

DRAWING CONCEPTS: A VISUAL EXPLORATION OF FISH FORMS**LAMIDI Lasisi Abdul**

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Abstract

Currently, drawing has taken a vast gamut of intellectualism by artists using varied materials, techniques and subject matters in its delineation. This paper surveys Lasisi Lamidi's drawings inspired by fish forms. The drawings are created with the aim of enhancing hand and brain coordination. This might serve as suitable mental exercises in improving the creative output of an artist. In this portfolio of drawings, the artist has categorised the series into three, single, double and multiple fish compositions. A total number of eighteen drawings are selected for description, while conclusion is drawn by enumerating the benefits of drawing.

Key Words: Drawing, Inspired, Fish, Forms, Techniques

Introduction

The concept of this series of drawings is centered on enhancing one's hand and brain coordination which can serve as mental exercise. The drawings are essential sketches as well as preliminary ideas for the execution of other forms of visual arts like relief sculptures, textile patterns, motifs and also in creating other possibilities in drawing. Another perspective of looking at this concept is the idea of getting a better contact with varied subject matters and how to explore them in drawing. For example, an artist could decide to pick any subject matter that interests him and explore several ways of interrogating that subject matter visually using different media. This enhances artistic versatility and broadens the mental scope of the artist on a particular subject.

These creative tendencies in visual arts can mainly be brought to bear in the artist by engaging in drawings of this nature. This is so because drawing is economical and easy to start compared to other areas of the visual art practice. Therefore, artistic contemplation and apprehensions are better conquered by exploring drawings that have gestural characteristics as mere sketches or preliminary ideas. Though, the above assertion encapsulates the intention of this artist in documenting these drawings for the purposes of referencing and posterity; Okoli (2009) states that, "sketches are like under wears" and artists mostly hide them, but of course some of the neat under wears can be brought out for display. Some of the drawings presented in this paper could be termed as noodles and doodles; yet they form a tangible artistic portfolio. These explorations are basically inspired by fish forms and are grouped into three categories. Figs. 1-6 are single fish compositions, Figs. 7-12 are dual fish compositions, while Figs. 13-18 are multiple compositions of the fish forms. They are of the same sizes (21x30cm) and executed with pen on paper in 2018. It should be noted that this paper seeks to showcase and perhaps document a portfolio of drawings accompanied by an intentionally designed approach to its descriptive analysis which may be said to be systematic in nature.

Concepts in Drawing

Drawing is a two-dimensional expression using any artistic media to create line on any surface. Drawing turns the creative minds to expose its workings. "Drawing discloses the heart of visual thought, unites spirit and conjures imagination; an act of meditation, an exorcism of disorder, a courting of artistic ideas" Above all; it is a lean instruction of visual formulation and the vortex of artistic sensibility. "Drawing is a spirit that manifests its self in form of lines controlled by the thought processes of a person. It releases the energy, feelings and thinking of any person on a given surface" (Hill in Irokanulo and Gbaden, 2015). Once an artist gives in to drawing it becomes a spiritual aspect of the artist as breathing is natural to man.

Drawing is as close to the heart of every artist as if without doing it artists become somehow incapacitated. According to Hutter (2017), in Fine Art, a working drawing is a separate, exploratory drawing that develops an idea towards a final work of art. This concept as supported by Hunter defines the concept of the fish forms in creating these drawings. Creating a work of art is sometimes an iterative process. This means that rather than diving feet-first into a complete drawing or painting, the artist will do a series of sketches with the aim of trying out ideas. Sometimes it can be difficult to translate an idea from the mind to the canvas, so working drawings allow the artist to revise the work and re-draw to develop a composition, working

through problems as they occur. Particularly in the case of large and complex works, these then become references as the artist embarks on the final piece.

Literally; drawing is an art of representing an object in line, therefore without line drawing does not exist. The significance of drawing to the visual artists is in exhaustive. Drawing as stated by Ogumor in Akor (2017) is a way of training the eyes and of promoting visual and muscular coordination. It is the art of using lines to represent, define and describe objects visually. Observation should be seen as one vital element in drawing; observing an object or a model is not an act of catching a glance but a critical study of the subject matter before making a mark on paper or on any surface. In this vein, Aristides (2006) observes that, 'All drawings share a sense of vivid engagement with the subject matter either seen or imagined' so; drawing connects observation with conception and vision to inspiration. In furtherance of this concept of drawing; some general definitions of drawing by the renowned masters of art will help our understanding of drawing better.

