

Exploration of Paper Stenciling as Matrix for Portraits Prints of four selected Nigeria's Past Presidents

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Abstract

The 'Matrix' is a surface where original art is prepared, and from which duplicates can be made via impression on surfaces such as paper, fabrics and even walls. Matrixes can be in form of wood, metal, leaf, and even chemical coatings such as emulsions. Paper has not been considered as an effective media for preparing art for prints on another surface. This is as a result of the emergence of digital printing technologies. Therefore, this study focused on experimenting with paper as matrixes in preparation of stencils for layered printing of colours, to make images of past Nigeria's presidents. There has been an outright neglect of paper stencil as a medium for image printing. The research design used was the Practice led Research (PLR).

Keywords: Print making, Matrix, Paper stenciling, Nigeria, Past Presidents

Introduction

Printmaking is an art form in which ink or other materials are transferred from a matrix: that is copper, zinc (etching), stone (lithography), blocks of wood (woodcuts), linoleum (lino cuts), fabric (silk screen), or other materials to a material like paper, fabric, wood, or stone. A wide variety of techniques can be used in printmaking, and this art is one of the oldest in the world. Printmaking can be divided into four basic categories: relief, intaglio, planography, and stencil. Relief printmaking is one of the simplest types of printmaking, in which material is carved or taken away from around the protruding design that is to be printed so that only the design appears. Intaglio printmaking is the reverse of relief printmaking, in that the design is carved in a way to hold the ink, and then printed that way.

Ostrowitzs (2009) avers that printmaking uses some kind of ink or paint to make the design on a surface whether it is paper, cloth, or another medium. Printmaking originated in China after paper was invented (about 105 AD), while relief printing first flourished in Europe in the 15th century, when the process of papermaking was imported from the East. Since then relief printing has been augmented by the various techniques described earlier, and printmaking has continued to be practiced as one of the fine arts. Print is fundamentally, any image which can be reproduced.

Printmaking is "an Art form consisting of the production of images, usually on paper but occasionally on fabric, parchment, plastic, or other support, by various techniques of multiplication, under the direct supervision of or by the hand of the artist. Such fine prints are considered original works of art, even though they can exist in multiple copies". The major techniques are relief printing, where the background is cut away, leaving a raised image; intaglio printing, where the image is incised directly into the plate; surface printing such as lithography, where the image is painted or drawn onto a stone; and stencil printing, where the design is cut out and printed by spraying paint or

ink through the stencil. The history of printmaking parallels the history of art and is one of the oldest art forms (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008).

Printmaking is also the process of producing “multiple originals” of an original artwork on to a support surface. Printmaking as a fine art is not the same as “making prints;” mechanical reproductions of artwork through an ink jet printer. Instead of manufacturing duplicates, the artist creates more than one original print from a single original surface or a matrix. The images are then reproduced on paper, fabric, plastic, or other support surfaces through a process of printing. Similarly, monotyping follows a similar process but produces only one unique print. The notion of printmaking can be traced back to the earliest stencils on cave walls. Later on, around 500 BC, Japanese artists created stencils using paper and human hair. Woodcutting appeared in China as early as the fifth century AD. The arts that comprise printmaking such as silk screening, engraving, etching, wood cutting, and lithography, continued to evolve mostly in Asia and Europe throughout the following centuries, (Bomb Magazine (1981).

“The matrix” in printmaking is practically a surface on which a design is prepared before being transferred through pressure to a receiving surface such as paper (Getlein, 2004, 187). Materials such as wood, rubber, paper, or metal, can be deployed as matrix for printmaking. In relief printing, the matrix is carved away to create a raised image, which prints in reverse. Intaglio printing involves incision of the matrix, while planographic techniques like lithography use specially treated flat plates, with the ink adhering to some areas and not others. The use of stencils and screen printing tools is also a form of print making. Classically, Printmaking is used for visual art, not the reproduction of text. The matrix is the original artwork and the prints or impressions are copies in the technical sense, but they are often treated as original works of art. Rather than being copies of existing works in other media, like photographs of paintings, impressions are actually individual works of art created with the use of the tool.

In this study, stencil paper was chosen as a medium of creative expression, because of the quest to explore printmaking techniques that was sidelined by some graphics student, and stenciling as a case study is one of the fastest technique of printmaking which has been sidelined by graphics artists. In Nigeria over the years, Nigerian artists have exhausted printmaking technique such as wood, lino and screen methods in generation of imagery for their printmaking courses, thereby eluding paper stencil technique.

