

Unconventional Colours and Materials: A Means to an End in Contemporary Paintings

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Abstract

Contemporary paintings have no boundary or limitations as to what colours or materials that can be used in the creative process to achieve a painting. What matters the most is the end that will be achieved in the final process and the artistic fulfillment of the painter or artist at the end of the day. Different media ranging from gouache, water colour, acrylics and oil have been used in painting by different artists as well as different supports (the surface on which a painter does his painting) such as oak wood, paper, boards, cloth materials, canvas and even glass. It is noteworthy that materials hitherto not meant for art production has been used severally in the production of art works in the visual arts. This tends to lend more credence to the functionality and action ability of such materials. For instance, materials which originally were serving non aesthetic purpose or functions are therefore, taken from their original context and incorporated into the art making process. The ability of an artist to see art materials as a vehicle through which he/she can express himself or herself, would help create room to diversify as well as source for other materials to achieve his or her aim. This paper therefore aims at helping the artists, especially the painter, see colours and materials as a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Introduction

At different times, various media ranging from gouache, water colour, acrylics and oil paint have been used in painting by different artists. Similarly, different Supports (the surface on which a painter does his painting) such as oak wood, paper, boards, cloth materials, canvas and even glass have also been used. They all have their advantages and disadvantages as materials which artists have used or made paintings on. Genres of paintings like murals and collages have been created using things like beads, tiles, tailors off-cuts and paper cut-outs. These materials have been used at various times and they are still being used, though minimally being used today for the creation of works of art.

Galton (2002) reported that collage was product for the first time in painting in 1912 when Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) stuck a piece of oil cloth into his canvas to represent a caned chair seat. This was further explored by the cubist painters, notably Braque (1882-1963), by adding pieces of newspaper, stamped envelopes, theatre tickets and wallpaper to their paintings. The purpose opined by Galton, was to emphasize the existence of the picture as an object in its own right as opposed to an illusion of reality.

Modern artists from 19th century have continuously looked out for new materials as a means of expressing themselves. They call on every imaginative device to convey the strongest emotions. Distorted forms, convulsive lines and in some cases, raw paints were applied to objects, landscapes and even portraits as a way of portraying what they felt about what they saw. Furthermore, the socio-political and economic environment, have often driven the creative mind in search of new mode of self-expression. Egonwa (2005), avers:

The contemporary artistic expression of Africa is a necessary evolutionary result of current African artistic environment. The artistic environment encompasses the physical and psychic space accessible to the artist. This entails the tactile structures, the socio-cultural and economic condition and practices as well as ideological options (philosophical, technical or political) open to the artist. (p.2)

At different times Artists have turned out to be great inventors and discoverers as a result of their inquisitiveness which often result in their experiment with different materials. “Great artists, like scientists, are rarely satisfied with things as they are, or with what others have discovered. They are always seeking to find ways to improve on methods of painting, to describe the real world”. Willard (199, p7).

In the visual arts, the use of materials hitherto not meant for art production in the production of art works tends to lend more credence to the idea, functionality and action ability of such materials. For instance, materials which originally were serving non aesthetic purpose or functions are therefore, taken from their original context and incorporated into the art making it part of the aesthetic statement and material of expression. Buskirk (2003), corroborates this when she stated as follows:

For contemporary works of art that assume the museum or gallery as a natural context, re-contextualization is not something that happens to the work as a result of the collection process, but a technique that artists often choose to employ as a key element of the artistic process. ... in interacting with context, particularly when artists play with materials, forms and methods that are closely related to corresponding examples from non-art realms. (Like the use of ready-made), (p.14).

Using ordinary (unconventional) materials to create art (art works) is likely to have advantages and disadvantages. On one hand resulting to limiting one’s palette which might mean having to work around problems that may arise as well as relying on variable quality of the materials available. On the other hand, there is an implicit element of novelty and most likely there could be inherent opportunities for imbuing works with multiple meanings. Though these materials may be unusual but the likely results could range from conventional to extraordinary.

