

Paradigm of Painting Practice and its Influence on Art Market in Nigeria

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Abstract: Any form of art patronage starts with an artist creative activity in art studio space. Hence, an appropriate form of painting practice by artists is expedient for a sustainable economic viability of artistic practice. The study, therefore examine the influence painting support, media, subject matter and style on the art market in Nigeria. The rationale is to address low patronage of paintings among Nigerian artists and promote their active participation in the global art market. Paintings sold at the Arthouse affordable art auctions over a period of five years (2016 - 2020) were purposely selected. Out of the 268 paintings sold, 54 which constitute (20%) were randomly selected for analysis. Semi-structured interviews was conducted and structured questionnaire administered to 180 inter-connected stakeholders in the art market. The study established the importance of quality materials, continuous artistic aptitude and relevant networking stakeholders by the artists. The findings revealed that figurative paintings (58.7%) were the most preferred subject matter. Expressionistic paintings (WMS=2.6) were the most patronised and oil colour (WMS=2.6) were considered as the highly purchased medium in the art market. The study concludes that artists are the main marketer of their paintings; physical evidence of their creative processes.

Keywords: Painting, Practice, Patronage, Art Market, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Painting is a visual form of communication between the artist's and the audience. It is achieved by the artist's interpretation of his/her immediate environment via media into two-dimensional space. This offers an additional and enriching outlet for human beings to express themselves nonverbally (Skagfeld, 2018:1). Painting has an unequal prospect to express cultural awareness and development of communities through creativity (Getlin, 2002:162-174). Painting practice is uniquely a continuous personal expression. It goes beyond the physical activities of making artworks as it includes the idea, philosophy, process and the materials used in executing the artwork (Ngumah, 2014:2). An artist's practice is often shaped by individual artist's goal, interest and experience in creating artwork, researching and exploring new ideas, exhibiting, marketing of artworks and collaborating with relevant art market stakeholders. The practice of painting is stage by stage creative processes or activities in the studio space. It includes how the artists develop concepts and themes, styles and movements basically through experimentation and exploration of material and subject matter.

In Nigeria, visual art practice can be traced to Nok culture, Igbo Ukwu culture, Ife art, Benin art, Mbari culture and many others (Ngumah, 2014:3-4). Painting in Nigerian art are numerous and diverse in forms. It covers a wide spectrum of day-to-day happenings in an environment, society and the nation at large (Abodunrin, 2021:1). For example, Campbell, (2007:24) observes that shrine painting is an observable feature of painting practice in Yoruba religious activities. Similarly, the practice of body painting; conspicuous and intricate painting that is identifiable among Nigerian women during ceremonial occasions like wedding and religious festivals (Abodunrin and Oladiti, 2015:190). This creative ingenuity metamorphoses with age to form Nigerian artistic phases namely; Pre-colonial period, the colonial period and the post-colonial period. Therefore, contemporary Nigerian art is a fusion of tradition and modernity as evident in the adaptation of new techniques, materials and styles of painting today (Ikoro, 2015:91-92).

Nevertheless, one of the major goals of artistic practice is to communicate with the audience through display in galleries, studio space, online platforms and museums that are usually in form of exhibition, art fair

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and auction which may eventually leads to patronage by any interested member of the audience. The aforementioned channels of communication by the artists relatively transform to an art market. Art markets are platforms where artists display their work to an accessible audience, while offering their product at prices determined by the artist (Skagfeld, 2018:1). Contemporary artists are the producers within the contemporary art market. They are influenced by the art galleries, auction sales report, art collectors, curators and dealers. Nonetheless, the contemporary artist's practice developed through multiple career phases from unknown, emerging, mid-career, to established artists, starting within the primary market, and moving, often with the length of their career and growing reputation, into the secondary market (Lehman & Wickham, 2014). Significantly, any form of art patronage starts with an artist creative activity in his/her studio space. Hence, appropriate painting practice by artists is expedient for a sustainable economic viability of painting practice in Nigeria.

Existing studies on painting in contemporary Nigerian art can be accessed from both historical and studio practice. However, more studies have explored history of painting in Nigeria when compared to studies focusing on studio practice. For example, the works of Chukueggu (2010), Ngumah (2014) and Ajiboye and Fajuyigbe (2015) are studies related to painting from the historical point of view. Others studies related to studio practice have been documented by Diakparomre (2010), Adeyemi (2011), Abodunrin (2014), Abodunrin and Joshua, (2015), Abokede (2021) among others. Nonetheless, none of the studies highlights influence of painting practice on the art market, an obvious gap thus filled by this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study examined painting practice and its influences on art market. It investigated how studio practices in form of support preparation, choice of media, subject matter and styles influences marketability of painting in the art market. Data was collected by direct field survey to generate visual, written and oral data. This was achieved by interacting with artists, gallery owners and art collectors. Paintings of various artists from diverse educational backgrounds sold at the Arthouse affordable art auctions over a period of five years (2016 - 2020) were purposely selected. Out of the 268 paintings sold, 20% (54) were randomly selected for analysis. Moreover, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined for the data analysis.

Also, a series of semi-structured interviews was conducted with art market stakeholders including visual artists, gallery owners and curators. A structured questionnaire was administered to 180 inter-connected stakeholders and groups in the art market such as art galleries, art collectors, artists, art dealers, curators, museums, art connoisseurs and art lovers. A total number of one hundred and fifty (150) returned questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistical tools which include frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and weighted Mean scores (WMS). Therefore, 33 questionnaires (20%) were retrieved from the artists, thus constituting larger population among the respondents. Art collectors (private and public) returned 25 questionnaires (16.7%), art galleries returned 18 questionnaires (12%), curators returned 15 questionnaires (10%), art dealers returned 17 questionnaires (11.3%), art lovers returned 22 questionnaires (14.7%), and museums returned 10 questionnaires (6.7%), while 8 questionnaires were retrieved from art connoisseurs.

The distribution as indicated below in Figure 1, shows a total number of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents as the sample size.

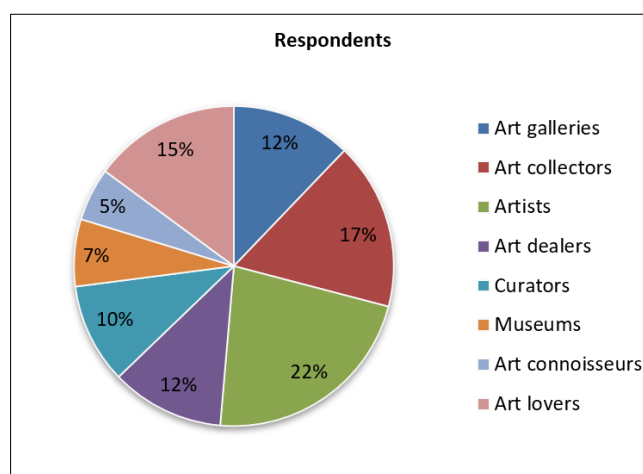


Figure 1: Questionnaire Distribution in the study area.

