

A Reinvention of Medieval Paintings using African Forms

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Abstract

Previous works have been done on medieval as well as African forms of painting. But to the best of the researcher's knowledge, little or no attention has been paid to creating a fusion of both forms. Therefore, this study investigated how European medieval and African paintings fared in order to marry the two. As a result of this, the researcher intended to fill that gap by creating a blend of both forms of painting reflecting on it from an African perspective through the researcher's synthesis. Various medieval costumes, African forms, painting techniques, media and other materials were explored, with the intention of re-inventing African portraiture and figures in medieval times. Paintings revealed that a new form of expression can be projected in marrying African Art form with the Medieval European costumes, thereby giving birth to a contemporary African art form. Experimentation method was used to carry out this research. This research project will serve aesthetic and educative purposes as well as a point of reference at museums, galleries, and schools where it can be used for effective pedagogy as teaching aid among others. If this project work is approved, the researcher intends to publish this research work so it can be made available in libraries, journals, and museums and other medium where it can be easily accessible.

Keywords: Reinvention, Painting, Medieval, African forms

Introduction

Africa has diverse ethnic groups and several cultures. Each culture comes with its own uniqueness. This is one of the characteristics of a populous continent called Africa where there are many different societies and ethnic groups. These societies and ethnic groups are identified by their common world view and practice of their culture, religion, language and history. The outsider may not have a clear understanding of the boundaries among the ethnic groups and communities but members of each of these communities being the custodians of those cultural values understand them and how they work. Most Africans are polyglots in that they speak more than one language. Due to frequent migrations and interactions as well as intermarriages with other tribes have often blurred ethnic distinctions. According to Britannica Encyclopedia (2015) there are estimated 900 to 1500 different languages but many distinct political units share a common or similar language such as the Yoruba, Hausa and Swahili-speaking people.

Through many different art forms, such as music, dance, art, sculpture and bead work, African tradition is expressed. Through many other art forms, many African people express themselves as well. The Zulus are popular for their intricate bead work. The colour of each bead carries a specific meaning in terms of both aesthetics and functionality. The beads have been used for dissemination of information or sending messages known as "ucu" which is a Zulu term translated as "love letters". The diversity

and richness of the African culture is not limited to one country to another, but within each country as well. The culture of each ethnic group is hinged on family and can be found in the art, music and oral literature of each group. Most of the people living in Africa are indigenous; however, people from all over the world have migrated to the continent of Africa for hundreds of years. Peel (2014) recorded that Arabs began crossing into North Africa from the Middle East in the 7th century, A.D bringing with them Islam. Europeans started to settle down on the continent of Africa in the mid-17th century just as the South Asians, who settled in places such as Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Tanzania. Over the centuries, African culture had merged with cultures from around the world but much of traditional African customs have remained the way they are throughout,

Ethnic groups in Africa have customs that are unique to their culture. The traditions and cultures of each group have been woven into a tapestry as colourful and diverse as Africans themselves. From north to south, the type of clothing worn across Africa varies which is largely determined by religious beliefs and traditional customs. While some cultures wear colourful attire, others prefer less colourful attire but add shiny thread with minimal jewelry in their dressing. To some “neat” appearance meant that they were expected to keep their natural hair either cropped or covered. Plating of hair as an art has been learned by many and passed down from generations to generation.

Mercer (1987) opined that African hair-styling can be evaluated as a popular art form articulating a variety of aesthetic ‘solutions’ to a range of ideological and racial problems. Apart from being a traditional art, African-style hair braiding is a way of naturally taking care of tightly coiled Afro-textured hair without the use of scissors, heat or chemicals. Their hairstyles usually come with threads and are elaborate. Black thread is used for the thread styles but it can now come with rich coloured ones wrapped around strands of hair from a little above the root all the way to the ends. Hair braiding as an art extends back thousands of years in West Africa. According to tradition, a person’s tribal membership might be reflected in their hairstyle. Their social status/rank as well as marital status could also be determined / known by their hairstyle. Hairstyles were of social significance and could take several hours to achieve. The act of making them comes with deep meaning. In some typical African settings, only family members are allowed to braid for another member of the same family. In other, some who wishes to befriend another would voluntarily offer to braid another person’s hair while still in other societies; a community or family hairdresser who has become a trusted member of that society would braid everyone’s hair. This way braiding itself helped in building and sustaining communities even just as hairstyles reflect the community one belonged.

