

**AESTHETICS IN THE COSTUMES AND FLOATS OF
OGWASHI-UKU CARNIVAL.**

CHUKWUDI VICTOR AKANNA

2016/234286

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND
APPLIED ARTS. UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR
OF ARTS DEGREE IN FINE AND APPLIED ART.**

SUPERVISOR: DR OKPARA C.V

AUGUST 2021

ABSTRACT

The costumes and floats of Ogwashi-Uku carnival has been a significant part of the event, the diversity in display, culture, time (new and old) and also the huge role it plays in the success and relevance of the carnival have not seen much light in terms of documentation. Using various method of data analysis and artistic point of view, this work examines, analyses and brings to light the unique nature of these costumes and floats as well as answering research questions on how the costumes and float affects the carnival; its relevance to the people, its diverse nature and also the notable changes and adjustments in design and material. Not having much documentation of this event and the costume and floats, this project makes a strong attempt to bring to notice the uniqueness and beauty evident in this wonderful event, not just to the people of Ogwashi-Uku but to everyone opportune to read this work.

LIST OF FIGURES

| FIGURE | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE | PAGE |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------|
| Figure 1 | <i>Olobo masquerade performing At the Ogwashi-Uku carnival (2010).</i> | Google images. | 26 |
| Figure 2 | <i>Already woven Akwa-Ocha material.</i> | Google images. | 27 |
| Figure 3 | <i>A woman in traditional Akwa-Ocha Attire.</i> | Google images. | 28 |
| Figure 4 | <i>A couple wearing modernized Akwa- Ocha attire in the 80s.</i> | Google images. | 28 |
| Figure 5 | <i>Modernized and stylized Akwa-Ocha Designs by Mrs Anthonia Oguah, worn And displayed by models at the 2019 Edition of Ogwashi-Uku carnival.</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 30 |
| Figure 6 | <i>Traditional coral beads.</i> | Google images. | 31 |
| Figure 7 | <i>An Anioma bride Adorned in coral beads.</i> | Google images. | 32 |
| Figure 8 | <i>Participants adorned in coral beads and Cultural attires during the Ogwashi-Uku Carnival parade (2019).</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 33 |
| Figure 9 | <i>Carnival float on display at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival (2010).</i> | Google images. | 37 |
| Figure 10 | <i>Cultural and other dance groups on parade At the Ogwashi-Uku Carnival (2010).</i> | Google images. | 39 |

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----|
| Figure 11 | <i>Young women adorned in cultural beads and Akwa-Ocha attire at Ogwashi-Uku carnival (2019).</i> | Awele Nwabuokei. | 41 |
| Figure 12 | <i>Aniocha cultural beauty pageant participants Wearing Akwa-Ocha and bead attire at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival (2010).</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 42 |
| Figure 13 | <i>Cultural dance group performing at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival (2019).</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 43 |
| Figure 14 | <i>Carnival costume groups at display during The 2019 edition of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 45 |
| Figure 15 | <i>Ogwashi-Uku Carnival participants during The Carnival</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 46 |
| Figure 16 | <i>Cultural group on display during the 2019 Edition of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival.</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 47 |
| Figure 17 | <i>Members of various dance groups pictured during the 2019 edition of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival.</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 49 |
| Figure 18 | <i>Models wearing stylized Akwa-Ocha at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival (2019).</i> | Chukwudi Victor Akanna. | 50 |
| Figure 19 | <i>A group in colourful carnival costumes at the Ogwashi-Uku carnival (2010).</i> | Ogwashi-Uku Carnival page@fb. | 51 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The word carnival is a generally accepted derivation of the term „carnem levare“ or „carnelevarium“, coined from Medieval Latin. „Carnem“ means „flesh“ while „levare“ refers to abstinence from meat during the forty days of lent of the Christian year. Historically, the origin of carnival according to the encyclopaedia is quite uncertain except that it is found in the pre-Christian customs. However, many scholars see links between the pagan Roman Saturnalia and Greek festivals with carnival; they regard carnival as an even more ancient agricultural rite connected with the theme of death and resurrection such as the spring festival in ancient Babylonia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Carnival therefore originated from a pagan custom during the pre-Christian period of Saturnalia, a custom which was modified by the church to become a two day festival before Ash Wednesday. Converts during this time were permitted to pay “farewell” to the devil, vanity and lust of the flesh before entering into the period of fasting and repentance for forty days of lent. Jacob Udayi Agba (2013).

When Western European commercial capitalism intruded into the Caribbean and Latin America and was almost displacing the area and its indigenous people and institutions, which nourished the spiritual nucleus of their religion, the West European ruling class brought the Africans to carry out forced labour in the sugar plantations. French planters and their slaves immigrated to Trinidad during the French revolution in 1789. Carnival was created when the labourers and slaves who saw the French celebrating in costume, and mimicked them while combining aspects from their own cultures. These Africans in turn brought with them their cultural customs, languages and artistic expression, which were restricted to Sundays and Christmas holidays. Carnival was later therefore taken out of the confines of the old slave master’s Big Estates

and brought out to the public arena of the streets where the freed Blackmen gave full vent to their natural artistic, cultural and theatrical creativity at a popular mass level.

CarnivalPower.com a website about carnivals stated that:

“Hundreds of hundreds of years ago the followers of the Catholic religion in Italy started the tradition of holding a wild costume festival right before the first day of Lent. Because Catholics are not supposed to eat meat during Lent they called the festival Carnavale, which means ‘to put away the meat.’ As time passed, carnivals in Italy became quite famous and in fact the practice spread to France, Spain and all the Catholic countries in Europe. Then as the French, Spanish, and Portuguese began to take control of the Americas and other parts of the world, they brought with them the tradition of celebrating Carnival”.

So carnival is a western Christian and Greek Orthodox festive season that occur before the liturgical season of lent. The main event are typically during Februarys and March, during the period historically known as “Shrovetide” (pre-lent). Carnival typically involves public celebrations including events such as parades, public street parties and other entertaining features. An annual festival, typically during the week before Lent in Roman Catholic countries, involving processions, music, dancing, and the use of masquerade. (As defined by Google) Carnival is a public event or celebration, typically held outdoors and involving stalls, entertainment, and processions. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defined carnival as follows: A season or festival of merrymaking before lent. An instance of merry making, feasting or masquerading, A form of entertainment that travels to different places and includes rides and games people can play to win prizes, an event where many people gather to celebrate something, this can also include exhibitions.

The carnival is celebrated in Brazil every year, 46 days before the Easter festival. The roots of the festival are believed to be in the tradition of the Roman Catholics when they abstain from meat and alcohol on certain days as a method to drive away bad things from their lives. Held just before Lent each year the Rio de Janeiro Carnival is the worldwide standard for huge festivals. With over two million people in attendance each year, it is the world's biggest carnival and has been running annually since 1723. Other big carnivals around the world include the carnival of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, which is held in the Canary Island. It is considered the second most popular carnival in the world. The carnival of Venice is another one, which takes place just before lent and it ends on the holy day, it is all about the decorative mask native to the city itself. There is also the Cadiz Carnival in Spain, the Mardi Gras Carnival in America, the Notting Hill Carnival in London and numerous others. Around the world, carnivals are celebrated as events such as parades, public street parties and other entertainments, combining some elements of a circus. Elaborate costumes and masks allow people to set aside their everyday individuality and experience a heightened sense of social unity. Participants often indulge in excessive consumption of alcohol, meat and other foods that will be foregone during the upcoming Lent.

Other features of carnivals include mock battles such as food fights, expression of social satire, mockery of authorities, costumes of the grotesque body that display exaggerated features such as large noses, bellies, mouths, phalli, or elements of animal bodies. The National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tabago stated that Africans started to participate in carnivals in festivities from 1883 after the emancipation bill was passed. Feathers were frequently used by Africans in their motherland on masks and headdresses as a symbol of our ability to rise above problems, pains, heartbreaks, and illness, and to travel to another world to be reborn and to grow spiritually. Today we see feathers used in many forms to create carnival costumes. African dance

and music traditions transformed the early carnival celebrations in Americas, as African drum and rhythms, large puppets, stick fighters, and stilt dancers began to make appearances in the carnival festivities. Apart from having huge influence on carnivals, in the Americas, Africans began to have their own carnivals which include Calabar Carnival in Nigeria, Luanda Carnival, Angola, Bijagos carnival, Guinea Bissau, Mindelo Carnival, Cape Verde, and others. The Calabar carnival in Nigeria dates back to 2004 when Donald Duke the governor of Cross River State decided it would be the perfect way to boost tourism and local economy. According to Finelib.com there are numerous carnivals in Nigeria which includes Calabar Carnival, Lagos Nigeria Carnival and Cultural Fiesta. Kubwa FCT Nigeria Carnival and Parades, Imo Carnival, Ogwashi-Uku Carnival, Agila Social and Economic Carnival, Carniriv in Port Harcourt, Osun Carnival and others. According to its origin, carnival is a traditional activity and when Africans started participating in it, they brought their different traditional attributes and in that sense maintained it when the festivity began to spread around the continent. African carnivals especially in Nigeria is graced by traditional costumes, dances, masquerades and acrobatic cultural display. Due to modernization, some of these activities are drafted to suit social compatibility. An example is the music performances by local and international artists. Although historically, Africans were known to move around villages during festivities, but the movements of floats in terms of colourful displays and adornment by beautiful costumes wearing participants originated from the Europeans.