The use of non-art materials for the production of art works did not just start today, Cyril (2009) opined that the Modern Art Movement is the most significant example of artists pushing beyond limitations, challenging the existing paradigm to discover a new language in which to communicate and define their existence in history. The monolithic, slice-of-life concept of picture-making was no longer the norm as new approaches in handling space and form, independent of nature, were being discovered. Painters likes Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Georges Braque (1882-1963), inspired by the ground-breaking work of post-Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne (1839 – 1906), took a leading role in the redefinition of art as well as its making.

From 1908 to 1914, the two pioneers (Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque), worked collaboratively in search of an alternative form of expression, a different approach to seeing and interpreting the world. From their efforts, Cubism, an artistic vision that allows for multiple viewpoints to be shown simultaneously, was born. Renaissance-based pictorial theory was challenged for the first time, opening the floodgates to a new and more progressive ideology. According to Cyril (2009), the Cubist movement also gave birth to a more tactile approach to picture-making. With the invention of *papier collé* (collage), cut and torn paper as well as found objects/materials were then being layered and juxtaposed, often projecting from the support in a constructed relief, to realize a subject. With the introduction of matter painting, granular materials such as sand were brought into the paint mixture and applied to the working surface with unconventional tools, creating low-relief textural effects. Under Cubist theory, pictorial reality became multidimensional, expressed in a multimedia format. The monumental discoveries introduced by Picasso and Braque profoundly impacted the visual vanguard for decades.

The exploration of different materials hitherto not known as art materials could be traced to Artists of various time and age, the use of these new materials resulted in creating new art forms. Cyril (2009), captured this when she stated that there is an artistic revolution. She opined that no other time has seen such innovation in the way art can be intellectualized, produced and presented. Furthermore, she believed that Artists are breaking from conventional approaches, reexamining the fundamental methodology in which they work.

The dynamism of society and the quest for new mode of self-expression has often driven the artists in search of new media other than the traditional or conventional ones. The ability of an artist to see art materials as a vehicle through which he/she can express himself or herself would help create room to diversify as well as source for other materials to achieve his or her aim. Some materials that are available in our environment which hitherto have not been exploited for the purpose of painting could be sourced and used to create paintings that would be appreciated by all. Besides, these materials can serve as viable alternatives to the conventional art materials hitherto used for painting.

In painting, non-art or painting materials have been used in the production of quite a number of works in Nigeria and the world over. However, in most cases these materials were not used exclusively on their own but were often used to compliment conventional painting materials as in the case with most mixed media paintings. The resulting effect in this is that the conventional materials such as the paint-the vehicle for the colour pigments still play a primary role while the unconventional materials play a secondary role. However, it should be noted that paintings can be created without actually applying paint to the support just as there are numerous alternative materials that can be used as painting support.

Support in painting parlance means the surface on which a painter does his painting, while *Pigment* means the colour element in materials. Painting is centred on the use of colours as a means of expression and colour is the product of light and in fact its very essence.

Whatsoever materials that have been used by man for the purpose of creating art works were used because man found such materials suitable for use as art materials at one time or the other? Such materials in another context could have served a different purpose. To use the

words of Perry G. and Klein (2009), “Religions do not come from nowhere, but from us and our needs. We look around for things that fit and do the job: if we need a story to believe in, then we make one up. Harmilton (1989), states that “art works need not necessarily be representational but inventive when he posiststhus;

In the half-century between 1886, the date of the last impressionist exhibition, and the beginning of the second world war, a change took place in the theory and practice of art which was as radical and momentous as any that had occurred in human history. It was based on the belief that works of art need not imitate or represent natural objects and events. Therefore, artistic activity is not essentially concerned with representation but instead with the invention of objects various by expressiveness of human experience, and object whose structures as independent artistic entities and cannot be evaluated in terms of their likeness, nor devalued because of their lack of likeness to natural things.

Re-contextualization and its significance in the creation of art

Re-contextualization according to Linell (1998), is “the dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one discourse/text-in-context to another”. In the same vein, the Urban Dictionary (2011) says

Re-contextualization is a process that extracts text, signs or meaning from its original context (de-contextualization) in order to introduce it into another context. Since the meaning of texts and signs depend on their context, re-contextualization implies a change of meaning, and often of the communicative purpose too.