The Middle Ages was a period of cultural and second to none artistic achievement. However, as any other historical period, the Middle Ages had its challenges which included economic chaos, poverty, bad leadership, epidemics, ignorance, contempt for human life etc. Medieval culture does not only match the glories of the classical age and the accomplishment of the Renaissance but it has what is to be the mother in terms of legal, political and educational institutions of modern Western culture. For example, the university did not originate in ancient Greece or Rome, but in medieval Europe.

Historians usually divide the medieval age into three phases: early, high and late middle ages. This is because the medieval ages span so long in European history and it includes major economic, cultural and intellectual developments. Although, this division seems justified, it should be emphasized that there is a spirit that binds or unites the

whole of the middle ages and at the same time distinguishes it from other eras in human history. This spirit is the belief which is based on Christian faith that the world is an ordered entity with an infinite and all-knowing God as the ruler. This belief extends through the time of wars and social unrest, it pervades the Medieval church architecture, the poetry Dante Aquinas (1226-1274), the Gregorian chant, and the music of composers such as Guillaume de Machant.

The painting done by Leonardo Da Vinci made Mona Lisa popular. Long before now, artists had communicated their thoughts, ideas and concepts using colours on various surfaces. In a recent interview, Bruce Onobrakpeya emphasized the relevance of painting in the society, He has the belief that artists would extend their practice and work if an enabling platform for painting is adequately provided. Callaghan (2015) asserts that Vincent Van Gogh's 'The Starry Night' is one of the world's most beloved and well known works of art. It is oil on canvas by the Dutch post-impressionist painter Vincent Van Gogh. He did the painting in June 1889 and it depicts the view from the east-facing windows of his asylum at Saint-Reiny-de- Province, just before the sunrise with the addition of an idealized village.

According to the Oxford dictionary, 'reinvention' is the action or process through which something is changed so much that it appears entirely new. As creative people, it behooves us to reinvent ourselves to reach our goals, to express our creative skills, to reach our audience that expects that extra touch, invention and freedom to develop creativity. What it entails is creating something new from what already exists.

The researcher wonders why there is so much limitation as to the invention and reinvention of new concepts despite this incessant craving for new discoveries and freedom of expression. The researcher has experimented on several media using materials such as oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas, calcium powder, vanish glue, water colour and other substance and materials to achieve fusion.

Over the ages, so many art styles and movements existed across European continent; among such movements were Renaissance, Medieval Style, Baroque, Rococo, Classicism, among others, and even in the African milieu, there have been stylistic tendencies in visual expressions. As a result of that, African art has become popular due to several explorations, researches, excavations and documentations. In spite of the fact that modern artists have explored contemporary and historical contexts in visual expressions, there has not been the fusion between medieval costume in Europe and African art in Painting. The question now is how can Africa be synthesized with medieval themes, thereby reinventing medieval paintings using African forms and motifs, and to what extent could it serve the purpose? By experimenting with this concept in paintings, the researcher intends to set up a new direction for further exploration.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. The infusion of African forms on European medieval costumes thereby reinventing Africa in medieval times.
2. The projection of African art from a European medieval art perspective so as to add to contemporary Nigerian/ African Art.
3. To reflect contemporary African art through the prism of medieval European art period.

