EXAMINING LIFE IN MY CITY ART FESTIVAL AS A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR EMERGING PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS IN NIGERIA

Chike Obeagu

Department of Fine Arts, Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. chikeobeagu@gmail.com

And

Ayo Adewunmi

Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Institute of Management and Technology, IMT, Enugu. adewunmiayo@gmail.com

Introduction

Having a support system is one of the very key ingredients to the establishment of emerging professional artists as seasoned professionals. Art practice is financially demanding and requires multi-faceted support structures that enable emerging professionals to find their footing in the art world. Sometimes, it takes more than financial support to elevate up-coming artists to a comfortable status where they can manage their affairs and sustain their practice. Unfortunately, the support structures to help artists, especially the young and up-coming artists in Nigeria, are grossly inadequate. Ikwuemesi (2007) notes that the art ecology in Nigeria is not necessarily a poor one, but the enabling factors, including art patronage and art consecrating agencies and institutions, including government, have not performed most creditably in Nigeria.

For a sector that represents one of the few essential vehicles of national development, government has not lived up to expectations in their support for the arts and artists. Most government funding and scholarship incentives favour the sciences more than the arts. Buhari (2016) observes that whenever there was a cut in national budgets, it was always the culture and especially the visual arts sector that suffers, irrespective of whether one was dealing with a developed country or an emerging one. This has led to what Adewunmi (2018) described as, placing the onus on the professionals and other stakeholders in support of the development of this sector. It is also worrisome that, notwithstanding the potentials of art to yield economic gains and transform the society through the agency of its reflective evaluations and human capital development, most investors still do not find it worthy or profitable to invest in the arts and artists. Such investors tend to invest in reality tv programmes, that will yield easy and quick money, for example Big Brother Nigeria (a reality television show of youths living as housemates in a designated house over a period of time), not minding its moral burden on the society.

Despite the challenges of support faced by the visual arts sector which has impacted negatively on the development of the sector in Nigeria, a few interventions have been made to fill the gap created by the little, or not-adequate sponsorship in the art sector by the government. One of the very few structures that have advanced the growth and development of the arts in Nigeria, especially in the area of providing the much-needed support for emerging professional artists, is Life in My City Art Festival (LIMCAF). This paper examines the impact of LIMCAF as a support system for emerging professional artists in Nigeria.

Chronicle of Life in My City Art Festival

Life in My City Art Festival (LIMCAF) is a not-for-profit yearly competition in visual arts that was created in order to encourage and empower young Nigerian artists under the age of 35. It was envisioned and founded in 2007 by Chief Robert Onwuamaegbu Oji, founder and CEO of Rocana Nigeria Limited with the support of Alliance Françoise, Enugu, the French Embassy in Nigeria, and the Pan African Circle of Artists (PACA). Adewunmi (2018) notes that:

The maiden edition of Life in My City Art Festival (LIMCAF) was held in 2007, with the objective being to "Reposition the arts for social development". The aims included 1., To encourage artistic creativity and awareness of environmental issues. 2., To provide space through art for young people to make meaningful statements about their environment in Nigeria. 3., To encourage and empower young artists throughout Nigeria by promoting and commercializing their creative endeavours on a national and international platform.

It is clear, from its aim and objectives, that LIMCAF from inception set out the goal of providing support base for emerging professionals to thrive on. The maiden edition witnessed a submission of nearly 200 works of art from artists across Nigeria. After the first phase of exhibition which also served as one of a three-stage judging process, the works were pruned to 40 which was also trimmed to 14 at the second stage and finally, the award winning 3 at the final stage. These tripartite stages have been sustained ever since, evolving into regional selection exhibitions, because of the increasing number of entries from different zones of the country, and the steady growth of LIMCAF over time. Obeagu (2018) observed that:

The rigorous well detailed process through which the final works were selected has become a recognized part of transparent sifting by the organizers of LIMCAF which is without controversy or debate. The well-structured tripartite stages proceed on a terrain that is quite orderly, engages well situated experts in the field, operates by clear rules and borders, and is characterized by excellent planning, coordination, and execution.