Printmaking is becoming obscured; this could be as a result of Modern printing technology which has also brought about the neglect towards stencil cut in this area. The advent of computer in particular, has provided quicker ways of generating imagery. The neglect ought not to be so because both manual and digital production of art, have their advantages and disadvantages. Some experts in the field of fine arts disregard stencil cut as a form of matrix. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the technique in this study.

Therefore, the exploration of stencil printmaking was chosen after some observation made about the outright neglect on the use of paper as a medium to generate images for stencil printmaking.

Purpose of the Study

This research aimed at exploring stencil paper technique in the production of images of four past Nigerian Presidents in full process colour, with the following objectives include;

- 1 To project paper stenciling as a viable technique of printmaking
- 2 To popularize stenciling as part of printmaking among the staff and students in the Department of Fine and Applied arts in Nigeria
- 3 To present the outcome of the exploration in an exhibition format, and also as a written project

Review of Related Literature

Much has been written about printmaking and printmaking techniques. As such printmaking has attracted various forms of reaction right from the beginning. Ojialor (2008) in his words, described screen printing as one of the techniques that were originally called silkscreen printing and were discovered when production of images were done through a process known as stenciling. But stenciling is a process done by forcing a color or ink through an aperture or a shape cut through stiff paper into a plain material. More also, stenciling is good at sharp designs and the quest to achieve sophisticated designs with tones led to development of screen printing using a design cut on paper or other materials. Another author Walker (1980) asserts that printmaking is the process of transferring an image from one material to another which involves two surfaces made to touch each other to produce an impression. In stencil prints, transferring of images is from stenciled paper to plane paper. Stencil making also gives an excellent introduction to silk-screen printing which is a more complex form of the stencil process. Further, William (2003), described digital prints as the savings in labor, and the ever increasing capability of digital presses means that digital printing is reaching the point where it can match or supersede offset printing technology's ability to produce larger prints runs of several thousand sheets at a low price. The "savings in labor" here according to William unveils the reasons for the abandoned approach on stencil cut.

In another development, Akpulu (1999) reiterates that the basic reason for using a silk-screen is that loose stencils easily adhere to the screen mesh and remain in position while been printed. In addition, it is also a method more detailed shapes or design effectively and easily in large numbers. This study is similar to stenciling, but differs in methods of transfer of image on substrates. While screen printing employs mesh screen, constructed base and squeegee, stenciling employs dabbing on cut-out spaces on fabrics, papers or any other surfaces with the use of special inks and squeegee.

Merriam (2013) refers to printmaking as an art form consisting of the production of images, usually on paper but occasionally on fabric, parchment, plastic, or other support, by various techniques of multiplication, under the direct supervision of or by the hand of the artist. Such fine prints are considered original works of art, even though they can exist in multiple copies. The major techniques are relief printing, where the background is cut away, leaving a raised image; intaglio printing, where the image is incised directly into the plate; surface printing such as lithography, where the image is painted or drawn onto a stone; and stencil cut as course of study, is referred to as printing, where the design is cut out and printed by spraying paint or ink through the stencil. The history of printmaking parallels the history of art and is one of the oldest art forms.

Merianne, Horlesberger, El Nawawi, Tarek .and Khalil (2007), situate that the greatest difference between digital printing and manual/stencil prints is that there is no need replacing the printing plates in digital printing, where as in manual/stencil prints the

original copy is repeatedly used to produce multiple prints. And this results in quicker turnaround time and lower cost when using digital printing, but typically a loss of some fine-image detail by most commercial digital printing processes. The most popular methods includes inkjet or laser printers that deposit pigments on a wide variety of substrates including paper, photo paper, canvas, glass, metal, marble and other substances.

In a published material created to Zoo Town Arts Community Centre (2013) points out differences in production methods between screen printing technique and a large stencil. In screen printing different techniques are used to create, what is basically, a large stencil. The image receives ink and the inked image is transferred to paper using pressure. Pressure is applied using a printing press, through hand burnishing or, in the case of screen printing, with a squeegee. These basic printmaking processes can be repeated, producing nearly exact copies.