4. To synthesize the two cultures to reflect an African cultural image
5. To show that painting is not for mere decoration but can be used to create concepts and communication
6. To project the impact of painting in learning about cultural heritage

Literature Review

The Art of Reinvention

Several art forms have been modified and improved upon with great innovative, creative and imaginative skills over the years. Painting has always been limited to canvas and other conventional surfaces but now painting can be reinvented, fused and created with various materials and media such as melted rubbers, wax, fabric sculptures, calcium and other unconventional materials. These days, paintings on garments, bedspreads, garments and other textile surfaces and gift items are being achieved through creative efforts

Debra Sutherland according to Keane (2014), is a painter who creates various sceneries on canvas and transfers her works to blinds, throw pillows and stools. She starts with acrylic on canvas and imagines her paintings as fabric. From the same image, several textile designs can be derived. She takes photographs of each painting in stages and creates new prints from a multitude of sections of the canvas. She opens the file in Adobe Photoshop after she has taken a 35mm photo of her work of art. She alters the colours and patterns digitally, sends a jpg file to her printer, printing the design on silk, cotton or polyester.

In the words of Keane (2014)

“For centuries, fabric designs have been limited to what the hand could create. Now, with advancements in digital textile design, complicated patterns and colours can be instantly printed by ink jet. Thanks to these recent developments in technology, Iowa artist Debra Sutherland can take her original paintings on canvas and transform them into wearable art.”“My newest passion are the design of fabric patterns created from my paintings and photography”.

In the same vein, Shafqat (2017) gives a description of the re-inventive skills of the students of NCF thus:

“As many as 10 students from the National College of Arts’ Textile Design Department have displayed their thesis designs, ranging from visual reinterpretation of centuries-old motifs to other innovative ideas using several techniques. Amen Asif Malik’s thesis titled ‘It’s Not Waste until it’s Wasted’ projects her concerns about turning living spaces and cities into junkyards. “We live in a polluted world and my worst fear is seeing Abbottabad, my hometown, turning into a huge landfill site,” Amen said. “Hence I have always dreamt of doing something productive to save my city from becoming a dumping ground.”

She explained that her project was based on up cycling wasted materials. “Up cycling is the process of transforming waste materials into new materials of better

quality and by making yarn out of waste polythene. I have created surfaces that can have multiple usages,” Amen elaborated.

In the same vein, George Edozie organized an art exhibition an art exhibition “New Nigerian Conjunctures. Several paintings and three fabric sculptures make up his works. Okpulu is a non-figural piece rendered in woven-like moulding, made with pieces of shred clothes wrapped over some metal skeletal frames holding the fabric. Ozolua (2018) describes the fabric sculptures made by Edozie as very inspiring and gigantic which include Dinkpa (VIP) a 12-foot tall fabric sculpture. Edozie also produced an unconventional reinvented form or letters sunning fabric with which he created three dimensionality effects using several colourful pieces of fabric in a work made for LBS.

Kehinde Wiley is a young, African-American painter who is quite literally changing the faces of portraiture with his sensitive, vibrant, and political portrayals of black folk, ranging from teenagers he meets on the streets, to fellow contemporary artists, and even former president Barack Obama. Wiley often appropriates, or re-uses, recognizable art history images and tropes, such as portraits of Napoleon, heroic sea paintings, and traditional nudes. He does this as a way to critique art historical norms - the way we almost only see white people painted by other white people when we look at painting - and to use pre-existing tools to elevate black folk to the important positions inhabited by these white people of art history. Wiley often appropriates, or re-uses, recognizable art history images and tropes, such as portraits of Napoleon, heroic sea paintings, and traditional nudes. He does this as a way to critique art historical norms - the way we almost only see white people painted by other white people when we look at painting - and to use pre-existing tools to elevate black folk to the important positions inhabited by these white people of art history. Sherwin (2017), describes Kehinde as a superstar American painter famed for placing anonymous, beautiful black men in kitsch pastiches of Old Master portraits of the ruling class.

The Medieval Art

In the western world, the medieval art covered a vast scope of time and place spanning over 1000 years of art in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Major art movements and periods, national and regional art revivals, the artist’s crafts, genres and the artists themselves are included in the medieval art.

