

A Critical Analysis of the Exploratory Art of Kunle Adeyemi

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Abstract

This discourse documents the artistry of Kunle Adeyemi, a contemporary, and well exhibited Yoruba artist who solves artistic problems through the synthesis of a new genre termed Paintocast and Paintograph. Thus, this work employed rationalistic and scientific modes of enquiry; interpretations based on qualitative, descriptive and evaluative approach. It concludes that the artist utilizes a content and context that is revisionism and revivalism that brings traditional African (Yoruba) relevance to the modern stage of African art.

Keywords: critical evaluation, exploratory art, painting, paintocast, paintograph

Introduction

Kunle Adeyemi has been practicing artist for over two decades as a painter with skills and a developed dexterity acquired from Yaba College of Technology, Lagos- Nigeria. He acquired printmaking skill during his MFA degree programme at the University of Benin. His printmaking skill was further enhanced with internship training with Dr. Bruce Onobrakpeya at his Papa Ajao studio, Lagos and Agbahar Otor, Delta State, Nigeria and has just concluded a Ph.D. programme at Delta state University Abraka. *Paintographs and Paintocasts: A new consciousness* marked his 15th Solo exhibition and had participated in well over 75 group exhibitions. He passed through the tutelage of Nigerian art masters like Iren Wangboje, Dele Jegede, Kolade Oshinowo, Yusuff Grillo, Osa Egonwa, Dan-Ikhu Omovbude and others.

According to Adeyemi, his rendered themes categorized can be into four (4): Naturalistic cum semi-abstraction where religious, mythological, historical, literary and everyday life is expressed. The second category is Abstract expressionism with much of visual impact than storytelling; the third category is Iconic cum Expressiveness which displays distorted prompt imagery and color; while the fourth category is geared to create subtle poetry specifically for contemporary enlightenment rather than relating them to meanings (2012:9).

However, it is of note that Adeyemi's subject matter, composition, forms, colors and context are derived from the immediate environment of the Yoruba in Southwestern Nigeria. And it is observable that most of his themes and titles do not reflect indigenous concepts, but modern ideas expressed much in modern language.

Art Critics have some methods of presenting critical evidence: looking for appropriate precedents to any creative work of art before arriving at a critical conclusion. Feldman identified four stages of critical performance: the Descriptive Analysis, Formal Analysis, Interpretation and, the Evaluation or Judgment respectively (1967:468-498). In order to fulfill an utmost critical exercise, the order has to be followed sequentially, proceeding from the simplest (descriptive analysis) to the most difficult (judgment). The exercise is more of an empirical one i.e. from specific to general before drawing conclusions about the collective value of the work of art.

By descriptive analysis, the critic seeks to make inventory all that is before him, collection of all evidence, names of things present, mode of execution, things not superficially visible but objectively present in the work. For formal analysis, the critic seeks out for how artistic elements are constituted: the organization of shapes, areas, colors, textures, spatial arrangements, lines, etc. The descriptive analysis takes care of the inventory of all decorative elements, the total composition, viewers and universal expectation and other phenomena dictates that is present in the work. Next to this is the Interpretation stage where expressive meaning of the work, theme, artists conscious or unconscious ideas, explanations of artistic achievements, ideological content and constructs; the organization of formal and other qualities into one organic unity; the people's opinions about the work, the disunity or orderliness explicated; all meanings that can be confirmed, the impact of the work on visual sensation; what artistic and intellectual problem has been solved by the artists, how the artwork can be likened to its predecessors. These leads to the final stage of critical experience – the Judgmental stage where such a work is ranked with other works in its class, the actual worth or value pronounced, the comparison with other historical models, the artistic styles and the genre it belongs; the expression of the spirit of the time at its creation; the breakthroughs and originality of the work; the craftsmanship, the skills, materials and other facilities involved; its expressiveness, the technical deficiencies and proficiencies explicated.

