

**EXPLORATION OF SELECTED SCULPTURAL FORMS AS MOTIFS FOR WAX PRINT DESIGN****Zainab, BELLO<sup>1</sup>; Adeoti ADEBOWALE, A<sup>2</sup>; Alesagba, Ebenezer IGBEKELE<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Department of Industrial Design, Faculty of Environmental Design, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.<sup>2</sup>Department of Fine and Applied Arts, FCT College of Education, Zuba-Abuja, Ahmadu<sup>3</sup>Department of Industrial Design, School of Art, Design and Printing, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja.<sup>1</sup>[bellozainab55@yahoo.com](mailto:bellozainab55@yahoo.com)<sup>2</sup>[geliloe3@gmail.com](mailto:geliloe3@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>[ebeneigbekele@gmail.com](mailto:ebeneigbekele@gmail.com)

---

**Abstract**

*Form and image development are fundamental to creative expression in visual arts. Form is an element that distinguishes difference between two-dimension and three-dimension among the branches of visual arts. Particularly, sculpture is three-dimensional form, while textile design is two-dimensional form by their visual appearance. The visual expression of each of them is embedded in creative practice of the artist which is easily understood and interpreted by the viewer. In this research, attempt is made to explore and analyse sculptural form adapted as motif for wax print in textile design, aiming at breeding yet a new pattern and motifs suitable for various design uses. For instance, the dynamics of sculptural form adaptation in to other area of creativities such as architecture, pictorial arts and pottery as well as automobile bodies is a discernible image everywhere. The research is studio exploratory while camera and descriptive analysis were used to process the data. Two sculptural forms were adopted from the Ahmadu Bello University in this study due to uniqueness in their technique of execution. The findings resulted at ten (8) paper designs showing dexterity of studio practice in the development of new design for various fashion and textiles use. However, the paper concludes that sculptural form is a source of inspiration for generating design concept for the textile designer.*

**Key Words: Exploration, Sculptural forms, Motifs, Wax Print.****Introduction**

Sculpture is a branch of visual arts usually classified as fine art which is an expression of aesthetics in three-dimension. And as a plastic art Adeoti and Ejiogu (2017), it is continually extending the range of its activities and evolving new kinds of objects beyond imagination. The view of Leonard (2022) captures the full essence of sculpture:

Sculpture, an artistic form in which hard or plastic materials are worked into three-dimensional art objects. The designs may be embodied in freestanding objects, in reliefs on surfaces, or in environments ranging from tableaux to contexts that envelop the spectator. An enormous variety of media may be used, including clay, wax, stone, metal, fabric, glass, wood, plaster, rubber, and random "found" objects. Materials may be carved, modeled, molded, cast, wrought, welded, sewn, assembled, or otherwise shaped and combined.

In the modern era, the role of sculpture, like most arts, has changed to be more about exploring or expressing secular concerns like individual expression on issues such as highlighting history and culture among others. Contemporary sculpture, in dealing with these issues, can be figurative, abstract or a morphing between the two. Sculpture can use any material or process that present day technology provides, from stone to electronics and light itself. According to Kuhtz (2016), a vast majority of sculptures are not entirely autonomous, but are integrated or linked in some way with other works of art in other mediums.

The merging of forms and tactile effects of sculpture is a unique dynamic expressive medium that allows for “unlimited freedom of expression for the modern artists in terms of media” (Obodo, 1998), which on the other hand widens the scope of textile and other related art. Bill (1952) has pointed out designers who realize new forms and are consciously or unconsciously reacting to trends in contemporary art because, it is in art that the intellectual and spiritual currents of every epoch find their visible expression. Hopkins (1994) argues that, sculpture ultimately represents the subject that it is taken to represent within an appropriate appreciative experience, where this will be determined not just by isomorphism of shape, but also by other factors such as the manner of presentation of the sculpture.

Wax print is a resist technique of fabric design, where a desired area is protected by a certain resin to prevent dye penetration. It is a similitude of batik where melted candle wax has been applied on the fabric to prevent entrance of dye. According to ELISE (2020) wax prints are colourful cotton fabrics produced using a mechanised wax-resist printing technique inspired from the Indonesian hand-crafted batik method. The author further reiterates that, the design is etched on to two copper rollers which are mounted on to the wax printing machine. The molten wax resin will be picked up in the etched roller and impressed on to both sides of the cloth. The hallmark of wax print is how colourful the visual appearance always appealing.