Medieval art produced works in large number in many media. These include sculpture, stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, metals and mosaics which have a higher survival rate than other media such as fresco wall-paintings, tapestry and other works in precious metals and textiles. Works in the “minor arts” or decorative arts e.g. metal work, ivory carving, enamel and embroidery using precious metals had more value in the early part of the period than paintings or monumental sculpture.

In Europe, medieval art grew out of artistic heritage of the Roman Empire and the iconographic tradition of Christianity in the early church. The artistic heritage of the Roman Empire and the iconographic traditions were mixed with “barbarian” artistic culture of Northern Europe resulting in a remarkable artistic legacy. In fact, it can be said that the history of medieval art is the history of the interplay between the elements of classical, early Christian and “barbarian” art. There was also a constantly practiced tradition of realistic depiction of objects that survived in Byzantine art throughout the

period. In the West, it only appeared intermittently, combining and sometimes competing with new expressionist possibilities developed in Western Europe and the Northern legacy of energetic decorative elements. With the self-perceived Renaissance recovery of the skills and values of classical art, the period ended. Then the artistic legacy of the middle ages was criticized for some centuries. It was a revival of interest and understanding in the 19th century and it has been seen as a period incredible, enormous achievement underlying the development of later western art.

By the end of the Middle Ages, only artists from the clergy were exempted from showing artistic interest and production of arts, works of profound artistic interest could be found in small villages, in homes of the elites thus production of art works became an important local industry. However, the reign of St. Benedict allowed the sale of works of art made by monasteries. It is clear that monks were permitted to produce arts including secular works for a lay market and monasteries would equally hire lay specialists when and where needed.

Medieval palaces and large houses have been lost at a far greater rate, same for their decoration and fittings while most churches have been rebuilt often uncountable times. Churches in England survive and remain intact from century to century since the 7th. The city of Norwich alone has 40 medieval churches but most of the royal palaces did not survive from as early as the 11th century, on by a few remained from that time onward. In most parts of Europe the case was not different, though the 14th century Palais de Papes in Avignon remaining intact. Many of the longest scholarly disagreement over the date and origin of each of the individual works relate to secular pieces reason being that they were very scarce the British Museum refused the Anglo-Saxon Fuller Brooch as an implausible fake and small and free-standing secular bronze sculptures are so rare to the extent that there were arguments over the date, origin and authenticity of both of the two best examples. The use of valuable materials is a constant practice in medieval art; until the end of the period more money was spent on buying them than paying for the services of the artists, even if those hired for the job are outside the clergy.

The Influence of Modern Art on African Art History

At the start of the 20th C, many artists such as Derain, Picasso, Matisse and Modigliani became enthralled by African art and began to visit the Trocadero museum in Paris to gaze upon the unique forms, absorbing all that was presented before them. These artists saw in this art a formal perfection countered by abstraction, asymmetry by balance, primitivism with sophistication of design. They responded to this raw expressive power with all their faculties, not only with sight but with imagination and emotion and experienced a mystical and spiritual encounter.

According to Albert, (2006) this absorption exploded in a fascination in abstraction, organization and reorganization of forms, and the exploration of emotional and psychological areas that had not been investigated before. It helped them move beyond the naturalism that had defined Western art up to this point. Now, the status of visual art was changed forever and Cubism was born, influenced by the African sculptor's simplified use of planes and forms and the rearrangement of human form that was based, in fact, on disproportion.

Picasso and the other group of avant-garde artists from the 'School of Paris' began themselves to collect tribal sculptures and artefacts that were beginning to appear in great numbers in Paris as a result of French colonization in Africa. Picasso

incorporated the ceremonial masks of the Dogon tribe into his groundbreaking work like *Les Femmes d'Alger*, (1907-1909) and the influence of his Gabon masks he acquired is also seen in his white sculpture, *Head of a Woman* (1929-1930).