Three works of Kunle Adeyemi are used in this discourse, thus, a few of his recent works on display. Critical reviews of the works have not been carried out anywhere. Subjecting the works to a critical performance and exercise will expose a lot of things about the works, as well as well as the artist's intent for creating such works, hence, a critical analysis of the Kunle Adeyemi's works of art. This discourse aimed at examining three works of Kunle Adeyemi with a view to subjecting them to a form of critical contemplation. Other objectives derivable from this exercise will include: looking at the kind of critical sense that guided the artist in producing such works; to examine the expressive content of the works vis-à-vis the stages of critical performance and; passing a critical judgment on the actual value or worth of the three works, as well as the artist technical proficiency. This study will be selected out of the artist's 2012, exhibition tagged "*Paintocast and Paintograph – A New Consciousness*". The works considered are *Wheel of fortune IV*, *Dialogue – Principal tool in Democracy*, and *Female form IV*.

Literature Review

Feldman's (1967) review of four stages of critical performance is considered alongside an exhibition catalogue of Kunle Adeyemi's *Paintograph and Paintocast – A New Consciousness* - 2012. Adeyemi's studio explorations brought about an innovation into art practices and art vocabulary which is recent, a significant development and contribution to Nigerian contemporary painting and printmaking. Paintocasts is a synergy forming the synthesis of easel painting and printmaking traditions- a combination of the required techniques, skills, methods and materials from the two artistic genres. In the words of Egonwa, "Paintograph and Paintocast are a procedural transliteration of techniques of one into another ... a sort of collaborative possibilities between the visual arts, science and technological discipline hitherto thought to be impossible" (2012:4). Adeyemi declares "A painting idea takes off from sketches, studies and composition through a technical stage of printmaking and painting to the first final product of Paintograph, it can progress further through metal foil or cast reproduction to form the ground for a sculptural painting called Paintocast (2012:8).

Labode avers that, "The mastery of artistic techniques by Adeyemi can be placed on the framework of Nigerian great masters of arts such as Bruce Onobrakpeya, Yusuff Grillo and Kolade Oshinowo to mention a few". Truly, Adeyemi is in the making of one, going by age, dexterity and a strong desire to be one of the Nigerian contemporary "Art Statesmen" (2012:16), Adeyemi too believed strongly that "the height that great men reach and keep is not attained by sudden flight ... their greatness was not sudden but came by gradual process of evolution, resolution and revolution" (2008:19).

To transmute is to make or change something into something different; operating in or between many different phases without being based or biased with another. As earlier, pronounced *Paintocast-Paintograph* is a form of synergy between printmaking and painting. Adeyemi tried textural addition to medium trying to move away from conventional practices in the two genres combined together (a.k.a. mixed media) see Plate 3 Female Form IV. The usual paint as a medium came into play, augmented by the addition of sand, wood chips and dust, charcoal, calcium carbonate etc.

According to Adeyemi (2012:6) "doctrinal strictness of preserving boundaries of art activities often tends to limit creativity and thereby reduces the free growth of art practices... where each part performs its aesthetic and technical function to create a unison." In the words of Labode (2012:16), Adeyemi's *New Consciousness* is another artistic representation that is unconventionally compared to his past art exhibitions with the adoption and use of alternative local materials for his imageries; the use of traditional Yoruba motifs and symbols to interpret current happenings around his immediate environment. The success of the artist craftsmanship is by dint reliance on collage and mixed media approaches from where he had much of his stint, be it textural effect, materials, support, adhesives and techniques.

Methodology

Rationalistic and scientific modes of enquiry will be used for the discourse with objective interpretations based on qualitative, descriptive and evaluative approach of data gathering. The discourse judgment will be based on established principles of art, other perceptions, experience and observations that may lead to objective thinking substantiated with evidence derived from photographs and exhibition catalogue used. The artist's diary, as well as little biography of him will be reviewed and the examination of the three works will be carried out vis-à-vis phases of art criticism and the critical performance. The scope is however limited to three works listed because considering the artist's nominal and creative age combined with academic attainments, Kunle Adeyemi could be said to have reached the apogee of his creativity and career.



Plate 1: Kunle Adeyemi, WHEEL OF FORTUNE IV-2010,
Paintocast on board, Diameter 132cm (52")

Plate 1 shows a rotary disc with concentric circles of no recognizable, but of an imaginary center, colored, full of miniature images and patterns. A game board, having a similitude of *Ouija* board, a wheel or disc that can spin around. It has a good arrangement of colored and golden embossed patterns. There are several symbols arranged around and all over the disc surface. The disc has seven constructed, concentric, colored circular bands with forms, signs; motifs are repeated all over it forming a network of smaller images and areas. The symbols are recognizable and contained in square boxes. The disc's entire surface obeys an informal balance and it gives an impression of something in motion.