This paper contextualized visual appearance of sculptural form to be interpreted as motif for designing. It was reported by Adeoti (2020) that, idea generation in design can be from any source. Adapting form for designing in this context, The Artifice (2022) argued that adaptation is a process of change due to alternative purpose, function or environment which simply means “the presentation of one art form through another medium”. In the same vein does Brittney (2021) relates that artistic adaptation of art from one style, culture, or medium to another which is refer to as “transposition”. This definition when applied in this context becomes “an altered or amended version of form”. It is against this background that, this paper explores sculptural form as a motif generation for wax print design.

### **Relationship between textile and sculpture**

There is close relationship that exist between sculpture and the other branches of visual arts, which have been attested to by a number of artists such as, Michelangelo, Bernini, Pisanello, Degas, and Picasso who have turned sculptural art in to another form (Encyclopedia, 2021). Below summarizes the relationship of sculpture and other forms of art:

- i. Sculpture has long been closely related to architecture through its role as architectural decoration and also at the level of design.
- ii. Some forms of relief sculpture approach are closely related to the pictorial arts of painting, drawing, engraving, and so on.
- iii. The borderlines between sculpture and pottery and the metalworking arts are not clear-cut, and many pottery and metal artifacts have every claim to be considered as sculpture.
- iv. There is a growing affinity between the work of industrial designers and sculptors. Sculptural modeling techniques, and sometimes sculptors themselves, are often involved, for example, in the initial stages of the design of new automobile bodies. (Encyclopedia, 2021)
- v. Also, a medium of expression for fiber, thread, fabric and movable objects through which sculptural forms are achieved by weaving and other creative processes (Udeani, 2014).

Textiles are interconnected with subject areas such as figurative tapestries, installation art, literary texts and architectural materials (European Research Council, 2013). Related core concepts, specific

to design are the relationship between the elements and principles of textile and sculpture (see Tables 1 and 2).

**Table 1: The relationship between elements of textile and sculpture**

ELEMENT OF TEXTILE DESIGN	ELEMENT OF SCULPTURE
Line	Line
Space	Space
Form	
Colour	Colour
Texture	Texture
Shape	
	Plane
	Mass/ Volume

**Table 2: The relationship between Principles of textile and sculpture.**

PRINCIPLES OF TEXTILE DESIGN	PRINCIPLES OF SCULPTURE
Balance	Balance
Emphasis	
Rhythm	Rhythm
Proportion	Proportion
Scale	Scale
Harmony	Harmony
Unity	
Repetition	
	Axis and Plane

### **Methodology**

The research employed studio exploratory study in the Department of Industrial Design, Fashion and Textiles Studio, using digital camera to photograph works, while descriptive method was used to do the analysis. Two sculptural forms were selected: one sculpture in the round in the sculpture garden and a relief sculpture installed on the wall of building in the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The sculptures were specifically made of metal, iron and fiber glass. The choice of selecting the two sculptures were informed by their uniqueness in style of execution which mostly has been adjudged as master piece over the years.

**Materials:** Cardboard paper, drawing sheet, Light-table, pencil, gouache paint, sable brush, fixative spray, digital camera, and drawing instruments

### **Studio Activity 1:**

The two sculptures were photographed with digital camera for clarity's sake. A print-out of the photograph was made through digital imaging machine. The print-out was later processed in to design template using pencil sketch draughtsmanship to form the motifs on drawing sheet. This is rarely ideation stage. The motifs were later transferred on half-imperial cardboard which has been mounted on board through Light-table. The working area was patterned in to grids of different styles to house the motifs, while symmetric and asymmetric shapes were interwoven onto the background to complete the pencil work.

**Studio Activity 11:**

The pencil works were later coloured using gouache colour paint with round sable brush. The researchers were careful enough to work with a planned colour pallets mixing paints in various bottles at the required quantity sufficient for the work. After the painting, the surface of paper works were fixed with fixative just to allow for permanence.



Plate 1: Sculpture in the round by unknown artist  
Photographed by the researchers (2021)

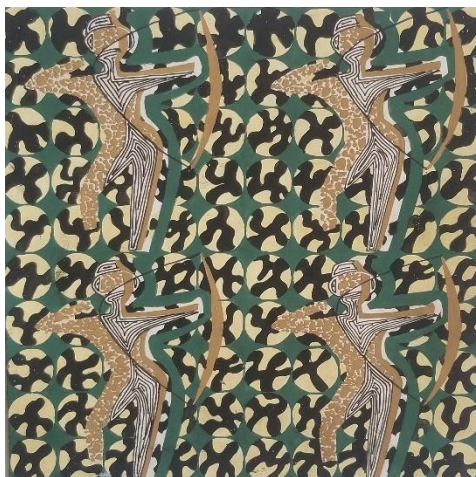


Plate 2a: Paper design  
Researchers' collection 2021



Plate 2b: Paper design  
Researchers' collection 2021



Plate 2c: Paper design  
Researchers' collection 2021



Plate 2d: Paper design  
Researchers' collection 2021





Plate 3: Relief Sculpture by unknown artist  
Photographed by the researchers (2021)