Bernstein (2000), sees re-contextualization as “a process through which knowledge is moved from one site to another”. Through re-contextualization, Bernstein feels “other discourses are appropriated and brought into a special relationship with each other, for the purpose of their selective transmission and acquisition”.

Re-contextualization’ in the visual or literal arts has to do with movement from one context to another; it implies taking from one context or use and transmitting or transferring to another context or use. This was implied by Singh when she said it is the rule or procedure by which educational knowledge is moved from one educational site to another, (Singh 1996). Buskirk moved this further to the realities in the visual art by bringing it down to materials associated with contemporary works of art. She opined that re-contextualization is not just what happens to a work of art as a result of the collection process, but rather that it is a technique employed by artists as a key element of the artistic process in interacting with context, particularly when artists experiment with materials, forms and methods that are closely related to corresponding examples from non-art realms. Buskirk (2003).

The addition of non-art materials to traditional art materials by artists is believed to have begun in the 20th century. The Spanish painter and sculptor Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) according to Visual Arts Cork, is said to be one of the first to pioneer the idea when he

affixed a printed image of chair caning onto his picture titled *Still Life with Chair Caning* in 1912. Other artist that used found objects (non-art materials) as material for paintings and sculpture in the 1910s by include were Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968). Georges Braque (1882-1963), Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948), Joseph Cornell (1903-1972) and many others that incorporated paper collage and mixed paint with drawing materials to create their artwork. In the 1940s Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) started the use of house-paint, silver and aluminum paint and various objects for his paintings. Excrement was used by artists in the 1960s and again in the 1990s, notably the Italian artists Piero Mazoni (b.1933). Nigerian born but British based artist Chris Ofili (b.1968) who specialized in using elephant dung in the 1990s



Plate 1: Chris Ofili's *The Holy Virgin Mary*, 1996, elephant dung and images of naked bottoms, 460cmx288cm. Source: <https://qz.com/441976/chris-ofilis-controversial-dung-decorated-virgin-mary-painting-sold-for-4-6-million/> Retrieved 2015

Re-contextualizing materials that were hitherto non art materials for use in art would often result in the creation of new art forms. This is supported by Buskirk (2003) when she stated that re-contextualization is ultimately more an act of authorship rather than just a physical transport. This view was also canvassed by Visual Arts Cork when it subscribed to the fact that "Modern Artists" were fed up with following the traditional academic art forms of the 18th and early 19th century, and were starting to create a range of "Modern Paintings" based on new themes, new materials, and bold new methods. Being tired of the norm, artists became inspired to test and transcend the boundaries and the limitations of the traditional and conventional forms of art making in search of newer forms and new materials.

Art grows out of each particular situation, and I believe that artists are better off working with whatever their environment throws up (Anatsui, 2003). In line with this, El Anatsui has continued to re-contextualize non art materials such as discarded milk tins, bottle covers, used printing plates and broken pots in the execution of his sculpture works whose effect when hung on the wall is very colourful almost appearing like paintings.

By re-contextualization, artists have been able to take out ordinary materials that have previously been used in other context and transformed same into another context of art making.

Improvisation in Art making

Improvisation as defined by Bertinetto (2011), “means not only an action accomplished without preparation, but also, and more importantly, the ability of doing something freely either following some rules or changing the rules or both” Bertinetto believes that by definition improvisation in the arts has two main properties which are;

- (i) Processuality. That is to say improvisations are processes in an essential sense and that what matters is mainly the process not the product of the process.
- (ii) Coincidence between creation and performance. By this he feels improvisations are a special kind of processes in which the creative (inventive idea) and the performing activities, not only occur at the same time but are the one and same generative occurrence.

