

**ASSEMBLAGE OF WOOD PIECES AS AN EXPERIENCE OF POWER  
DIALOGUE**

BY

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the MFA and that to the best my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledge has been made in the text.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The powerful presence and physicality of wood has changed over the period with contemporary art practices .Wood working methodologies have evolved leading to the expansion of it presumed boundaries. This shift and rethinking, the process, form and materiality generate a very interesting discourse. Assembling wood off cuts using joining as the methodology in favor of carving or other methods, creating a flexible sculptural form capable of taken various display experiences is explored. This display experiences is used in questioning the dialoged of power experiences in our society. That is studying the structure, practices, and conditions as we engage with it.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The art assemblage has proven to be one of the legacies of the twentieth century avant-garde practice. The avant-garde describes the era where artist created works that are experimental or innovative especially with respect to art, culture, and politics. During the period, the boundaries of what were accepted as the norm or the status were pushed to the limits mostly in the cultural realm. Artists who align to the avant-garde movement trace their history from Dada through the situationists to postmodern artists such as the Language poets around 1981.

Assemblage emerged during the avant-garde, as an artistic process that consists of making art by putting together objects and forms. The objects and forms can be cut or torn pieces of paper, clippings from newspapers, photographs, bits of cloth, fragments of wood, metal or other such materials, shells or stones, or even objects such as knives and forks, chairs and tables, parts of dolls and mannequins, and automobile fenders. These objects are not originally intended for an assemblage but come useful in the hands of the artist.

Assemblage acts as a way of constructing provocative combinations of objects that have been made by the artist or that of found objects. These provocative combinations cause a mind-boggling reaction which is done intentionally by the artist. The artwork can be extremely surprising and difficult to understand or imagine. This is seen in situations where the unexpected is presented in a way that the viewer is left to make a choice whether to consider the worth of the individual objects in the assemblage or to appreciate the assemblage as a whole through the concept the artist is expressing. The

idea of taking ordinary objects and transforming them through thought brings to fore the power being given to them to exist as art.

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the tradition and classification of art materials were demystified. Painting and sculpture were respectively distinguished from what were not art as well as their materials. Oil on canvas was consecrated to painting, clay or plaster, bronze and marble were also consecrated to sculpture and no other materials aside these were considered no matter how much skill it required or how inventive its pursuit, carried as much cultural weight as much authority to give visual representation to the human condition (Cottingham, 2005). This challenge against artisanship and beauty generated several discourses from them and ventured into the twenty-first century.

In the light of this wood as one of the predominant materials has evolved in its usage as a sculptural medium. The emergence of various methodologies of presenting wood sculpture has moved from the traditional carving, drilling or in combination with other media is worth noting. Now each material presents its own issues which the artist then appropriates into the thoughts to be expressed. Hence I wanted to use the power that this wood of cuts presents as metaphor to question systems created in our society and how we are manipulated or subordinated to this power.

In chapter one, I started the research in a background of what has occurred with respect to the art of assemblage presenting the concept of power which leads us to chapter two where the research verifies through a review of the various discourses and works of artists to make a case with comparable models that has come about not only in history, but in recent times. Having had a fair idea of occurrences, I began this research project with an experimental praxis in Chapter three and four which opens up

the ground for a discussion. Chapter Five with analysis and hope that more opportunities would be created for sculptors to explore.

## **1.2 Thesis Statement**

The aesthetic landscape of the 21st century is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary. This has led to the exploration of boundaries around how wood can be used as a medium for artistic expression, what it can look like, how it lives in space, how it is made, and how it relates to the works that came before are also shifting and changing. Are there new ways for wood to exist in physical space, to be shaped and formed, or to relate to the history of the medium?

Hence, what might it mean for an artist working with wood to break or push past an assumed boundary, be it social, material, aesthetic and narrative is worthy of exploring. Expanding the possibilities of the material through the methodology of joining or connecting and exploring connectivity as power constructions is of importance to me as an artist. I seek to allow the connections created by this construction to dictate how power is experienced through various exhibition strategies. These exhibition strategies include wrapping, spreading, portioning, draping etc.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

To examine existing tenets and revisions of wood sculpture and explore wood connections as a concept of power manifested as a sculptural form. This will result in reviewing the presentation of wood as a material investigating the making process and form inviting the viewer to engage in a diverse experience of power in society.



To engage the discourse of power relations as employed through joining as my methodology of connectivity, creating the chance to justify different artistic manipulations of the material.

#### **1.4 Justification of Objectives**

Reviewing the tenets of wood sculpture and the expansion of its boundaries by interrogating the medium and its manipulation through joining as connections creating a dialogue of power systems encountered and experienced. Examining wood off cuts which is a residue of the post production process in an artistic expression engaging in the discourse where the connective nature of our systems results in everybody experiencing the manifestation of power in one way or the other.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

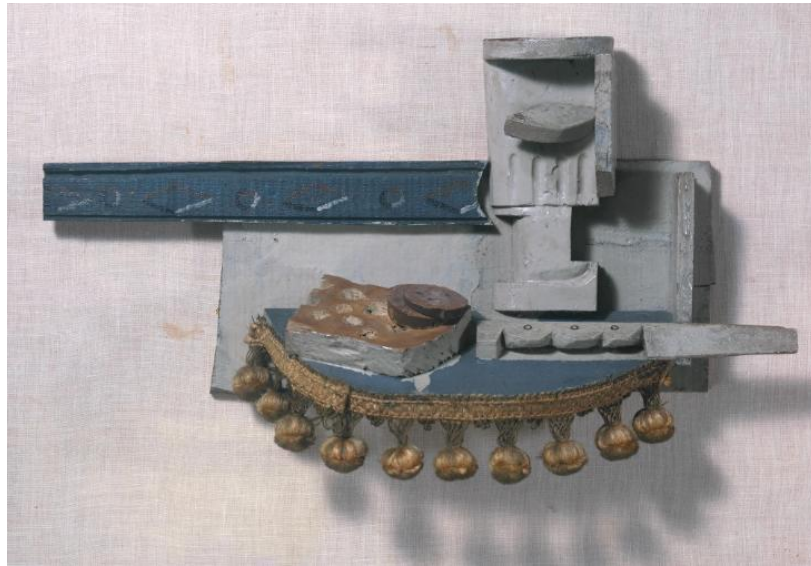
Art through history has seen a lot of transformation; this has led to the evolving of various processes for an art work. In the artists used clay, wood, metal, or stone to produce objects that were as permanent as possible. But many contemporary artist have experimented generated other approaches, using objects from the real world as the raw material for their art. Even more ephemeral materials such as ice, soil, and sugar have been used to create temporal works of art that quickly disappear, enduring only in photographic documents.