Over the years, the number of participants and submissions have grown tremendously with regional collation centers in Abuja, Enugu, Port-Harcourt, Owerri, Auchi, Ibadan, Kaduna, Lagos, Zaria, and Uyo, covering the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The approval rating of LIMCAF has also grown over time. This is evident in the increasing number of public and private partnerships, and sponsorships that LIMCAF has attracted within the period of its sustained growth. This is made possible with the support of LIMCAF's distinguished patrons, His Majesty, Igwe Nnaemeka Achebe CFR, Obi of Onitsha and, Emeritus Professor El Anatsui who according to Kalu (2022), among other things, opened the way to corporate sponsorship for LIMCAF. Today, LIMCAF boasts of sponsorships and partnerships that number over 30 including Ford Foundation, First Bank Holdings, and MTN Foundation. This is a very important achievement, because, according to Buhari (2016), private institutions are not sentimental about where they put their money. Worthy of note also is the support by Enugu State Government under the leadership of His Excellency Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, the Executive Governor of Enugu State (2015-2023).

With the help of these private and public partnerships and sponsorships, LIMCAF has been able to increase the number of artists fully sponsored to attend the grand finale event at Enugu from zero at inception to top 25 artists in 2017, top 50 in 2018, top 100 in 2019, top 50 in 2021 (the reduction of sponsorship from 100 to 50 finalists in 2021 was due to the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the economy in the year 2020 which reduced the sponsorship fund from donor partners). From 2022 to the latest edition in 2023, LIMCAF has sustained it's all expense paid sponsorship of 100 finalists to the grand finale. This is greatly commendable as all the artist that made it to the last 100 are fully provided with transportation, accommodation, feeding and tour of interesting sites within Enugu during the period of the grand finale. Despite the challenges faced by LIMCAF during its formative years, the story is different today with a lot of successes recorded, and many more projected for the future.



Plate 1: Set-up Exhibition Space for 2022 LIMCAF Grand Finale, International Conference Centre, Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Enugu



Plate 2: Top 100 Artist fully sponsored to attend the LIMCAF Grand Finale Exhibition at the International Conference Centre, Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Enugu, in 2022

Methodology

This paper focuses on Life in My City Art Festival as a support system for emerging professional artists in Nigeria. The paper relied on primary and secondary data, assembled through past LIMCAF exhibition catalogues from inception in 2007 to 2022, review articles on LIMCAF, and interview with past winners. Questionnaires and video interviews were deployed to collate information from the primary sources, who are past LIMCAF prize winners. The wealth of information available to the researchers as key players in LIMCAF from its inception till date was also a huge database that was

drawn from. Ayo Adewunmi played a key role in the formation of LIMCAF and has been the Art Director of the event from its inception till date, while Chike Obeagu was a pioneer participant in the LIMCAF 2007, a regional juror (Abuja Zone) for the 2016 edition, and three-time curator of LIMCAF in 2018, 2019, and 2022 respectively. The outcomes of the desk studies, the interviews and the experiential knowledge of LIMCAF was synthesized into a qualitative analysis to support the position of LIMCAF as a significant support system for emerging professional artists in Nigeria.

Multi-faceted Systems of Support

Though the prize money easily takes the front seat in the consciousness of the young emerging professionals that take part in the yearly LIMCAF competition, the systems of support provided by the yearly event are multi-faceted. Obeagu (2016) notes that beyond the prize money, LIMCAF has been able to support emerging professionals in the areas of Artistic Cognition and Creativity, Economic and Social Empowerment, Providing Platform for Inspiration, Interaction and Growth.



Plate 3: Happy moments at the 2018 Edition of LIMCAF Grand Finale International Conference Centre, Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Enugu

From 2007, financial rewards have been distributed in a way that many of the participating artists go home with something. The number of awards and the quality of prizes have also increased steadily over the years. According to Adewunmi (2018), at the formative stage, precisely during the first two years, 2007 -2009, the funding of the project was primarily shouldered by Rocana Nigeria Ltd and the French Embassy, with the Pan African Circle of Artists (PACA) providing logistics and strategic support. Today the story is different. From the initial grand prize of N200,000, 1st and 2nd runners up of N150,000 and N100,000 respectively, and 10 consolation prizes of N10,000 won during the inaugural edition in 2007, the 2023 edition which will be the 16th successive edition, apart from the interruption in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is packed with a lot of upgraded prizes. For instance, the overall prize winner will go home with N1,000,000 (One Million Naira), while Best Painting/Mixed Media/ Drawing, Best Sculpture/Installation Art, Best Ceramics, Best Graphic/Digital Art, Photography/Video, and Best Textile Art/Fashion, will be rewarded with N500,000 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira) each, while 14 contestants will get the consolation prize of N50,000 (Fifty Thousand Naira).