In defining improvisation, Butler (2004), related it to the sense implied by the literal meaning of the term derived from Latin, to Butler improvisation is an unforeseen, unforeseeable, and unplanned activity that is driven by invention, as any creative “doing” that is voluntary or involuntary and that does not follow any predetermined plan or pattern”. Butler understands improvisation as a “practice” and therefore sees it as being defined by a scene of constraint. The word practice implies that, improvisation, though not following any particular plan, nevertheless relies on experience and repetition. It is therefore not the expression of uncurtailed freedom; Butler believes improvisation becomes a process that requires a degree of consistency by repeating and altering what has come before. Butler’s Improvisation aims at creating recognizable patterns, forms, works or other things out of what is available

Harris (2012), believes that we are living in an age in which "Improvisation" has become a motivating factor in all the arts. He believes this originally started as a reaction against stiffness and calcification which had taken the inventive spirit out of theater, dance and music in the early 20th century. According to him, it was a plea for a freedom which was hoped would revitalize new performance and new composition in arts. However, Improvisation was soon seen as more than a protest, rather it became a part of the creative spirit of the mid-20th century. Furthermore, Harris say we can no longer think of Improvisation as affecting one segment of the creative arts because he believes it is probably much nearer the core of the creative impulse than what is thought in the teaching programs in the Humanities

Furthermore, Harris states that improvisation in imaginative philosophical terms might be metaphorically described as way of stepping out of the fixed and fossilized world of the Past, standing for a moment on a tight-rope while preparing to test the waters of the Future with an exploratory toe. This to him is a mixed metaphor, but it is intentional and it is perhaps like much of life itself. Harris further avers that improvisation in one form or another is the premise of all living beings, which have to do with constantly maneuvering one way or another to escape the formal dehydration of homeostasis. It is according to Harris a condition of life for a proto-amoebea to improvise its status by splitting in two, making possible both survival and extension in the same stroke. Speaking further, Harris says Painting by its nature has to do with improvisation. The artist in his words has a rough idea to be sketched on his canvas, after that it is all testing and trial with brush from the palette as he invests time and

great care into each micro-mosaic portion of his canvas, he believes Improvisation is virtually the whole painting; there is often nothing else on the sheet. When Rembrandt in his old age stared with blurred eyes into a mirror and transferred with pigment to the easel in-exact representations of what he saw, Harris believes he was departing from his prior realistic depiction and moving into a new way of representing his mind's eye. To Harris, Rembrandt was improvised paint to look like a cloudy eye as it existed in his mirror and slowly transferred the image to his canvas.

Too much of conventions place strong constraints on the artists, this could be so constraining because they do not exist in isolation, but rather come in complexities of interdependent systems. The development of innovative materials by artists comes over a period of time by creating a body of convention that is particular to their own work.

Meecham and Sheldon (2005), opine that “what we think of as being art has changed over the course of the past century”. This was further supported by Landgrat (2011), when he stated that improvisation is about the reactive response to contingent events.

The non-availability of known art materials should not stop the creative process, by improvisation we are able to make or do something using whatever is available even if we do not have what we really need. However, even in situation where we have what we need, there could be other factors that may militate against our acquiring what we need such as exorbitant cost and the desire to create new forms of artistic expressions. This is implied by Pressing (1984) thus;

To the extent that we are unpredictable, we improvise; everything else is repeating ourselves or following orders. Improvisation is thus central to the formation of new ideas of human endeavour. Its importance experimentally rests with the magical and self-liberating qualities. Its importance scientifically is that it presents us with the clearest, least-edited version of how we think, encoded in behaviour.

Cyril (2011), also believes that with every aesthetic exploration, the pictorial surface is reinvented, embracing alternative way to provoke, engage and communicate with an audience. Speaking about the resourceful artist, he concludes that to foster creative innovation, artists must continue to look beyond their own processes and approaches, being observant, resourceful and open to the myriad of possibilities outside the confines of the studio. From the construction, medical and automotive industries to the fashion, textile and culinary arts, a vast array of alternative surfaces, materials and tools can be repurposed and assimilated into the visual vernacular. She concluded that defying convention often open the door to creative ingenuity.

Similarly, Treep (2014), says “the art of improvisation gives the artist the freedom to think out of the box”, out of his own habits. Treep believes Improvisation provides the artist the avenue to excel in creativity. He sees improvisation as a technique, to change on the spot, using the unforeseen in what he called a happy accident. He believes that, with improvisation

the artists can use accidents to create a piece of art that becomes personal and shaped by the artists' decisions.

Non-Pigment Colours

The term non pigment colour as used in this text is subjective, and by implication refers to colours that are contained in non-paint materials. By extension, it refers to the colours of materials that can be selected or sourced by artists to be used to create paintings. They could include colours of rubber slippers, drinking straws, shoe laces ribbons among others. These are different from the conventional colour pigments.