The identifiable colors are indigo, golden yellow, Prussian blue, warm red, yellow which tend to accommodate each other. Presumably, the background color is indigo. The center of activities is localized in some circular areas or bands. Most of the motifs, signs, and symbols used are housed in network of brick-worked areas; their distribution indicates what we can call a random movement of all features with no fixed positions for all the elements housed in the entire disc area. In addition, there is an arrangement of small, round, regular, white 'plate-like' objects forming a distinctive and deliberately ordered area; adjacent to it is another circular area with a wavy band.

The spatial arrangement has about seven (7) obvious concentric circular areas marked out by outlines. Numbering from the inside then outwards, the inner wheel (no 1) has fourteen (14) symbols in colored square shapes of red and blue: four (4) symbols in blue, ten (10) in red and in addition, between thirty-eight/nine (38-39) other patterns in golden square areas. The inner wheel, (no 1) is the centre of activity in the disc area having a haphazard arrangement – no particular order. The second wheel (no 2) from the center has an embossed wavy line with raised golden dots alternately arranged. The third (no 3) is a ring of small round white platelet or discs, - clean white of about one hundred and nine (109) pieces forming its own distinct area almost demarcating the entire surface into half.

The fourth circular area (no 4) is another entire golden band containing seven (7) money motifs or symbols (of no regular distribution) five (5) in blue and two (2) in red colors sparsely distributed among various patterns of golden yellow coloration. The fifth band (no 5) is not so broad, and of no specific design or pattern, it contained just streaks and dots of embossed golden - yellow color – all moving in a continuous cyclic motion. The sixth band (no 6) contains forty-eight (48) money symbols: twenty-four (24) symbols in yellow and red colors, while other twenty-four (24) symbols are in white color all arranged intermittently i.e. – white-colored area – white. The symbolism of the sixth band (6th) having these forty-eight (48) symbols is not known, but 6, 24, 48 have significance in game of numbers; 24 and 48 are multiples of 6; incidentally all the 48 symbols are carried on the 6th band. The seventh band is a three-dimensional ring of indigo color; like a steering wheel, having thirteen (13) cross-bands. It is raised like a rim and will not allow anything to fall out of its entire space area.

The entire spatial view gives an impression that the square colored shapes are representations of a disc having an insignia of currency used from different parts of the world: Naira, Manila, Pounds Sterling, and Dollars etc. The presence of dices is localized to the first and the third colored bands, which is displaced in a manner that look like the (cubes) dice will settled down after each throw. Beating the expectation of the viewer, the winning or scoring point of the game cannot be determined. The actual direction which the wheel is to rotate too (clockwise or anticlockwise) is not determined or indicated neither the determination of success in the game obvious. The motifs and designs on the sixth band are all fixed being representative symbols of the constituents of the game board.

The expressive content of Plate 1 lies in the notion of fortune. Money is much desired and valued in local and foreign currencies. The main theme of the work is about a game of chance depending on whichever way the wheel of fortune spins – clockwise or anticlockwise. The absence of direction connotes that there is no choice of movement and direction for fortune seekers. Looking at the wheel supposedly, the colored –square boxes with money symbols are symbolic representation of dice. The artist has used his skill to solve a problem having bearing on our existence and also to solve an artistic problem with an ideological content.

The Oxford *Advanced Learner's Dictionary* of current English (2001) explains dice to be a small 'cube' of wood, plastic etc. with a different number of spots (symbols) on each of its side; used in game of chance: a pair or *many* of dice rolled; thrown or shaken – italics mine. From every indication, the first circle (innermost) must have contained all the dice before the wheel is spun, some of the dice as a matter of chance has to move out of the inner circle outwards to the fourth circle (penultimate outside the row of white plate-like discs constituting the third circular area). The emergent and arrangement of the seven dice by happenstance indicated a set of result achieved after a successful spinning of the wheel. Where and how to detect the luck is not known; the artist has succeeded in arranging formal and other qualities into an organic unity.



Plate 2: Kunle Adeyemi, DIALOGUE: PRIMARY INSTRUMENT IN DEMOCRACY 1- 2011, Paintograph & Assemblage on board - 75 cm x 90cm.