Getlein (2008) describes the making of woodcut as a technique whereby the artist will first draw the desired image on a block of wood. Then all the areas that are not meant to print are cut and gouged out of the wood so that the image stands out in relief. When the block is inked, only the raised areas take the ink. Finally, the block is pressed on paper, or paper is placed on the block and rubbed to transfer the ink and make the print. While in stencil is both the resulting image or pattern and the intermediate object; the context in which *stencil* is used makes clear which meaning is intended. In practice, the (object) stencil is usually a thin sheet of material, such as paper, plastic, wood or metal, with letters or a design cut from it, used to produce the letters or design on an underlying surface by applying pigment through the cut-out holes in the material.

Stencils can be made with one or many color layers using different techniques, with most stencils designed to be applied as solid colors. Nevertheless, stencil techniques involve manipulation of colors in various styles like spraying of colors, dabbing of colors and painting with brushes.

Ogumor (1993), identified four major types of printmaking methods; they are relief, intaglio, planography, screen printing, stencil cut. If all these techniques are printmaking techniques why then some or more of artists sideline the use of stencil technique as one of the tools used in production of images. In our view, therefore, it is expedient to introduce the use of stencil as one of the tools to disseminate information and ideas in the field of art. Riggs (1963) wrote extensively on wood as one of the major printmaking media. For him, mixing of techniques cannot be judiciously done unless the unique qualities of each medium are appreciated. But in stencil, the most appreciating key advantage of a stencil is that it can be reused to repeatedly and rapidly produce the same letters or design. Although painting stencils can be made for one-time use, typically they are made with the intention of being reused. To be reusable, they must remain intact after a design is produced and the stencil is removed from the work surface. With some designs, this is done by connecting stencil islands (sections of material that are inside cut-out "holes" in the stencil) to other parts of the stencil with bridges (narrow sections of material that are not cut out).

Oloidi (2000) in tracing the history of printmaking in Nigeria, avers that printmaking as a major study in graphics dates back to the late fifties when it was studied at the Nigerian college of arts, science and technology, now Ahmadu Bello University and the Yaba Institute, now Yaba College of Technology. By the early 1960s and with the Onabrakpeya workshop experience, Nigeria had already produced some artists who

were known for printmaking. Some of these were AjayiBayo, , Akin Salu, Wangboje, S.I Oshinga, O. Ajayi, Ayo, Odita E, Amaefuna V.C, Bruce Onabrakpeya, OlajideOshiga, Ayo Ajayi, Emmanuel Odita, V.C Amaefuna among others. After the civil war, a recognized and defined mode of expression based on the use of *Uli* motifs and iconography emerged. The *Uli* motifs were inspirational stepping stones to the development of printmaking. It helped the printmakers produce prints that were conceptually intellectual, formalistic, strongly propagandist and a political weapon for life's experience.

Curlee and Linda in EPI "Experimental Printmaking Institute" (2014) has been passionately committed to advancing the printmaking process as a dynamic and relevant art form for purposes of cultural and creative engagement. The inherent nature of the printmaking medium encourages a communal participation by artists and students alike. These artists use traditional printmaking techniques in concert with experimental approaches as a means of expanding our visual language. This approach to image making offers us a perfect metaphor in a world of dynamic and diverse values and perspectives." Gabor (2013) states that one of the simplest methods of duplication, the design is cut out of paper (or any other suitable thin, strong material) and is then printed by rubbing, rolling, or spraying paint through the cutout areas.

Generally, printmaking involves two surfaces made to come in one contact with each other, in order to produce an impression. The two surfaces are the one bearing the image and the one to which the image is transferred. Another important fact is that in the process of making the two surfaces touch each other, pressure is applied. In the case of stencil cut, less pressure is used. Printmaking is the most common process utilized by artists in all cultures in creating and spreading ideas and quotidian images.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Plato's Mimesis, which he coined 'the imitation of imitators'. **Mimesis** is one of the basic theoretical principles in the creation of art. The word is Greek and means "imitation" (though in the sense of "re-presentation" rather than of "copying"). Plato and Aristotle spoke of mimesis as the re-presentation of nature. According to Plato, all artistic creation is a form of imitation: that which really exists (Britannica, 2015). Again, Plato belongs to a mimetic tradition that considers art as a copy or imitation of the natural world. The main concern of this tradition is the study of the relationship between art and nature (Adams, 1971). According to Juan-Navarro (2007), Plato developed an idealistic doctrine which opposed the permanent ambit of the eternal forms to the mutability of the material world. In this context the artist's goal would be the reproduction of the universe of appearances that we perceive through our senses. Access to the superior realm of the Ideas is the exclusive privilege of the philosopher. The artist is simply an imitator of imitators. In this context, although images of these leaders were not copied directly from poses, the pictures which were used to prepare printing matrixes are the true reflection of these Nigerian leaders. Again there was no question of resemblance as the cuts on the stencils aided in achieving resembling print copies of the selected presidents