Pioneering these thoughts have been many artists who have questionend the supposedly distinct categories of art and the ability to push materials and processes beyond the presumed boundary. The challenge to the traditional art practice and the evolution of material opened a paradigm for questions about how creative art is organized.

Pablo Picasso in his work “Still Life construction 1914” (Plate 1) included a collection of humble materials. The materials include some scraps of wood and tasselled braiding, painted and arranged to look like a slice of bread and sausage, a knife and a wineglass on a table which he assembled to create an intriguing artwork.

Picasso points to the conventional character of the objects by combining conventions of representation for the object being portrayed. Picasso plays on the borderline between fiction and reality by combining artefacts of wood to represent some of the elements and a real braid which was common in his time. In this he compromises on what is art and what is. In his style, Picasso makes a difference by invention in his ability to create fiction with his artwork.

Cottington asserts that “the very humbleness of its materials contributing to its with this is a transgression for which that borderline is a marker, not an obstacle. He delightfully transgressed the norms of art practice in his time. Cottington (2005)



**Plate 2.1: Painted wood and upholstery fringe**

Pablo Picasso *Still Life* 1914

object: 254 x 457 x 92 mm

Purchased 1969© Succession Picasso/DACS 2002

He challenged the conventional way of portraying reality and explored materials which were against the formal traditions in art practice at his time. He assembled the scraps of wood and tasselled braiding to look like bread. All this was to challenge the traditional art practice. The expansive selection of material broke with tradition sculptural forms.

This break phenomenon brings about thoughts of the intriguing relationship between contemporary use of wood for art and its use in earlier art and tribal cultures. Wood presented various properties such as texture, grain, smell and traditional associations. These properties gave the material most of its traditional definitions and functions as

an art medium. However artists are encouraged to rethink an expanded view, the form, meaning, process and material.

In exploring this view artist Lin Lisberger who states “My attention to form has been consistent, describing both object and space, and thus creating a foundation upon which a narrative can be built. I use narrative, both subtly and overtly, to emphasize my interest in humans and their relationships. The act of the hand in carving seems to enrich the voice of the storyteller—creating images to evoke personal thoughts and memories for each viewer”. (Lisberger, 2015, pg.1185-1192)

His work “Anxiety Vessels” (figure 2) he explored an assemblage of wood of various sizes and form interrogating the traditional wood carving in sculpture. He asserts “I approach carving wood in a non-conventional way. Traditional wood carvers find or create blocks of wood that they then carve to create the form they seek. I prefer to carve, construct, carve some more, and then construct further to allow my sculptures to grow more integrally out of the process. This layering method allows me to create pieces that are more open and fluid than traditional carvings, and it allows my sculpture to build into or around space in an organic fashion. Additionally, it lets me incorporate other materials, such as bronze, wire, and plaster, as I create a sculpture”. (Lisberger, 2015, pg.1185-1192)



**Plate 2.2: Lin Lisberger Anxiety Vessels, 2014 Wood, copper, bronze, variable**

“Wood has become my voice and my language. Over years spent making things both useful and useless out of wood the physical work of sawing, carving, turning, and polishing has become my contemplation. The real effort is in figuring out what to make next. Sometimes the wood itself makes a suggestion”. (Bauermeister, 2015, p. 49) (<http://collectorsofwoodart.org/artist/statement/49>)

This diversity can be considered a demonstration of the strength and viability of wood as a medium for dialogue and its transformation in new contexts.

El Anatsui's Akua's Surviving Children (plate 2.3) share in common the innovative approaches to material and making processes. Inventive adaptation of materials, ideas, and the way in these artists engage with subjects is worth noting. El Anatsi placed priority on the direct experiencing of the material as well as new techniques, shaping methods.



**Plate 2.3 El Anatsui 'Akua's Surviving Children', 1996 Wood and metal;  
Installation dimensions variable**

Collection of the artist and October Gallery, London

Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

The long history of artistic practice transformations is heavily dependent on the expanding possibilities of a material exploration of contemporary ideas. Considering both the present and past lives of a material generates the ability to make history a new aesthetic and avails the artist technical possibilities.

Such new aesthetic and technical possibilities are the argument of this project, where wood off cuts are being explored as the medium for expression on the theme of power.

Through my art practice I have been interested in wood and this necessitated several visits to these sawn mills. Observations I made is that, through their operation there are many lapses. This is as a result of the dictates the sizes of wood lumber to be consumed and its resultant effect being wastage or leftovers they call Wood-residue. Due to the multitude of origins, wood off-cuts can come in varying shapes and sizes. Additionally wood off-cuts are chopped and prepared as firewood for private users.



**Plate 2.4: Wood-residue**





**Plate 2.5: Wood-residue**

In advance countries its common practices to recycle and reuse timber residue into new products and applications such as particleboards, biomass energy, animal bedding, mulch and composts. The versatility of timber is no better demonstrated than in the variety of second life products it makes its way into.

Ingrid Jensen a designer from the Netherlands who employ wood off cuts to make delightful wooden stools with knitted seats, along with many other wonderful objects. She repurposes all her wood offcuts, and used a selection of discarded pieces of various lengths to fashion these gorgeous Christmas trees.





**Plate 2.6: Ingrid Jensen, ‘various woods off cuts’**



**Plate 2.7: Ingrid Jensen, ‘untitled’ woods off cuts knitted doll**



**Plate 2.8: Ingrid Jensen, 'untitled' woods off cuts**

As an artist my quest to explore the viability of these woods off cuts into a sculptural form was heightened whenever I visited the sawn mills. Observing heaps of wood off cuts brought about creating a form that challenges preconceptions and eliciting audience response. Considering the inherent value of the material and juxtaposing this with the artist's imposed intended meaning of power. The massing up of the woods off cuts is embedded metaphorical thought of power that is coming together to do something either controlled or not controlled. The concepts of power where each unit represents mass and through connections or associations masses are realized.