Colour is the appearance that things have that result from the way in which they reflect light (Hornby, 2006). Similarly, Geddes and Grosset (2010), define colour as the eye's perception of wave lengths of light. Furthermore, they opined that different colours should correspond to different wave lengths. The ability of objects to appear different depends on their different abilities to absorb, emit or reflect light of different wave lengths. The present colour of any object often is as a result of its intrinsic coloration or colours applied as paints or dye. This appearance may have altered since application due to degradations

The first known pigments that were used as colouring materials were raw natural materials such as coloured clay, earth minerals, and plant or animal products. These naturally occurring materials were further refined with the addition of new colours that were introduced in the form of man-made compounds. The new colours were formulated from minerals and metal ores. Prior to the introduction of conventional colours man depended on what may be referred to as non-pigment colours derived from the natural environment. Earth pigments are naturally occurring minerals, they consist principally of iron oxides that people have used in paints for thousands of years for their natural color.



Plate 2: Natural Pigments: Ochres and Sienna, Source: www.unearthedpaints.com (2015)

These natural pigments are found in rocks and soils around the world, where the combinations of different minerals create vibrant colors that are unique to the regional landscapes. Some earth pigments are roasted in order to intensify their colour. Earth

pigments include ochers, sienna, and umbers. The hues produced by earth pigments are often soft, uniquely vibrant and have naturally harmonious interiors.



Plate 3: Natural Pigments: Umbers, Source: www.uneearthedpaints.com (2015)

One of the non-pigment colour that have been used over the years is Sand, Sand have been used by different artists in conjunction with other natural minerals as shown in the figure 4 while in other cases they were used with conventional pigments by some contemporary artists.



Plate 4: "[*Asynchronous Syntropy*](#)", Colored sand, The Museum of Arts and Design "Swept Away" exhibit May 2012 Source: <https://vimeo.com> › *Joe Mangrum* (2015)

Some artists however, have done the unexpected with non-pigment colours. Such artists have gone beyond what may be called the unorthodox and have used what may be termed the unimaginable non pigment materials for painting. Artist like Millie Brown (b. 1986) creates her painting, by drinking colored milk and regurgitating same onto a white canvas or even her own dress. She has mastered the art of regurgitation and uses her talents to create actual art. Her work requires her to drink colored milk and simply vomit the milk on a white canvas, thus creating abstract "paintings".



Plate 5: Millie Brown creating her paintings, 2011,
Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/24/millie-brown-vomit-artist-lady-gaga> Retrieved 2015

Another artist who used unorthodox non pigment colours is Kuashik is Vinicius Quesada. He is a talented street artist from Brazil who likes to add a shock value to his artworks. His paintings were created using blood and urine. Vinicius Quesada makes undoubtedly detailed art of violent geishas, smoking monkeys, and other apocalyptic images

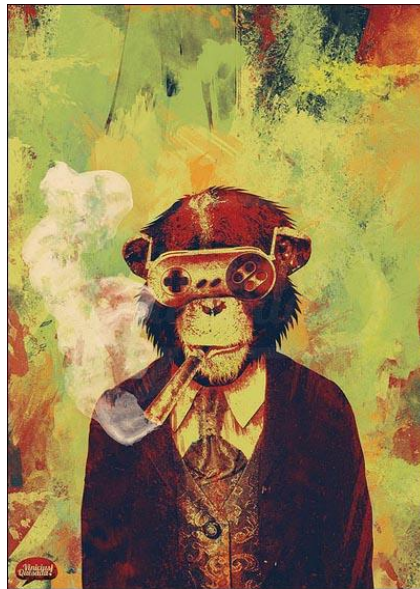


Plate 6: Vinicius Quesada, *Mr Monkey, Blood and Urine*, 566cm x800cm
Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/viniciusquesada/4767751758> Retrieved 2015

Chris Trueman paintings were made with an unusual medium. One of his paintings which he titled "Self-Portrait with Gun." Was made using dead ants, about 200,000 dead ants were used to paint a portrait of his little brother holding a rifle.