Vam.ac.uk, (2018) states:

Michelangelo (1475 - 1564) 'Let whoever may have attained to so much as to have the power of drawing knows that he holds a great treasure. 'Titian (c.1487/1490 - 1576) 'It is not bright colours but good drawing that makes figures beautiful. 'John Ruskin (1819 1900)'The art of drawing which is of more real importance to the human race than that of writing...should be taught to every child just as writing is. 'Camille Pissarro (1831 - 1903)' it is only by drawing often, drawing everything, drawing incessantly, that one fine day you discover to your surprise that you have rendered something in its true character. 'Paul Cezanne (1839 - 1906)'Drawing and colour are not separate at all; in so far as you paint, you draw. The more the colour harmonizes, the more exact the drawing becomes.' Wassily Kandinsky (1866- 1944)'Drawing instruction is a training towards perception, exact observation and exact presentation not of the outward appearances of an object, but of its constructive elements, its lawful forces-tensions, which can be discovered in given objects and of the logical structures of same-education toward clear observation and clear rendering of the contexts, whereby surface phenomena are an introductory step towards the three-dimensional.' Henri Matisse (1869 - 1954)'Drawing is like making an expressive gesture with the advantage of permanence. 'Spencer Fredrick Gore (1878 - 1914)'by drawing, man has extended his ability to see and comprehend what he sees.

The dynamic perceptions of great minds as enumerated above in the subject of drawing as a form of visual art expression cannot be over looked as far as experience is concerned. In the definitions given above, Michelangelo sees drawing as great treasure that all artists should possess. However, Titian over looked the attribute of colour to figural rendition but states that good drawing is what makes a figure beautiful. Ruskin notes that, every child should be taught drawing like they are taught writing; meanwhile, Pissarro on his part is concerned with training, artists to him must continuously engage in the practice of drawing. Cezanne like Titian considers that one cannot separate colour from drawing- as an artist paints; he is also engaging in drawing. While; Matisse sees drawing from the view point of gestural drawing and Gore states that drawing extends the ability of the artist to see and conquer his apprehensions by understating what he sees. Enstice and Peters, (2003) sum up the significance of drawing thus, "drawing today is firmly established as an aesthetic and commercial value and it's been given a status equivalent to that of sculpture and painting".

Portfolio of Works and Description of the Drawings Category One: Single Composition



FIG. 1



FIG. 2

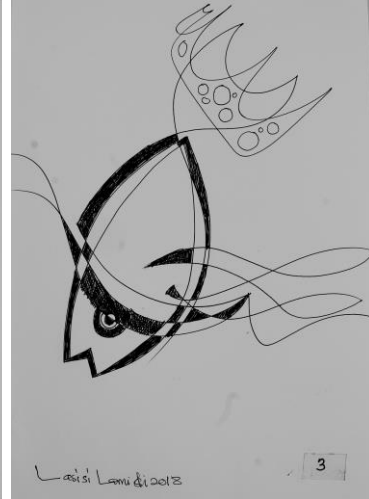


FIG. 3

Fig.1: This is a simple linear drawing; the tail of the fish is shaded in dark tones which run across the back to the head. The lower region is dramatically rendered in continuous timeline that flows from the head into the tail of the fish.

Fig. 2: In figure 2, one can observe a combination of silhouette drawing approach with shading and amidst use of contour lines which provides an illusion of grace and elegance to the fish form.

Fig. 3: The fish form in figure 3 is captured in broad outline of thick, dark tones against a plain white background in simple line drawing of the tail and fins. The contrast of the broad dark toned outline against the continuous use of thin fluid lines gives the composition a striking look.



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

Fig.4: Figure 4 presents an illustration that displays a vivid, contrasting use of broad and thin lines in creating an elaborate linear composition of the fish form. The body of the fish is small against the elaborately enlarged drawn out tail with sharp overlapping simple, geometric lines. The systematic coiling and overlapping of the thin, fluid lines around the tail and the fins express simple, rhythmic stream of line movement characterized by fishes when they swim in natural habitat.

Fig. 5: The use of positive and negative spaces is central in the composition of a fish form in figure 5. The thick lines and few tiny contour lines help accentuate the use of positive and the negative spaces in the drawing. Also, the use of wavy interplay of lines on the body of the fish form in contrast to the upper movement of the fins suggests simple fish-like movement.

Fig. 6: This drawing is characterised with a stylistic rendition of a fish of the tilapia kind; with its body characteristics of curvy fins and tail captured in simple organic lines, while the body of the fish is maintained in its naturalistic form and shaded in dark tones.