Sharing similar methodologies in expression but a different dialogue, contemporary artists El-Anatsui dedicates himself to working with pieces of bottles, cups, pieces of

metal plates and rings to engage a discourse. Observing the joining of the material he uses inspired my experimentation and adapting the screw eyes for my work. (Plate 10)

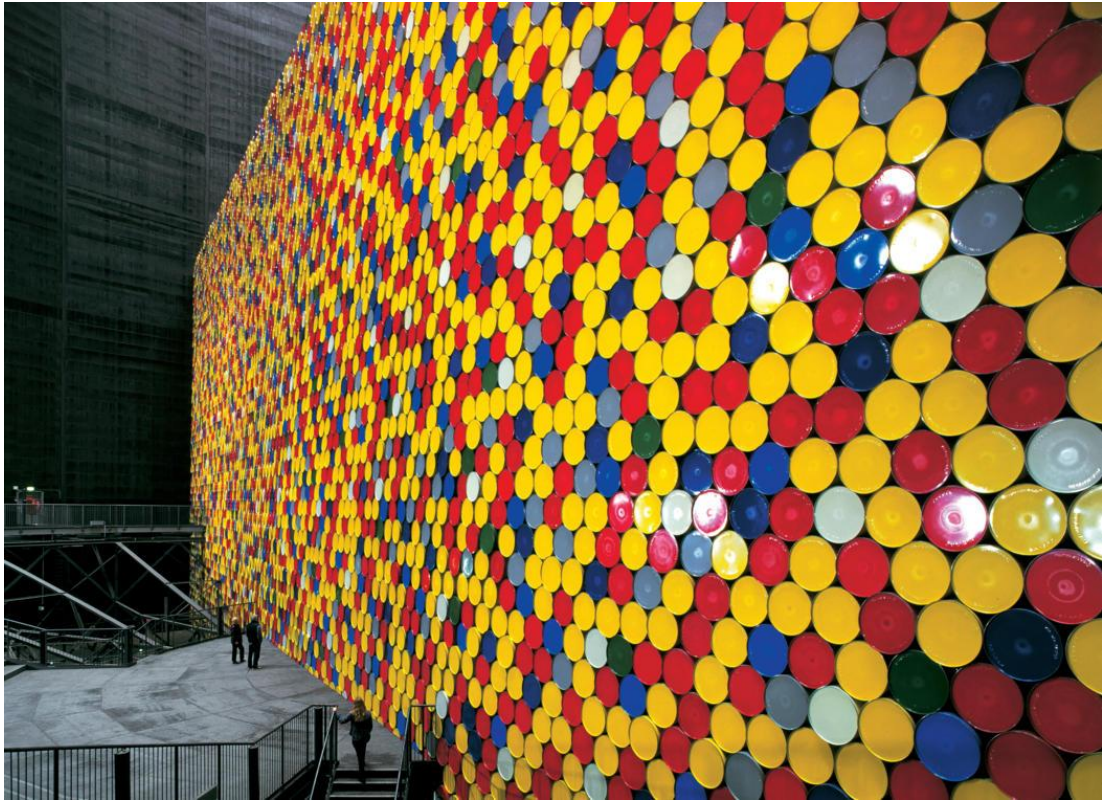


**Plate 2.9: El Anatsui, detail of Bukpa Layout, found aluminum and copper wire, 2012. Brooklyn Museum**

The ancient African depicted the idea of power through status of sculpture figures, power figures including people with high rank, and status were rendered relatively large size, refined finish, and detailed rendering of anatomy and decoration thereby setting the status of representation.

Christo and Jeanne Claude assembling of the wall 1300 oil barrel shows their concern but oil and human dependency on oil. The dependency of most of the oil and its by-product leads to a rapid depletion of this natural resource, but oil has become a measure of power between nations. He investigated the power relations generated by this material and how those who have it exercised their power through its commodification. This shows how a material can become a symbolization of one of the power manifestations.





**Plate 2.10: Christo and Jeanne-Claude the Wall - 13,000 Oil Barrels, Gasometer Oberhausen, Germany, 1998-99 Photo: Wolfgang Volz © 1999 Christo**

Power is marked by deep disagreement over how it is manifested making its definition very difficult. One such disagreement put those who define power as getting someone else to do what you want them to do that is an exercise of power-over, against those who define it as an ability or capability to act, that is the power to do something. Robert Dahl offers what he calls an “intuitive idea of power” according to which ‘A’ has power over ‘B’ to the extent that he can get ‘B’ to do something that ‘B’ would not otherwise do” (1957, p. 202–03). Dahl's definition sparked a vigorous debate that continued until the mid-1970s, but even Dahl's best-known critics seemed to agree with his basic definition of power as an exercise of power-over. One of such critics Steven Lukes notes, Dahl's one-dimensional view of power, and others two-dimensional view, and his own three-dimensional view are all variations of “the same

underlying conception of power, according to which A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests" Lukes (1974, pg. 30).

Max Webber also defines power as being "the ability of an individual or group to achieve their own goals or aims when others are trying to prevent them from realising them" Webber (1978,pg 53). From this Weber identified power as being either authoritative or coercive. Authoritative power is exercising power which is seen as legitimate. By being legitimate it is effective because those who are subject to the power do so with consent. In contrast coercion is where someone exercises power through.

Michel Foucault is also one of the early writers on power. He defines the exercise of power as a way in which certain actions may structure the field of other possible actions Foucault (1983, pg. 217). In this definition, power is analysed as the way actions from one party influence the actions of another. It can be an action of giving a command from one party in a relationship with another party. Power is exercised when the party receiving the command obeys the actions of the party who gave the command. Thus power is exercised when the action of one party influence or lead to other actions of another party. There are always two or more parties involved.

Foucault in a critical inquiry sought to investigate power from philosophical understandings to its practicality in the society. Michel Foucault's analysis presupposes that power is a kind of power-over; and he puts it, "if we speak of the structures or the mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others" Foucault (1983, pg. 217). Notice that there are two salient features of this definition of power: power is understood in terms of power-over relations, and it is defined in terms of its actual exercise. Allen (2014)

Power must therefore be strategized to prevent any form of excessive power with known opportunities and limitations. If these are not well set, there lead to struggles and opposition which throughout history has been common. The struggles exist since power is based on relationships between two or more.

Power is expressed in many forms and may originate from different sources. According to Foucault, power of western states originates from Christian institutions. This is true of most states, especially Ghana where the origins of power institutions even of the state have backgrounds in the major religious bodies. Foucault calls this power technique as the pastoral power.

Foucault writes “it has Christianity brought into being a code of ethics fundamentally different from that of the ancient world. Less emphasis is usually placed on the fact that it proposed and spread new power relations throughout the ancient world” Foucault (1983, pg. 214).