Figure 1: Author's distribution, 2022

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Painting Support and Its Influence on Marketability

Painting practice as continuous personal expression of creativity through colour representation originated several thousand years back with early man's painting on rock surfaces basically as a form of ritual process before a hunting session (Morris - Kay, 2009:160). This creative ingenuity in many forms developed with age, resulting in diverse innovations and inventions of painting material and support system in various epochs. For example, in many civilizations prior to the Industrial Revolution and the development of manufactured paints, a painter was not only an artist, but also a producer of paints in his/her studio space. However, the introduction of collapsible paint tubes in 1841 and the development of the paint industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made artists freer in their creative process. Hence, many modern and contemporary artists focus on the usage of paints by leaving the production process to the paint industry (Taft and Mayer, 2000:12-13).

The technological advancement via experimentation and exploitation of material propelled the availability of many painting media such as oil colour, acrylic, pastel (oil and chalk) and watercolour in place of animal blood used by the early man. The new media relatively propagate the production of newer painting supports such as acid-free papers, glass, plywood, chipboard, masonite, aluminium, and polyester canvas fabric instead of rock surfaces used by the early man. However, whether the artists paints in oils, acrylics or other traditional or non-traditional painting media, the quality and physical make-up of the support and its preparation is a critical determinant of the final outcome of an artwork. The support usually in form of paper, panel and canvas does not only set up the working properties of the chosen media but also has a significant role in its relative durability, method of display and the final visual aesthetic of the work. Thus, proper studio practice activities such as the use of quality painting materials and support preparation serve as a major factor that will either make or mar a painting. This germane painting process affects the end product (finished painting) and is often overlooked by many painters. A well-prepared painting support and adequate painting material will give painting the much-needed durability to stand the test of time.

According to Salako Olajide, a mid-career Nigerian artist: "Adequate surface preparation is paramount to his painting practice because it determines its durability. Hence, he does not buy readymade primed canvas but prepare his painting surface personally in his studio space" (personal communication, December 6, 2021). Similarly, Kolade Oshinowo, an established Nigerian artist further explains the importance of a well-prepared painting support: "He posited that material experimentation has been key to his artistic practice,

which is evident in his current body of work that involve fabric waste exploration and exploitation. His painting surface are well prepared to accommodate the gluing of different patterns of discarded fabric pieces to form harmonious colour scheme. More so, his mixed media techniques involve the use of sand, wood dust, tissue paper and fabrics to create relief and enhances the painting tactile value. Thus, adequate surface preparation is essential to his artistic practice" (personal communication, December 8, 2021).

Hence, proper consideration for adequate painting materials, a solid ground process and surface treatment should be the painting practice hallmark of any painter. There are so many available supports for artists to work with now. These include the popular traditional cotton and linen canvases and the newer synthetic polyester fabrics in a range of sizes and thickness. It is important to note that a good support stays flat, resists shrinkage and expansion to minimize stress on the paint as it ages. Thus, it is highly recommended that the artists apply a very fluid acrylic polymer (primer) to the cotton canvas either in the process of pre-stretching or applying over an already stretched unprimed canvas. This process will lock the fibers in place by reducing the movement and vibration of the canvas. It is also recommended that the artists apply a thinned primer (acrylic gesso) with up to 20% water for the first coating. This will allow the primer to easily soak into the cotton fibers and lock them in place (plate 1). More so, multiple coats of the acrylic gesso are recommended because they will increase the hardness and the tensile strength of the composite fabric and acrylic ground (plate 2).

However, many artists ignore the importance of painting surfaces and their effective foundations which often enhance marketability and the long-term durability of painting. According to Kum-Essuon (2016:26-28), "many artists deny posterity the benefit of their ingeniousness mainly due to ill-prepared painting supports, inferior materials and misapplication of paint mediums." He argued further, that many art collectors, patrons, dealers, curators and gallery owners are easily won over by a painter's styles and techniques, medium, subject matter and contents and they tend to ignore the importance of painting surfaces and their effective foundations which often ensure the long-term durability of the painting." This factor often determines whether the artist will enjoy a continuous patronage or not from a collector (patrons) who fall victim of the ill-prepared painting surface. Accordingly, Abiodun Omolayo, an art gallery owner explained that "the use of quality material is important to artistic practice because it promotes the marketability of a painting. He stressed further that there was an artist his gallery once sold his painting to a collector for ₦400,000. The painting was eventually returned to the gallery by the collector due to poor quality of material used by the artist to execute the painting" (personal communication, December 10, 2021).

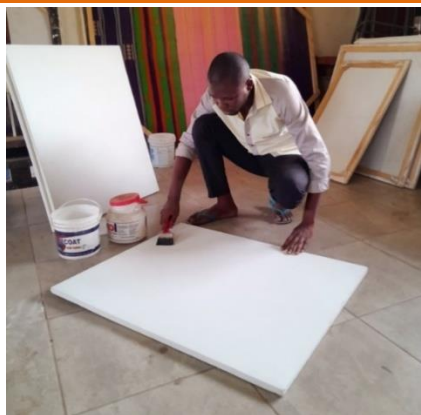


Plate 1

Priming process in the studio with gesso
Photographed by Oyedele Abiodun, 2022



Plate 2

Primed canvas with multiple coats of gesso
Photographed by Oyedele Abiodun, 2022

Examples of these inadequate studio practices among artists include the use of untreated stretchers that often results in termite attack (see plate 3). Moreover, the use of kerosene instead of turpentine results in loss of painting vibrancy. The use of olive oil in lieu of refined linseed oil affects the curing process of oil colour that leads to cracking of painting (see plate 4). Furthermore, poor ground preparation (painting support) and the use

of sub-standard painting medium result in sinking and loss colour vibrancy in painting (see plate 5). These irregularities in studio practice activities affect marketability of painting. They also make effective communication with the audience difficult which in turn affects proper documentation of feelings, beauty and history for the benefit of posterity.



Plate 3

Termite attack on untreated stretcher, 2022.