Plate 4a: Paper design  
Researchers' collection 2021



Plate 4b: Paper Design  
Researchers' Collection



Plate 4d: Paper design  
Researchers' collection 2021



Plate 4c: Paper Design  
Researchers' Collection 2021

### **Findings and Discussion**

The studio exploration of sculptural forms adapted into wax print patterns, indicates a departure from reality in the depiction of imagery in art. Intuitively, the visual representation in art has to do with resemblance. The sculptural forms are abstracted, usually through a process of simplification, and still retain the essential characteristics of their natural sources. The sculptural forms were distorted, exaggerated, reorganized, and still recognized so do paper works (wax print designs). The sculpture in the round is an action posture which is symbolic of bravery and power (plate1). A visual depiction of female archer holding arrow targeted at the enemy is massively executed, with an adjustable shoulder strap and a weapon beaded string around her waist. Significance of female in protection against the enemy is brought to bear in this context. The other sculpture is association of ancestral mask faces arranged in a dignify row which can suggest deliberation towards peace or watching over the subject since the earthly world is committed to their hands.

The catalogue of the studio exploration below presents some of the works executed in the studio (see plates 2a, b, c, d, 4a, b, c and d).

For instance, in plate 2a, standing female hatted warrior is portrayed in four repeat pattern suggesting full-drop technique. The body of the warrior was depicted in scale-like shapes combined

with scarifications, while the background is super-imposed with three different colours (olive green, yellow ochre and black). The background which can be seen as having yellow ochre is cast in grids with contour lines to form palimpsest against olive green black lines. Also, the formation of the background is suggestive of war front and forest which can bring sense of combatant to memory, of course, it has a striking semblance of Nigeria Military combatant uniform.

In the plate 2b, the pattern is repeated in both half-drop and mirror system, while the motif is slightly different in form formation as compared to the sculpture with female figure. In this case the figure looks masculine with hat conspicuously featured on the head. The background is worked with complex wavy lines, even with rhythm execution of the lines, it suffices to mention that the lines represent rowdiness atmosphere which characterize war front.

Plate 2c turn around the posture of the motif stature to left direction, depicting 'variety' as principle of design. In the design, the motifs were juxtaposed within the layout of diamond grids repeat pattern. The motifs are worn in dark-brown colour distorted with geometrics and interlocked in to contrasting green and pinky hue. A shadow effect is prominent to recede the main caption in yellow ochre seems like unregistered design to show contour of head down to the arm, this is characteristic of wax print technique.

In plate 2d, the motifs reside in coffee brown colour contrasting to seemingly pink and ash hue, the style of repeat is manifest of mountainous hills revealing battle front where the warrior hides to target the victims. The motifs are decorated in bluish colour using spherical shapes like technological symbols to fashion the outfit while the background is degraded with crackle lines.

Plate 3 is an abstracted mask faces of the ancestor. A relief metal sculpture installation supplanted by protruding iron as the connecting web to hold the masks. This phenomenal of power and strength in collectiveness exhibited in the work brought to bear the terrestrial power of the ancestors especially for the protection of our cosmology.

In the plate 4a, the motif portray harmony by abstraction, styled in two repeat system. Blue colour dominance at the background convey the fragility of nature that needs to be protected from destruction, hence conspicuous appearance of the faces in orange and lemon green. This is suggested guardian of galaxy, while interwoven black lines are saturated at the background portraying a protective net preventing an intruder.

In the plate 4b, the design alludes to peaceful atmosphere, where full protection is achieved with the intervention of ancestors, certainly this endears harmony in the world. The background is subtleness of colour brilliance, using tint of blue, green and light-brown to create a better world, placing humanity in harmony with the environment.

Plate 4c is typical of African architectural design outlook, where the ancestors are housed. The motif is embellished with light orange colour, while the images are outlined in black colour against predominant bluish-green background. Prominently featured in the work is an effect of dotted adornment expressed conservatively around something that looks like wall.

In plate 4d, the design is depicted in monochromatic effect of ash colour with superfluity effects of musical sound when it is viewed at a glance. A close observation would reveal a body of ancestors in a joyous mood dancing to peaceful co-existence of their subjects. The rhythmic depiction of wave length of water flow by lines and circle shapes accentuate ecological sustainability while engaging with deeply socially conscious people.