He further states “Christianity is the only religion which has organized itself as a church. And as such, it postulates in principle that certain individuals can, by their religious quality, serve others not as princes, magistrates, prophets, fortune-tellers, benefactors, educationalists, and so on but as pastors” Foucault (1982, pg. 783). However, this word designates a very special form of power.

1. It is a form of power whose ultimate aim is to assure individual salvation in the next world.
2. Pastoral power is not merely a form of power which commands; it must also be prepared to sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock. Therefore, it is different from royal power, which demands a sacrifice from its subjects to save the throne.

3. It is a form of power which does not look after just the whole community but each individual in particular, during his entire life.
4. Finally, this form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it. This form of power is salvation oriented (as opposed to political power). It is ablative (as opposed to the principle of sovereignty); it is individualizing (as opposed to legal power); it is coextensive and continuous with life; it is linked with a production of truth-the truth of the individual himself.

This implies that power of a pastoral type, which over centuries had been linked to a defined religious institution, suddenly spread out into the whole social body; it found support in a multitude of institutions. And, instead of a pastoral power and a political power, more or less linked to each other, more or less rival, there was an individualizing "tactic" which characterized a series of powers: those of the family, medicine, psychiatry, education, and employers Foucault (1982, pg. 783)

## **2.1 The Manifestations of Power**

Power manifests itself in many forms. It has the ability to exert force over a subject, the ability to modify, use, consume and also considered as relations between individuals (or between groups). Power is also fostered by communication. Power relations have a specific nature with objective capacities. The communication of power and the objective capacities overlap one another, support one another reciprocally, and use each other mutually as means to an end. The application of objective capacities in their most elementary forms implies relationships of communication. These relationships and power connections permit the exercise of

power. The coordination between the relationships is neither uniform nor constant. The manifestations of power work in sections or blocks which serve as confines for the operation of power. The confines are different based on the setup or part of society where power relations exist. The level of formality also contributes to the blocks. For example, an educational institution: the disposal of its space, the regulations which govern its internal life, the different activities which are organized there, the diverse persons who live there or meet one another, each with his own function.

The manifestation of power is influenced by the levels of communication between the people involved and the goal that the people involve hope to achieve. The goals that the parties want to achieve influence the extent to which one party allows the other to exert power capabilities.

One unique way is the type of power exercised is with the Panopticon. The Panopticon is a type of institutional building designed by the English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century. The concept of the design allows a single watchman to observe all inmates of an institution without the inmates being able to tell whether or not they are being watched. Although it is physically impossible for the single watchman to observe all cells at once, the fact that the inmates cannot know when they are being watched means that all inmates must act as though they are watched at all times, effectively controlling their own behaviour constantly. The security person thus exercise an enormous amount of power even though the truth is that he is perform a little action. The name is also a reference to Panoptes from Greek mythology; he was a giant with a hundred eyes and thus was known to be a very effective (Bentham, 1995).



Michel Foucault's conceptualization of the panoptic , states that, "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" Foucault (1995, pg. 202-203). It is clear that power can alter the actions of individual when it is deployed. The manifestations of power conform people to it nature and capabilities. Power can make one silent or shout. The way power is utilized in a relationship of connections cannot be overlook.

Foucault analyses modern power as a mobile and constantly shifting set of force relations that emerge from every social interaction and thus pervade the social body. As he puts it, "power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere Foucault (1977, pg. 194). Concluding my thoughts a wide variety of perspectives on power concept continually refine in light of the ever-changing social, cultural, and historical circumstances that we are presented with every day.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

To explore the concept of power metaphorically presented many thoughts in the choice of materials to articulate the arguments to be made. Working in the Integrated Rural Art studios was an opportunity for me to visit so many sawn wood mills and saw the way wood off cuts were being handled. They were either sold to be used for firewood or burnt sometimes when the buyer are not readily available and they are becoming nuisance to them.



**Plate 3.1: Disposed wood off cuts**

Looking at the wood off cuts gave me many fascinating ideas, the first was to take these wood off cuts without any further modifications being done to them and assemble them into a an aesthetic and narrative form.

The design was drawn on a board and the off cuts pasted on the design drawn on the board with the help of white glue to depict the image on the board. White glue was

used for bonding the wood off cuts to the board; which suggest the connection of the wood off cuts to the board to make the desired form.

This was to use the wood off cuts as a form of expression, where each individual material represents a unit of mass and its connections represent another mass of an object created. In so doing, I realized that some of the shapes could not correspond to the design because the control of the off cuts and its manipulation resulted in them being dictatorial in the execution of the work, which made execution very difficult.

The intuitive nature of control and submissiveness were the first ideas I tried to explore.

Wood became the selected material for my work. It has played an important role in our society, used in so many fields, useful in transport construction and has also been used as a major trade commodity between nations.

Wood is one of the natural resources that are abundantly found in this country. A lot of people use it because of its availability. Hence, a lot of its off cuts are generated. The parts disposed were collected and trimmed into desired shapes for my work.

Wood was also chosen because of its physical appearance. Wood has different shades of colour and grains which makes its appearance interesting. Using different shades of wood in my work to enhance the visual aesthetics of the work.

Furthermore, its submissive nature contributed to its selection for my project. Wood is materials that can be shaped in any form and size desired so I chose it.

Again, I considered wood because of its weight. My project required that a lot of pieces are put together to form one whole unit which during display, would be hanged. I thought of using a lighter material so that it can support the project.

Considering the use of the screw eyes which is screwed into the wood, the wood pieces needed some thickness so that the screw eye can be screwed into it. If the right thickness is not achieved the wood can split. With wood the form is achieved and does not give much weight.

The earlier work drew my attention to another way of using the wood off cuts. This is because the earlier methodology of leaving them in the original shape created a lot of limitation. Consequently, each individual is left to live or do whatever they want to bring about loss of control. Because the power is in their bosom and they wield it any how without considering the other. Therefore, I wanted to explore the concepts of control using power which creates submission. Submission in the way that now they are trimmed to a certain shape which can easily be manipulated

Same as those who have power control and secure people into submission, the off cuts were then cut into a precise and various shapes which made assemblage easier to be controlled and submissive to the dictates of the artist.