One thing that is outstanding in Nigerian cultural carnivals is the participation of major traditional rulers and their cabinet. In the Calabar Carnival, the Obong, his cabinet members and other traditional title holders dress in their traditional regalia to reflect the cultural carnival. The carnival ushers in performances such as fashion show, beauty pageant, boat regatta, Christmas village, traditional dances and the Annual Ekpe masquerade festival. Another is the Lagos Cultural

Carnival, where there is largely an exposition of culture and tradition of Lagos through dance, costumes with its remarkable body paints and colourful fashion, the participants parades through the streets amidst cheers and songs. Cultural carnivals in Nigeria are mostly created to show the beautiful cultural heritage of the people in the Imo carnival participants dress in their beautiful attires and parade the streets of Owerri, they parade accordingly in their different local government batches with lots of musical, dance and varying entertainment. The differentiation of local government is another dimension taken to showcase the cultural diversity of the people, which is not common in carnivals. Different festivals in Nigeria possess the attributes of a carnival as shown in the Eyo Festival, which witnesses one of the most unique and fabulous celebrations in Nigeria. Some people called it the Adamu Orisha Play, a Yoruba festival that transforms the commercial Lagos Island to be stunning white, its similarity with carnivals is that it is open to all around the globe. It attracts thousands of tourists around the world who come to see costumed dancers or masquerades called 'Eyo' who perform during the festival.

One of the attribute of carnivals in Catholic Europe is that it served as a means of pilgrimage, this attribute can be found in the Sango Festival, which is to honour Sango the all-powerful god in Yoruba land. This festival has facilitated an annual homecoming avenue for Yoruba descents in the Diaspora as a form of pilgrimage. It brings backs the past history and celebrates the culture and tradition of the people, while creating wealth and employment for the people. Carnivals are mostly known for parades and this could also be found in many festivals such as the Ofala Festival in Anambra state of Nigeria, where the traditional rulers who are adorned in their red caps and royal regalia with their traditional staffs paint the whole place red with their parades and display affluence power. The New Yam Festival in Enugu State is celebrated in pomp cultural display. Hundreds of masquerades, dancers in beautiful attires, acrobatic displays and other numerous

activities are adopted during carnivals in Nigeria and Africa at large. In as much as carnivals did not originate from Africa, Africans had and still have festivals, which showcase their tradition and cultural beliefs from time immemorial so after participating and adopting the European carnivals it was modified to suit the cultural and tradition of the people in Africa. It no longer focused on being a catholic celebration but rather became a medium to show the rich cultural heritage of Africans and also allow other people from different part of the globe to perform and showcase what they have. In some situations, it is used to create awareness, encourage economic growth and so forth. Ogwashi-Uku Carnival is not far from this. Ogwashi-Uku is a town in Delta State, Nigeria. It is located west of the state capital, Asaba and is the headquarters of the local government area, Aniocha South. The population of Ogwashi-Uku is about 26,137 according to the Geonames geographical database. Ogwashi-Uuku people are of the Igbo stock. It is in the Anioma part of Delta State, the Igbo speaking part and its people are among the Enuani Igbo dialect speakers, ‘Asusu Enuani’. Nine villages make up Ogwashi-Uku. These are; Ikelike (the original inhabitants) Umu Dei, Azungwu, Agidiase, ogbe Akwu, Ogbe Mokwuni/Ogbe Ukwu, Ishekpe, ogbe Onicha and Ogbe Ani.

Ogwashi-Uku carnival is a yearly parade of the people of the town of Ogwashi-Uku, which usually starts mid-December, and accommodates home and abroad based sons and daughters of the town. The carnival just like the one adopted from the west and Americas involves the use of colourful costumes and floats like parading the streets with different dance displays and so on. Like any other Nigerian carnival consists of cultural dance displays, football competition, quiz competition, and talent hunt/display. The Ogwashi-Uku dance carnival begins on the 24th of December with an elaborate road show festival that serves as the icing to the three day event. In involves paying homage to all the Clans (Ogbe) that makes up Ogwashi-Uku kingdom as a show

of respect and solidarity, and helps to activate the mood of the season. The road show festival provide an opportunity for the carnival crew to brief dance displays at various popular areas of the community to entertain passers-by and carnival enthusiasts. This carnival, celebrated annually involves the use of aesthetically rich costumes and beautiful floats and not much has been written on them. So many people do not have an insight into the aesthetic value of the costumes and floats of his carnival and it is this gap in knowledge that this research strives to bridge.

Statement of the Problem

The Ogwashi-Uku Carnival has been celebrated for eight years now and not much has been written on it, and as such the artistic aspects of their costumes and floats have not been subjected to detailed study. This indicates a lack of recognition, which impedes the supposed global awareness of an event of this magnitude. Bringing to awareness the aesthetics in the Floats and costume of this Carnival is what this study set out to achieve.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims at revealing aesthetics in the costume and float of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival, while at the same time identifying the details in the characteristics of the elements, principles, forms and styles of the costume and floats of the Ogwashi-Uku carnival. Specifically, the following objectives are the driving force of this study, as the researcher seeks to reveal.

- Explore the nature of material used for costumes in Ogwashi-Uku carnival.
- Bring to light the unique nature of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival
- Explain how the people are able to integrate their culture and tradition in the Carnival.
- Appreciate the way the Carnival serves as a unifying event and social development.
- Explore the aesthetics found in the costume and floats of the Carnival.

Research Methodology

Two methods were applied in the course of this research which are:

- Data collections
- Data analysis

For data collection, primary and secondary were the main sources of collecting data. The primary source included oral interviews, where organizers and participants were interviewed based on experience and knowledge of the study in question. Photography played a great role in gathering primary information haven graced the event as an eyewitness, personal observation played a great role in the accuracy of analysis. For secondary sources articles and photographs gathered online were used in the course of this research.

In the analysis of data, four major approaches were employed for analysing of data gathered in the course of this research, they include, aesthetic, functional, historical and formal method of analysing data.

The aesthetic approach was used to evaluate the costumes and float of Ogwashi-Uku carnival and an eye opener to the beauty thereof, also sorted out the problems aesthetically noticeable. Functionality of the costumes was analysed from the social context, it helped expose the multi-linear functions of costumes in Ogwashi-Uku Carnival showing that it is beyond aesthetics and possesses functions which this work helped expose.

The historical approach showed that art evolves and that creates room for possibilities and that the costumes have not remained the same so the historical approach helped trace these beautifying changes that has occurred overtime. Formal analysis opened the details of elements and principles of designs found in the floats and costumes of the carnival.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this project torchlight's the nature of costumes and aesthetic qualities found in carnivals using some major carnivals in Nigeria to set the bar but the work is specifically focused on the form and aesthetics found in the Ogwashi-Uku carnival as looked into from inception till date.

Limitations of the Study

The lack of record keeping is a major limitation in this particular work. Due to the fact that articles written on this carnival lack formal documentation and are just like mere analysis, it is difficult for a researcher to make good use of them, besides photographic evidence is cumbersome because of the contemporary nature of the carnival, one has to rely on oral access to gather major information, and this sometimes leads to inaccuracy of information.

Significance of the Study

This research work is designed to bring forth the artistic and aesthetic value of the costumes and floats of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival, by critically researching and analysing the pictures obtained at the 2019 and former carnival years. This research work can be used by government and non-governmental organizations to make policies that will help improve, expand and project the carnival to the rest of the world. This research work will help the people of Ogwashi-Uku to see the deeper meaning and beauty in these costumes and floats. It will ensure record keeping and publishing and prove that it is important to maintain such event for the unity it ensures during these festivities. This work will help people within Nigeria and beyond to understand the culture of Ogwashi-Uku community and how they plan to integrate this culture in carnival celebrations and also to understand the interesting aesthetic nature of their carnival thereby encouraging tourism.

Finally the research work will be presented in conferences and published in journals thereby serving as reference materials to the future researcher.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews related literature as it concerns the aesthetics in Carnivals, festivals and the activities that follows suit, various paragraphs and sentences are drawn for individuals who have in given an insight into works that relate to the project topic.

