

## CHAPTER

# 11

### **FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN GRAPHICS DESIGN CONCEPTS: CREATIVITY AND INDIGENOUS INNOVATION IN NIGERIA**

**Godwin O. Uka and Kasi Jockeil Ojike**

Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

#### **Abstract**

The quest for design in general and graphic design practice in particular has led to the conceit of creativity and innovation often used interchangeably in design practice. In most instances, creativity is usually considered as an internal and national process of creating a new idea, while agreeing that innovations are the fulcrum of the implementation of such ideas. This position unwittingly placed the idea as a global force and appears increasingly inevitable, as many experts find it difficult to establish and maintain a competitive edge despite an increase in the number of indigenous innovations and creativity. This in turn has affected indigenous enterprises and sustainability, especially in the digital era. Hence, this paper seeks to examine the fundamental issues in graphic design and how visual data could help to formulate creativity and indigenous innovation, using the theory of diffusion of innovation and visual perception that supports indigenous creative endeavour in Nigeria. The underlying logic and finding of the paper hence the recommendations thereafter reflect on the question of indigenous innovation and creativity in the graphic design concept.

#### **Introduction**

There is always a need to progress and change in any developing nation, which could be as a result of new technology and possibilities or because of changes in the world. Innovation could be used as a term to mean progression and adapting to changing conditions. The opposite of innovation is 'stagnant' or, at least, 'complacent'. A readiness to do something new is required for innovation. But anything new is viewed as a risk in most African developmental processes or still as a distraction from the normal routine. There is every need to commit resources to anything new.

Innovation and creativity in the African context have increasingly come to be seen as a response to the condition Africa has been subjected to by the world. Innovation and creativity describe the adaptation of tradition to new challenges. African appropriation of external inputs, the endeavour to integrate these inputs into their lives, and most importantly, their response to the ever-new situations that result from innovation itself are important for future development.

Innovation can happen if there is a readiness to try new things and if a habit of exploring new possibilities is developed, it will help and be beneficial to African development. Creating a climate of acceptance for every new possibility is very difficult. There is a need for someone to be sensitive to what is happening elsewhere in the same field and to what is happening in the world.

There are many myths about creativity. There is the belief that creativity is a mysterious talent that some people have and others can only envy. Anyone can learn and practice the thinking skill of creativity. Some people might be better than others, as with any skill - such as driving, cooking, tennis or soccer, art and design and others. Innovation is the introduction of something new to an organization or culture. One might do this by copying someone else, by systematic, intuitive, logical design or still through direct and deliberate creativity. However, there must be a readiness to explore and implement new ideas. Innovation means putting into effect something new for any organization, association, community or nation. There may be many sources for what is 'new'.

A professional designer's role is to enhance living by applying a developed sense of aesthetics and utility to the design of a human-made world.

### **Innovation through Creativity**

Africa can be seen as a laboratory of a multiplicity of actors engaged in experimenting and exploring with a multitude of innovations. Empirical studies can be either in-depth case studies or follow a comparative approach. In addition, some comparative studies may even include cases from regions outside Africa. The envisaged research may include all fields of fine and applied arts or industrial design (global exchange, environmental and climatic change).

However, in this respect specific attention to socially relevant innovations and emerging orders may be identified for example cities as spatial emphases of change; artists, designers, musicians and young people as particularly innovative actors; new forms of political order; religious groups, or civil society associations as new forms of group association. These efforts may all be linked to particular worldviews, normative frameworks, concepts of belonging, or the moral order of social relations. Urban social environments appear to open up increasingly to a creative blend of various cultural expressions in film, music, literature and art and design as well as in new fashions and lifestyles. Some of these expressions form the background to new social movements with new discourses on social and political life in general.

A special emphasis on young people and youth movements may be helpful to further explore this sociocultural change. From a generational perspective, youth has always been perceived as a non-conventional entity which must be tamed to make it conform to the order of society. In this sense, it is a phase of life open to uncertainty, exploration, experimentation and innovation and this renders youth one of the most promising topics to research in the quest for order framework.