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research follows a qualitative design, with exploratory procedure that involves materials and practical studio work, thereby adopting the Practiced Based Research (PBR).

Sources of Data

A source of data for this research was gathered through both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were mainly oral sources such as oral interviews, observation and focused group discussions. While the secondary sources are mainly written sources which include; books, journals, newspaper, internet sources among others.

Population of the Study

The population consists of only selected four past presidents of Nigeria; Rt Hon. Namdi Azikiwe, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

Materials

The following are the materials used for the research; paper, stencil, cutter knife, masking tape, nylon tape, textile ink, printer, laptop computer, CorelDraw 13 software application, foam, and frames.

Production Stages

Stage 1; First, the images were downloaded from google and transferred to computer. It is then edited with adobe photo shop and CorelDraw software where the relevant tones were applied. The image is then printed out on A3 cardboard paper. The registration marks are marked out in order to centralize the image while superimposing different colors that made-up the image



Plate 1: High resolution picture of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. Source: google.com



Plate 2: Photo of Alhaji Dr. Umaru Musa Yar' Adua. Source: google.com



Plate 3: Photo of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Source:google.com



Plate 4: High Resolution image of Alhaji Shehu Shagari 2016,
Medium; Paper Size; A3, Source; google.com

For the stage 1 picture of Alhaji Shehu Shagari was downloaded through google.com. The image is then edited with coral draw software before pasting on micro soft word.

Stage 2: This is the stage whereby the outline is been indicated, for without the indication of the outline, during stencil cut there will be mistake of where the first color, second, and final color should be. It is called first stencil outline. After marking the registration marks, transparent tapes were used to cover the image before cutting the stencils else it will tear the paper. The use of transparent tape was applied on paper stencils so that they can be used again and again. The one just printed, can become a long term free stencil. It's easy. The tape was used to run even strips covering all of the paper surfaces before cutting out the stencil. Burnish or rub the tape down to get the air pockets out. When cutting the stencils, some tags or bridges were left to hold the areas that were not cut out.

Stage 3 is the intermediate stage where the third colour should come in between the first and second colour to give it a more definition before the last colour that is black.



Plate 5: Stage 3, marking the midtone colours with a black marker. Medium; Paper. Size; A3. Photo: Nneka Nwafor



Plate 6; Marking black outline on the printed photo of Shehu Shagari. Medium; Paper size; A3. Photo: Nneka Nwafor

Stage 4: this outline comes at last; it also serves as darkest tone.



Plate 7: The first cutting of the marked lines.
Paper Size; 8by7 inches. Photo: Nneka Nwafor

Stage 5 comes after the lamination of the printed image on the paper. It is called first cutting stage where the marked ink lines are cut with stencil blade. the basic colour will be applied



Plate 8: First cutting stage, A3 paper, Photo: Nneka Nwafor

Stage 6 shows the process of cutting after the printout, it is basic outline cutting before dabbing. The entire background is removed where the lightest tone of colour will be printed. The picture is secured with transparent tape on the paper surface before cutting.



Plate 9: Cutting of the dark mid-tone sections with the registration marks.
Photo credit: Chidiebere Onwuekwe

This stage pictures the second stencil cut which will serve as the intermediate colour. The registration marks are visibly situated on the four edges of the two dimensional surface where they will serve both aesthetic and utilitarian purposes



Plate 10: stencil cut on paper for the outline print, A3, photo by Nneka Nwafor
Stage 8 happen to be the final stencil cut stage where the black colour will be printed



Plate 11: mixing of colours, photo by Chidiebere Onwuekwe

Here mixing of second and third order of colours shortly before the print is important. Certain colours such as green, yellow-orange, brown, sky blue, and others, are mixed before printing through the matrixes. After cutting the stencil of the three images, colors of textile ink were mixed to get the desired colors, pieces of foam were used to dab the image. The open sections of a stencil are called islands. These are the areas that allow color to be applied on the surface under the stencil. Bridges are the stencil material that separates the islands and keeps the shape of a stencil. These areas block color or paint from reaching the surface. After dabbing the first stenciled image on a plain white background, it is then removed and allowed to dry.