To explain the meaning of aesthetics Aideyan (1985) says that, Aesthetics is an organized body of knowledge covering a special field of subject matter. This subject matter which is 'beauty' may include nature, visual and theatre arts, music, dance, and literature. What this implies more or less is that aesthetics is not basically under art, but rather, that art is under aesthetics and that aesthetics may be undertaken to study art in more or less intellectual and logical way. Amoke (1996), states that, the aesthetics expressed in Onunu festival cut across the major events in the ceremony, which include the wrestling match, the Umuada cult performances, the Igede Nkwo musical group, Ibu Orome, Igba Echi, and the Ogonna activities. He goes on to say that on the ceremonial day, which is the Nkwo Onunu, the environment is filled with noise, exchange of greetings by the attendants, the air is full of festivities. Adu (1996), Quoted Cole (1986) that 'the aesthetic ideology of masking involves the manifestation and metaphors of the powers of those two worlds in sight, sound and sometimes smell, fine fabric bodies (costumes) and masks with idealized hair style. Those feature reflect the power of beauty whereas horns, smelly medicines, animal skins, seeds and many adopted natural ingredients combine to embody single or multiple spirit essences of heavy threatening masks worn or deputized by elders.

Okenyi (1996) supports that each motif found on each masquerade has specific significance, though very few are for aesthetic purposes. He went on to say that these motifs could be divided

into two main groups, according to their sources of derivation. These groups are motifs from organic sources, and those from inorganic sources, the third include motifs effects of modernization. On the influence of costumes, Mere (1992); States that costumes are known to have mythical influence on the beholder to the extent of personal power, dignity and wealth are beheld. Costumes could therefore be described as being the equivalent to the conscious image that creates its own appearance. The body in the nude is the natural condition of the human body, but costumes reflect the image of the individual influence by his culture, status and society.

Aniah, (1994), corroborates this extraordinary effect of costumes when she points out that, when finally crowned as an Igwe, his costume becomes powerful symbols. They portray him as man of power, they are the emblem of his royalty. Like the obi of Onitsha, he is both man and spirit; his costumes are therefore ways of showing that he is the link between the living and the dead. In 2012, Ademiju-Bepo, (*aesthetics of ladeko festival Isona, Oyo state*) says that aesthetics focuses on new ways of seeing or perceiving the world and examines what makes something beautiful, sublime, disgusting, funny, cute, entertaining, pretentious, discordant, harmonious, boring, humorous, or tragic. they possess a special aesthetic property or exhibit a special aesthetic form; they have the capacity to convey meaning or to teach general truths; they have the capacity to produce pleasure in those who experience or appreciate them; they have the capacity to convey values or beliefs central to the cultures or traditions in which they originate, or important to the artist who made them. In another vein, if the objects have the capacity: to help bring about social or political change, to produce certain emotions we value, at least when the emotion is brought about by art rather than life. He concluded that we see this communal festival, the 'Ladeoko Festival', as a paradigm of African choreo-musical performance spiced with drama, a cultural heritage festival with aesthetic and theatrical dimensions.

The inability to recognize aesthetic value was also expressed by Ododo (2001) stating that; traditionally, less attention is given to the aesthetic qualities of all theatre elements identifiable in the performance of the singing masquerade during the Ekuechi festival. The general air of civilization and modernization pervading the whole universe has also overtaken the organizers of this festival performance. The competitive factor that is considered in preparing for the Eku rahu's performances is also a crucial point of note. These two factors have greatly affected the authentic nature of the festival in many aspects. Even though the core of the festival is still intact, many of the features have undergone serious transformation. Also Joe (2012) expresses that; Aesthetics according to his own view is the perception of beauty. It is the appreciation of the beauty as well as the ugly in all parts of life including the arts. It comprises of what is good and bad in any work of art. Ekong (2018), gives an insight into the aesthetic value of exploration art in carnival. He indicates that one of the five competing carnival bands (The Seagull Band) has delved into the use of plastics for its costume design and production, during the 2016 edition of the carnival with a very encouraging outcome, going by its result at the end of the carnival. He goes on to encourage the organizers and management of the Calabar carnival as a major tourism driver in Cross River state, Nigeria that they should consciously and deliberately embrace plastics as a standard production component in the annual fiesta both for its aesthetics value and the socio-economic multiplier advantages that abound for the local community.

Niyi (2016), noting that Ile Aiye's emblematic signature lies in its colourful and African-derived Carnival costumes. Translating its ideology more concretely, the costumes reflect a conscious effort to Africanize by deliberately dressing up in African costumes during carnival parades and other cultural events throughout the year. He also stated that Ile Aiye has sought to command respect from the public by engendering pride in aesthetics of its textiles. Amaefula &

Eze-Orji (2016), States that Calabar carnival costume is opulently electrifying and richly dynamic. In fact, the significance of costumes in carnival festivals can never be quantified. Invariably, it means there cannot be a carnival without a corresponding costume.

Utoh-Ezeajugh (2014) explains costumes as ‘the item of clothing, accessories and ornamentation worn by the actor or actress for the purpose of defining character and establishing the character’s existence, by situating him/her in time and space’. Beyond aesthetic value of costumes, Utoh-Ezeajugh, citing Russel (2017), describes costume as the moving scenery of a production, and when worn by actors, who are centre of all dramatic action, they are strongest element of visual sense; they project personality and individual emotion and obtain the strongest audience focus. Smith (2016), on his article on ceremonial and festival costumes expresses that; “Ceremonies, festivals, and other rituals provide a structure for an individual or a group to reaffirm social values and ties. They tend to be public events, seen as different from every day, which spotlight an important personal or cultural happening. Ritual helps to give meaning to the world in part by linking the past to the present and the present to the future. Ritual works through the senses to structure our perception of reality and the world around us; it is often when a society's deepest values emerge in the form of activity, objects, and dress. Ceremonies often combine religious belief with social and political concerns.

Although rituals tend to evolve very slowly, cultures do change over time, and possible disjuncture may develop between a ceremony and the attitudes of the society, resulting in the modification or even elimination of the ceremony”. Aguwa (2018), while stating the importance of festivals in Nigeria, said that; generally, festivals are an expensive way to celebrate glorious heritage, culture, and traditions of a community. They are meant to celebrate moments and emotions in our lives together with our loved ones. All festivals are cultural in one way or the

other. In our world today, we have many types of cultural festivals, such as national, religious, and seasonal. They all have one purpose, which is to bring happiness to our lives, and strengthen our sense of community.

Yemisi and Berytram (2016), in their report on “The understanding of festival scenes in Nigeria” expressed the socio-economic importance of independent art in Nigeria by saying that; Festivals are universally important for their social and cultural roles, and increasingly have been recognized for their economic impact. They have created jobs and boosted economies by generating revenue for airports, hotels, restaurants, taxis, car rental companies, craft vendors and other businesses, benefited the local populace in the area of sale of goods and services created by visiting local and foreign tourists, it also boosts the local economy through the dynamics of demand and supply built around the festival locations and enhanced the development of structural amenities like roads, hospitals and telecommunications. Association of Caribbean States (2014) writes that; one of the most unifying events and cultural and creative extravaganza, which is celebrated in the region is Carnival. Carnival finds its social and historic origin in the region and is an expression of culture that encapsulates music, dance, costumes, pageantry and performance. On the socio-economic level, Carnival generates business opportunities for singers, song writers, choreographers, costume builders and designers, makeup artists and musicians, to name a few. Even more importantly, Carnival has driven the growth and development of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), many of which are skills-based services.

Modish (2018) on “The relevance and functions of costumes in Ngwas Ekpe festival” writes that; The words costume and dress both refer to and imply the use of clothing to cover and adorn the body. To wear clothes, a uniquely human behaviour, is an act that possesses great symbolic meaning in a culture and is closely connected to social interaction. Risa (2010) states that costume

served as a means of communication in social interactions. Individuals, through the wearing of costume, have historically revealed their personal identity along with other socially pertinent information.

In conclusion, Eguriase (2018), points out that; the word aesthetics is a highly expansive appellation, which even when it is streamlined to the aesthetics of art or more specifically the aesthetics of performativity arts, encapsulates a wide array of thoughts, principles and features that have to do with the nature, meaning and impacts of beauty. Put in a concise way, aesthetics deals with the principles and evaluation of beauty. However, art is a major organ of aesthetics, and when focusing on art-form, aesthetics then becomes the study of beauty in direct relation to the art-form and its principles.