Modigliani was singular in his adaptation of the stylistic influences of the work of the Baule tribe, from the Ivory Coast. Brancusi adopted not so much the form but the use of wood as a sculpting medium just as on the other side of the world in America, sculptors such as William Zorach and Chaim Cross rejected Rodin's cast-bronze stronghold in favour of direct carving in wood.

Matisse was influenced not only by the sculptural forms of African art but also by the handcrafted textiles he, as a member of a family of generational weavers, was drawn to Kuba cloths from the Congo, in particular, with their all-over patterning became inspirational for his paper cutouts with their perspectival shifts. He noted that his impulsive use of bold colour stirred the emotions and related to the ritualistic origins of African Art.

In architecture, two new principles had radical influence on design. One was the visual effect of decorative patterning on surfaces, most notably exterior walls and the other was a new attitude to spatial environments, spaces that do not just conform to human size, to function and form but also to the psychology of human nature.

Architects such as Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer expressed themselves giving brutal form to structures and monumentalized buildings. They introduced long linear vertical lines and embellished their structures with textured murals and large bas-reliefs based on the nonlinear scaling of geometric shapes that is particular to African decoration. African art history has had untold influence on the global art world.

Theoretical Framework

For this research, the theory of modernity and theory of classless taste were used to explain the infusion of medieval times on African forms. Nevertheless, the research will be pinned majorly on the theory of classless taste.

Theory of Modernity

“Modern” is itself a modern word, developed originally to express the sense that the “rebirth” of western European culture after what then became the “Dark Ages” was not just a revival of ancient virtues but the creation of something new, with a character all its own. The term “modernus” had come into existence in Medieval Latin, as an antonym to antiques, and these terms were used already in the twelfth century for the two sides of a controversy between the adherents of antique poetry and the practitioners of a new poetics. But essential to the idea of this contrast as it developed after the Renaissance was the conception of history as a progress through a sequence of distinct stages. In this conception the present day is not just a period of time, but a period of history, characterized by features differentiating it from other eras, such as Antiquity or the middle Ages. Thus we have a series of contrasts with earlier periods, expressed in such images as Enlightenment’s overcoming of the darkness of the feudal age, or in the mythology of the “organic,” “traditional” community of the preindustrial past so basic to early sociology. Set against such contrast categories, modern politics, learning, science, art are conceived of as more than contemporaries; they are aspects of a unity: modernity. Something fundamental in this conception was correct: the appearance of “modernity”

as cultural category was a response to the development of a new commercial and then industrial mode of social life.

The theory of modernity which is thus not about time, but the changes that has occurred during a period of times explained the changes that has occurred as a result of effective erasure of boundaries in pattern and clothing. This does not mean that the African cultures are neglected or put aside but that it can be merged with beautiful cultures of other countries across the globe, nevertheless, this research is about the re-invention of the European medieval paintings, invariably culture with the African paintings.

Theory of Classless Taste

The concept of taste developed in the course of the eighteenth century, together with the idea of aesthetic experience and, indeed, with what in the next century would become the modern idea of art. Kant located taste in a mental faculty of aesthetic judgment, establishing the beauty (or sublimity) of some object of sense experience as a property of the human subject's response to it. Similarly, Hume took taste to be a matter of "the common sentiments of human nature" excited by objects of beauty. Beside these philosophically canonical authors stand the writers of essays, pamphlets, poems, and treatises exploring taste as a human response to the worlds of nature and art. What they all share is the idea that taste represents a natural response of human beings to sensory experience, providing a basis for judging degrees of beauty (or, as a more recent terminology has it, of quality). Although it has lost its preeminent place as a philosophical concept, taste remains an important category of everyday life, both to describe the range of human preferences and to serve as a standard for judging those preferences. However universal the faculty of judgment may be, tastes notoriously differ. Furthermore, difference in so class society operates implies inequality, and to the ranking of objects corresponds a hierarchy of subjects, from the sensitive and knowledgeable connoisseur to the ill-informed vulgarian. As Pierre Bourdieu puts it, "taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier."