Source: Author's field work

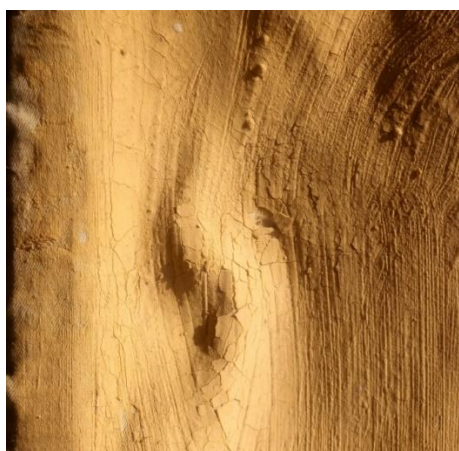


Plate 4

A flaking painting showing cracks, 2022.

Source: Author's field work



Plate 5

Poor surface preparation resulting in loss of vibrancy and sinking of oil based medium, 2022.

Source: Author's field work

Influence of Media on Painting Marketability

Media can be described as channels through which artists convey or express their emotion in painting. Media as a material in painting practice are in different forms and each of the medium has its peculiarity. Media as a tool of personal expression in the hand of Nigerian artists include oil colour, pastels (oil and chalk), acrylic, watercolour, mixed media, gouache, ink and non-conventional (metal foil, beads, plastocast, aluminium foil, linoleum, etching, plastograph, perforation handmade paper, serigraph, wood ankara, coffee, nails and strings on panel, carpet on wood panel, discarded fabrics, soft drinks cans, nylons, bottle caps, plastics among others). According to Kainebe Osahenye, an established Nigerian artist: "Practicing artists should make a habit of exploring their immediate environment by experimenting with every available material. In the process of material exploration and exploitation, the artist might find his/her artistic voice that relatively makes the artist's work unique in the art market" (personal communication, December 9, 2021).

Nevertheless, the marketability of any medium of expression used in the production of a painting is majorly dependent on the receptiveness of the audience; the intended final consumer. However, the uniqueness of an identifiable painting material used by the artist often highlights such artist's work in the art market which in turn increases its marketability. These recognized individualistic traits of material usage by the artist are predominantly from the artist's continuous research on exploration and exploitation of materials in a bid to solve issues of production cost, health implications, climate change, durability and waste management. Successful studio research by the artist often results in the formation of a new technique, form and style. Many modern and contemporary artists have their creative process framework majorly based on material and their painting styles are recognized mainly through their preferred medium.

Such artists include Gerald Chukwuma whose work captures a richly layered history imbedded with personal and political meaning via his multiple techniques such as burning, chiseling and painting on wood panels. His mixed media painting titled "Akuko Ifo (Folk Tales 1 & 2)" (plate 6) was sold for ₦920,000 at 2018 Affordable Art Auction by Arthouse Contemporary, Lagos State, Nigeria. Another artist, Uchay Joel, a mixed media artist uses unconventional materials in his painting on canvas. The materials include strings, sand, wax and found objects which he used to document social and environmental issues, questioning notions of crisis and inequality worldwide. These identified media tendencies are seen in his works titled "In the Blues I" (plate 7) and "Amazed I" (plate 8) sold for ₦276,000 and ₦368,000 respectively

Furthermore, preference given to a particular medium by artists and collectors alike cannot be

overemphasized in the art market. Many Nigerian artists mastered the usage and technique of their preferred traditional (conventional) media such as oil colour. One of the oldest media of expression is oil colour. It is known for its relatively slow drying time (usually takes months to dry completely depending on the thickness of the brushstrokes). It can be an advantage to the painter as used in depicting *Strength Of Purpose II* (plate 9) and *Dialogue I* (plate 10) sold at hammer price of \$3,200 and \$2,774 respectively. Acrylic; a water based plastic medium is fast becoming the most preferred medium of expression among Nigerian contemporary artists. This is attributed to its flexibility in usage, quick drying propensity and lack of health implication concerns unlike oil colour known for its toxic tendencies. Example of such paintings include *Solitude IV* (plate 11) and *Afrodisa I* (plate 12) sold for ₦184,000 and ₦632,500 respectively. Watercolour; a water-soluble medium that is typically executed on paper supports, bound in gum arabic and characterized by its fluidity in colour and expression is well explored by Nigerian artists as seen in *Great Expectations* (plate 13) and *Girl from Dreams* (plate 14) auctioned for ₦402,500 and ₦230,000 respectively.

Another water-based medium known for its opaque-bold effect on painting supports and often used by Nigerian painters to exercise their artistic prowess is gouache. This is evident in Ben Osawe's "Mask" (plate 15) and Muraina Oyelami's "Nuba Farmer" (plate 16) sold for ₦920,000 and ₦517, 000 respectively. Dry medium such as pastels are also prominent among Nigerian painters both modern and contemporary. Examples are Sam Ovraiti's "The Delinquent" (Plate 17) and Tolu Aliko's "Contemplation" (plate 18) sold at hammer price of \$1,714 and \$1,640 respectively. In addition, some experimental artists such as Bruce Onobrakpeya, David Dale, Tony Enabeli, Ufuom Onobrakpeya, Lanre Buraimoh, Juliet Ezenwa, Oluwale Olufemi and Onyinye Ezeennia use non - conventional materials and techniques such as ink, aluminum foil, serigraph, plastograph, metal foil, beads, carpet on wood panel, nails and strings on wood panel and coffee to depict their subject matter as observed in *Pregnant With Meaning* (plate 19), *Orale Orise* (plate 20), *The Elephant Masquerades* (plate 21), *Three Nigerian Girls* (plate 22), *The Nigerians III* (plate 23), *Full Blown Flowers* (plate 24), *Family Portrait* (plate 25), *Tears Of The People I & II* (plate 26) and *Precision* (plate 27) sold for \$1,061, ₦414,000, ₦1,380,000, \$979, ₦517,500, \$1,306, \$1,510, \$1,714 and ₦517,500 respectively.

The Most Patronised Painting Medium in the Art Market

Distribution of the most patronised painting medium in the art market revealed that oil colour was ranked first with the Weighted Mean Score (WMS) of 2.6. This was closely followed by acrylic (WMS = 2.5), mixed media (WMS = 2.1), gouache (WMS = 1.7) and non-conventional (WMS = 1.6). The result implies that

oil colour was the most patronised material for painting as identified by the respondents. A medium known to be one of the oldest and expensive medium of expression characterized with pigments that are bounded with

refined linseed oil. It can be manipulated using brush techniques to give a subtle and brushstroke effects while palette knife technique gives a bold and coarse surface texture in painting (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by the Most Patronised Painting Medium in the Art Market

Materials	Mostly Patronised	Averagely patronised	Not patronised	WMS	Rank
Oil colour	98(65.3)	46(30.7)	6(4.0)	2.6	1 st
Acrylic	86(57.3)	56(37.3)	8(5.3)	2.5	2 nd
Mixed media	48(32.0)	71(47.3)	31(20.7)	2.1	3 rd
Gouache	21(14.0)	66(44.0)	63(42.0)	1.7	4 th
Non-Conventional	18(12.0)	55(36.7)	77(51.3)	1.6	5 th

Author's Field Survey, 2022

Influence of Subject Matter on Painting Marketability

Subject matter is basically the main idea or narrative focus depicted in painting. Significantly, some of the factors influencing the artist choice of subject matter includes natural environments such as geographical environment, climate and other natural conditions which in turn prove the geographical identity of the artist. Historical developments such as ideological tide, pandemic and war also affect artist's chose of subject matter. Also, political factors in form of social system and economic policy affect the artist's choice of subject matter of expression. Lastly, is the influence of cultural identity and religious beliefs (Liu, 2020: 50).