I was also looking at the idea of connecting individual wood pieces together to create mass. I considered the idea of traditional brick wall where the individual bricks are joined to create mass which serves partitions. So the idea of the brick influenced the shape of the wood used for this work. The form created suggests how bricks are laid to form a building. The wood pieces were cut into 10.2cm x 5.2cm to form rectangular shapes and joined together with screw eyes. The screw eyes were to serve as the connection or link to all the four sides of a piece of the wood. Each wood piece has two short vertical sides and two long horizontal sides. Each vertical side takes one screw eye and that of the horizontal side takes two screw eyes. This makes the execution even, creating a uniform form. The screw eyes help created flexibility. The

flexibility in this experiment gives the idea of power through connectivity and networking where the system created is flexible so as to accept other members into the group or the team. It also gives room for corrections; this is because, if any of the wood off cuts falls off the others, it holds it into place bringing control and submission.

The addition of more wood off cuts generates individual elements to be controlled. When humanized, it represents societal systems on experience. The church is one of such system where people are accepted into it provided they submit to their dictates and live within it. This shows the experience of control and submission.



**Plate 3.2: Exploring the idea of traditional breaks by the use of wood pieces**

The experiment in plate 3.2 has attained some amount of flexibility but still rigid. All these methodologies earlier explored generated various ideas about how to create the main project. It was realized that the wood off cuts have to be trimmed to a regular shape so that the subject of power could be explored to achieve more flexibility and control. Each wood piece was trimmed into 3.8 x 3.8 squares in order to achieve evenness and to control the form. Equality generates flexibility and connectivity



**Plate 3.3: pieces of squared wood (1.5" square)**

Plate 3.3 depicts the wood pieces cut into regular square shapes 3.8cm x 3.8cm square thickness by 1.4cm thickness

The square shapes make arrangement uniform. It also represents the idea of power through connectivity which an individual piece represent a unit of a mass while they being joined together also represent another mass of a form. To explore the idea of power through mass, the individual piece is shaped into a uniform piece so that when they are joined together will give a uniform pattern and even spaces which enhance its flexibility. Therefore, masses can demonstrate a change of authority while authority



can also influence the size of the masses when there is no transparency and the systems seems to be rigid.

Exploring the concept of power through connectivity where wood cuts were joined together by the help of super glue and screw eyes. One piece of wood represent a unit of mass and they join together also represents another mass of a work created. The pieces were joined with this method because the screw eyes have the screwing ability, their eyes can be opened to accept another eye and also because the screw eyes have enough space to accommodate one another. (See plate 3.11 and 3.12). The super glue was used to aid in the bonding of the screw eyes to the wood thereby giving the work strength so that the screw eyes would not be removed from the wood easily

The cutting machine was used for cutting large boards into strips. The strips were then cut into smaller square shapes.

The square shapes were sanded with sand paper to eliminate rough fibres.



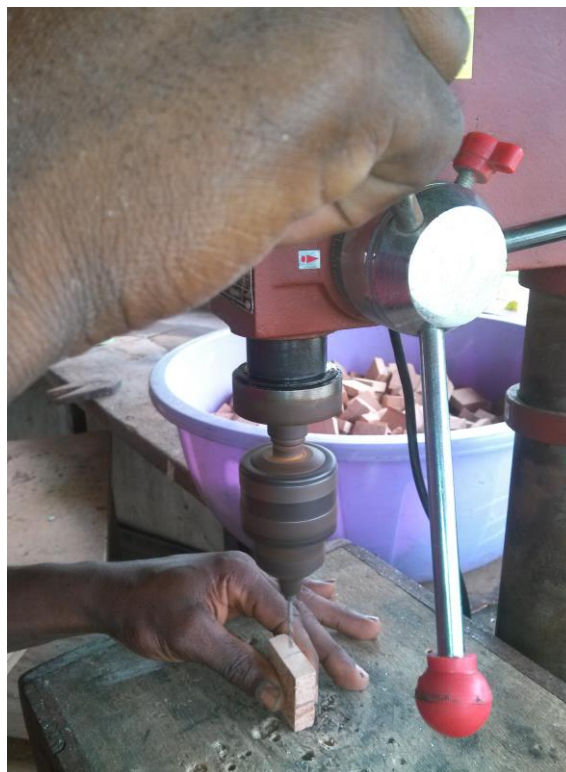
**Plate 3.4 Sanding of the wood pieces**

The parts of the shapes were marked with a pencil or pen.



**Plate 3.5: Marking of the wood pieces**

The pillar drill was used to drill the marked parts with a drill bite to ensure easy penetration of screw eyes.



**Plate 3.6 Drilling holes in the wood pieces**





**Plate 3.7: wood pieces with drilled holes**

Super glue was used to aid the bonding of the screw eyes in the wooden holes.



**Plate 3.8 pouring super glue into the drilled holes**

The screw eyes were then screwed into the drill holes. This process was applied to all the parts of the wood pieces.



**Plate 3.9: screwing the screw eye into the hole**



**Plate 3.10: the wood piece with the screw eyes**

Plate 3.10 shows the wood piece and the screw eyes

To be able to join one screw eyes to another, one of the screw eye was opened with pliers then the other one that is already closed is joined into the open one and is closed again with the same pliers and is to lock the two screw eyes together.



**Plate 3.11: opening the screw eye with a pillar**



**Plate 3.12: putting an open screw eye into a closed screw eye**





**Plate 3.13: closing up the opened screw eye**

Figure 3.14 shows how the opened screw eye accepts another closed screw eye.