Plate12: dabbing stage, photo by Chidiebere Onwuekwe, 2013

Herein illustrates dabbing processes over the stenciled areas by means of application of base colours. The first prints are usually light colours such as yellow, sky blue and lemon, and so on.



Plate 13: Second print superimposed on light brown it serves as the mid tone of the image. Photo: Nneka Nwafor, 2013.

Stage 13: This Stage is a stage where the second stencil paper is super-imposed on the base colour, Then the brown colour is dabbed with a piece of foam on the super-imposed paper which reveals the mid tone (dark brown).The second stenciled image is superimposed on the first prints following the registration marks else the image will be undefined. It is then dabbed with another piece of foam using the second desired color, and finally, the darkest color was applied to bring out the finished Stencil produces an image or pattern by applying pigment to a surface over an intermediate object with designed gaps in it which create the pattern or image by only allowing the pigment to reach some parts of the surface.

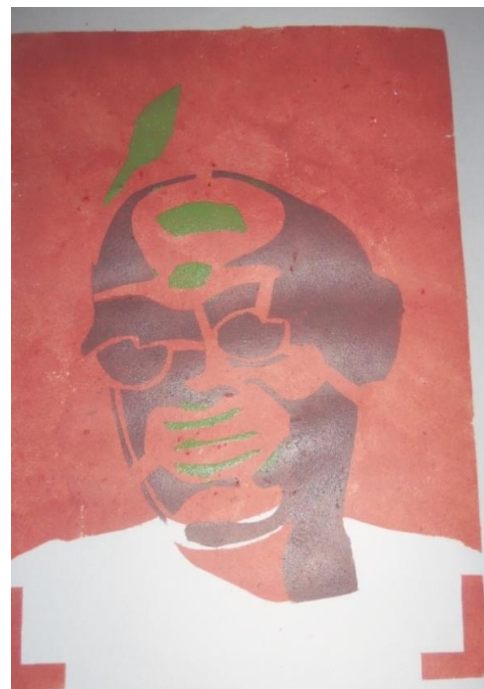


Plate 14: Second mid-tone, photograph: Nneka Nwafor



The stencil is both the resulting image or pattern and the intermediate object; the context in which stencil is used makes clear which meaning is intended. In practice, the (object) stencil is usually a thin sheet of material, such as paper, plastic, wood or metal, with letters or a design cut from it, used to produce the letters or design on an underlying surface by applying pigment through the cut-out holes in the material. Stenciling is a method of transferring, printing or brushing over a perforated plate or sheet to another surface.

Plate 15: Completed prints with colours adequately superimposed.
Photo: Nneka Nwafor, 2013

Stage 14; The second intermediate colour is introduced and it reveals the original resemblance unlike the previous prints of only three colors. In stage 15, the end print which serves as the last stage of the print, the black introduced here indicates the dark areas of the image and finally reveals the original resemblance of Alhaji Shehu Shagari.

Hermeneutical Presentation and Analysis of Works

This chapter centers on hermeneutical presentation of finished works, based on form, content, techniques and print style. Again, there will be brief historical overview of lives and works of these past Nigerian Presidents used as samples:



Plate16: Print portrait of Rt. Hon; Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. Photo: Chidiebere Onwuekwe

Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904-1996), Nigerian politician, founder of modern Nigerian nationalism and first president of Nigeria (1963-66). Born at Zungeru, the son of an Igbo clerk, Azikiwe was educated in Nigeria and the United States. In 1937 he founded a newspaper chain, and in 1946 he became president of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. He was premier in Igbo-dominated Eastern Region (1954-59), then Governor General, and later President. Following the military coup of 1966, Azikiwe was adviser to the Igbo secessionist state of Biafra. He was Chancellor the University of Lagos from 1972 to 1975 and ran unsuccessfully for president in 1979.