Hence, artists use subject matter as a tool of personal expression to document emotion and feelings, political atmosphere of their epoch, showcase beauty in nature, promote religious beliefs, protest against unfavorable government's rule and policies, educate the audience on societal and environmental issues. Subject matters as represented by artists are in many forms including figurative, animal, landscape, portraits, history and legends, dreams and fantasies, religious and mythology, still life and everyday life activities. For example, the church as a prominent patron of the arts in the renaissance era extensively promoted religious norms by commissioning artists to produce artwork with a focused similar subject matter. One of the most popular Italian Renaissance scenes is the Virgin and Child Enthroned. Giotto di Bondone's depiction of the subject (plate 28) was widely admired and more realistically painted compared to his contemporary paintings of the same subject.

Nonetheless, aesthetic value of a painting is mostly subjective, depending on the environment and the viewer, which explains the diverse art receptiveness by the audience on beauty. This is called consumer's subjective reason for buying an art piece. In its simplest term, the consumer's subjective experience varies. Moreover, only individual collector can establish the monetary value to be placed on the experience. Thus, it is the shared experience between the artist's creative ideas (experience) in producing a painting to that of consumer's (collector's) experience that usually results in

the acquisition of the art piece. Significantly, an artwork is solely a symbolic representation of the artist's creative idea and experience that he/she chooses to share with the audience in the society. But the painting is not always for sale. The shared experience could be aesthetic, environmental, ethical, cultural, educational, religious and political (Marshall and Forrest, 2011:117).

Nigerian contemporary artists use figurative subject matters to express intellectual perceptions of masculinity and femininity. Many Nigerian artists often depict expressions of images about Nigerian women to convey messages relating to fashion and beauty, abuse, feminism, entrepreneurship, culture, sexuality and motherhood, and mysticism (Abodunrin and Joshua, 2015:23). Nigerian artists that use figurative expressions as subject matter for the admiration and consumption of the audience include Sam Ovrati's "Woman in Green", (plate 29) and Timi Kakandar's "Deeper"(plate 30) sold for \$1,795 and \$1,958 respectively. Human expression, mood, identity and social class in the society are captured by painters via portraiture as seen in Rom Isichei's "Vacancy Of Stares" (plate 31) and Segun Aiyesan's "Ewa"(plate 32) sold for ₦1,150,000 and \$3,427 respectively. Recently, the secondary market success by the sensational Oluwole Omofemi's paintings titled "Invader"(plate 33) and "Yesterday Has Gone"(plate 34) evidently shows the growth and acceptance of Nigerian contemporary figurative and portrait paintings that document and celebrate black women's identity, sexuality, power and liberty by prominent art patrons globally when the works were sold in 2022 at a realised auction price of \$189,000, \$151,200 respectively at Christie's, London.

Artists do not only use subject matter to educate, but they also use it to arouse the audience emotions which in turn influence the visual perception of the depicted art piece. Nigerian artists also use subject matter to protest against corruption, inequality, human right abuse, rape, police brutality and climate change by depicting the event in a provocative and emotional way. This is with a view to capture the attention of the audience, as seen in Bob-Nosa Uwagboe's "Power Drunk"(plate 35) and Ikechukwu Ezeigwe's "Vote King Kong For Second Term" (Plate 36) sold for ₦322,000

and \$2,290 respectively. Hence, audience with a shared experience and interest with that of the artist as expressed in the painting are often the collectors of the exhibited art piece.

Subject matter also influences the art market commercially due to the shared experience between the painter of the depicted scenes and the audience (likely buyer) on themes such as culture, history, religion and festivals. For instance, audience with fond memories, cultural inclination and historical background in cultural festivals such as the popular Eyo festival in Lagos State, Egungun and new year Yam festival in the south and the Durbar and Argungu fishing festivals in the northern part of Nigeria would love to purchase Mukaila Ayoade's, *Orisha Oko* (plate 37) and Muraina Oyelami's, *Shango Shrine Mural*, (plate 38) sold for \$1,110 and ₦200,000 respectively. These paintings showcase Nigeria rich culture and festivals as depicted by the artists in their captivating hues and expressive cultural symbols while audience (patrons) with shared experience and interest in religious and mythology would prefer Benedict Olorunnisomo's "An Act Of Contrition"(plate 39) sold for \$1,795. Also, collectors with shared experience in human survival events in form of daily life activities

would prefer paintings depicting crowded markets, illuminated streets and yellow busses in Lagos State, Makoko water front and monumental architectural structures as documented in Mavua Lessor's "Idumota Series" (plate 40), Diseye Tantua's "No Business, No Wife"(plate 41) and Oluwafunke Oladimeji's "Where We Thrive (Series)" (plate 42) sold for ₦747,500, \$1,700 and \$1,120 respectively.

Identification of the Most Patronised Painting Subject Matter in the Art Market.