Amalu & Anim (2012), point out that another importance of tourism is that, it creates employment. The world travel and tourism council had estimated that in the year 1999, travel and tourism was expected to generate almost 200 million jobs across the world economy, both direct and indirect. Looking toward, world travel and employment in travel and tourism is expected to grow at 2.6 percent per annum. The majority of the job will come in the form of direct service jobs in tourist related facilities and attraction at the destination and in tourist generating areas. Bracia (2016) states that, if there's one aspect of Carnival recognizable worldwide, it's the use of masks and feathers. In Europe, masks are used to hide a person's identity whereas in the African tradition, masks take on an entirely different meaning: to bring to life some spirit.

The colourful feathers used to decorate masks in major carnival regions of Brazil, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago can be traced to some practices in Igbo, Yoruba, Fon, Ewe, Kongo, and Bantu traditions. Eyitemi (2013) observes that; dubbed Africa's biggest street party, thousands of costumed revellers danced along the 12 km Carnival route to entertain screaming spectators. It was

a public holiday in the state which allowed for everyone to enjoy the day and cheer on their favourite Carnival bands. Okpu (2015) wrote that, fine art is referred to as an artistic expression created for its sense of beauty and decoration, such as painting, carving, decorative ceramic objects, sculpture pieces and so on. Applied art is also in the visual arts family but mainly produced for a purpose or function such as graphic arts, textile designs, ceramics and photography. Performing art, is that form of artistic expression for entertainment. They include music, dance, and drama and so on. All the aforementioned aspects of art are all prominent in carnivals and they perform integral roles that see to the success of carnivals.

CHATER THREE

OGWASHI-UKU TRADITIONS, FESTIVAL AND HISTORY OF THE CARNIVAL

Geographical location. (Map).

According to Wikipedia, Ogwasi-Uku is an Igbo town in Delta State, Nigeria. South-South or the Niger-Delta region. It is located west of the State Capital, Asaba and is the headquarters for the Local Government Area, Aniocha South. Being located within the tropical rainforest area of the Niger-Delta region, it experiences high rainfall and high humidity most of the year. The climate is equatorial and is marked by two distinct seasons. The dry and rainy seasons. The dry season lasts from about November to April and is significantly marked by the cool harmattan, always characterized by dusty haze from north-east winds. The rainy seasons spans mainly May to October with brief dry spell in August, all things being equal.

The population of Ogwashi-Uku is about 26,137. Its numbers have vastly increased over the years. It is in the Anioma part of Delta State, Igbo speaking parts and its natives are Enuani people. Nine villages make up Ogwashi-Uku. These are: Ikelike (the original inhabitants), Umu Dei, Azungwu, Agidiase, Agidiehe, Ogbe Akwu, Ishekpe, Ogbe Onicha and Ogbe Ani.

Occupation.

According to a research report by Researchclue.com in 2017 historical records has it that a good number of neighboring towns of Ogwashi-Uku such as Ibuzo, Ubulu-Uku, Agbor etc. were founded in the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century. In other hand, traditional sources ascribe the founding of Ogwashi-Uku kingdom to the Ikelike people. The nature of occupational practices in precolonial times was mainly farming, though an insignificant number of women folk engaged in crafting mainly weaving. However, a quarter in Ogwashi-Uku called Ogbe-Nti where the Obi's palace is situated prefer trading to farming because of its proximity to the Obi. The reason is that they benefit from the general benevolence of the people who made available their farming

proceeds during harvest in form of yam, cassava, plantain, coconut, palm oil, bush meat etc. the Ogbé-Nta therefore took advantage of these supplies to engage in petty trading.

Language

According to Dutable.com the people of Ogwashi-Uku speak Enuani language otherwise known and referred to as Delta Igbo. Other Nigerian languages are spoken by immigrants in the community from different parts of the country, which include Hausa, Yoruba, Ukwuani, Isoko etc. as a result of the presence of different ethnic groups in the community, to ensure effective communication, English is also used as means of communication especially the Pidgin English.

Food

Ogwashi-Uku is known for several traditional delicacies. According to an article written in the Nigerian Tribune Ogwashi-Uku is known for their sumptuous delicacies and one of them is the Erimonu soup with bush meat. Erimonu leaf is to them what shoko (jute leaves) is to the Yoruba. Dutable.com also reported that the major food of the people of Ogwashi-Uku is pounded yam with melon soup. The people also eat garri and other cassava derivative foods, rice and several other staple foods in Nigeria, are also parts of their dishes.

Traditions/Culture

One major event that Ogwashi-Uku people is known for is the Ine festival celebration. The activities of Ogwashi-Uku as a people with rich culture and traditions are manifest in their kind of food, attire, (Akwa Ocha, which the Enuani region of Delta state is known for) their dance styles (known as Okanga), their house designs and most popularly their festivals. As reported by Innocent

Osakwe in the Pointer, the annual Ine festival appears to be the most celebrated culture of the people, it is often carnival like and celebrated with fanfare.

The Ogwashi-Uku Ine Festival is commonly said to be as old as the community, having started right from their forebears. It is held in high esteem because that is the period persons who have not had the opportunity of seeing their traditional ruler is availed the opportunity. Unlike the modern day, in the past, seeing a traditional ruler of a community is as difficult as seeing the sacred heart of people's shrine. Hence, the Ine Festival of the Ogwashi-Uku people is an opportunity that comes once in a year and it is held sacred. As it is customary, the festival is usually flagged off by the Obi with the annual Ihuji or new yam festival and is followed by other eight quarters outside the vicinity of the Obi palace. Each Idime title holder among his people celebrates the Ihuji feast on the day the whole community celebrates it. This often calls for merriments and feasting on roasted new yams soaked in fresh red palm oil blended with Ugba a special delicacy used in preparing what is today tagged African salad. During this period, the people normally forget their differences and even resolve old ones through mutual interaction and joint celebration of the festival in gratitude to the Almighty in seeing them through the old farming season and for blessing them with abundant yield from their farms. For the title holders which includes the Onihe, the Iyase, the Ihonor and several others, it is a period to also feast their kith and kin who in turn also support the Idime title holders with new yam from their yields.

One other festival celebrated significantly is the 'Olobo' it is an indigenous phrase or acronym for masquerade in Ogwashi-Uku Kingdom as reported by Yujin on Nairaland, it is a crowd puller of some sort and its existence is as old as the Ogwashi-Uku kingdom. It is a highly revered dance that is one of the very best and is still well maintained by the Ogwashi-Uku people. The Olobo dance which features the use of cane and whips by the escort and mask wearer is

predominantly a male affair but watched in admiration by men and women, old and young children and adults alike. The masquerade comes in various colours of raffia palms and very colourful head mask that adds beauty to the face of the mask wearer and to the delight of the spectators, who giggle at the sight of a male masquerade wearing a mask with female face design and with lipstick to match feminine dance steps signalling the attraction of a male masquerade. In fact, the beauty and dance movement, including the flogging of both masquerade and its escort and the ability to endure the pains from cane remain the unique attraction of spectators. Because of the high regards of the attendant crowd, for Olobo it has become imperative for the organizers of the Ogwashi-Uku carnival to integrate the dance into the carnival with one day set aside solely for the display of Olobo. The Olobo Festival was conceived to add more glamour to the beauty of the carnival but most of all to sustain its cultural legacy.



Fig 1. Olobo masquerade performing at the Ogwashi-Uku Carnival 2010 ©Google images

Akwa-Ocha

Akwa-Ocha, which literally means white cloth, is basically an indigenous hand-woven cloth that is produced by the Aniocha people of Delta state. The cloth which contains surface decorative motifs and symbols is used for various festive occasions among the people.

Since not much research have been conducted on Akwa-Ocha of the Anioma people, the origin of this fabric remains largely unknown but history has pointed us towards Ubulu-Uku, Isele-Uku and Ogwashi-Uku as its fundamental home, which is due to their link with nearby Benin, where white fabric is also used on ceremonial occasions and as their cultural attire.

Of the mentioned three communities, Ubulu-Uku appears more favoured due to the fact that the palace of the king at Ubulu-Uku for instance, still has a role to play before the final coronation of the Oba of Benin, in which the use of Akwa-Ocha may be involved in the said ceremony. Despite this assertion, one may not have spoken with finality.

What is well known is that production of the cultural fabric is heavy in these three communities. The Akwa-Ocha may have therefore evolved from Benin where men also are so known to make flowing garment with white fabric as cultural and ceremonial wear.



Fig 2. Already woven Akwa-Ocha materials ©google images.



Fig 3. A woman in traditional Akwa-Ocha attire ©Google images.



Fig 4. A couple wearing modernized Akwa-Ocha attire in the 80s©Google images.

Over the years Akwa-Ocha has gone through various transformation and modernization for the sake of affordability, and to fit into not just traditional occasions but other celebrations, various stylist and dress makers have input their modern ideas into the Akwa-Ocha across the Anioma region of Delta State and among The Enuani people. These stylized and modernized Akwa-Ocha is seen in various occasions across the State and region of recent.