Those who have taste recognize others like themselves by their agreement on judgments of quality, or at least by disagreements within an accepted range of preferences. In this way judgments of taste produce social classifications. This is particularly true, Bourdieu argues, with respect to taste in art. Since the capacity for a judgment of taste about a work of art requires knowledge of its place within the array of objects and performances making up the domain of art, and thus a familiarity with that domain, the capacity for aesthetic experience depends on certain formative experiences, having art in the home or being around artists; being encouraged in artistic activity at school; visiting museums and attending concerts, etc. A simple example of familiarity with art is the presence of small art museums at elite universities in the United States, and their absence from lower-class schools. Even if many students at Harvard, Mount Holyoke, or Berkeley never visit their campus collection, the fact that the collections are there to be visited corresponds to the high likelihood that students at those institutions will have grown up in households taking an acquaintance with art and its history for granted, just as that fact helps to maintain that likelihood.

Research Method

This study was carried out through the collection of materials and information obtained from several online sources. It is an explorative and experimental research. The data was translated, evaluated and transformed into visual forms and juxtaposed to obtain the desired theme. The researcher made several trips to consult with great scholars and my supervisor to enquire about the medieval structures and costumes. Models from the Southern parts of Nigeria were employed as references and several sketches in varying positions and attitudes were done to achieve the forms. The internet also played a good role of providing the resource costumes in visual forms. Several painting materials, techniques, media and tools were experimented on while carrying out this study with the aim of contributing reference at museums, galleries, schools where it could be used as teaching and learning aid. The media used in carrying out this research are; oil on canvas, water colour, calcium, acrylic on canvas, mixed media, pen drawings and cards.

The Techniques and Production Process Used In This Research Work

The technique employed by the researcher in creating paintings that reflects Africa in medieval times; a reinvention of medieval paintings using African forms. The researcher employed various methods to obtain information for this study. The internet was a major source of data collection. The researcher consulted various websites to get relevant information on the medieval forms and costumes. Research was made on European medieval costumes and the medieval culture as well as African forms and costumes and this was fused with the African forms. The researcher consulted several magazines, encyclopedia of arts to get relevant information on African art and medieval art. Art text books, books on fashion and modern art were another source of collecting information for this research work. The researcher randomly employed male and female models from various ethnic groups in Nigeria to model for this research work.

This research work was carried out in realism and abstract styles, the researcher used various media such as oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas, water colour on paper, mixed media, acrylic on canvas and other forms of expressions. Imaginative approach was also used to execute the works this gave room for proper visual expression and fusion of medieval cultures/costumes and African forms. Lots of sketches were made as experimental to obtain the actual concept and eventually proper drawings were made.

Step 1; Visualization of Concepts:

This is the stage where the researcher visualizes his ideas and concepts by making various sketches of medieval costumes, ruffed collars and African forms. A sketch is a rapidly executed freehand drawing that is not usually intended as a finished work. Several life sketches of models were also made and fused with medieval costumes. At the experimental stage lots of sketches were made before the actual drawing was chosen and drawn on the prepared canvas by the researcher. Drawing is the art or technique of producing images on a surface, by means of marks, usually of ink, or chalk. In this case the drawings were made on canvases and cardboard papers.



Plate 1: Drawing for Painting I,
Ufuoma Isiavwe, 2017



Plate 2: Drawing for Painting II,
Ufuoma Isiavwe, 2017

Application of Colours

Colour is the sensation or effect produced in the eyes by rays of decomposed light. The researchers prepared lots of Colours on his palette and created several tones for each colour thereby creating varieties of shades and tints for each colour. He mixes his colours on a palette. A palette is a thin oval or rectangular board or tablet that a painter holds and mixes pigments on. While mixing Colours for the painting the researcher discovered that it is often not easy to get the exact shade that he had mixed previously, it is very important when mixing colours to mix in sufficient quantity. He mixed his water colour and acrylic paints with water and mixed his oil paints with linseed oil, these colour mixture were done on a large palette using palette knives and the colours were applied on the surfaces with soft brushes of different sizes and palette knife.