**Plate 3.14: opened screw eye accepts another closed screw eye**



**Plate 3.15a**

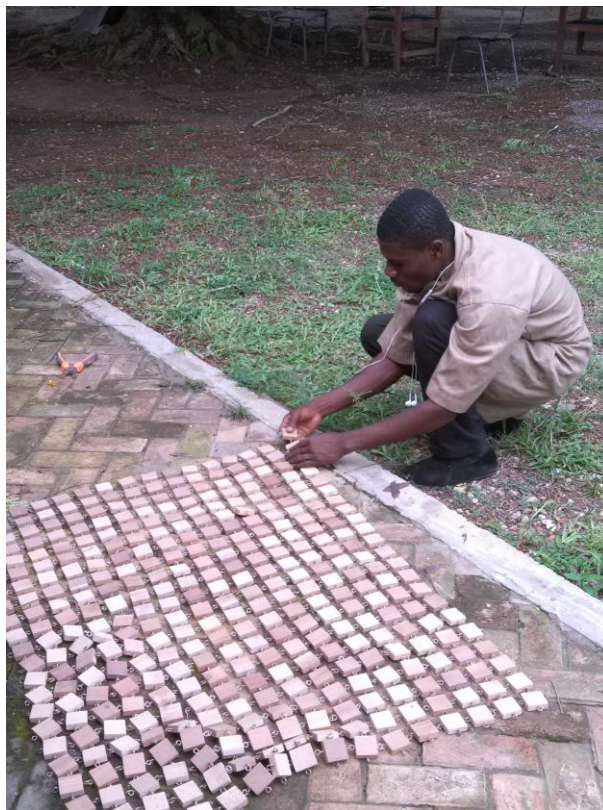


**Plate 3.15b**

**Plate 3.15a & b: connecting the wood pieces together**



**Plate 3.16a**



**Plate 3.16b**





**Plate 3.16c**

**Plate 3.16a-c: Many wood pieces were added to create a larger piece.**

**Plate 3.16 shows how the wood pieces are joined together with the screw eyes.**

**Many wood pieces were added to create a larger piece.**

Below are pictures of the connected pieces.



**Plate 3.17 pictures of the connected pieces**

The above plate 3.17 shows the displayed work on the stairs showing folds.



**Plate 3.18 shows the displayed work stretched on the stairs**



**Plate 3.19: coiled connected wood pieces**

The plate (3.19) shows how the work is coiled to form a snake-like pattern





**Plate 3.20: drape connected wood pieces**



**Plate 3.21: shows how the work is coiled and drape.**

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Power being a concept has various ways it is manifested by display and form. In investigation the concept of power to be explored the various theories as discussed became pivotal reference point of thought. The choice of wood piece as material for this exploration is fundamental to the concept of power being explored. The wood pieces as a material has its inherent life and characteristics but the artist taken and using the methodology of joining in one large form and the individual wood pieces embedded with their own characteristics or properties. These insinuate the idea of individual element coming together to form one mass. Connecting power through connectivity this is not to say that they do not have or inhibit power on their own but suggest the greater power or the dominance of the masses.

The wood pieces are connected to each other with the help of screw eyes; the screw eyes are used because of its screwing property and its ability to be opened to accept another screw eye. This connection refers to how as individuals from different background are connected by the beliefs in common grounds where a lot of thoughts are shared. The idea of connectivity relates to Foucault's idea of knowledge and power where there is an emergence of a systemic knowledge of individuals through connected practices of surveillance, confession and documentation. We have become a singularly confession society. The (confession) plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships and love relation, the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn right; one confesses his thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles; one goes about telling, with the greatest precision. Whatever is most difficult to tell one confesses or force to confess? (Foucault,

2005:pg5) With connectivity, the system is designed so that other individuals can be connected. There is connectivity when there is an interaction between two people or groups of people and they make confessions among themselves. They reflect dependency where each member depends on another in a way, which create interaction between individual members through interaction between individual wood pieces, individual. However the connection can also represent constraint and restrictions. This constraints and restrictions do not allow sometimes the individual to express themselves freely. The constraints may be religious, academic, social, where rules set by these systems. These rules control individuals connected by the system.

Sometimes, if you want to control people you need to make them connected. The individual pieces are connected together to form one large work, so they are manipulated and controlled by the connecting systems. These manipulations can be explored through the display of the work. The manipulation by hanging, coiling, spreading, folding, draping, covering, etc. Connections therefore create power for manipulation. (2005:pg5).



This manipulation in display creates the interactivity with the audience. The various forms of display allow viewer not to be restricted to one exhibition style appreciating the work in all varied forms. The displays allow audience to walk on the work, touch the work, move around the work, wrap themselves with the work and manipulate the work the way they want. They are also given the chance to interpret the work the way they want experience them. The way the screw eyes articulate the individual wood pieces together, draws the viewer's mind to the ideas of power through connectivity, network and interdependency, the power to act, effect change within and without and to be controlled . When one piece is removed the whole piece becomes weak. Change in power can cause so many disturbance of a group. This idea expresses the fact that power is not static but dynamic. As power is not static but dynamic; the concept of power is explored through various forms.

The work is displayed by hanging where the individual pieces connected create a larger piece of work that can be hanged. By hanging, the work depicts the hierarchy system in institutions, health sectors, government institutions etc. These institutions create a hierarchy system where there is a distinction between those at the top from those at the low level. This system also creates a requirement which also distinguish people, between those who can meet the requirement and those who cannot meet the requirement. Those who can meet the requirement are placed at a level different from those who cannot meet the requirement.