Endowed prizes are; Justice Aniagolu Prize for Originality N300,000, Awarded to an artwork with distinctive level of originality, Dr. Pius Okigbo Prize for Technical Proficiency N200,000, awarded to an artwork with high level of technical proficiency and craftsmanship, Mfon Usoro Prize for Best

Entry from Uyo-Calabar Region N200,000, Vin Matin Ilo Prize for Best Entry from Enugu Region, N200,000, and Lawrence Agada Price for Most Promising Young Artist N200,000. New categories are; Most Creative Female Artist N300,000, Life in My City Foundation Award for Selected Physically Challenged Artist N300,000, Fedelia Okoroafor Price for Most Promising Female Artist N200,000 and 14 consolation prizes. These make up a total prize money of over N6,000,000 (Six Million Naira). This is in addition to El Anatsui's Prize of all expense paid international travel and exhibition opportunity for top 6 winners to the 2024 Dak'Art Biennial, in Dakar Senegal.



Plate 4: Emeritus Professor El Anatsui chatting with the 2018 winners of his LIMCAF all-expense Paid trip to Dak'Art Biennale, in Dakar, Senegal

From the surplus number of prizes distributed into different categories, many artists gain financial support to improve their practice. Because of the magnitude of the event, which has also become an annual gathering of stakeholders and art aficionados in the visual arts, LIMCAF also provides opportunities for sales of work by a lot of artists who are not lucky to win any of the designated prizes. The positive effect is that many artists who take part in the event go home financially improved. Some also make connections that yield commissions and further patronage thereafter.

LIMCAF's El Anatsui's prize of all expense paid international travel and exhibition opportunity for top winners to the Dak'Art Biennial is no doubt a huge expositive support that provides publicity, visibility, international exposure, global art awareness, networking opportunities and great moral boost to the benefiting artists. Adewunmi (2022) aptly notes, regarding the all-expense paid international travel, that the mission of LIMCAF as advised by the sponsor of the prize, Emeritus Professor El Anatsui, is to expose the LIMCAF winners to the next level of art practice, beyond winning in Nigeria. Part of the deal is to give them the opportunity to attend an international exhibition where they can see what is happening at the continental level, and interact with participating artists. The package is also to offer them the privilege of showcasing their artworks in an international event which will help them connect with museums, art lovers, critics, galleries, and curators from all over the world.

From the diverse accounts of the beneficiaries, one could rightly state that the retinue of supports this experience provides for emerging professional artists cannot be quantified financially. For the beneficiaries, the encounter with some of the world acclaimed artists in the continent, including some established artists from Nigeria, and their works has opened their eyes and minds to the bigger picture of what contemporary

art should be, and also exposed them to new mediumistic possibilities. It brought about the rediscovery of self, a boost of their self-confidence, and the courage to dare to play at the international level. It was an opportunity to network and make acquaintances for possible connections and collaborations in the future. In art practice, there is something that exposure of this magnitude does to the mind of the artist. It places the artist on a higher pedestal, motivates them to think big, and creates a burning desire to aspire to reach for greater heights.



Plate 5: El Anatsui's travel award recipients after the opening ceremony of Dak'Art 2018 with Smooth-Ugochukwu Nzewi, Curator, Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) New York

Another area that LIMCAF has provided grassroots support to the arts is through its school children and teachers workshop as well as LIMCAF lectures organized within the period of the grand finale event. The 3-day workshop, for secondary school students and art teachers of selected secondary schools within Enugu urban area is part of LIMCAF's strategy to rekindle the dampening interest in art at that pivotal level. By their involvement in LIMCAF events, school proprietors, teachers, students, and parents are exposed to the possibilities that art offer, which according to the Executive Director of LIMCAF, Mr. Kevin Ejiofor, a key aim of the workshop is to encourage understanding of art as a socially and economically viable profession. Art is a profession in which students can be proud and contribute in a recognizable manner to the development of themselves, their families and society at large. This enlightenment is very important, especially in a clime like Nigeria, where most parents restrict their ward from studying art as a profession because of their uninformed notion that art is not as status and economically viable as law, medicine, and other professions that are considered to be of more importance.