The distribution of painting subject matter in the art market revealed that figurative (58.7%) was the painting subject matter mostly patronized. Others are portraiture (24.0%), non-representation (22.7%), landscape (19.3%) and still life painting (10.7%). This is attributed to figurative painting's ability to combine elements of the known with the unknown by positioning the audience (prospective buyers) in a state of being the main subject of expression, which in turn heighten collector's receptiveness to collect. Furthermore, figurative painting expresses a profound longing of the soul; a vivid reflection of the world around us via texture, technique, form and colour (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by the Most Patronised Painting Subject Matter in the Art Market

Types of Painting	Frequency	Percentage
Figurative	88	58.7
Portraiture	36	24.0
Non representation (Abstraction)	34	22.7
Landscape	29	19.3
Still life	16	10.7

Author's Field Survey, 2022

Influence of Style on Painting Marketability

Style influences painting marketability due to its group of characteristics that can be recognized as constant, recurring or coherent. A style of painting may be associated with an entire culture within a particular time and place, a group of artists, an individual, or a particular institution over a period of time (Getlin 2002:36). Nigerian painting styles can be categorised majorly into realism; a detailed realistic representation of subject matter without any artistic convention as seen in *Corner Market* (plate 43) sold for ₦460,000, abstraction; a visual composition of lines, shape, texture and colour with no representational implications as observed in *Inception* (plate 44) sold for ₦690,000, expressionism; a dramatic depiction of emotions via colour and lines as seen in *Peaceful Thoughts* (plate 45) sold for ₦920,000, cubism; a geometric representation of forms and subject matters as depicted in *Parade* (plate 46) sold for ₦747,500 and naturalism; a close to life visual representation of nature and subjects without any form of distortion as seen in *Meditation of Patterns of You* (plate 47) sold for \$571. Furthermore, many Nigerian artists employ impressionist style of painting; a visual depiction of fleeting moments and experience of the effect of light on subject matters as documented in *Misty Morning*

(plate 48) sold for ₦287,500, symbolism; an expression of ideas, feelings, culture and spirituality via sign, symbols and colours as observed in *Religious* (plate 49) sold for ₦437,000, abstract expressionism; a spontaneous expression of emotion and forms that effortlessly glides via colour and lines as seen in *Ori Inu* (plate 50) sold for ₦172,500, neo-expressionism; an expressive representation of subject matter via forceful brushwork and provocative expressions as seen in *Self Portrait (Mr. Why Hurry)* (plate 51) sold for \$1,714, abstract realism; an oscillation between realistic depiction of subject matter and abstraction of forms as observed in *Composition with Pot and Face* (plate 52) sold for ₦230,000, surrealism; a psychoanalysis of imagination concerning myth and dream and events as depicted in *Enemy of the State* (plate 53) sold for \$2,530 and stylization; a personalised pictorial representation of subject matter in a simplified form, lines and colour as exemplified in *Protection* (plate 54) sold for ₦460,000.

However, the individual artistic practice characteristics such as materials, brush strokes, color combinations, subject matter, and technique of representation relatively make an artwork unique, popular and recognized in the global art market.

According to Wallace Ejoh, an established Nigerian artist: "Constant practice is the key. The aim of any artists should be a continuous improvement of his/her artistic practice. Hence, artists should metamorphose into having a unique painting style naturally as they practice daily" (personal communication, December 13, 2021).

This constant exhibition of a unique artistic prowess in the course of the artist's creative practice assures the audience and the prospective buyers of the originality and uniqueness of such paintings in their collection. Thus, preferences are given to the selected artist's work with a recognized painting style in the pool of crowded global art market by art collectors, galleries, curators, dealers, museums and patrons. A global acceptance by prominent art collectors, art collections, museums and a recurrent success at the secondary market by an artist with a peculiar painting style also dictates the flow of commercialisation influx in the art market. Hence, the importance of an identifiable unique painting style cannot be over emphasized in the art market. It is attributed to increase in record sales, availability in both public and private collection and gallery representation enjoyed by artists with a recognized style. This individualistic painting style trait is evident in the works of many Nigerian masters painting such as Diseye Tantua 'Afro Pop Art characterized with graphical symbols, bold colours and expressive text' as seen in

Cool Down, No Vex (plate 55) and *No Business, No Wife* (plate 56) sold for ₦862,500 and \$1,700 respectively. Dipo Doherty is another painter with a recognized style that uses geometry and colour to explore a deeper, chaotic relationship between forms as observed in *The Human Paradox In Nature* (plate 57) and *Circle 001* (plate 58) sold for ₦402,500 and ₦200,000 respectively. Lastly, Jimmy Nwanne's abstract realism painting juxtaposes a seemingly disparate visual reference combined together to form an implied narrative association as seen in *Will* (plate 59) and *Bond* (plate 60) sold for ₦805,000 and ₦667,000 respectively.

Style of Painting Majorly Patronised in the Art Market

The distribution of painting style majorly patronised revealed that expressionism was ranked first with WMS of 2.6. Realism, abstraction and impressionism have (WMS = 2.4), naturalism (WMS of 2.3), stylization (WMS = 2.1), symbolism (WMS = 1.8) and cubism (WMS = 1.6). The result implies that expressionism was the most patronised style of painting. This is attributed to expressionist painting's ability to elicit the audience (collectors) emotional response through the artist's use of bold and intense colours, lines and forms represented in diverse themes and subject matters (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Style of Painting Mainly Patronised in the Art Market

Style of Painting	Mostly Patronised	Averagely Patronised	Not Patronised	WMS	Rank
Expressionism	102(68.0)	35(23.3)	13(8.7)	2.6	1 st
Realism	73(48.7)	65(43.3)	12(8.0)	2.4	2 nd
Abstraction	76(50.7)	56(37.3)	18(12.0)	2.4	2 nd
Impressionism	67(44.4)	69(46.0)	14(9.3)	2.4	2 nd
Naturalism	68(45.3)	58(38.7)	24(16.0)	2.3	5 th
Stylization	46(30.7)	69(46.0)	35(23.3)	2.1	6 th
Symbolism	28(18.7)	61(40.7)	61(40.7)	1.8	7 th
Cubism	16(10.7)	52(34.7)	82(54.7)	1.6	8 th

Author's Field Survey, 2022

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Artistic practice as a way of life requires a continuous sustenance in form of funds, materials, conducive studio space and market for the end product to keep the creative fire burning. Significantly, appropriate painting practice processes in form of support preparation, usage of quality painting materials and adequate knowledge on painting media, subject matters and styles are paramount to a successful artistic practice. These creative processes has a germane role in a

painting's physical make-up, its relative durability, method of display and the final visual aesthetic which in turn influences its marketability in the global art market. Hence, artists themselves are the main marketer of their end products (paintings); physical evidence of their studio creative process and activities. Thus, it is recommended that artists use quality painting support and materials for production, keep proper record of their artistic practice including sales records, and improve on their artistic aptitude and network with relevant stakeholders in the art market.