#### **Stages of display of the work by hanging**



**Plate 4.1a Hanging the work**





**Plate 4.1b Hangging of the work**



**Plate 4.2 Hangging of the work**



**Plate 4.3a Hangging of the work**

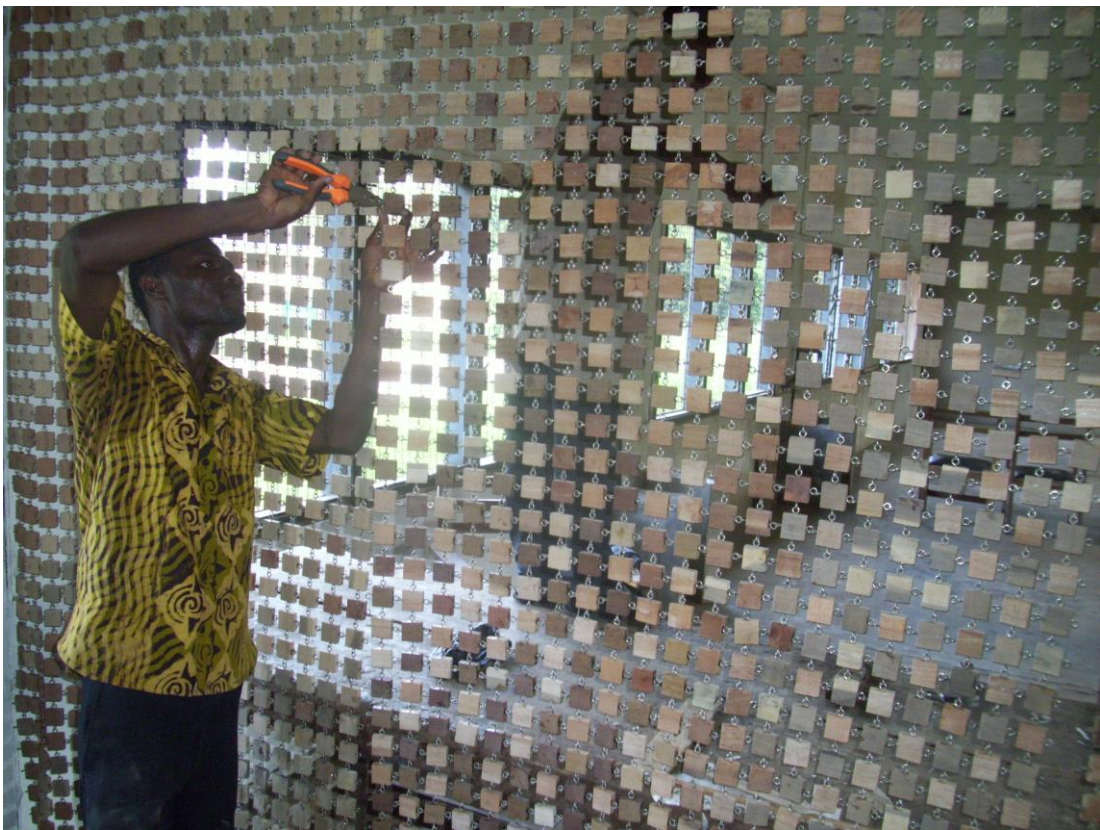


**Plate 4.3b Hangging of the work**



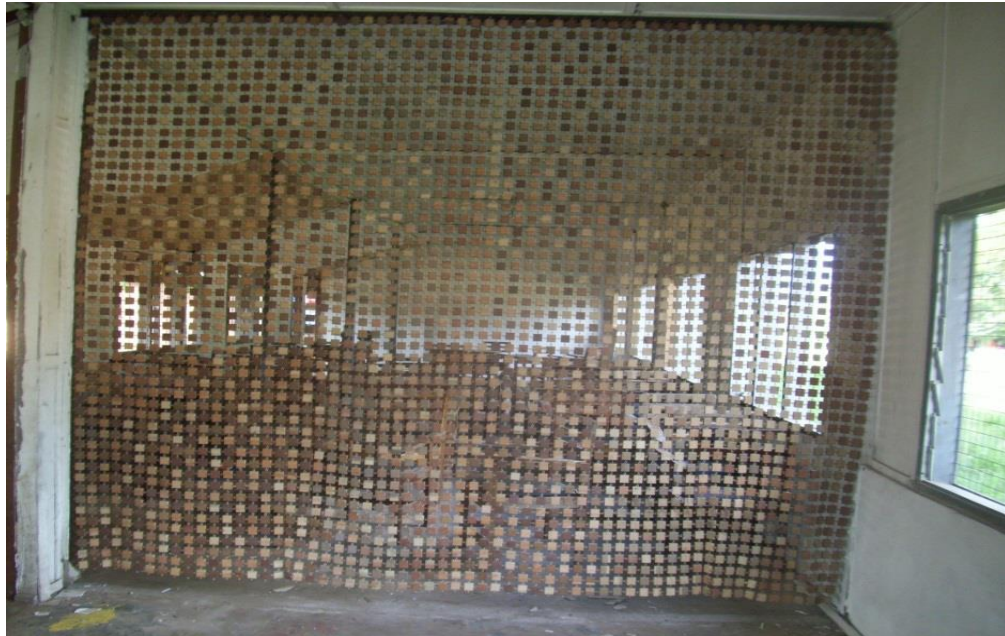


**Plate 4.3c Hangging of the work**



**Plate 4.3d Hangging of the work**





**Plate 4.4: Display of work by hanging**

Coiling the work also create another system of control. The work is coiled and this depicts the power to influence people so that the system created becomes disadvantage to them thereby allowing them to coil back into their shells. This type of control normally happens because of their own limitations such as fear, unable to meet requirement, physical deficiencies etc.



**Plate 4.5: Display of work through coilling method**



**Plate 4.6: Display of work through coilling method**

Draping is another display form where the work is displayed so that part of it is draping. By draping the system creates certain new policies or changes which do not favour others, by way of not meeting requirement or standard there by laying them off from the system.



**Plate 4.7: Display of work through dripping method**

Spreading is again seen through the display format of the work. With spreading the work is spread on the ground so that audience can walk on it and interact with it. This also suggest another form of control where those who are laid off by the new policies or changes see themselves insufficient there by allowing themselves to be controlled by other who are standing or considered to have authority. Eg. Literate and illiterate, the government and citizens, managers and subordinates, contractors and labourers etc.