Creative originality is not just limited to creating and originating a system of ideas out of nothing but artful and careful combination, coupled with a well-established pattern of thought by a process of cross-fertilization is needed to save the system from the state of mythology. It is therefore imperative to develop a new reasoning ability to think aright, explore possibilities and to be able to discover and combine meaningfully, as many ideas and experiences as possible to

create new forms of knowledge. Exploring the Mind can be achieved with daydreaming, meditation and also Thinking about thinking. What makes an individual tick? What are one's hopes, Dreams, and Fears? What does one do well? What could one do better? Start practising observing oneself – this might be a great start.

Creativity is more closely related to thinking abilities and attitudinal development. It is a continual process for which the best preparation involves creativity itself. The act of creativity can be seen as that which provides the urge for continuing exploration and discovery. Every child is born creative. The urge to explore, investigate, and discover, what is on the other side of the screen is not limited to human behaviour, but is experienced by the whole animal kingdom, (Lower Field and Brittan 1975). One of the most commonly agreed upon components of creative thinking is the ability to produce a large number of ideas. In a general sense, the idea of creativity means different things to different people in the world. Murray (1966) states "... the creative process of the African artist is quite distinct from that of his Western counterparts". There is the need to take due account of this distinction in any comparative analysis.

Creativity exists everywhere in people's life. It can be found in designing and packaging, processing and production, fabric and fashion, sign and architectural design, applied science and technology, visual arts, theatre, music, film (video production) and a host of other activities. Creativity in the modern dispensation is used as a powerful tool to attract attention to a nation or country's powerful endowment. Creativity can be meaningful to an individual if it is ideologically and culturally inclined. Runco (1994) opines that creativity is in terms of cognitive processes that lead to an original and adaptive insight, idea or solution. Thus, creativity is the most essential of all human resources and skills (Bolaji 2007). Akinboye (2004) sees creativity as a tool that propels organizations, catapults careers, and generate potent growth and viable outcomes.

Creativity is at the heart of art and design, at all stages throughout the design process. The most exciting and challenging design is that which is truly innovative; the creation of a radical departure from anything currently on the market (Baxter, 1995). The more people try to define creativity by identifying with specific sets of values, meanings, beliefs, and symbols, the more our creativity will be focusing on how values, meanings, beliefs and symbols are formed, and the greater the chance that our creativity will become less restricted ( Bolaji 2007).

One major way to spark creativity is through exploration. Exploring exposes one to new things. New things are inspiring. While exploring one might stumble across a new way of doing something, a new thing to do, or something more subtle. Sometimes one uncovers a bit of information that clicks with things he has been thinking about and completes (or helps to complete) the picture he has been developing in his mind. Other times one may discover a tool, a process or an approach that others are using which is unrelated but still inspiring in its ingenuity. Exploration can fuel one's creativity.

Exploration is the act of travelling or searching within and around a terrain (including the immediate environment, the world and space or even an unknown region for the discovery of resources or information for a particular project. Exploration in art could take different forms, for example a visit to the city especially where one lives, or the nearest one and spend a day walking through the streets. Also, a visit to local, independent shops, clothing stores, antique shops, craft shops, toy stores, markets, museums, and art galleries/workshops are great places to seek out.

Others are new parks, beaches, monuments, and other gathering areas. As an artist or designer, it helps to have a goal, or set of goals, to provide some structure to your creative wanderings. Artists and designers are no longer constrained to the physical realm for their explorations, the Internet and the World Wide Web; there are vast tracks to be explored without ever leaving their homes.

Graphic design plays an indispensable role in the industrialization of any nation. That is no matter the type of industries being established, be it advertising, printing or publishing companies, graphics design services would be needed if the products of the industries are to reach the general public and infect if they are to be marketable. The importance of teaching graphics cannot be overemphasized because of its educative and industrial power as well as its career prospects. The teaching of graphics would help the growing ones develop creative minds as well as discover themselves early. Besides, it would lay a good foundation for students who wish to do higher studies in graphics design. With the characteristic changes being brought about by scientific and technological developments and the need for education to be dynamic to respond to the changing needs of Africa and the world in general, graphics still have a big role to play.

### **Exploration and experimentation with indigenous material**

The designer in the process of exploration and experimentation with indigenous and unconventional materials can produce aesthetical functional and functional art objects. The indigenous materials for creating good design and production include can include beads, POP, wood, sand, paper, and plastic among other elements.