Plate 6: A facilitator addressing some students during the 2022 LIMCAF Three-day workshop for students and art teachers, to stimulate and deepen interest in art



Plate 7: Cross-section of students taking part in the workshop for students and teachers of selected secondary schools in Enugu urban



Plate 8: Cross-section of students taking part in one of the workshop sessions for students and teachers of selected secondary schools in Enugu urban



Plate 9: Some students creating a mural painting during the three-day workshop



Plate 10: Some of the Top LIMCAF Winners and recipients of El Anatsui's travel award at the opening ceremony of Dak'Art 2022



Plate 11: 18 Top LIMCAF winners (2018-2021) and recipients of El Anatsui's all-expense paid trip to Dak'Art

Biennale with two LIMCAF officials, Dr. Ayo Adewunmi and Dr. Ngozi Agujobi Odoh, at Daniel SORANO National Theatre, Dakar Senegal, The Exhibition Venue for LIMCAF/PACA Dak'Art, 2022

Progression Survey of 7 past winners

To point-up the impact of Life in My City Art Festival as a support system for emerging professional artists, it is pertinent to examine the progression of some of the past winners as a yardstick to ascertain the influence of LIMCAF experience in their practice. For this purpose, the study examined the professional evolution of 7 past winners, namely; Olumide Oresegun (1st Prize Winner, Maiden Edition, 2007), Klaranze Okhide (2nd Prize Winner, 2008), Badru Taofeek Abiodun (Winner, Best Textile 2015 and 2016), Sor Sen (3rd Prize Winner, 2011), Ngozi Omeje Ezema (1st Prize Winner, 2014), Eze Mariagoretti Chinenye (1st Prize Winner 2012), Muoneme Izuchukwu (Winner, Best Painting/ Mixed Media/ Drawing 2015, and Vin Martin Ilo's Prize for Best Enugu Entry, 2013). This section is majorly drawn from a survey titled "Where are they now? The Story of Past Top Prize Winners Since 2007 As Told by Themselves, which was first conducted in 2016 by Dr, Ayo Adewunmi the Art Director of Life in My City Art festival, and updated in 2023 for the purpose of this research.

1. Olumide Oresegun, won the first prize of LIMCAF's Maiden edition in 2007, then as a student of Yaba College of Technology. Olumide has had a steady growth in his artistic career since winning the prize in 2007. Today, he is well known as a forerunner of hyper-realistic art in Nigeria. He has gained international prominence with a recent CNN article that lauded his hyper-realism art. In 2016, Olumide became an internet sensation, gaining international media attention, for his hyper-realism technique with over 3.2 million views on YouTube and over 73,000 followers on Instagram. He was one of the jury members for the LIMCAF Grand Finale in 2022.



Plate 11: Olumide Oresegun. Photo Credit: lifeinmycityartfestival.org

Recounting his experience with LIMCAF, Olumide stated;

"My participation in LIMCAF really made me believe in myself. I had that strong belief after winning the first prize that year that no matter the challenge I face; I will achieve my set goals. To add to it, the money I was given helped me a lot to get some desired materials for my work."

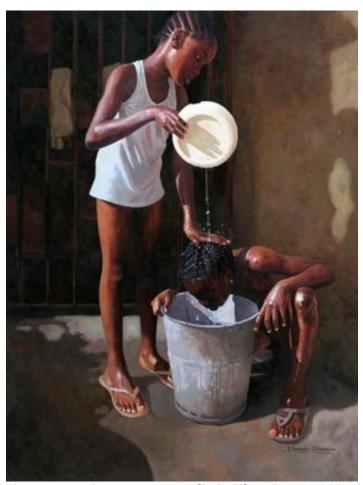


Plate 12: Olumide Oresegun, Haircare, Hyper-realistic Oil on Canvas, 129 x 89cm 2011. Photo Credit: Invaluable.com