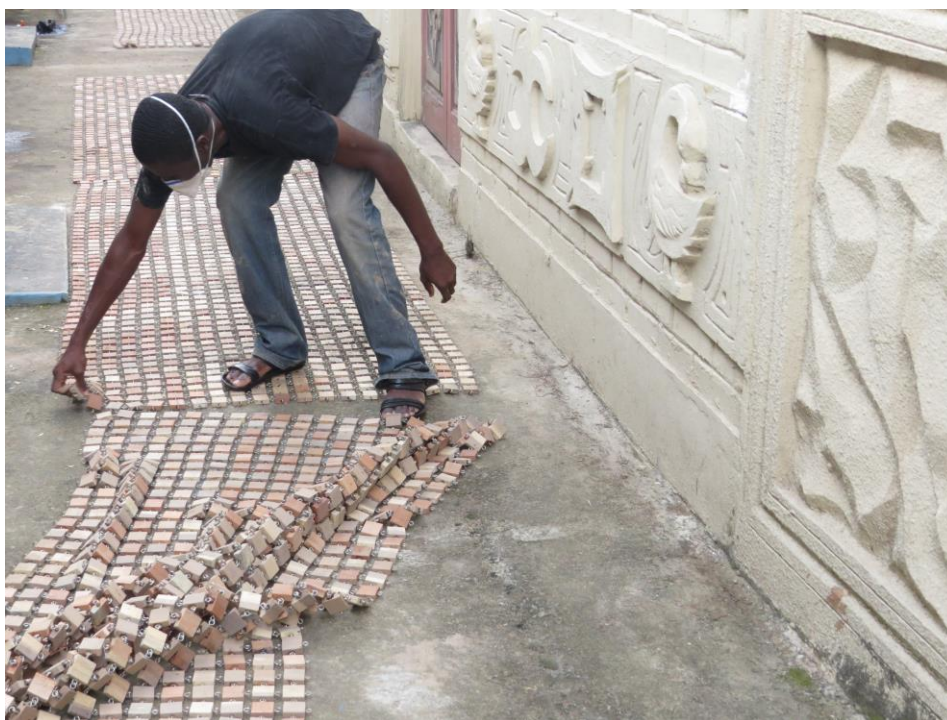




**Plate 4.8: Display of work through spreading method**



**Plate 4.9: Display of work through spreading method**



**Plate 4.10a: displayed by spreading**



**Plate 4.10c: displayed by spreading**





**Plate 4.10b: displayed by spreading**



**Plate 4.11: Display of work through spreading method**



**Plate 4.11a: Audience interacting with the Displayed work**





**Plate 4.11b: Audience interacting with the Displayed work**



**Plate 4.11c: Audience interacting with the Displayed work**

Folding is a source of power seen in the work in terms of its display form. This suggests the manipulative type of power where folds are created in the work. This is possible because of its flexible nature. This system of manipulation is seen in institutions and organisations such as schools, religious sectors, cooperation, unions, associations, etc where the system created manipulates and controls its members. For example, manipulation and control can be seen in school systems where the school draws its calendar to manipulate students, the time to vacate and the time for reopening, the time to write exams.



## Stages of Folding the Displayed Work



**Plate 4.13: Display of work through the folding method**



**Plate 4.14: Display of work through the folding method**



**Plate 4.15: Display of work through the folding method**



**Plate 4.16: Display of work through the folding method**





**Plate 4.17: Display of work through the folding method**

Covering is another type of power where the wood pieces joined together as one piece is used as a covering. This idea depicts the idea of individuals coming together with a common goal to possess authenticity. Here masses come together to demonstrate against authority to cause unrest in system, revolting against authority. When masses overcome another they possess the system.

### **Stages of Displaying the Work through Covering**



**Plate 4.18: Display of work through the covering method**



**Plate 4.19: Display of work through the covering method**



**Plate 4.20: Display of work through the covering method**





**Plate 4.21: Display of work through the covering method**



**Plate 4.22: Display of work through the covering method**



**Plate 4.23a: Display of work through the covering method**



**Plate 4.23b: Display of work through the covering method**





**Plate 4.24a: Display of work through the covering method**



**Plate 4.24b: Display of work through the covering method**

Displaying work as a fabric



**Plate 4.25: Displayed of work as a fabric**



**Plate 4.26: Displayed of work as a fabric**





**Plate 4.27: Displayed of work as a fabric**



**Plate 4.28: Exhibition model of display**





**Plate 4.29: Plate 4.28: Exhibition model of display**



**Plate 4.30: Exhibition model of display as a cover**





**Plate 4.31: Exhibition model of display as a cover**



**Plate 4.32: Plate 4.32: Exhibition model of displayas a cover**





**Plate 4.33: Plate 4.28: Exhibition model of display**

The insinuations of the togetherness of the unit in the group form a cover for the group. This shows that groups exercise their support for members when challenges arise. They try to help each other up so the group does not disintegrate and lose the strength amassed. The collective manifestation of power is therefore of importance in such structures and systems. These systems are experienced in our daily engagements such as schools, religious groups, professional groupings etc. these groups exercise their powers in creating internal mechanisms for discipline and protecting members.



**Plate 4.29 Audience interaction with work**



**Plate 4.30 Audience interaction with work**





**Plate 4.31 Audience interaction with work**



**Plate 4.32 Audience interaction with work**



**Plate 4.33 Audience interaction with work**



**Plate 4.34 Final Display of Work**



**Plate 4.35 Final Display of Work**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Exploring the idea of power metaphorically using wood pieces in this project has brought about different disciplines that the concept of power can also be considered. Studies have been made into a lot of literature to bring about its execution and its relationship to existence.

Many writers have different thought about this concept, but one such idea is the power to do something. The probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry his own will despite resistance by Max Webber. This idea still relates to the idea of power where someone the power to do something despite resistance. Robert Dahl also offers what he calls an intuitive idea of power where A has power over B to the extent that A can get B to do something B would not otherwise do. This concept also talks about the fact that A has power over B to get B to do something. Duhl again is a political scientist who defines power in terms of a relationship between people, which is expressed in simple symbolic notation. He access further that since power is seen in relation between people, one can have a statement of power comparability or relative degree of power help by two or more people in the relationship. In seen power as such we can have one part of the relationship been more powerful than the other base on a criteria for comparison. Some words synonymous to power are influenced, control and authority. The idea of power of to do something is still seen in Duhl's concept of power where objects are compared so that one is powerful the other in terms of having the power to influence, control and having authority over something. In this case the idea of power to do something plays a major role. In the same way the individual pieces of wood are

joined together where pieces of wood joined together to form another piece of wood and to another piece of wood and so on with the help of the screw eyes till it attains the mass to influence, control, sustain and have authority to dominate.

Power is created through the idea of putting mass together to control, influence and have authority to do something. Power can also be seen through discipline and training where bodies and objects are reconstructed to produce new gestures, actions, habits and skills. Against this background, one piece of wood cannot bend or used in terms of flexibility however, they putting together creates mass that can be bend. Surveillance is another source of power where new structures are instituted to organize and to enhance visibility within them to check examination practices such as scholastic test but also medical or psychiatric examination, employment interviews, prison masters and military reviews. Power is again seen in terms of confession where one confess or force to confess crimes, sins, thoughts and desires, illnesses and troubles which then documented and used for further examination and constraint. The concept expresses itself in nature, most especially in our human institution, cultural, social, political and economic relations. The initial experiment sought to create a work expressing the concept of power through mass by the use of wood offcuts pasting on a board by the help of white glue where it creates a bond between the board and the wood offcut. This leads to plate 3.2 where the wood pieces were separated from the board to stand alone. The wood pieces were cut into a rectangular shape and were joined together with screw eyes to ensure a uniformity, evenness and flexibility. In order to attain more flexibility and uniformity, the wood pieces were cut into square shapes and joined together by screw eyes and super glue which enhances its strength. One piece of wood represent a unit of mass and they joined together represents one piece of work. The concept of power is now created through the joining together of



individual mass to create a massive net-like work. The power attained by the mass now is able to control, influence and have authority to wrap an object, spread on the ground, folded, twisted, hanged and manipulate in any form. In acknowledgement of the fact that the concept of power is dynamic and expresses itself in our society, the study recommends an interactive discourse and attitude towards the perception and experience of the object created for viewers. The concept of power is not only explored through putting together mass, but can also be considered in several ways. So artists are encouraged to explore the concept of power in other ways.

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