Plate 2 is a wood panel that has its entire shape near a square and more like a storyboard. The entire board is divided into two (2) equal halves. The top half is divided into three (3) units in the ratios of 1:2:1; the bottom half is divided into four (4) units of two (2) rows of almost of ratios 1:1½:1½:1 where lower rows is a bit larger that of the middle rows. The entire painting surface contains smaller pictures i.e. Pictures-in-picture. The center picture have six (6) seated figures; all clad in white traditional robes, five (5) are seated on benches in two (2) rows directly opposite each other: to the left side of the viewer, three (3) and towards the right. Two (2) of the five (5) men have caps and no shoes on; the sixth (6th) man, seated towards the middle at the rear end on a single chair, have a necklace, white cap clad in white robe and shoe, in possession of a walking stick in contrast with the red caps of the other five (5) men, who are without necklaces or shoes. At the background, there is a backdrop, a textile design of *Adire Eleko* and a rectangular brown opening with or knotted cloth. Flanking to the right and left of the background are reddish tall structures more like a pillar posts. The color of the background is indigo, white and light blue. Flanking to the right and left of this central panel are grisailles of colors giving a form of an impression of people from a bird's view.

Coming to the last two (2) rows of the bottom half, the first row contains four (4) sets of pictures of people coming together in clusters, to the immediate left and right are standing group of people; the other two (2) panels in the middle contains people seated in a clustering manner around tables. The colors are somber, hallowed lights over each group, Contrasted with all the above is a lower set of four (4) panels. The settings contain many people that are settled, standing undisturbed, clad in brilliant colors of various hues with white outlining, more illuminated. The crowd is not converging here but, freely dispersed, no tension; spaces above them are luminaries. On the overall, the main frame is wooden rods joined together. The frame has variable numbers of notches at the corners; each smaller picture is framed by flat rods having patterned surface decorations.

Going by the title, theme, and iconography, Plate 2 underscores the importance of dialogue as a primary tool - the basic in any democratic setting – a fundamental starting point in resolution of conflict of ideas, motives, actions and democracy. Democracy is a game of numbers where the majority upturns the tide of choices and events: before its full maturation, series of consultation and dialogues will have ensued among some people with a common goal. This thematic rendition centers on a group of people having a discourse on crucial issues bothering on their collective responsibility and existence; this virtue is an African essence particularly, among the Yoruba, Southwestern Nigeria.

The central panel at the top half of the plate emphasizes and encores the centrality of deliberation in the existence of a selected group of people. This picture-within-picture serves as a model over other groupings – the display of leadership in a mediatory role. Still referring to the central panel in plate 2, the fact that all the six (6) figures in it are clad in white apparels symbolizes sage, statesmanship, wisdom and their red caps stands for authority with decision makers. These typical white gowns are lacking in other ten (10) other panels arranged in the two rows occupying the main plate - though there are signs of red caps in other sub-pictures too. The figures in the median row resemble Black men and women having dialogues – some seated, some standing. In contrast with the figures in the middle row, which are standing white-figures clad in various hues occupying these other four (4)panels; their size outweighs that of the middle row, their environment seemingly white, a different society we will say, despite their numbers, they looked organized beyond dialogue and conferences – more advanced.

This plate has a bearing on our existence; the artistic problems that have been solved center around the reality that, settled opinions and society are based on popular decisions and sound group dynamics: a set of dialogue within dialogues; between small groups of people and (later), a larger group. People of different background must confer to determine their existence, future and societal basics. A leader is expected to emerge chronicling the developmental efforts that have been put in place to raise a good society. S/he should be a central figure around which some other genius sat to determine the movement and survival of the group. This artwork successfully balanced a democratic setting at its inception stage against a developed democracy which is suggestive of African and the Western world respectively. The four (4) set of panel at the lower row is suggestive of the democratic culture in advanced economies of the world.



Plate 3 represents a panel of many of color bands with several divisions, the vertical and horizontal. Horizontally, the plate is divided into eight (8) bands, and vertically divided into other irregular forms and shapes. There are displays of colorful rounded objects of the same size arranged serially of varying lengths and curvatures. Towards the middle of the canvas around the central figure, are five (5) loops of these rounded objects: two (2) loops of red, and pink, one (1) yellow, and one (1) white. Towards left and right of the viewer, there are smaller arrangements of these rounded objects again in yellow, red and white sequences.