Category Two: Double Composition

In this series, fish forms are visually considered in plural. Figures 7-12 make up this set of compositions



FIG. 7



FIG. 8



FIG. 9

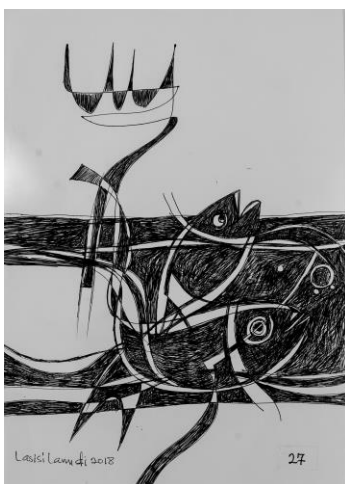


FIG. 10



FIG. 11



FIG.12

Fig. 10: In this drawing are two fish forms that are stylistically rendered in dark silhouette cross-hatching, with interplay of an assortment of curvy overlapping lines and shapes captured in positive and negative spaces. In this composition, the un-shaded parts become the negative spaces as well as responsible for shading light around the whole composition.

Fig.11: Shows a simplistic silhouette approach to portraying two fish in a composition. There is no visible attribute of overlapping in the rendition of the fishes, yet harmony is achieved in the composition through the cleaver repetition of elements used within and around the compositions subject of interest. The surrounding quite spaces go along to enhance the ethereal nature of the natural objects as well as the elegance of the lines used to create the composition. A central principle in this illustration is rhythm expertly captured through repetition.

Fig. 12: In this composition, the emphasis of the fishes could be attributed to the fluid rendition of the fins and tail of the fishes. Lines used in this composition are angular yet graceful perhaps as a result of their thickness or thinness. The use of elements and motifs in this composition is parse yet captivating in a simple manner.

Category Three: Multiple Composition



FIG. 13



FIG. 14



FIG. 15

Fig. 13: This drawing explores the interplay of shapes, line and the effects of curving and overlapping of elements within a composition. Four fishes can be identified to have been captured in different orientations and intricately shaded in dark, textured tones through an effective use of positive and negative spaces.

Fig. 14: This drawing explores three fish forms in interactive atmosphere, as if they are in a conversation.

Fig. 15: Explored dynamic movement of the fish forms using broad and contour lines to create spatial positive and negative spaces in drawing.



FIG. 16



FIG. 17



FIG. 18

Fig. 16: Is a composition of four fish forms; three small fish are captured above, while a big fish is drawn as if it is feeding the small fishes. The fishes are in circular setting portrayed with solid, broad and contour lines.

Fig. 17: Is a multiple composition of the fish forms which explored fishes rendered in silhouette against simple and clear fluid linear expression. The upper part of the drawing shows some fishes in dark tones with some few negative spaces of lines; the lines in white are the negative spaces, while the dark shaded and toned areas are the positive spaces of the composition. Meanwhile, the lower sides of the drawings capture multiple fish forms in single, thin and fluid lines all overlapping one another.

Fig 18: In figure 18, the use of positive and negative spaces was explored in capturing the fishes. With close observation to the drawing; one may notice that; it is only the shaded dark tones that make up the drawing. However, in this drawing; the shaded dark tones are the positive spaces as suggested by the composition. This drawing is a preliminary idea meant for the execution of metal relief sculpture. The upper four rendered fishes are decorated with multiple geometrical shapes embellished with detailed organic and amoebic motifs. The dark shaded background enhances the visual appreciation of the overall illustration.

Conclusion

Drawing is continuing to gain grounds in contemporary art practice across many or all art institutions in Nigeria and beyond. This is widely felt with the multitude of possibilities that now abound in contemporary

trends in drawing using mixed media. Artists are now more confident to express themselves and expose their drawings unlike before. Gestural and conceptual drawings seem to provoke innovation and improvisation in visual arts. The drawings derived from the fish forms are one of such explorations in contemporary art practice in Nigeria. This portfolio of drawings is motivated by the artist's desire to transform ordinary objects or subject matter into several potential visual possibilities through gestural drawings. This shows that an artist can pick whatever fascinates him/her and explore and experiment with whatever material he/she desires. What such a philosophy shows that, everyday familiar objects could be the most interesting subject matters depending on the prowess of the artist to transform these objects into varied artistic possibilities.

One cannot ignore the spirit that manifests itself when drawing; especially gestural approach to drawing. Drawing generally broadens the artist's perception and imagination as well helps the hand and brain coordination. Therefore, drawing is synonymous to what blood does to humans; it helps to sustain the creative and artistic lifespan of artists. Drawing can invoke a deep mental articulation of concepts and imagination that can be developed by doodling. The ability of any artist to 'flirt' with a pen or pencil significantly improves linear and conceptual drawing. Significantly; this portfolio of drawing shows the vitality of drawing and the need for artists to document even the most minuet aspects of their expressions for the future.

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