PLATES

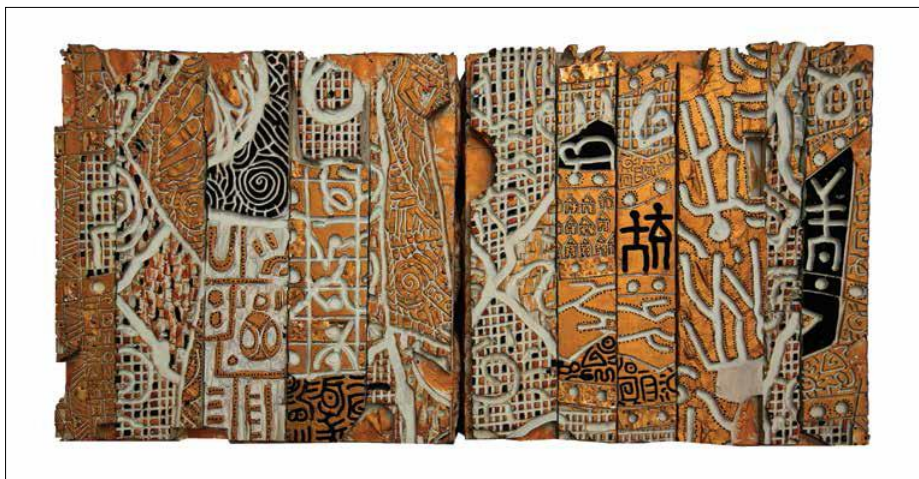


Plate 6

Gerald Chukwuma, *Akuko Ifo (Folk Tales 1 & 2)*, Mixed media, 61 x 61 cm (each), 2015 (The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue 2018)



Plate 7

Uchay Joel, *In the Blues I*, Mixed media on canvas, 51 x 51 cm, 2014.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)

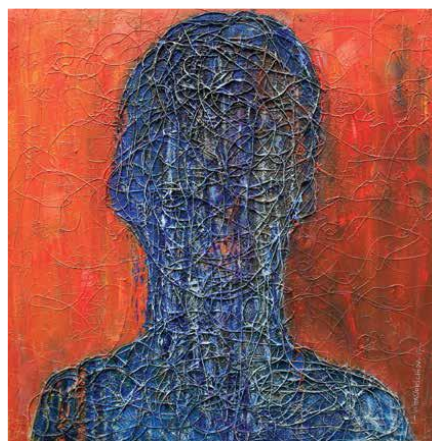


Plate 8

Uchay Joel, *Amazed I*, Mixed media on canvas, 91.5 x 91.5 cm, 2017
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2018)

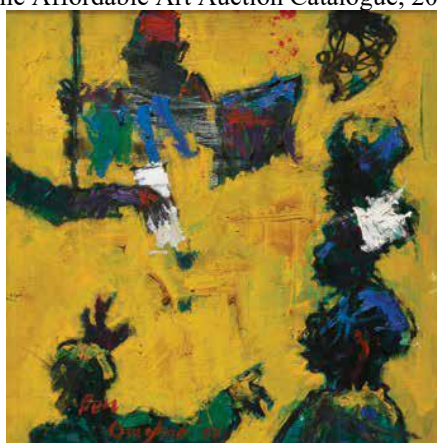


Plate 9

Rom Isichei, *Strength of Purpose II*, Oil on board, 76 x 58 cm, 2018
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2019)



Plate 10

Ben Osaghe, *Dialogue I*, Oil on canvas, 44 x 44 cm, 2007
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 11

Sade Thompson, *Solitude 4*, Acrylic On canvas 49.5 x 46 cm, 2015

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)



Plate 12

Lemi Ghariokwu, *Afrodisia I*, Acrylic on canvas, 122 x 91.5 cm, 2016

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 13

Sam Ovrati, *Great Expectations*, Watercolour on paper, 22 x 15 cm, 1999.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 14

Umoh Akanimoh, *Girl from My Dreams*, Watercolour on paper, 76 x 57 cm, 2016.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 15

Ben Osawe, *Mask*, Gouache on paper, 47 x 30.5 cm, 1985.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)



Plate 16

Muraina Oyelami, *Nuba Farmer*, Gouache on paper, 53 x 38 cm, 1985.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2018)



Plate 17

Sam Ovrati, *The Delinquent*, Pastel on paper, 43 x 30.5 cm, 1986.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 18

Tolu Aliko, *Contemplation*, Pastel on paper, 63 x 53 cm, 2008

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2019)



Plate 19

Muyiwa Akinwolere, *Pregnant with Meaning*, Ink on paper, 75 x 54 cm, 2017.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 20

Bruce Onobrakpeya, *Orale Orise*, Alluminium foil on board, 69 x 22.5 cm, 1987.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)



Plate 21

Bruce Onobrakpeya, *Three Elephant Masquerades*, Serigraph on paper, 67 x 50 cm, Edition 1 of 70, 2011.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)

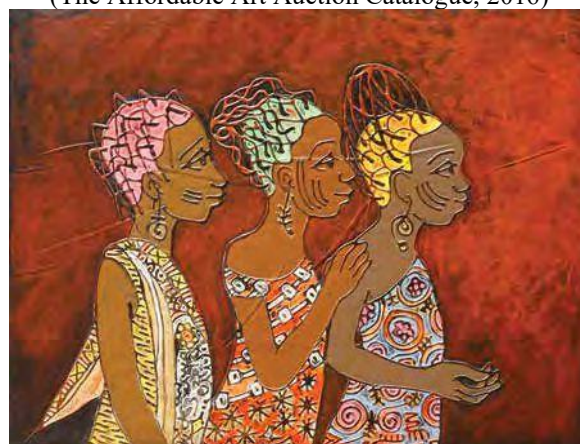


Plate 22

Juliet Ezenwa Pearce, *Three Nigerian Girls* Original additive plastograph plate, 53 x 69.5 cm

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 23

David Dale, *The Nigerians III* Metal foil on board, 76 x 48 cm, 1986.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2018)



Plate 24

Lanre Buraimoh, *Full Blown Flowers*, Bead on board, 50 x 40.5 cm, 2019
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 25

Olufemi Oyewole, *Family Portrait*, Carpet on wood panel, 122 x 158 cm, 2018.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2019)

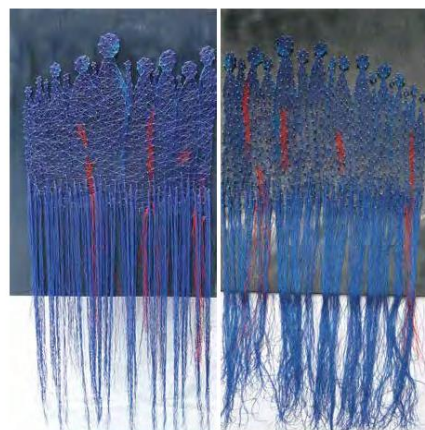


Plate 26

Onyinye Ezennia, *Tears Of The People I & II* Nails and strings on panel, 91.5 x 122 cm, 2019.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 27

Tayo Olayode, *Precision*, Coffee on aches paper 92.5 x 62 cm, 2016.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 28

Giotto. *Virgin and Child enthroned, surrounded by angels and saints (Ognissanti Maestà)*, 1300-1305.
The Uffizi, Florence.