Nnamdi Azikiwe was an important nationalist figure in colonial Nigeria and became the first president of independent Nigeria in 1963. Throughout the early 20th century, Nigerians found many ways to oppose foreign rule. Local armed revolts, concentrated in the middle belt, broke out sporadically and intensified during World War I (1914-1918). Workers in mines, railways, and public service often went on strike over poor wages and working conditions, including a large general action in 1945, when 30,000 workers stopped commerce for 37 days. Ire over taxation prompted other conflicts, including a battle in 1929 fought mainly by Igbo women in the Aba area. More common was passive resistance: avoiding being counted in the census, working at a slow pace, telling stories ridiculing colonists and colonialism. A few political groups also formed to campaign for independence, including the National Congress and the National Democratic Party, but their success was slight. In 1937 the growing movement was given a voice by Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo nationalist, who founded the newspaper *West African Pilot*.

World War II (1939-1945), in which many Nigerians fought for, or otherwise aided Britain, increased the pace of nationalism. The growing anticolonial feeling was most strongly articulated by two groups, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), led by Azikiwe and supported mostly by Igbo and other easterners, and the Action Group.

The colours applied on this image of Nnamdi Azikiwe, especially the black cap represents the true heart of Igbo culture and generally the brown and orange colours represent the human colour. The portrait of Nnamdi Azikiwe was printed with yellow base colour, two orange layers and black over print. Looking at the work, yellow creates a contrast on the face, thereby highlighting the other tones. Stencil cut for black was precise that it gives a perfect resemblance of Nnamdi Azikiwe. Strokes were cut on his clothes, giving impression of drapes. Because Zik was a civilian President, he was expected to put on mufti, which has been represented in white. The white sections implied absence of colour, meaning that they were blocked on the matrixes, such that on printing, colours would not pass through. Calibration marks are seen on the backgrounds of the work. As much as they serve the purpose of holding the colors in one spot (registration), they serve as elements of beautification as well. This technique of printmaking appears to be the easiest way of printmaking that can give the intriguing appearance in the art of graphics.



Plate 17: Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Prints. Courtesy: Nneka Nwafor

Elections for the Second Republic were held in July 1979. Most parties received votes along ethnic lines, the exception being the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), which commanded support from several corners of the country and won the most legislative seats. The NPN fell short of a majority, however, and often joined forces with the Nigerian People's Party (NPP), a mainly Igbo group led by Azikiwe. In the presidential elections, the NPN candidate Alhaji Shehu Shagari won the largest number of overall votes, plus 25 percent of the votes in 12 of the 19 states and 20 percent of the vote in a 13th state. The results provoked a brief but important constitutional crisis: Did the constitution, with its mandate for the president to win 25 percent of the vote in two-thirds of the states, require Shagari to win 25 percent in 13 whole states (which he had not done)? Or did it require him to win 25 percent in 12 and two-thirds states (which he had done)? The federal election commission ruled in favor of the latter, giving the election to Shagari and no doubt undermining the new constitution's authority.

Once in office, the new federal, state, and local governments embarked on ambitious programs of development to cure the weak economy. Although several of the initiatives were productive, many more were expensive and economically unsound. Others were riddled with corruption. In 1982 the world oil market collapsed, leaving Nigeria unable to pay its short-term debts, much less finance the projects to which it was committed. Eventually, the country was also unable to import essential goods. On New Year's Eve 1983, army officers led by Major General Muhammadu Buhari overthrew the Shagari government in a bloodless coup.

The base brown colour printed on the background also served as the first print for the portraiture. His shoulder was blocked to give suggest is civilian regalia. The motifs of his cap were carefully carves on the stencil to give a visual feel. The green parches of colour makes the work to have a special appeal as green seems unusually a highlight colour. The black prints have outlined the features of the figure, giving it a clear resemblance.



In the presidential elections in April 2007 Obasanjo's hand-picked successor, Umaru Yar'Adua, won in a landslide with about 70 percent of the vote. Opposition parties charged fraud, and international election observers described the vote process as "flawed." Yar'Adua took office in May. As head of the People's Democratic Party, Obasanjo's influence over Nigeria's government and its policies was expected to continue. But unfortunately for Yar'Adua, he passed on without completing his tenure in 2009 and his predecessor Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan took over his post.