Generally, the panel has black outlined in groves; the lower half of the central area contains floral motifs, the middle portions has eight (8) sinuous curved lines and embossed areas. The entire surface area is a very low relief formation. The central area looked like a figural representation having colors distributed without any order. One of the sinuous lines in the middle area run downward dividing the lower half of the figural representation into ratios 1:2; the constricted middle portion of the figure bulge out suspending loops rounded objects.

The eight (8) horizontal band is a similitude of the area occupied by the central figure. To the lower part of the canvas, precisely the sixth and seventh horizontal bands are having an alternatively, opposite arrangements of checkered patterns; another brown area, as well as another red area, having a floral motif.

The bulge area downwards had a confluence of two symmetrical curved lines. The upper part of the figure is almost as broad as the bulge area having two (2) undulated, projecting roundish mass just at the terminal point of a set of “J” shaped sets of rounded small pink objects. The rounded mass to the right of the viewer have a reddish embossed, well-rounded projection just at the middle of the concentric circles of red and yellow circular areas; toward the left of the viewer is a profile of that rounded mass again with a dome-like projecting end. Beside the rounded mass is an incised star shape in black color are the constricted area have a dot and ring adjacent the sinuous lines though seen a little from the profile; the impression is however repeated facing the viewer directly at the top left-hand corner of the canvas inside a hatch of yellowish lines. On the sixth (6th) and seventh (7th) horizontal bands are an alternately arranged checkered board patterns of white and pink set against another black. The third (3rd) and fourth (4th) horizontal bands formed another figure all together.

Interpretively, the horizontal bands are female forms seen in profile; the central figure is the torso of a lady, displaying the “figure 8” characteristic shape of women in a profile. The two rounded masses with projected ends are the two (2) flaunted bare breasts of the lady. The cylindrical round masses suspending three (3) sets of rounded objects – bead-like are the uncompleted hand of the lady. The incised star shape and sinuous lines are like tattoos embellishing the constricted part of the figure – the waistline; the bulged area is the lady’s massive buttocks, the loops of rounded colored objects are forms of waist beads arranged to distract away, the attention of viewers from the nudity of the figure who has an exposed underwear partly representing on another hand textural addition to surface – textile (lace) materials with six-patterned holes. The sixth (6th) and seventh (7th) horizontal bands are also forms representing female profiles set in a reversed and alternate arrangement to each other; the checkered patterns are tied wrappers or loin clothes. Two tapering areas dividing the female profiles are two (2) massive exposed thighs of the female form. However just like the hand were cut off, so also is the leg and head of the female form allowing the viewer to concentrate on the seductive areas of the form – an ideal form of an African woman. The confluence of two symmetrical curved lines represents the “V” shaped of the women’s’ private part.

An Aesthetic Judgment of Kunle Adeyemi’s Works

Myriads of impressions and storyboards have been created to be seen by the artist in the three works x-rayed can be likened to a kind of effect that is seen with splashes oil on water, kaleidoscopic effects of wanted and unwanted colors, forms, shapes, motifs, designs etc. One may not be able to know to what extent has Adeyemi got involved in Benin, Edo or Niger Delta areas of Nigeria where oil pollution has been a major environmental challenge, but certain was his experience of four years in Delta State University, Abraka.

If one is opportune to see the effect of oil pollution on water bodies, rivers, and the environment, melancholic! There is no doubt that this would have been one of the effects to have spurred Adeyemi's canvases (paitographs-paitocasts). The artist has not disclosed his adventure into the world of oil pollution, but, in his studies, inspiration and exhibitions though, very characteristic of the kind of mental picture, consciously or unconsciously someone would have retained.

Each work of the works of Kunle Adeyemi is made up of multiple smaller images or pictures arranged with the character of a chessboard – 'pictures- in -picture' translated with colors, in which violent, warm colors determines the direction, dominance, space, the environment of other attributes, acting as seams containing every other things. The ways and manners that colors were used are devoid of any conventional or canon order of application. They are presented naturally as an effect, in any environment that is not controlled – in situ. At times though, one may see pockets of colors obeying rules of color combination, which is possible generally in a given environment at a particular time. The artist's color usage is reflective of an impression received by the eye from a typical African landscape where all colors interplay without specific regard for any particular order or color scheme – his color application is eclectic with an indiscriminate approach- bold application with dexterity. There is a 'native' balance of color values and chromatic expressions exhibiting high contrasts between each other.