Plate 29

Sam Ovrati, *Woman in Green*, Watercolour on paper, 36 x 53 cm, 1991
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 30

Timi Kakandar, *Deeper*, Acrylic on canvas, 170 x 104 cm, 2019.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 31

Rom Isichei, *Vacancy of Stares*, Oil on paper, 61 x 53.5 cm, 2015
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2018)

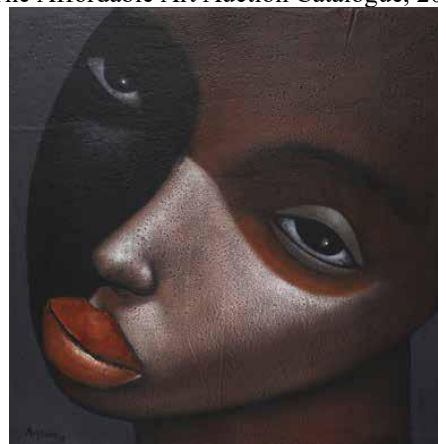


Plate 32

Segun Aiyesan, *Ewa*, Mixed media on canvas, 91.5 x 91.5 cm, 2019
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 33

Oluwole Omofemi, *Invader*, Oil and acrylic on canvas 122 x 122cm, 2021.
Artist Archive



Plate 34

Oluwole Omofemi, *Yesterday Has Gone*, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 106 x 120cm, 2021.
Artist Archive

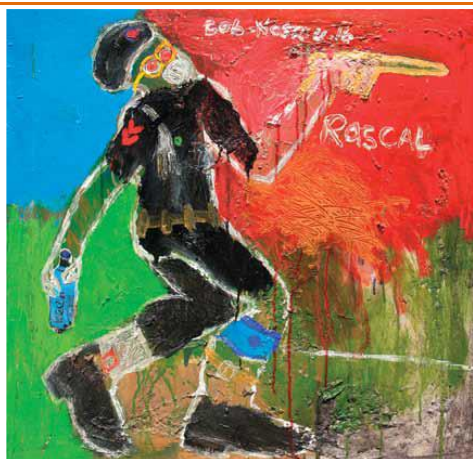


Plate 35

Bob Nosa Uwagboe, *Power Drunk*, Acrylic on canvas, 76 x 76 cm, 2016.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)

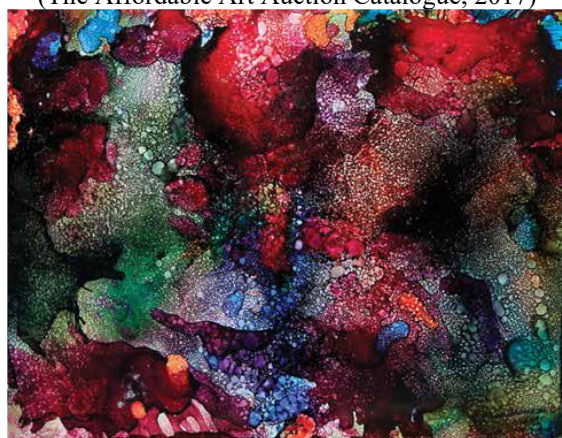


Plate 37

Mukaila Ayoade, *Orisha Oke*, Alcohol ink on Yupo paper, 20 x 26 cm, 2018

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2019)



Plate 39

Benedict Olorunnisomo, *An Act of Contrition*, Acrylic on canvas, 168.5 x 124 cm, 2019.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 36

Ikechukwu Ezeigwe, *Vote Kingkong for Second Term*, Acrylic on canvas, 165 x 111.5 cm, 2018.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2019)



Plate 38

Muraina Oyelami, *Shango Shrine Mural*, Oil on paper, 53 x 41 cm, 2008

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2018)

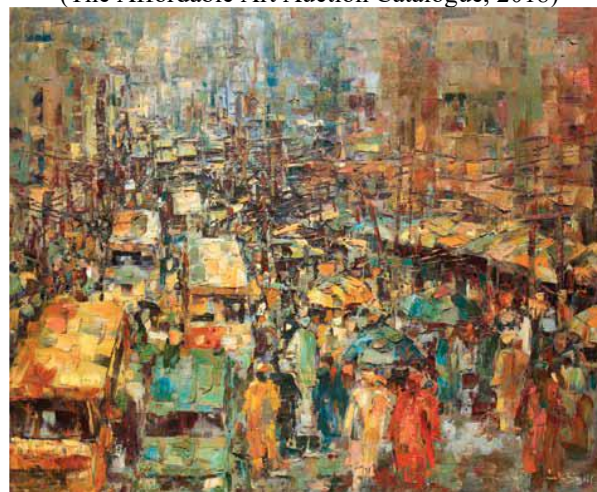


Plate 40

Mavua Lessor, *Idumota Series*, Oil on canvas, 114 x 139.5 cm, 2004.

(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)

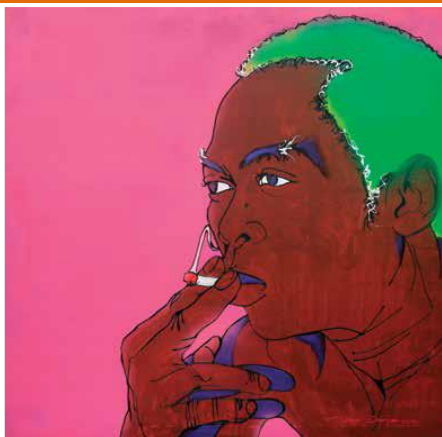


Plate 41

Diseye Tantua, *Differeen Differeen Fever*, Acrylic on canvas, 91.5 x 91.5 cm, 2016.