Plate 7: Chris Trueman, *Self-Portrait with Gun*, 2010, ants on coloured Canvas, 120cm x 105cm. Source: www.odditycentral.com/pics/artist-uses-200000-ants-to-create-unique-n-painting.html (2015)

Artists such as Moyo Okediji (b.1956) and Kainebe Osahenye (b.1963) have explored various alternative materials as painting medium by adding non paint materials to their paintings with the resultant effect of a mixed media. Moyo Okediji began to explore various alternative materials for painting, as part of his desire to define an African painting aesthetics during his graduate days. This offered him the opportunity to build his painting around mixed media and found objects which were superimposed on indigenous techniques. One of such techniques, he disclosed, was weaving, which he learned to do via mats (Okediji, 2012).



Plate 8: Moyo Okediji, *Things Fall Apart*, Hand-Woven Metal, 2012. Source: <http://africanartswithtaj.blogspot.com.ng/2012/08/expanding-art-horizon-in-okedjis-new.html> (2015)

Unconventional Support In making of Art

The word ‘support’ simply means the surface on which you paint, whether canvas, prepared board, paper or cardboard, (Galton, 2002). Over the years painters have relied on conventional supports such as canvas for their paintings. The reason for this may not be

farfetched; canvas is already prepared and ready for use and is readily available through at exorbitant prices. Galton believes that, the choice of surface is very important as it affects the way the paint behaves. He is of the opinion that in general; textured surfaces are more pleasant to work on as they hold the paint to some extent, whereas on a shiny, non-absorbent one like Masonite, it tends to slide around and takes a long time to dry. He however points out that it is not possible; however, to recommend an “ideal” support, the choice he said, must necessarily involve some trial and error, and will depend on style of painting, the size of the picture, whether you are painting indoors or outdoors and ultimately, what you feel comfortable with.

Similarly, Judson (2010), says that, “although stretched canvas is the most commonly used surface for oil paints, it isn’t the only surface that work well with oil paint”. In the same vein, McClung (2012), says Card board can serve as a really great acid free base alternative surface for painting because once treated with gesso the card board becomes less absorbent, preventing the paint from soaking onto the surface. The best type of cardboard for painting according to her is thin cardboard. Another material that can serve as alternative painting surface she says is Masonite or hardboard, in her words this is another common substitute for canvas. Masonite is a type of board that is made from wood chips and resin, it has both smooth and rough surfaces on either side. Either of the sides can be used as painting surface depending on the type of texture that is desired by the artist.

Other materials that she believes can be used as painting support includes Oak, Pine and Plywood. She feels it is important to prepare the surface by sanding the panels and priming the surface with coats of wood primers. One thing to keep in mind with wooden panels she says is the weight and bulkiness of the paintings. She finds this to be a disadvantage, especially when there is need to transport the work.

There has been an increased desire by artists to explore the use of other support other than the conventional one since the dawn of modern art movement. This is also the view conversed by Cyril (2007) when she opined as follows: “since the Modern Art movement, there has been an ever-growing interest in exploring unconventional surfaces and techniques to create a new vitality in painting.” She further asserted that Artists who have ventured outside the constraints of traditional approaches have found more inventive ways of handling space, structure, form and content. Their eagerness to push boundaries she says has opened up a plethora of new possibilities in picture making. Cullen, Cyril and Hickey (2007), similarly expressed this when they stated that there is an ever-growing interest in exploring unconventional materials, surfaces and techniques to create distinction. They further said that artists are finding interesting alternatives by experimenting with various techniques on a vast array of materials from metal, wood, plastic to leather, handmade custom paper and laminated duplexes of every kind.

Writing further on unconventional surfaces, materials and tools, Cyril (2011), avers that in order for artists to expand their creative repertoire, they experiment with a vast array of unconventional surfaces, materials and tools; thereby pushing the painting ground to take on a more active, visually expressive role in the cognitive interpretation of a work of art.

Painting with Unconventional Colours

Much in painting is obscure even today, says Nordmark (1988); many problems are still awaiting solutions. It is only time that can prove whether or not new materials and methods are mere novelties rather than improvements on what has been. The painter who is a master of his material as well as of his idea has, in his art, a personal means of expressing what is important to his individual development. (Nordmark 1988).