The forms and motifs of Kunle Adeyemi's picture plane are equally depicted in a manner of what one can termed a 'bird's-eye view' of the environment: stones, sands, grasses, logs and splinters of woods, decorative and non-decorative materials littering a landscape; patches of dry ground: green grasses, completed and uncompleted buildings, scrap of metals, different things of diverse shapes and forms - all forming a mosaic pattern but having both deliberate and spontaneous placement with jagged edges like corroded or rusty iron- a manner of what is seen with the action of acids on metals and surfaces: consciously or unconsciously, all these must have been imprinted on Adeyemi's creative mind. See Plate 1.

Kunle Adeyemi's 'new consciousness' is an exploratory art exhibition of painting and printmaking techniques combined together. 'Paintograph-Paintocast' are the new techniques made (open enough) to advance the present limitations of the two artistic traditions of painting and printmaking. Adeyemi has also considered the possibility of utilizing alternatively sourced local materials to ameliorate the prohibitive cost of the imported materials. This artist's creativity has not been hindered by non-availability (within reach) of materials for his creative expressions. The artist attempt to stimulate creative instincts of budding artists without the inhibitive costs and non-availability of imported art materials: the use of materials considered as wastes and junks found a place in studio practices and even helped the spirit of recycling. Adeyemi's art has identified problems and proffered solutions to part of visual art problems in Nigeria and anywhere else. The artworks of Kunle Adeyemi are therefore a new set of artistic representation compared with what is known about the artist in the past- the traditional easel painting tradition and printmaking techniques.

Findings: Adeyemi's Craftsmanship and Distinctive Treatment of Artistic Features

The artist's picture plane and spatial arrangements can be tagged "divisionism" – the picture plane is divided into series of smaller picture planes housing one decoration or part of the overall story. There is a general tendency to avoid *horro vacui*, every available space is filled up. The artist's entire surfaces are more or less like storyboards an inspiration he must have derived from studies of legendary Yoruba woodcarvers, such as Olowe of Ise Ekiti, Arowogun, Fakeye and others. Spatially, the artist clearly demonstrates his mastery and control of spaces by adopting informal balance always, thus, creating pictures that will not be too formalized, tired some and uninteresting. There is clear and deliberate delineation of figures, motifs, forms and a demonstration of calculated attempts in the distribution of spaces. In the figural representations, the normal human body proportions are emphasized and not the traditional African artistic proportion of one head to three parts of the body, the figures, motifs, and forms used are typically African in orientation.

In addition to the artist's organization of space, he is fond of using sinuous or serpentine lines to build forms with white spider-like thread paints to outline spaces and forms. Each of his picture planes is like a reworked photographic negative image in colors because of his use of white color to build images against dark areas showing heavy contrasts. The placement of fresh colors near black or neutral grays often bring out a sparkle that transforms the canvas surface into a bas relief, usually an embossed imagery, more like enameled paintings. Many a times, his picture surface looked like a game board: a chessboard, cross-picture puzzle, patchwork, medallion and checkered dresses.

On a generally scale, the works displayed are embellished with flogged motifs, patterns and decorations with little or no spaces left out –reminiscent of the Japanese, Indo-Chinese and Arabesque designs, but he is very African in his indiscriminate use of colors, shapes, techniques and materials. In Africa, it is believed that everything has a purpose: everything working together in an organismic manner and in a synergetic dimension.

Adeyemi: A Contemporary Nigerian (Yoruba) Artist

Adeyemi's 'paintocasts–paintographs' displayed a research work into the use of old traditional forms, motifs and problems encountered in the visual art practices in Nigeria and have proffered solutions to them. He had 'exhumed' the erstwhile ubiquitous Yoruba motifs and symbols. He also translated the female figure- an ideal state of an African woman's beauty of the traditional into a conception of modern African women: large hips, exposed dark, ripe and rich woman's nudity, flaunted (bare) breasts, exposed navel, flamboyant use of beads, neck, waist, armband, tattoo, body scarification see Plate 3 -Female Form IV, [2010]. The changing body of modern Nigerian women is expressed in massive round buttocks and thighs, the penchant love for floral patterns, designs, fashion, and textile materials.