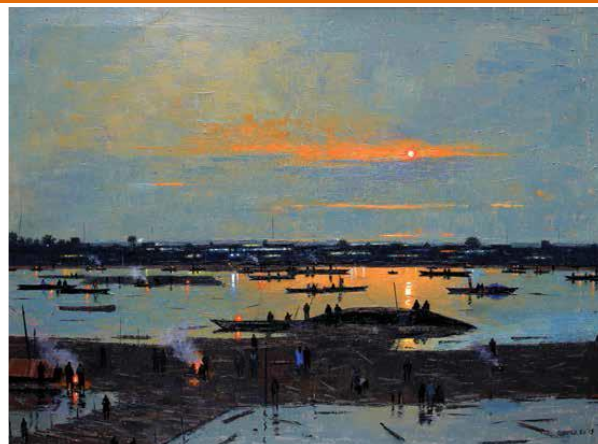


Plate 42

Oluwafunke Oladimeji, *Where We Thrive (Series)* Oil on canvas, 76 x 101 cm, 2018.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2019)



Plate 43

Abiodun Olaku, *Corner Market*, Pastel on paper, 22.5 x 18.5 cm, 2005.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)



Plate 44

Anthea Epele, *Inception*, Oil on canvas, 140 x 112 cm, 2015.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)

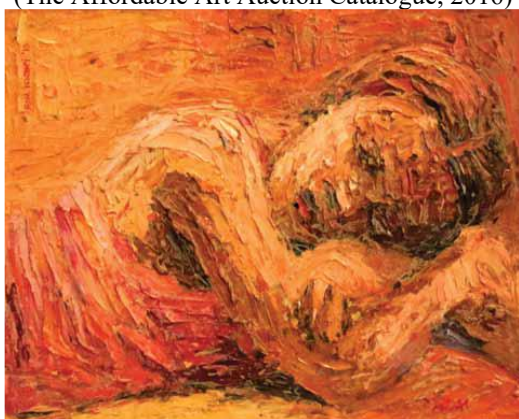


Plate 45

Rom Isichei, *Peaceful Thoughts*, Oil on board, 42 x 52 cm, 2010.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)

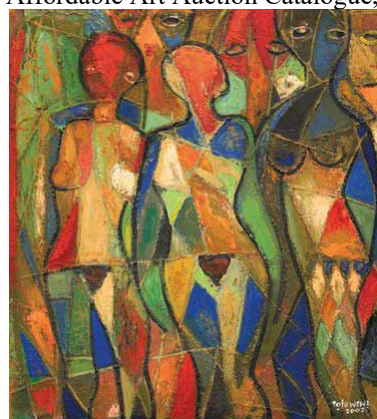


Plate 46

Tola Wewe, *Parade*, Acrylic on canvas, 74 x 67 cm, 2011.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 47

Foluso Oguntayo, *Meditation of Patterns of You*, Acrylic on paper, 78 x 53 cm, 2019.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 48

Pita Ohiwerei, *Misty Morning*, Oil on canvas, 38 x 48.5 cm, 1996.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)



Plate 49

Tayo Adenaike, *Religious*, Watercolour on paper, 61 x 46 cm, 1998
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 50

Ayo Akinyemi, *Ori Inu*, Watercolour on paper, 61 x 44 cm, 2013.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)



Plate 51

Edozie Anedu, *Self Portrait (Mr Why Hurry)*, Mixed media on canvas, 130 x 99 cm, 2019.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)

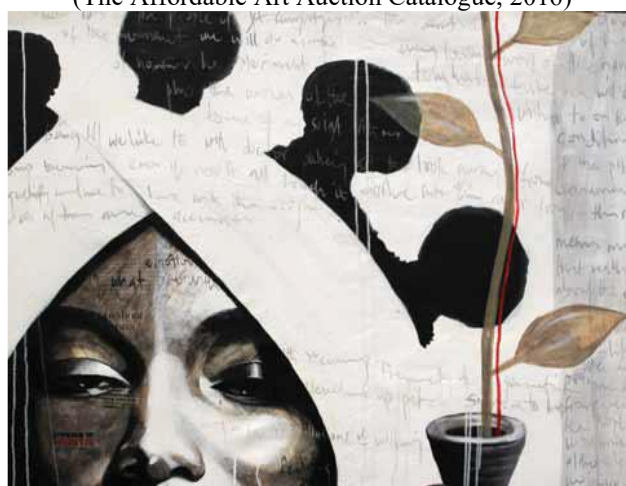


Plate 52

Joseph Eze, *Composition with Pot and Face* Acrylic on canvas, 141 x 120 cm, 2012.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)



Plate 53

Ikechukwu Ezigwe, *Enemy of the State*, Oil on canvas, 122 x 96.5 cm, 2018.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2020)



Plate 54

Chike Obeagu, *Protection* Mixed media on canvas, 91.5 x 78.5 cm, 2013.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 55

Diseye Tantua, *Cool Down, No Vex*, Acrylic on canvas, 122 x 152.5 cm, 2016
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)

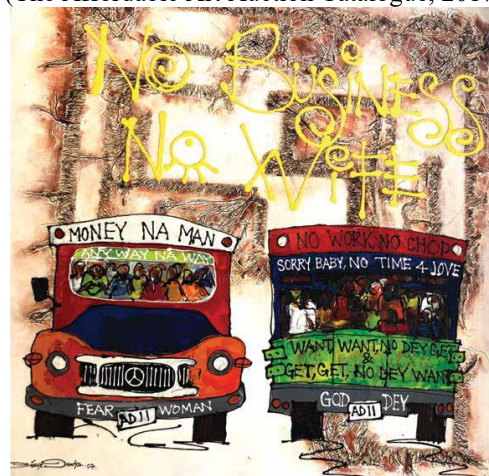


Plate 56

Diseye Tantua, *No Business, No Wife*, Mixed media on canvas, 89 x 89 cm, 2007
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2019)

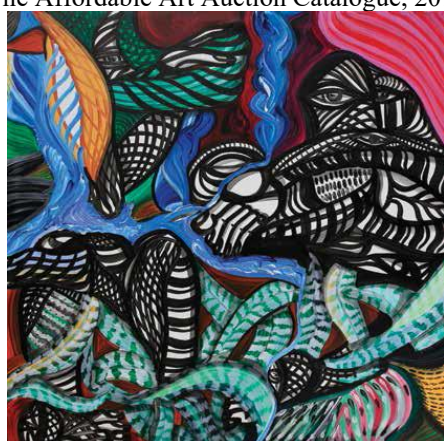


Plate 57

Dipo Doherty, *The Human Paradox in Nature*, Acrylic on canvas, 122 x 122 cm, 2017
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2018)



Plate 58

Dipo Doherty, *Circle 001*, Acrylic on canvas, 30 cm (diameter), 2016-2017
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 59

Jimmy Nwanne, Will, Mixed media on Canvas, 139.5 x 100 cm, 2015.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2017)



Plate 60

Jimmy Nwanne, Bond, Mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm, 2015.
(The Affordable Art Auction Catalogue, 2016)

ETHICAL DECLARATION

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Oyedele Abiodun Oyewumi, Abodunrin Johnson Adelani and Abokede Olugbenga Oladeji. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Oyedele Abiodun Oyewumi and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Permission to conduct the interviews for the purposes of this research was obtained by all respondents, who were fully informed about the purposes of this research and how their responses would be used and stored the submission is original and is not being considered elsewhere. The authors agree to grant the first editing / publishing rights to the journal up on acceptance.

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