Plate 3 and plate 4: Oil colour painting II in progress, Ufuoma Isiavwe, 2017

Analysis of Some Works

Plate 6: The soul of Africa, oil on canvas, 90cm by 120cm, 2019

This is a portrait painting of an African female dressed in European medieval costume done in a realist approach. The eye lashes were done in details as well as the iris and eye pupil. The lower lips were built up with a tinted shade of cadmium red. Looking soft and calm, the effect of dark and light contrast shows realistic appeal. The upper lips was built with a contrast of burnt sienna and black. The dark well hair-cut depicts a typical afro hairstyle with a pattern to the right corner of her hair. The head is oval in shape, the fore head has a highlight reflection. The smoothness and looks in her face depict tenderness as she tends to gaze into the mind of the viewer with her eyes looking directly with affirmation. The face was painted with

varying shades and tints of burnt sienna and umber. The light reflects from the front directly to her face creating a glowing effect of light and dark contrast on the face. The face was painted very realistically and with much detail, the lines on her lips, reflection on her eyes and the intricate details of her eye lashes. The face was painted in two layers or foundation giving a base for the face and making the skin have a glowing and luminosity effect. The body of the portrait is in quarter view.

The robe she is wearing is dominated mostly with ivory black which has certain sections of designs in red and a golden like petal of embroidery, She wears a ruff collar around her neck; the ruff collar is decorative and fashionable flowing from the back of one ear all the way to the chin and then to the other ear, this was painted with varying shades and tints of white and black creating a dignified and royalty look showing wealth and sophistication. The texture in the work can be seen and felt as most part of the work was built with palette knife. Some parts are quite smooth as the colours used were was effectively blended from one transition to the other.

The background of the painting has several patches of primary, secondary, intermediate colours and lots of grey shades, these colours were laid on the canvas with a palette knife creating a certain impasto effect. The composition was arranged in an orderly manner on the pictorial surface, the figure poses calmly in the middle of the canvas looking directly at the viewers.

The painting has a dignified and exotic look, the dark robe with the red and gold embroidery like designs. The ruff greyish collar makes her look young, youthful, radiant and refreshing.

This painting effectively depicts a young African woman in a European medieval costume, building a medieval African. The painting takes the viewer into a time scenario of viewing Africa in medieval times in a detailed form, the lady poses a dignified African European look. This composition effectively infused the European costume and African form thereby creating a successful fusion of the Medieval African culture. This painting effectively depicts a young African woman in a European medieval costume.

Plate 7: Mycha- Game of thrones, Acrylic on canvas, 90cm by 120cm, Ufuoma Isiavwe, 2019

This is a painting of a young girl with a black cap. The face of the figure is in a perfect oval shape, beneath the chin is the underscore by the cap ribbon rubbing against the cheek, the eye brow is in a dark curved structure right above the eyes, the forehead is revealed right after the cap, the hair right after the cap is drawn back tight; the gazing looks of the eyes as if it is an unpleasant or inquisitive look into the viewer make its remarkable. The face is painted with varying shades and tints of purple which and a touch of tinted orange towards the eye, nose and mouth region symbolizing royalty and wealth.



Plate 8: Mona Lisa, Acrylic on canvas, 90cm by 120cm, Ufuoma Isiavwe, 2019

This painting depicts an African European Medieval version of the famous Monalisa painting executed originally by Leonardo Da Vinci. The form and facial structure is that of an African. The painting is done with a realistic portrait approach, the brush strokes are visible on the robe she is putting on. The effect of the palette knife used laid impasto effect thereby by giving a high-rise effect. The face has several colours which were carefully integrated and blended together to have a smooth effect on the face,

an artistic technique that uses subtle gradations of light and dark to paint the human face. This work was painted on a primed canvas of 36" by 48" inches using various tints and shades of several oil colours. The veil was painted in details, the drapery of the robe was expressed in detail. The woman painted has an unfathomable and perplexing expression on her face.