Painting could be defined as the act or art of applying paint on surfaces for artistic purpose. Willard (1991), tried to capture this general opinion about painting when she stated thus: “all too often an artist is pictured as an unruly genius who waits for an inspiration to send him into a frenzy of paint splashing”. However, according to Willard (1991), we rarely think of artists as great inventors or discoverers. Yet if we look up the word ‘invention’ in a dictionary, we find that it is “something thought up, something originated by experiment, a discovery”. The inventiveness of the painter had been buttressed by Nordmark (1988), when he stated that “painting in oil has almost unlimited possibilities. It lends itself so readily to varieties and combinations of techniques that it gives free scope to the inventiveness of the painter”. To Willard (1991), this inventive urge is not new. Earlier, Van Eycks and artists who lived in the fifteenth century where mixing pigments with water or egg white. This paint once applied on canvas could not be changed or altered. The artist of the fifteenth century however, tried mixing pigments with oil and that changed the history of painting. Painting means the application of colour or pieces of coloured objects on a surface.... (Egonwa, 2005). In African societies, painting is considered as an environmental art in much the same way as architecture and helps to create the desirable environment for spirits to take possession of ritual objects, alters and sanctuaries, even parts of the human body.



Plate 9: Juan Gris, *The Sunblind*, 1914, pieces of wall papers, thereafter programs and tickets
Source:
http://www.artinthepicture.com/paintings/Juan_Gris/The-Sunblind/
(2015)

Painting has never been just a copying in a photographic way. The more slavishly you copy the less likely are you to discover your own style and vision (Schwarz, 1969). According to Schwarz the often-heard argument that one ought to learn to draw ‘properly’ before developing one’s own style; This is false because there can be no generally accepted way of drawing ‘properly’. However, College training has conventional ways of drawing considered proper. Willard (1991), supports this notion of painting in one’s own personal idiom when she stated thus; ... certain modern artists decided to paint the world of their inner feelings. The outside world no longer interests them. To Willard, these artists called on every imaginative device to convey the strong emotions. He feels distorted forms, convulsive lines and raw colours, were applied to objects, landscapes and portraits to achieve this. In practice, artists such as Chris Ofili (b.1968), Juan Gris (1887-1927), Lisa Kokin (b.1953), and El Anatsui (b.1944), belong to this school of thought and have used non paint materials in their paintings and sculptures.



Plate 10: Lisa Kokin, *Passage*, 2004, Buttons and mixed media, imitation sinew, waxed linen, chicken wire. 41 x 29-1/3cm, Source: <http://www.lisakokin.com/buttonworks-one.html> (2015)



Plate 11: El Anatsui, *Illusion of wealth*, 2011, Used bottle tops, cut, beaten, pieced and stitched together. 7500x5700cm, Source: <https://writinginrelation.wordpress.com/2015/03/19/el-anatsui-beautiful-and-sensate-objects/> Retrieved 2015



Plate 12: Kainebe Osahenye, *Fleshly*, 2009, Acrylic and flattened can collage on canvas laid down on wood in six parts, 760 x 700.25cm.

Source: <http://www.artnet.com/artists/kainebe-osahenye/past-auction-results> Retrieved 2015

Conclusion

When artists see colours and materials as a means to an end, they begin to think of what it will take to achieve that end. That by implication means thinking outside the box, looking at what is available to achieve that end. In fact, thinking of any of the creative arts only in light of conventional materials is to limit the creative mind. Like Cyril (2009), said, “artists need to expand their creative repertoire by exploring the vast array of materials in their environment.” All the artists need to do is look around their environment and be open to what they see every day.

The objects found within our environment can be re-invented or re-contextualized either as pigments or support for painting. Our environment is laden with numerous materials that have been used for a particular function or the other, if carefully studied we can find other uses to which we can put such materials or item. One interesting thing is that some of these materials have been used and discarded, while other can be obtained at an extremely low price.

By sourcing and using materials available in his environment, the painter can always find a way to produce painting that will meet his creative goal and still remain satisfied without splurging his/her life savings.

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