2. Ngozi Omeje Ezema, won the 1st prize in the 2014 LIMCAF edition. Before then, she had won the category prize (2nd runner-up and the best entry from Enugu zone) in 2011. Since her participation in LIMCAF, her career in art has blossomed. Ngozi has gone ahead to win the Outstanding Concept Award in the National Art Competition in Lagos, Nigeria, in 2015. She has taken part in major exhibitions within and outside Nigeria including the First International Biennale in Central China and Le Pineceau De L'integration in Senegal, during the Dakar Biennale in 2016. She won the High Excellence Award at the Cheongju International Craft Biennale in South Korea and 60th Faenza Biennale Prize, Italy, 2018 and was selected as one of the artists exhibited in the main exhibition of Dak'Art Biennale 2022. She has also taken part in artist's residencies at the Centre for Contemporary Art/ Triangle Trust (Lagos), Goethe-Institute Nigeria (Nsukka), Sevshoon Art Centre (Seattle, USA), Goethe Institute Ghana (Kumasi), and many more. She was part of the Grand Finale jury in the year 2018.

For her LIMCAF experience, Ngozi has this to say:

"LIMCAF gave me the courage to apply for other competitions within and outside the country and to keep trying even when I was not selected. The best chance could be the next trial."

3. Badru Taofeek Abiodun, won the Best Textile in 2015 as a student. He also won the Best Textile Art in 2016. He participated in LIMCAF five times in 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018 respectively. In 2018, in addition to winning the best entry in textile, he won the Alliance Françoise Young Talent

Award which enabled him to have a successful solo exhibition at Alliance Françoise Lagos. Regarding his experience as a LIMCAF participant, Badru narrates thus;

"My participation in LIMCAF and winning has really helped me professionally. It gives me courage never to give up. Every year, I always look forward to the theme of the competition; the theme stretches my thinking faculty and makes me want to participate and win".

4. Klaranze Okhide, won the 3rd prize in 2009 as a studio artist and part-time art teacher at St Therese Catholic School Bwari, Abuja. She presently teaches art in a government secondary school, Abuja. She is one of the founding members of Female Artists Association of Nigeria (FEAAN), and Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA) Abuja. Her works have been featured in exhibitions within and outside Nigeria including Kunstort Eleven Artspace, Starzach, Germany, 2018, United Nations Women International Women's Day Celebration, Abuja, 2018, Women in Visual Art Exhibition, National Gallery of Art, Abuja, 2019. She was also a member of LIMCAF Grand Jury in 2019. About her experience in LIMCAF, Klaranze wrote;

"Participating in LIMCAF 2008 was an unforgettable experience for me. I had never been involved in any competition prior to that time ... I can still remember vividly the call I got to inform me that out of 400 entries, my painting "Kasuwan Diko" came 2nd. Quite unforgettable! The experience gave me the much-needed morale boost to face the challenge of being a mother and a practicing artist. I came to the realization that I count for something in the world. My voice (work) counts, and that made me a better teacher to my students. The realization that one can be heard from the most remote part of our country Nigeria. I thank LIMCAF for that".

5. Eze Mariagoretti Chinenye, won the overall prize in 2012 with a mixed media photography work titled "Rejuvenation" when she was a final year student of graphic section, Department of Fine Art, Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu. She currently lives in Abuja where she works as a production assistant. She participated in LIMCAF twice, in 2011 and 2012 respectively. In 2016, she won the 1st prize of the 11th edition of Visual Arts Competition organized by the embassy of Spain in Abuja.

For her experience in LIMCAF, Chinenye has this to say;

"My participation in LIMCAF gave me the opportunity to identify myself and the courage to know that my works are deserving of wider recognition. The experience has helped me to build confidence in myself and has continuously inspired me to improve in my works. In a nutshell, LIMCAF has made me more curious, more aware, more exposed, and more engaging in the creative world".

Chinenye also noted that winning the prize money enabled her to buy her first DSLR Camera, which pushed out the latent desire of her becoming a story teller. It was one of the pictures she took with this camera that won her the $1^{\rm st}$ prize in the Spanish art competition. She was part of the LIMCAF Grand Jury in 2022.