On the 2019 edition of Ogwashi-Uku carnival the Akwa-Ocha is seen transformed into runway worthy dress, with the work of Anthonia Oguah, speaking on the notion she says that ‘As part of our pledge to help promote and popularize Akwa-Ocha the famous and very elegant traditional attire of the Delta State Igbo, Enuani people from Anioma extraction, Ogwashi-Uku Carnival is keeping this pledge in every way, as we have diversified Akwa-Ocha from weaving Ankara, this is for ease and cheaper method (affordability). Akwa-Ocha is a unique attire made from very expensive wool and woven for a period of three to four weeks before it is put in the market for sale to an intending customer.’

Anthonia Oguah, a daughter of Ogwashi-Uku, whose intention from the beginning of the dance carnival was to use Akwa-Ocha blended with western carnival paraphernalia to create a very exquisite style and costume during the celebration of the dance carnival, however, because of the high cost involved in using the original Akwa-Ocha, which sadly could not be used for a celebration with over five thousand carnival enthusiasts. The initiator through her dexterity went ahead to introduce Akwa-Ocha in a more simpler style using the popular Ankara material to create Akwa-Ocha in a more simple manner and process, thereby the use of Akwa-Ocha by all carnival participants during the cannula dance fiesta. So far, a lot of people from Anioma speaking tribe have applauded this initiative which is cost effective and achieved within a short period and ready for use, thus leaving in use the authentic Akwa-Ocha as ceremonial attire thereby retaining its originality for generations unborn.

The transformed Akwa-Ocha into Ankara gives anyone interested in using /weaving the Akwa-Ocha in several fabulous styles instead of being restricted to the age-long style as worn and used years ago.

The 2019 edition of the carnival was no exception as Akwa-Ocha was taken a little further in terms of modernization designed and adorned by models who parade during the carnival and presented by Anthonia Oguah, they were designed in a way that it can be featured in a way, while speaking during the parade she states, 'Cloud dress!', it is something you see on the runaway, used by international models, we want the global world to see something beautiful from Anioma, to also wear the Akwa-Ocha like they do with Adire, we want to see Akwa-Ocha on the runway of New York fashion week, that is our dreams and that is why I took my time to conceptualize it in fashionable trending outfit that anybody can wear, especially the Anioma daughter who finds it difficult to wear Akwa-Ocha on their traditional marriage day, we have made it very simple for you to see that Akwa-Ocha can be used very well on your traditional marriage day.



Fig 5. Modernized and stylized Akwa-Ocha designs by Mrs. Anthonia Oguah, worn and displayed by models at the 2019 edition of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival ©Chukwudi Victor Akanna.

While speaking to the Daily Independent newspaper on 15th January 2020 Mrs Anthonia Oguah expressed that: “Akwa Ocha is reserved for special events. It is not meant to be used while carrying out routine activities or worn casually. She said as the name implies that Akwa Ocha means “Cloth that is white or better still white cloth.” It is the traditional cloth worn by the Anioma speaking tribe of Delta state, otherwise known as the ‘Delta-Igbo. It is adorn mostly during important occasions such as: traditional tittle ceremonies, Cultural festivals, marriage ceremonies, burial, national and state ceremonies and any other occasion that is considered special.”

It is not an exaggeration to say that Akwa Ocha is by each passing day gaining recognition and becoming widespread, and has become one of the tangible manifestations of an ever-growing sense of traditional wear in Nigeria. It is more widely recognized as one of the shinning strands which make up the colourful cultural fabric of Anioma people.

Eshulu (Bead Adornment)



Fig 6. Traditional coral beads ©Google images.

The use of coral beads in Nigeria cut across ethnicity, and diverse cultures, in the country, as the Igbos, Yorubas, and Hausas have their respective versions of the application of beads in their traditional or ceremonial outfits. In Delta State however, as written in the Pointer Newspaper by Felix Ogedegbe he points out that "in most Delta communities it is an adage that, 'anger hardly makes the king to destroy his beads, or tear them apart'. It is because beads are symbol of royalty, elegance, dignity and majesty. Research has also shown that bead has long been in Africa. Bead has various uses and of great importance to African culture and Delta State is not an exception. Bead has also been an article of trade from time immemorial. Its origin is chequered. It was also used as a medium of exchange but in recent times, the role of beads in Delta and other parts of

Nigeria has unified the people in purpose, use and way of life of Deltans and Nigerians in general."In the Anioma region of Delta State beads go with the Akwa Ocha attire for royalties, chieftain title holders and in recent times for the influential in the community.



Fig 7. An Anioma bride adorned in coral beads
©Google images

Ogwashi-Uku community, which is one of the oldest in this region, wear beads in a significant manner like the Benin women from the ancient city of Benin. According to the tradition and customs of the people, a bride is adorned with beads on her special day. When you see Ogwashi-Uku people in white wrappers and beads you know it's celebration time, whether in festivals, rituals and other rites, and also just as the culture has been integrated in the annual carnival, you see male and female participants adorned in the traditional coral beads in different styles and this reflects the culture and tradition of the people and their enthusiasm which will help sustain it through the course of time.



Fig 8. Participants adorned in coral beads and cultural attires during the Ogwashi-Uku Carnival parade 2019 @Chukwudi Victor Akanna

I was Opportune to witness the 2019 edition of the Ogwashi-Uku carnival, a lot of participants and dignitaries were seen wearing beads. Dance groups used these beads to make up their attire, in the picture above you can see a boy accompanied by a dance group all adorned in the Eshulu(coral beads) this tradition is special to the Anioma and as well as Ogwashi-Uku people and showing it in such events helps to promote the people’s tradition.

Leadership

Like most towns in the Anioma region, Ogwashi-Uku traditional system is democratic in nature and headed by the Obi (king). In this monarchy or Kingship, it is hereditary by birth. Speaking to Prince Paul Okwufulueze of Umudunkwu quarters Ogwashi-Uku he explained that “The Obi who is the head of the community is usually succeeded by his first son who is the heir to the throne, in a situation where the first son is absent or suffers a disability, the second son can

become the king. The king is assisted by Ndi Orinzele (titled chiefs), five major chiefs makes up the king's cabinet which are Iyesei, Onihe, Alamuzo, Odafe and Ineoba. These chiefs deliberate and argue with the king on matters of interest in the community/town. There are other chiefs that make up the council in general and they appear ceremonially or in general meetings and these chiefs are appointed by each family from the communities that make up Ogwashi-Uku. These chiefs are selected by each family to represent their interest in the council of elders and the court of the Obi during general meetings. Besides these chiefs are chosen not by age but preference and eligibility.

There is another group known as the Umu-Ada is made up of the eldest women from each extended family in the communities and they are in charge of matters which include rites, rituals and traditions that concern women in the community. Another group the Ikolo, is the union of young men in the community who see to the security of the town. This system is built for transparency and representation to promote interests in general terms and this has thrived from the creation of the town.”

Carnival/Festival

Ogwashi-Uku Ine festival is a pillar for the culture and tradition of the people. Haven been so over the years, it has continued to be an integral part of preserving the people's tradition. The festival spans through an important period of time, which sees various display of age long traditions and rituals as well as the eating of new yam by the Obi and of course the people.

The Carnival since inception is now the final bit of the traditional festivals as it is celebrated as the final event as to keep the spirit alive and incorporate into extending and expressing their culture in an event that originates from the western culture. Speaking to Prince Paul Okwufulueze about the process of this festivals he expressed that “the first step is *Isi Iwu* (cooking and

preparations of Ine rituals), after *oge ato* (four market days) the Iwu is prepared on Orié market day and two Ories later it is brought down, this process is called *Isi Iwu*. Obida River which carry's it to Abor. The next event is Igbu Ubi by the Ikelike community which is a worship of their idol then four market days later Obi Ahuaji (preparing and eating of yam by the king and his cabinet) , the next market day Ogwashi-Uku people Ahuaji, after the king have set the bar. Then Ogwashi-Uku communities in general egbue Agbo and that is followed by *ika ine uchichi* (night feast) that is night celebrations which lasts for several market days (*oge asa*) then they proceed to *igba ine eshishe* which is the main event the afternoon feast which is interwoven with the carnival, during this celebrations every chief takes his family and goes to the palace to dance and celebrate with the Obi.”