Plate 18: Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Prints, Nneka Nwafor

The colours used in the production of this image of Yar'Adua are cyan, green, brown, and overprint black while the base colour is cyan, the intermediate colour is blue, highlighting the basic facial features of the President. The stylistic tendency of blue highlights on the face has a semblance of Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein's Pop prints, as they employed strange colours to print human faces, while the green print on the cap portrays the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Cyan sections portend optimism as witnessed in the regime of Umaru Yar'Adua, whose tenure was short-lived by his demise. Finally, the stencil technique proves to be superb in production of images, and blue colour can reveal a predictable resemblance of the figure head as it appears above.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan happen to be the immediate past president of Nigeria who handed over power to Muhammadu Buhari on 29th of May 2015. Goodluck Jonathan's date of birth records show that he was born on November 20th, 1957. He is regarded as the luckiest politician in Nigeria's history, having served as a Deputy Governor prior to December 2005 he got sworn as the governor after the erstwhile governor, Chief Alamiyesiagha was impeached. Ebele Jonathan as the Governor of Bayelsa from December 2005 to May 2007. Ebele Jonathan's fate also earned him the president of Nigeria in February 2010 when the Nigerian Senate conferred him following the hospitalisation and the eventual demise of the then President, Musa Yar'Adua.



Plate 19: Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, prints, 2013, Nneka Nwafor

According to the history of Goodluck, Ebele was born in Otueke, in the Eastern region of River State which has now become Bayelsa State. Jonathan obtained a BSC in Zoology and went ahead to obtain a PhD in Zoology at the University of Port-Harcourt.

Former president Goodluck has worked as an Education Inspector and an Environmental Protection Officer before joining politics in 1998. Jonathan tagged himself “the most criticized president in the world” many Nigerians believed he was speaking the truth as most of his economic policies were outrightly rejected and criticized for lacking “human face”. The outright rejection of fuel subsidy removal policy, for instance is one of such. Goodluck happened to be the best to practice democracy in the world by accepting defeat by Muhammadu Buhari, during the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria, and even as the incumbent president.

In this picture of Goodluck, the use of colour here implies the fairness of Goodluck to all Nigerian's, Basically the colours are brown, yellow and overprint black. Because of precise stencil cuts, the resemblance has been consistent. The print is sharp, flat and easier than wood or linoleum print.

Summary

This study focused on the making of print portraits of some Nigeria's past Presidents, using the stenciling technique as the media for creative resource. Pictures of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, and Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, were chosen for the exploration. Each photo was downloaded from google.com, enhanced, printed and enlarged to A3 size, photocopied into four. Each copy was marked differently, laminated, and cut subsequently with the cutter blade. Then, each stencil was printed in one spot, using different colours of varying tones, thereby creating whole new images. There was no problem of resemblance as the designs were made directly from the pictures of those great men

The exploration of stenciling was chosen after some observation made about the outright neglect on the use of paper as a medium to generate image for stencil prints. Again, stenciling process was chosen because of the pressing need to explore stencil cuts as one of the technique for printmaking, which has been sidelined by the graphics students. For the contemporary printmaker, an infinite range of possibilities are now open to them, from traditional processes dating back centuries to recent digital innovations. From this perspective, a broad overview of this technique of printmaking is shed, focusing in those key developments, which have shaped this history and consider how artists have responded to these new techniques.

Moreover, working with paper stencils has a few advantages; one can adjust the size of the paper stencil to fit the size of one's project, just take the page to a copier and reduce or enlarge, then cut out the stencil openings.

Since stencils are frequently used by official organizations, including the military, utility companies and governments to quickly and clearly label objects, vehicles and locations, it can also be applied for more elaborate designs such as for multi-coloured print making on various surfaces.

Conclusion

Over the years, the students and professionals alike have exhausted printmaking techniques such as wood, lino and screen methods in the generation of imagery for their printmaking courses, thereby eluding paper stencil technique. Conclusively, the researchers aver that is imperative to employ paper stencils as matrixes, and creative resources for more complex prints such as portraiture, commercial art, and abstract expressions. In this vein, students are encouraged to explore paper stencil as a veritable medium of artistic expression, vis-a-vis printmaking.

Since the use of wood cut has been overstretched by the majority of artist, it is then necessary to look into the use of stencil as one of the agents of graphics that holds a promise to the future. The researchers recommend to all graphics students to employ the use of stencil cut as one of the technique of printmaking that serve a unique style in the production of art

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