6. Sor Sen, won the third price in 2011 as an MFA painting candidate at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Presently, he is a full-time studio artist resident in Abuja. He participated in LIMCAF five times. Aside winning the LIMCAF third prize, he has also won; second position, National Visual Art Competition, professional category, organized by National Gallery of Art, Nigeria in 2012, Special recognition, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library National Art Competition(OOPL), Ogun State in 2013, Second position, Visual Art Competition organized by the Embassy of Spain in Abuja, in 2023,

Fourth prize winner, Experience Nigeria Art Show, organized by Embassy of Spain, Abuja in 2015, (Honorary), Leonardo Da Vinci International prize Florence, Italy in 2016, 3rd prize, Visual Arts Competition, organized by Embassy of Spain in Abuja in 2016. Sor was selected as part of the LIMCAF Grand Finale jury in 2021

For his experience in LIMCAF, Sor Sen explained that;

"Since winning the third prize of 2011 LIMCAF, it has reinforced my confidence in art practice, supported me economically, and for me, it was a springboard to move on and win other prizes on different platforms. Also, it increased my visibility and relevance in the visual art scene. Winning the prize gave me the platform to kick-start my career. It was a spring board for me to show the world what I had that was hidden then, that talent that I've always had that was unknown and unseen before then".

7. Muoneme Izuchukwu, won LIMCAF 2015 Best Painting/Mixed Media /Drawing and Vin Martin Ilo's Prize for Best Enugu entry in 2013. He is a curatorial staff of National Gallery of Art (NGA), Enugu. He has participated in LIMCAF 4 consecutive times, in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. Through the encouragement of LIMCAF, he has had a two-man exhibition titled "Folkloric expressions" at the National Gallery of Art, Enugu, in November 2015. In response to his LIMCAF Experience, Izuchukwu wrote:

"LIMCAF has helped me to broaden my professional practice in terms of the quality of works I produce. This is from the nature of works I see from other artists during LIMCAF".

Conclusion

From this exposition, it is obvious that Life in My City Art Festival plays a pivotal role as a support system for emerging professional artists in Nigeria. The shared experiences of past winners as recounted by them, substantiates the submission of this paper that LIMCAF provides diverse support systems in areas of economic and social empowerment for artists. Being part of Life in My City Art Festival has amplified their artistic cognition and creativity through thought-provoking themes. It exposed them to larger art platforms that increased their inspiration, interaction, visibility, growth, self-discovery, moral boost to persevere, irrespective of challenges, confidence to dare for more, courage never to give up, equipping to give back, and the determination to be better artists. In Nigeria, there are very few platforms that provide support for emerging professionals robustly like Life in My City Art Festival. For increased growth and profitability in the visual arts sector, it is recommended that government should go beyond paying lip service and take the front seat in providing support for the visual arts and artists. More platforms like LIMCAF should be encouraged to thrive. They should be strengthened by both the private and public sectors in order to provide more support systems for the vast number of young professional artists within the country. With the current clamour for contemporary African art and artists on the global stage, this is the best time to invest in the future that could yield great dividend for all stakeholders.

References

- Adewunmi, A. (2022). LIMCAF/Dak'Art 2022 Report, in Paradox of Muted Echoes, Life in My City Art Festival Grand Finale Catalogue, 2022,
- Adewunmi, A. (2018). Engendering the Development of Visual Arts in Nigeria through Networking and Collaboration: The Study of Life in My City Art Festival. Paper presented at the 2nd Annual Conference of Arts, 18-21 August 2014, Canterbury, United Kingdom.
- Buhari, J. (2016). The Fruits of a Decade of Tenacity and Focus. Introductory Essay in Life in My City Art Festival Catalogue 2016. Rocana Prints, Nigeria.
- Eze M. C. (2019, October 29). Eze Magiorette Chinenye Discuss LIMCAF (Video). Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B4N4_0vAJ8P/?igsshid=MDJm
- Ezema N. O. (2019, October 29). Ngozi Omeje, Multiple Award Winner Discuss LIMCAF (Video). Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B4Caam6gHY9/?igshid=MDJ
- Ikwuemesi, K. (2007). Life in My City: An Introduction. Life in My City Art Festival Catalogue, 2007, Rocana Prints, Enugu, Nigeria.
- Kalu, K. U. (2022). LIMCAF 2022: Chairman's Welcome. Life in My City Art Festival Catalogue, 2022, Timex Prints, Enugu, Nigeria.
- Sen, S. (2019, November 7). Sor Sen Discuss LIMCAF (Video). Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B411FsAt16/?igshid=MDJmNz