The Ogwashi-Uku carnival came into play through the effort of well-meaning Ogwashi indigenes who thought it right to bring this event home and see how the people engage their culture into this western festivity. The integration of the traditional events into this is to help preserve and promote them. Dr Awele Nwabuokei, one of the initiators of this carnival, while being interviewed gave me an insight into the purpose, significance as well as importance of bringing such practice home. He said that “As a cultural organization which was set as an informal group within the town, we made this effort to see how we can come together and generate peace within the community. Having gotten the idea and mind-set, what we did was get through to the communities and villages in Ogwashi-Uku to showcase the dance and the culture as they perceive it in their place, so we tried to get them identified by making sure every village have the chance to showcase. We further invited other groups outside Ogwashi-Uku to add colour to the Carnival. These include Ebu Wonders from Ebu, Egwu Amala from Ibusa, Egwu Agwuba from Ubulu Uku kingdom, we got some communities to present *mmawu* (masquerade) and some of the groups we have in Ogwashi-

Uku are Olobo groups (as mentioned earlier in this work), Egwu Okanga group, Otu Ita, Egwu Aja, a children dancing group. Every village was to present what they have like the Ogbemokwuni came with their wrestling dance group and some came with matchet dance all these with their special traditional costumes.”

On the float of the carnival he said that “Carnival is alien, in as much as we try to demonstrate and domesticate it with our culture, and you will see that people on that day wear some feather-like costumes, which is not cultural but borrowed. The float is to enable the event be showcased around the town, the float is merely for publication to enable the people see what they can expect in the event proper, this is to take some groups and take people around to see what they have at hand. This is a mode of modernization, the theory of social modernizations and if you look at the South American carnivals we try to see what we can add to it and almost everyone on that day will be wearing Akwa-Ocha and Ehulu and these are our local costumes which we tried to let our people see.

What I had in mind when I got involved, because I backed out after the 2011 event and haven't been involved in the later events. What I had in mind was that Ogwashi-Uku as a whole present a team and other neighbouring towns present a team and be able to sponsor their presentations. I wanted it to get to a stage where each town and community become sole representatives and are able to sponsor their costumes and representation, so invariably while we are bringing this foreign culture and idea is because they were well organized because during normal Ine festivals people come to watch and we also go to other towns to watch, and if we can gather all these events together from all the communities to come showcase in one big shell and it becomes a carnival, it's just bringing the concept and being able to coordinate it and that is why it

looks more western, in the past we have so many mystical events and if we bring them together these mysteries can become attractions.”

CHAPTER FOUR

AESTHETICS IN THE COSTUME AND FLOATS OF OGWASHI-UKU CARNIVAL

Pictorial Analysis

Ogwashi-Uku Carnival showcase's an opportunity to express culture in the form of an exhibition. Spectators and participants alike embrace this event in the most homely way possible. This is because the traditional attires, dance, and other displays point back to traditional heritage. The carnival costumes borrowed from the originators show where we draw it from and the traditional attires both modernized and the age long ones shows where we are headed in terms of promoting our cultural values.

The beauty in the float and costumes of this wonderful event cannot be overemphasized. In this chapter effort is made to establish the ornamentation and aesthetics inherent in costumes and floats of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival. Analysis is conducted using selected carnival pictures, in order to also reveal the aesthetic qualities, meaning and contents of material, forms and ideas behind the various carnival costumes and the attendant floats.



Fig 9. Carnival float on display at the Ogwashi-Uku Carnival 2010 ©Google images

The picture above shows the float movement at Ogwashi-uku carnival. The vehicles, which are pickup trucks with open space at the back to accommodate participants, move in a straight line

maintaining a minimum amount of space at about 6 to 8 feet gap, in other to show unity in purpose. The sides are decorated with materials tied accordingly as well as the front.

Pieces of colourful materials are also tied on a straight line with a rope on the top of these vehicles and their similarity in appearance contributes to the aesthetic quality of the above float. Various colours can be seen including primary, and secondary colours etc. Most of these colours are repeated in more than one vehicle and these colours include yellow, green, red, white, but most dominantly, yellow and green, which harmonize the float colourfully. The materials are knotted at the edge, especially the ones at the sides of the vehicle. This creates draperies on them and it is usually done to enhance the festivity decoratively. This is one of the early Float of Ogwashi-Uku carnival celebrations and visibly the spaces in the vehicles are taken by participants wearing colourful costumes, the decoration, linear movements, colours and cheer all contribute to the aesthetic beauty of this float, which also separates in from the environment as significant.



Fig 10. Cultural and other dance groups on parade at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival 2019 © Chukwudi Victor Akanna

Figure 10 show groups parading during the carnival, and they can be seen wearing uniforms that identify them. They appear on a straight line, dancing and marching towards the carnival venue. The difference in costumes shows cultural and non-traditional groups, the cultural groups

or people adorned in cultural costumes include the men wearing Akwa-Ocha from shoulder down with beads on the neck, a red cap, white walking stick, and a feathery white round traditional hand fan. A woman can be seen wearing Akwa-Ocha with red dots and wrist beads, at the far end a group of women can be seen tying Akwa-Ocha from waist down with hand bags and a purple blouse as well as purple head ties. The non-traditional groups include the girls in knee level light purple gowns roughly textured at the end in form of draperies, blue pom-poms, and blue geometrical caps amidst yellow colour. The male group is also in yellow trousers and long sleeved shirts and blue hats. Some groups are seen wearing Christmas caps made of cotton and of the famous red and white Christmas colours. This comes into play because the carnival is celebrated not just during the Christmas season but on Christmas day.

These diversity and varieties in costumes not only beautify the parade but also shows the aesthetics in the carnival in terms of costumes. The movement of the parade is organized in such a manner that there is enough space for motorists to pass. Being in an extensive queue instead of one big crowd enables people to see the different groups and their costumes in all their beauty and glory. With the colour and forms of the parade festivity is shown as it stands out in the environment. One can imagine the sounds and cheers as they dance in beautiful and aesthetically amazing costumes.



Fig 11. Young women adorn in traditional bead and Akwa-Ocha attire at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival 2010 © Awele Nwabuokei

A picture taken from an earlier edition of Ogwashi-Uku carnival, two participants are seen wearing rather elaborate bead adornment, this shows that in the early stages of the Carnival the people indeed showcased their culture to its full extent for those who dressed in the traditional way.

The beauty of beads takes an interesting turn as the ability of it to be knitted into forms that take the body shape as showcased in the above (fig. 11). The lady on the left with less beads and Akwa-Ocha visible as part of her attire shows just how much the beads match and compliment the famous white cloth. As an overall dress, a waistband, and wristband and also as a cap, beads in the Anioma tradition know no bound in terms of functions, most especially as indication of royalty, class and ornamentation.

Taking different shapes, various forms and lines and also one colour in this case. Beads can prove versatile, the cap comes in various polygons, knitted together to form the cover shape that rests on the head of these young women. Tiny squares make up the elaborate bead clothe, white round ones are wrapped around the wrist stretching to the fingers and also on the neck to form a necklace. Considering bead adornment on different positions of the body the attire is a complimentary one. This express the aesthetics found in costumes and the beauty in how the materials are used.



Fig 12. Aniocha traditional beauty pageant participants' wearing Akwa-Ocha and bead attire at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival 2019 ©Chukwudi Victor Akanna

Four young women who participated in a cultural beauty pageant are documented wearing the traditional Akwa-Ocha attire during the 2019 edition of the Carnival. They are adorned themselves with the Akwa-Ocha and eshulu (beads) the beads are worn as hair band, earrings, necklaces, wristband, and are also adorned from the shoulder covering the bust, round knitted

beads are twisted to tie the hair, on the shoulder the beads are knitted in squares and curvy lines as well as dropping straight lines which helps spread it across the front and back. The beauty of beads here is fully displayed and also their versatile use, the beads are of different shapes and sizes, all of the same colour yet diversified by the manner of use and application to harmoniously beautify the Akwa-Ocha, which sparkles as immaculate white tied from the waist down and also holding the top half tucked into the wrapper. One can see tiny holes and feathery patterns on the edge of the knot of the Akwa-Ocha, all these comes together to show the outstanding aesthetics in this age long attire. Behind the young women are banners showing some traditional and other attires that are visible in the carnival. All these comes together to show the beauty in the costumes of this wonderful event.



Fig 13. Cultural dance group performing at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival 2019 ©Chukwudi Victor Akanna

A female cultural dance group of elders performing at the carnival proper (fig. 13). It is a traditional theatre performance, and the vast space consists of spectators and decorations. This kind of theatre performance sometimes invites participation from the crowd through cheering and most times viewers join in the action by either spraying them money or dancing with them as a

form of enjoyment and appreciation. There are three lead dancers accompanied by other dancers who are well spaced than others in order to have more room for dancing and a traditional orchestra. Their costume is of Akwa-Ocha and the group customized white t-shirts, coral bead caps, neck beads and also wrist bands. Some of the dancers can be seen wearing traditional shell anklets, which adds to the beat of the music as they dance. Various traditional musical instruments can be seen, including the bronze pot known as udu and also the ichaka.

