014). *Conflict Transformation through Culture: Peace-Building and the Arts*. Retrieved June 25, 2015, from Salzburg Global Seminar: http://www.salzburgglobal.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Documents/2010-2019/2014/532/SalzburgGlobal_Report_532.pdf
- Shabi, K. (2013). *Guernica Meaning: Analysis & Interpretation of Painting by Pablo Picasso*. Retrieved October 7, 2015, from LEGOMENON: What is the Meaning: Online Literary

- Journal & Magazine: <http://legomenon.com/guernica-meaning-analysis-of-painting-by-pablo-picasso.html>
- Shank, M., and Schirch, L. (2008). *Strategic Arts-based Peacebuilding*. Retrieved June 20, 2015, from Art and Peace: http://escolapau.uab.es /img/ programas/ musica/strategic_arts.pdf
- Shonibare, O. (2016, July 8). Focus Group Discussion with the Society of Nigerian Artist, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria on the 8th July, 2016. (J. Onoja, Interviewer)
- Sridhar, S. (2014). *Introduction: A Journey of Discovery*. Retrieved from Salzburg Global Seminar: http://www.salzburgglobal.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Documents/2010-2019/2014/532/SalzburgGlobal_Report_532.pdf
- The European Union's Plateau Will Arise! Programme for Nigeria. (2015). *Plateau Will Arise! Building an Architecture for Peace and Tolerance*. Retrieved July 14, 2016, from <https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PWA-I-Final-Evaluation-Report.pdf>
- West African Wisdom: Adinkra Symbols & Meanings. (2007). Retrieved November 10, 2015, from http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/adinkra_index.htm
- Westcott, K. (2008). "World's best-known protest symbol turns 50". Retrieved March 20, 2015, from BBC NEWS Magazine: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7292252.stm
- Willett, F. (1971). *African Art An Introduction*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Wyk, B. V. (n.d.). *Research design and methods Part 1*. Retrieved June 24, 2015, from http://www.uwc.ac.za/Students/Postgraduate/Documents/Research_and_Design_I.pdf
- Zappella, C. (2015). *Goya, Third of May, 1808*. Retrieved October 7, 2015, from <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/romanticism/romanticism-in-spain/a/goya-third-of-may-1808>.