In this painting, the artist used perspective at the background to create an illusion of space and depth, setting the composition and lighting such that the subject appears bold and radiant. The model is posed in three quarter view and a half-length portrait, the woman's arms and hands are displayed in a diagonal and horizontal manner overlapping each other, the image shows from the head to the waist region, sitting comfortably in a chair, her arms rest on the arm of the chair. Two fragmentary columns frame her thereby creating a window effect that looks out over the landscape behind her. The eyes of the figure were painted with blue and black in a way that it seem the woman's eyes appear to follow the viewer's wherever they may be standing.

Triangular figure towards the head, the portrait is highlighted with the use of high light. Her face and chest radiate in tinted light colours but her lengthy braided hair was painted majorly with black and strokes of orange, red and tinted blue, giving it a subtle effect of lighting. A variety of techniques was used in the application of colours. The sfumato (blending of colours without any defined boundaries). The background is an aerial view, with two horizons showing perspective. The work shows a multi coloured lace like a muffler on a colourful gown. She has her arm rested on an arm rest with the other hand draping gracefully on that arm. She is posed in a three quarter view looking straight at the viewer.



Plate 9: Unveiled Beauty, Mixed media on canvas, 90cm by 120cm, Ufuoma Isiavwe, 2019

This is a portrait painting of a dark African girl in a rich medieval costume. This work reveals a detailed exploration of varying shades, tints and colour application techniques. The face has a dominating colour of burnt sienna and burnt umber in tints and shades, the girl is in a clam mood, oval shaped head, light reflects from the left and the centre of the figure. The low cut hair is spiced with interesting tones of purple, blue, orange and green, the contrast is amazing as the sides of the face has a shade and light reflects directly on the face, the eye lashes are shown in tiny strands of dark and flipping backwards. The lips have bright tones at the middle and dark shades at the tip end.

The face was painted with brush in a manner that it has a smooth texture and realistic effect, the black robe was painted using palette knife and the effect is a massively laid impasto effect. Various shades and tints green, purple, blues, and other colours were designed in a square form using the impasto method on the robe. The layers of multiple colours on the black robe reflect wealth and royalty. The looks of the girl show youthfulness and angelic appeal.

The composition is in horizontal form; a greater hue used in this work was the burnt umber and burnt sienna fused in with many other colours in a systematic way. The face has a smooth blend and textures. The dark and light tones of red lines, blue, black, purple and other colours were laid side by side and some smudge to create a rainbow-like single stroke effect.

Textures can be seen and felt as they are the quality of the surface of a form or object. The textures of the robe are raised and highly visible as the light tone and dark background creates a high and low effect due to the impasto created by the palette knife and the brush strokes are visible.

Conclusion

This was an explorative and experimental research as the data was translated, evaluated and transformed into visual forms and juxtaposed to obtain the desired theme. Various data and information were obtained majorly from the internet to get relevant information on the medieval costumes and the medieval culture as well as African forms. Also, magazines, encyclopedia, Art textbooks on fashion and modern art were other sources where information was collected for the research work. The research work was also carried out in realism and abstract styles and various media such as oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas, water colour on paper, mixed media and other forms of expressions.

The researcher has succeeded in taking the audience and viewers through a different dimension of visual appreciation and excursion through an inventive and recreated society of African Medieval times. This takes the viewer's away from the conventional art forms of painting to a fine blend of medieval costumes and African forms. The intention of this research work has been achieved by the researcher as he was able to successfully create a fusion between the European medieval mode of dressing (costumes) and the African forms, this is achieved in paintings using oil, acrylic, water colour and pen-ink on surfaces such as canvas and papers. Models from the East and west of Nigeria modelled for the researcher to enable him make sufficient references. The finished work looks so fascinating; the radiant African facial looks, woven hair, some in low afro cut, the curves on the lips and the European round ruff collar which was made popular by Queen Elizabeth the 1st, protruding right below the chin of the figures and the Elaborate decorated gown worn by the medieval people

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