Some of the bead crowns are covered at the top, while some are open knitted to have openings as they cover the head with a round closed base to hold it on the head. The t-shirts are tucked into the Akwa-Ocha to give them an overall white look. The ichaka is laced with beads of rainbow-like colours, in the sense that visibly, we can see red, yellow, and green while the second one being held is of orange coloured beads and white circling it. The first three dancers are seen with traditional hand fans, which are round with feather like materials circling it and with a handle, which is also white. Obviously, the choice of costume for this group dominated by white and one can see that it stands out. Moreover spectators are seen at the far end under colourful canopies watching them perform. Their costume and dance are all cultural, while their use of white and the coral beads is aesthetic and adds to the beauty of the carnival.



Fig 14. Carnival costume groups at display during the 2019 edition of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival ©Chukwudi Victor Akanna.

A group of participants pictured wearing glitzy and lace long carnival dress as well as the furry and feathery caps, (fig. 14) five of them stand out in the picture as those whose costumes are elaborate. The dresses are of different colours and different coloured caps as well. The gowns are beautifully designed with lighter transparent materials that widen up from the knee level down as most of them are seen holding it up. The participant behind is wearing a maroon coloured dress with a circular big design with purple and white in the centre. This design hangs on the shoulder, straight lines move from the middle upwards to form zigzag lines that encircled the design, which stands out on her dress. The cap is made up of yellow feathery material that points upwards and held on her head with a white base, and various curved lines are seen as she holds up her dress.

To her right are two other participants, one in pink and white designed cap with straight lines shooting out and feather-like designs gracing them. The other is wearing a red and orange dress designed with a puffy hand of jagged lines, which beautifies the dress accordingly. In front of them are two other participants in red dress and red furry caps, with a base designed in a manner that creates a curved line from the both cheeks through the forehead and cuts out their face and are of yellow and white colour for both participants, holding up the transparent lace designs at the knee level that brings out the beauty of these dresses. There is a step from them and two more in green lace dresses including orange and green designed furry caps; one of them can be seen with locks of different colours ranging from yellow, white, green, red, etc. These dresses and caps maybe of different colours, yet it is seen that they are harmonious and they are very significant in the carnival every year as spectators are always thrilled at sighting them. It goes on to prove the level of variety and aesthetics inherent in the costumes of the carnival. In the picture, a lady can be seen wearing a shiny cap which is also part of the beautiful carnival costumes.



Fig 15. Ogwashi-Uku carnival participants pictured during the parade ©Chukwudi Victor Akanna

A picture taken during the parade at Ogwashi-Uku carnival (fig. 15). The photograph shows men in traditional Akwa-Ocha tied on the waist and on one shoulder as it hangs across the

body. It is the Anioma traditional way of wearing Akwa-Ocha for men and the complete attire is worn with red cap, ankle and neck coral beads, which compliments it. In some of the Akwa-Ocha designs of dark colours coming in form of shapes that include diamonds, squares, circles etc., there exist straight lines of dots moving vertically and also red lines moving horizontally. Some Akwa-Ocha come with these designs in form of variety and this goes a long way to exhibit all manner of traditional costumes and its aesthetics in this carnival. A woman in a white hat decorated with purple and white feathers wearing a handless lace material and transparent ones from her waist down, she holds a furry stick of blue, green, yellow, and red colours, the woman at the forefront of the picture is seen wearing bead crown as well as neck and ankles beads in blue and white traditional dress. This much variety and difference in costumes shows the diversity in this Carnival and well maintains its aesthetic qualities.



Fig 16. Cultural group on display during the 2019 edition of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival ©Chukwudi Victor Akanna

Participants and a cultural group at the carnival dressed in cultural lace and wrapper with bead adornment, (fig. 16) the group is accompanied by a little boy and girl who can be seen expressing extreme joy in the moment; they are also adorned in cultural attires. The women with

dark but differently styled hairdo, wearing beaded crowns in addition to the boy and girl, putting on coral bead crowns stand out from that of the rest, the woman behind the boy can be seen with a crown more fascinating in terms of the bead design, which come in form of lines and little squares. The girl wears a head bead, which wraps around like a face cap but rest completely on the head, while the boy who is in front, adorns a beaded crown which is peculiar to royalty with rope like beadings hanging from both sides. They are all adorned in neck coral beads of different sizes and style as well as wrist band made of coral beads too. The boy is seen wearing one of white colour.

Red is the dominant colour of this cultural group, the women in red lace tops with white designs on one, from their waist down is wrapper of white, red and black designs can be seen clearly. The girl and boy stand out in terms of costume; the girl is dressed in black handleless top with blue and purple designed wrapper round her waist, while the boy is adorned in *Akwa-Ododo* (red cloth) apparel as it is known to the Enuani people. The boy also is seen holding a traditional hand fan of white and black colour. This is a complete cultural group with nothing left behind in terms of costume and this brings out the aesthetic quality of costumes in this carnival and how much the people are willing to integrate in terms of their culture to bring to pass the successful celebration of the Carnival.



Fig 17. Members of various dance group pictured during the 2019 edition of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival ©Chukwudi Victor Akanna.

A picture taken of dance groups making their way into the carnival venue (fig. 17), the photograph gives us a good view of different groups and also diverse costumes seen in the Carnival proper. The event is a very colourful one which adds to its aesthetic qualities. In the picture we can see that the Carnival ground is covered with canopies of red and white designs to shelter spectators. Behind the spectators is outside the venue as indicated by visible trees and electric poles. All the foreground of the picture are the participants, four different groups are represented in this picture and three of them are cultural. The group at the rare view in purple blouse and hair ties of same colour with Akwa-Ocha tied round their waist, wore necklaces made of beads as well as earrings made of beads.

Another group is represented by just a member in the manner in which the photograph was taken, this group is represented by the lady at the forefront with red lace blouse and Akwa-Ocha tied from her waist down. At the right end of the picture is another cultural group in beaded crowns and necklaces as well as wrist bands, yellow lace top and Akwa-Ocha. In the middle and standing out is a group of three girls with traditional plaited hats cut open at the cone that makes up the top which serves as an outlet for their hair. The hat is of blue, yellow, red and green colours, and the

round edge of the hat have straight ropes hanging from them and of green and red colours. Looking further towards the canopies two young men can be seen wearing the same kind of hat but red in colour and not cut open, while the group of three girls are adorned in blue and gold coloured silk attire holding blue coloured furry sticks with yellow handles. The aesthetics in the costume of this carnival is not just seen in the colours and diverse costumes, but also in the creativity employed in the designing and remodelling of everyday costumes.



Fig 18. Models wearing stylized Akwa-Ocha at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival 2019 © Chukwudi Victor Akanna

A picture of models wearing modernized Akwa-Ocha designs (fig. 18), these designs were presented by Mrs Antonia Oguah during the 2019 edition of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival as she was behind the idea of such creativity. The Akwa-Ocha is designed into different styles of gown that fits into different everyday events which is the idea behind the remodelling. Various colours come into play in the Akwa-Ocha. Normally traditional Akwa-Ocha materials are not always all white, in the sense that some of them come with red and sometimes blue designs on the white background,

the gold colour design seen in the dress of the middle person among the three young ladies is a modern colour integration to the Akwa-Ocha. The manner in which red is applied on the bottom edges and shoulder of the dress worn by the second lady from the right is a new design to the Akwa-Ocha, while the red line designs seen on the dress can be found on traditional Akwa-Ocha designs. Furry and puffy designs are seen in various gowns ranging from the hand designs to the knee downwards. Some of the gowns are given split designs from the thigh exposing the legs, and one can also see curvy lines as well as slant lines that shoot some of the dresses wide from the knee level.

The shoulder designs are different with some hanging on one shoulder armless, while some are short sleeved. The second lady from the left can be seen wearing a unique design that one hand is covered in long sleeve, while the other hand is left sleeveless. These designs are made to suit different occasions and can be displayed in fashion shows and creatively they are made from the traditional Akwa-Ocha materials. This is the level of creativity and aesthetics in terms of costumes evident in the Ogwashi-Uku carnival.



Fig 19. A group adorn in colorful carnival costumes at Ogwashi-Uku Carnival 2010 ©Ogwashi-Uku Carnival page @facebook.

The costumes displayed in the picture above (fig. 19) are some of the colourful and elaborate ones borrowed for the carnivals from the Caribbean and South American Carnivals. These costumes come in various types, styles and shapes and mostly colourful like the one above.