The environment is a good enabling place or field for any explorative engagement for the designer. One major way to spark creativity is through exploration, Exploration can fuel one's creativity and exposes the designer to new things, which can be inspiring. The designer while trying to explore things around him stumbled across a new way of doing something more subtle and innovative. Other times one may discover a tool, a process or an approach that others are using which is unrelated but still inspiring in its ingenuity. The designer can travel and search within and around his terrain (including the immediate environment, the world and space or even an unknown region for the discovery of resources or information for this particular project. Most of his design works reference the creative expression as found in nature. The designers are no longer constrained to the physical realm for their explorations, their immediate environment has influenced the creative exploration.

It makes the designer conscious of the environment to use whatever is at his disposal to produce artwork which can serve aesthetic purposes and at the same time solve industrial problems. That way the graphic designer becomes an agent of environmental conservation and makes a brilliant contribution to technological research aimed at giving the nation a place in the global scheme of things.

The designer employs unconventional materials in the production of functional but aesthetic products in the form of graphics presentations in different media to enhance the aesthetics of the environment Examples of designs produced within the borders of this experimental area are two-dimensional designs such as cards, posters, and calendars made with a combination of fabrics, papers, wood and a myriad of other materials. Others are three-

dimensional works such as aesthetically rich and functional interior designs that include lampshades and clocks created in organic and geometric forms. Office and home collections are made also made created ranging from flower vases, pen holders, and racks, to mirror stands, TV trolleys and other pieces of furniture. In the area of product design, prototypes of a variety of industrial goods are made out of POP, paper, clay, and similar media. Other examples are functional devices like speakers and recorders that are used with other electronic gadgets or independently powered with electricity.

### **Presentation and Analysis Creative Design Ideas and Concepts**



Plate 1: Lamp holder, wood and paper, 2 by 3, © Olugu Peter

The artist in his exploration and experimentation with indigenous and unconventional materials produced an aesthetically functional lamp holder. The materials used in the design and production include, beads, POP, wood, sand, paper, and plastic among other elements. Other examples of designs produced within the borders of this experimental area are two-dimensional designs such as cards, posters, and calendars made with a combination of fabrics, papers, wood and a myriad of other materials.

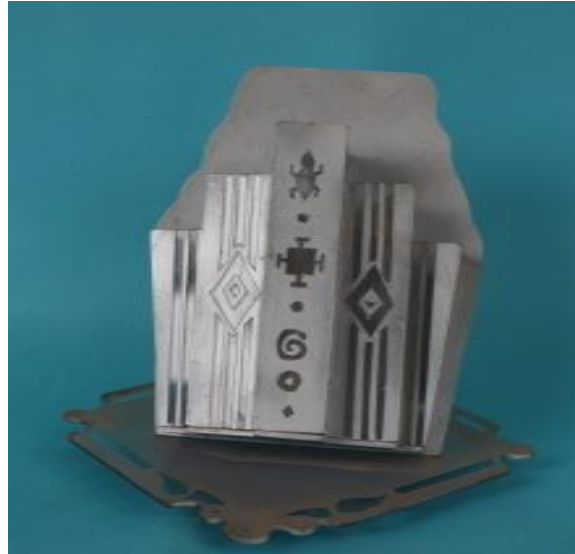


Plate 2: Customized Card, paper, 2 by 3, Isougie Faith

Plate 2 is a customized card in a three-dimensional format, with aesthetically rich and functional interior designs that can be used at home or in the office. In the area of product design, prototypes of a variety of industrial goods are made out of POP, paper, clay, and similar media.



Plate 3: Decorative lamp stand, 2 by 3, Onuche Damian

In Plate 3, the designer has through his explorative tendency designed/ created and produced an aesthetically rich and functional interior design lamp in organic and geometric forms. This could be used in the Office and at home. In this area of product design, prototypes of a variety of industrial goods are made out of POP, paper, clay, and similar media. Other examples are functional devices like speakers and recorders that are used with other electronic gadgets or independently powered with electricity. The dominant colours in the work are orange and black.



Plate 4: flower vase, 2 by 3, Agbi Adrian

Plate 4 titled flower vase is an aesthetically rich interior design work for the Office and Home collections, the artist's creative weight has been thrown into practice and pedagogical, enterprise exposition. His creative and innovative design has made him the focus of artistic discussion in many circles in and around Nigeria and abroad It is a colourful abstract pineapple design, with a combination of yellow, green and red, which have epitomize the visual aesthetics of the design.