The whole work is a celebration of organic pattern, shape, and texture being that they explore the inherent beauty of the environment, the inevitable cycles of rebirth and decay, and co-creation between man, ancestors and the environment. This is noted in the work of Andy Goldsworthy who is famed for environmental protection art (The Art Story, 2022). The cold, hard, monochromatic and static sculptural forms were explored and portrayed in warm, soft, multicolored, dynamic and stylistic forms. The differences in choice of colour was informed by natural habitat and principle of variety in design making to give wide range of aesthetic options.

It is important to note that, paper design for dress fabric has explored the potential of adapting sculptural forms to create wax print designs. This assertion was supported by The Artifice (2022), where the likes of Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and co-founder Paul Cezanne adapted African figure to originate new movement “Cubism” It also opens avenues for further explorations into visual documentation of textile sculptural forms in the society and contributes to knowledge. This work shows that, integrating textile design practice with sculptural forms, develops new approaches to textile design to drive innovation in the field. This crossing of boundaries will create a new dimension in the forms of pattern used by textile artists.

### **Conclusion**

Adaptation of form has formed source of inspirational touch for artists from time immemorial. It is unexpected that artist radically breaks away from conventional way of expression by adopting new way, style, technique, media and form for executing artistic piece. This dynamic has been notable by the ease with which artists swing their pendulum of creativity from adapting form and image from various object to create new art. It is no gain saying that, recreation of form adapted from another source will continue to generate an avenue for intellectual discuss. As this portend a veritable source of improving quality of work produced. Particularly, this research has dwelt in to form adaptation from sculpture to textile design, specifically for wax print. The sculptural form adopted were both metal constructivism and are evocative of ecological concerns, which provoke gender activeness toward attaining protection and the need for peace to prevail in the world.

The research is yet another feat in design generation, where more sculptural forms are urged to be integrated into textile design because sculptural form is a source of inspiration for generating design concept for the textile designer. This do not only improve design collection, but also pave way for innovative idea toward improving wax print.

## **References**

- Adeoti, A. (2020). Ceramic clay-arc-decor: a new technology for interior and exterior column designs, *International Journal of Research Publications (IJRP)*, 60(1), pg. 7-9.
- Adeoti, A and Ejiogu, F. (2017) *Frame work of Visual Arts and Creativity Development Methods for Early Childhood Care and Education Students*. Como De Prints
- Brittney. (2021, April 15).What artistic is credited with adapting?  
<https://artradarjournal.com/art-education/what-artistic-is-credited-with-adapting/>
- Bill, M. (1952) *Form* (Basel: K; Werner) p. 1
- ELISE (2020, April 28). What are Wax Prints? <https://affaso.com/what-are-wax-prints/>
- Encyclopedia Britannica. (2021, April 29). Sculpture Materials.  
<https://www.britannica.com/art/sculpture/>
- European research council (2013) An Iconology of the Textile in Art and Architecture. Retrieved from <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/183044-the-importance-of-textile-in-art-and-architecture> on September 9th,2021 on September 3rd ,2021
- Hopkins, R. (1994) "Resemblance and Misrepresentation," *Mind* 103: 421-438.
- Kuhtz, C. (2016). *Sculpture: Materials, Techniques, Styles, and Practice*. Retrieved from <https://books.google.com.ng/books>.
- Leonard, R. (2022, April 15). Sculpture. <https://www.britannica.com/art/sculpture>
- Obodo E.C. (1998). "Production of Sofi and Stuffed Sculpture- Walls and Tubers". Unpublished MFA Project Report, Dept. of Fine Applied Art, U.N.N.  
Retrieved from [https://www.unn.edu.ng/publications/files/UDEANI\\_Nkemdilim\\_A\\_2002\\_24837.pdf](https://www.unn.edu.ng/publications/files/UDEANI_Nkemdilim_A_2002_24837.pdf) on September 9th,2021
- The Art Story. (2022, March 13). Environmental Art.  
<https://www.theartstory.org/movement/environmental-art/>
- The Artifice. (2022, March 13). The Art of Adaption. <https://the-artifice.com/art-of-adaption/>
- Udeani, Nkemdilim Angela (2014). Synergy of Uli Symbols and Textiles: An Exploration In Textile Sculptural Forms. Department of Industrial Design Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola, Adamawa State. Mgbakoigba: Journal of African Studies. Vol. 3. Retrieved from File:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/116778-Article%20text-324186-1-10-20150511%20(1).Pdf On September 9th,2021.