The three young ladies adorn the costumes taking the shape of a butterfly as wing like designs are seen hanging behind them as evident in the picture. The lady on the left carries a red heart shaped wing structure opened in the middle with the inside carved with white and a touch of green and yellow materials on them, while the other ladies wear flappy large green wing designs with yellow and blue lines and dots in the wide green area. The gowns worn by the three rest above the knee level with deep yellow, white and purple designs, the top of the gown is designed with white and purple stripes and a purple V-neck except for the lady on the left with yellow and purple stripe designs, the knee level gown exposes matching black leggings trousers worn by the three ladies, their hairdo is also matching in black colours, they can also be seen wearing carnival caps with purple, white and yellow feather like designs on them, the three ladies are holding pom-poms in each hands except for the lady on the right holding it on just one hand. The environment shows that this was displayed in one of the many carnival parades such groups are mostly eye catching because of their illuminating costumes, staying closer and moving as one group helps harmonize

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter, will express the findings or observations made as an eye witness in the carnival as well as those made from analysis in chapter four and in accordance to the objectives of this study. In accordance to these observations, recommendations will be made and conclusion on the work in general.

Findings

In this research, certain objectives were listed and these findings fulfil those objectives, in the following way: The number one objective, which is to explore *the nature of materials used for costumes in Ogwashi-Uku carnival*, it was observed that the nature of materials identified during the course of analysis, ranges from thick white cloth (Akwa-Ocha) were dominant, coming in different designs, other traditional wears were lace designs and also Ankara. Metallic anklets and musical instruments of animal skin and wood were also visible, coral beads of different colours and sizes as well as those plaited into different forms and shapes, silk material costumes were abundant in different colours. Feathers were used to design hats and hand fans, even elaborate costumes that adorn various participants.

The second objective, which set out to *bring to light the unique nature of Ogwashi-Uku carnival*, from the analysis it is evident that the carnival stands out as a unique activity in the sense that, it is not just an avenue for the showcase of culture, beautiful costumes and floats, but serves as a form of tourism, different groups participating in an activity or the other are invited from different parts of the Local Government, State, and Country in general, it also attracts spectators likewise, the people's culture is broadly celebrated in this borrowed event making it to stand out and make a difference. This event helps the various communities involved to display their cultural heritage.

In terms of *integrating their culture and traditions in the Carnival*, the Enuani people, which is where Ogwashi-Uku belong are proud of their culture and over the years have preserved it through events and festivals, Ogwashi-Uku Carnival though a borrowed event, have seen the people integrate and exhibit their cultural heritage through participation. From the manner in which the Akwa-Ocha is worn, the use of eshulu (bead adornment), traditional orchestra and theatre display, introduction of masquerade groups. Through invitation other neighbouring communities show and display their culture through dance groups, wrestling matches, matchet play etc. bringing in these activities helps to preserve the cultural heritage of the people even in modern day activities.

The carnival is a medium for unifying communities and villages of Ogwashi-Uku, as a unifying event and a medium for social development is seen in the strength that comes through the willingness to participate by various communities, because the villages that comprises Ogwashi-Uku community are invited to show what they are known for in terms of cultural activities during this events, ranging from drumming, masquerade parades, dancing, wrestling amongst other events, the coming together both in spectating and participating helps the people relieve their cultural heritage and through this the feeling of oneness is reinstated in the minds and hearts of the people.

The objectives of this study have been expressed in terms of revealing details in the characteristics of the elements and principles of designs as it concerns *the aesthetical qualities of the costumes and floats of the Carnival*, this have been brought to light in the manner of identifying and analysing the qualities of various costumes found in the carnival in terms of aesthetics through the application of the principles and elements of design.

The Carnival attract various kinds of social, economic and infrastructural development as well as human resource development, during this period tailors and many other people that deal

with textile designs are employed in terms of costumes, hotels get poised to host individuals and groups, various roads and route in the town and fixed and clean up as well as the environment in preparation of the event, many sponsors, ranging from telecommunication, individuals, political parties and others show interest in the event, upcoming and aspiring artists are given the opportunity to show their talent which in turn serves as publicity, also, popular artists are invited to perform which many travel to come see during the event, example is the invitation and performance of the popular artist Timaya during the 2010 event.

The event is indeed one to uphold and the government as well as NGO's should maintain sponsorship in promoting such quality event even the media houses can play a big role through the publicity of a medium strong enough to maintain and exhibit our cultural heritage as well as exploring different ideas to improve our society.

Recommendations

Ogwashi-Uku Carnival is an event worthy of documentation because of the cultural, aesthetic and creative richness it provides, through pictorial and visual means it should be documented as it continues to be hosted year in year out. Various pages are created on online sites and social media which I was opportune to stumble on during the course of my research this is a good step in the area of documentation and should be encouraged. On these platforms through comments and reactions, people expressed how impressed they are that many take it upon themselves to show this wonderful event using such wide reaching media, more students and intellectuals should conduct research and make more literary documentation on the carnival keeping the record straight and alive. Ogwashi-Uku Carnival involves gatherings and games and this could lead to minor accidents it should be mandatory that the red cross union is invited every

year, and the local police department should provide officers not just for the sake of dignitaries but total protection of everyone present, the road safety and traffic wardens should guide the parade to ensure smooth movement of vehicles and safety of pedestrians during this period.

Conclusion

The costumes and floats of Ogwashi-Uku Carnival is an integral and significant part of the prestigious event, graced by various groups and diverse participants, a citadel for cultural and creative exploration, a centre for unity and oneness, Ogwashi-Uku Carnival through the display of its wonderful costumes offers an eye catching and aesthetically satisfying showcase in terms of beauty in these costumes. Analysed aesthetically, this work offers an insight to not just the local but also the international community an indebt view of the glorifiable concepts for costumes noticeable in Ogwashi-Uku carnival, by bringing these to light, it will promote and help preserve the cultural piece present in the costumes and Carnival proper for generations to come.

References

Aideyan Osaretin Charles: (1985). *Aesthetic concept among the people of Benin*.

Amoke Obinna Leo: (1996). *A study of the Aesthetic aspect of Onunu Festival of Nsukka.*

Adu, Kingsley Babatope: (1996). *The Elements on the Costumes of Elefon Masquerade of Omuo-Ekiti, Ekiti State* (1996).

Okenyi A. I: *An analysis of Designs and Symbols in the Costumes of Omabe and Akatakpa in Obolo*

Mere Chika Dorothy: (1992). *The Language of Costumes: the case of the Omabe Masking Tradition Nsukka.*

Aniah Joy A.: (1994). *The role of costumes in Igwe and Lolo title taking (A case study of Ofala and Afiangbede.*

D. Ademija Bepo: (2012). *The Aesthetics of Ladeko Festival of Isona ward in Ilesa, Oyo State.*

Sunday E. Ododo: (2001). *Theatrical Aesthetics and functional value of Ekuehi Masquerade ensemble of the Ebira people in Nigeria.*

Joe: (2012). *The Osun Oshogbo Festival: functions and Aesthetics.*

Ekong Maurice O. *The Aesthetic value of Plastic in Calabar Carnival costume designs, Nigeria (2018).*

Niyi Afolabi: (2018). *Aesthetics of the Aiyes African (ized) Carnival costume.*

Rowland C. Amoefula & Benard Eze-Orji: (2016) *Costumes for African values: a re-assessment of UN – African ideals in Calabar Carnival.*

Fred T. Smith: *carnival and festival costumes*

Chibuzo Aguwa: (2018): *Traditional festivals in Nigeria, their importance and what they are all about.*

Yemis Makudo and Bertran Lukstins: *Understanding of festival scenes in Nigeria (socio-economic importance of independent art in Nigeria)*

Associationb of Caribbean States: (2014): *Carnival; when culture meets tourism.*

Modish: (2018): *functions and relevance of costumes in Ngwas Ekpe Festival.*

Lilian Eguriase Bakare: (2017): *department of theatre and media arts, federal university of Oye Ekiti _ Aesthetics and semiotics of Ado Ekiti masquerade costumes; focus on Agbo, Efon and Agbe masquerades.*

Jacob Udayi Agba: (2013): *the performing arts and carnival; Calabar: implications for human rights protection in Nigeria.*

Amalu, Titus E. & Ajake, Anim O: *An assessment on the influence of Calabar carnival on the economy of metropolis Cross River State Nigeria.*

Researchclue.com: (2017): *inter-group relationships among the Ogwashi-Uku people of aniocha south local government area of delta state and its neighbours.*

Nigerian tribune newspaper: (July 22 2017): *ogwashi-uku erimonu soup and bush meat is their favourite.*

The pointer newspaper: *when the obi of Ogwashi-Uku celebrated ine festival (Innocent Osakwe)*

The pointernews online: *beads as a symbol of royalty, dignity in delta (Felix Ogedegbe)*

Prince Paul Okwufulueze (2020) "*Ogwashi-Uku leadership system and festivals*"
interviewed by Chukwudi Victor.A Oct 9.

Dr Awele Nwabuokei (2020) "*history of Ogwashi-Uku carnival*" interviewed by
Chukwudi Victor.A Apr 16.