Plate 5: Pawpaw design, 2 by 3, Marcus Idea

This particular design is explorative and experimental of visual ideas employing unconventional materials in the production of functional but aesthetic functional products in the form of graphics presentations to enhance the beauty, and aesthetics of the environment. The

artist assembles unconventional materials in the form of various colours and appearance of actual and different sizes of composition in enhancing his work. These works are richly characterized by dots, circles and other design elements characterized by linearity, dot, and geometric shapes mostly in perspective in producing creative expression in product design format. The representation of colours in this design is another key element. Different colours were employed due to cognitive processing; culture and personal experience here added meaning to the new change of environment. It is important to know the meaning behind the design to bring information across to the viewer's appropriate.



Plate 6: 2 by 3, Designer: Josh

His recent works have accommodated a wide range of media. His creative exploits in his rendering. The artist assembles unconventional materials in the form of various colours and appearance of actual and different sizes of composition in enhancing the environment. He employs two and three-dimensional geometrical visual images repenting chains of effects in exquisite dramatic organization visual organized. In other works in this experimentation and this area of product design, prototypes of a variety of industrial goods are made out of POP, paper, clay, and similar media. Other examples are functional devices like speakers and recorders that are used with other electronic gadgets or independently powered with electricity. The dominant colors in the work are orange and black.



Plate 7: Flower Vase, 2 by 3 inches,  
Designer:



Examples of designs produced within the borders of this experimental area are two-dimensional designs such as cards, posters, and calendars made with a combination of fabrics, papers, wood and a myriad of other materials. Others are three-dimensional works such as aesthetically rich and functional interior designs that include lampshades and clocks created in organic and geometric forms. Office and home collections are made also made created ranging from flower vases, pen holders, and racks, to mirror stands, TV trolleys and other pieces of furniture. In the area of product design, prototypes of a variety of industrial goods are made out of POP, paper, clay, and similar media. Other examples are functional devices like speakers and recorders that are used with other electronic gadgets or independently powered with electricity. His expressive use of brilliant and pure hues in fearless, skillfulness and imperative



Plate 8: Untitled, 2 by 3, Designer: Ezema Wisdom

In Plate 8 one can see a significant manifestation of the designer's creative enterprise in this work. It creates an avenue for collaborative research between graphic artists and engineers and other professionals in the applied sciences. Here the designer employs unconventional materials in the production of functional but aesthetic products in form of graphics presentations in different media to enhance the aesthetics of the environment.

It makes the designer conscious of the environment to use whatever is at his disposal to produce artwork which can serve aesthetic purposes and at the same time solve industrial problems. That way the graphic designer becomes an agent of environmental conservation and makes a brilliant contribution to technological research aimed at giving the nation a place in the global scheme of things.



Plate 9: Untitled, Flex Banner, 2 by 3 inches, Designer: Andiokoro

One major way to spark creativity is through exploration. Exploring exposes one to new things. New things are inspiring. The designer while trying to explore things around him stumbled across a new way of doing something more subtle. One can see through this fruit-shaped object on a base. Other times one may discover a tool, a process or an approach that others are using which is unrelated but still inspiring in its ingenuity. Exploration can fuel one's creativity. The designer in this particular has explored by travelling and searching within and around his terrain (including the immediate environment, the world and space or even unknown regions for the discovery of resources or information for this particular project. Most of his design works reference the creative expression as found in nature. The designers are no longer constrained to the physical realm for their explorations, their immediate environment has influenced the creative exploration

### **Conclusion**

The works presented are the outcome of exploration and experimentation by the graphic designers. There are benefits associated with this dispensation that are rooted in exploration and innovation. Thus, there are far-reaching benefits for any developing nation that makes creativity the centre of its philosophical ideology. Methodologies that aid the exploration and discovery of potentials, and a problem-solving ability which allows the learner the opportunity for creativity should be the focus of any educational endeavour or curriculum transformation. The need for a paradigm shift from theoretical and paper certification to a practical application of knowledge necessary for future employment and skill development in the art and design for self-employment is very necessary for African development.

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