The exclusion of head and lower limbs of the female figure expresses the individualistic manner of thoughts of the contemporary African artists: their freedom of expression which may not be evident in African traditional arts and concepts. Nonetheless, the traditional female form is being expressed in contemporaneous feelings. The artist adopted the use of Yoruba tradition figural composition, concepts and ideas but with modern representational canons of perspective, normal human body proportion, and bird's eye view see Plate 2- Dialogue: Primary Instrument in Democracy I- is a pointer to this. In the Wheel of Fortune series -IV-Plate1, there is a revitalization of old forms, motifs and patterns derived from Yoruba woodcarvings, crafts, leatherwork, tie-dye, calabash carving, basketry, body ornaments, shrine walls and introduction of modern designs. The entire surface reflected elements of calculation and mathematical representation.

Kunle Adeyemi as a Custodian of Tradition

“I derived my inspiration from what I see around me” (Adeyemi, 2008:11)

Evidently, Kunle Adeyemi is a Nigerian artist of Yoruba extraction who has a penchant love for Yoruba signs, symbols, forms and motifs derived from Yoruba textile tradition of *'adire'* and folklores featuring snakes, frogs, eggs, birds etc. A good number of his works elsewhere reflect the artist's ancestry with much inspiration from the interplay of traditional idioms, myths, oral literature, traditional decorative patterns, wood carvings, house posts, door panels, pottery calabash carving, textile embroidery, weaving, mats, body adornment etc. Dialogue: Primary Instrument of Democracy I (2011)-Plate 2 is a clear example.

The artist is one of the African-Nigerian (Yoruba) contemporary artist that responds to the dynamics and changes in his environment, deriving inspiration from the simplicity and directness of African signs and symbols (other group of artist that fall into this categorization are *Uli, Ona, Arewa* etc.) exploring and research into African essence. Adeyemi had tried to register his name as a connoisseur and authority of African visual forms, symbols and motifs: he gave relevance, understanding, a physico-spiritual essence and a re-enactment trying to integrate tradition, culture into contemporary arts.

The Position of the Kunle Adeyemi's Artistry among Other Artists

The influence of Printmaker Bruce Onobrakpeya is much felt in Adeyemi adapting forms and motifs from his environment, the thematic explorations and spatial arrangement; His boldness of form and figures is reminiscent of Kolade Oshinowo; the divisionism of picture plane into storyboard is a characteristic of legendary carver, Olowe of Ise Ekiti. Very good pointers to these are Dialogue: Primary Instrument in Democracy 1 (2011) -Plate 2, The Wheel of Fortune IV (2011)-Plate 1, Plate 3 Female Form IV. The Wheel of Fortune series is possible reflections from Japanese, Indian and Chinese arts.

So, with age and years of practice as a printmaker- painter and now “*Paintocaster and Paintographer*” these styles are symbolic and representative now of Adeyemi: creating a niche for himself conceptually and stylistically too. Advancing a new consciousness, Adeyemi has to be technically resilient, proficient and refined to justify the merited position of a contemporary African-Nigerian Arts’ statesman. The creative wits of Adeyemi have both local and international acceptance.

Conclusion

From the ascriptions, one can say categorically that Adeyemi is a contemporary African-Nigerian (Yoruba) Artist; one which utilizes many media to produce an art whose form, content, and context is of African relevance. A creatively independent artist with potentials, producing new legitimate form of artistic expressions of African essence faithfully; due to his experience and connectedness with African traditional heritage, that is, one coming off the changes that has occurred in African society, transmitting African messages, history, and environment in a globalized world, irrespective of race, alienation, educational background and producing art not again for ritualistic purposes: he lives and practices in Africa, precisely Nigeria in a Yoruba enclave.

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Acknowledgement: Picture credits – Plates 1-3, Quintessence Gallery, Falomo, Ikoyi-Lagos, Nigeria In *Paintograph and Paintocast* Paintograph and Paintocast: a New Consciousness. An Exploratory art exhibition catalogue of Paintography, Paintocast, Mixed media and Prints of Kunle Adeyemi: Lagos, Nigeria: Quintessence Gallery.