

COLLAGE AND CONTEMPORARY
GHANAIAN ICONOGRAPHY
KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI

COLLEGE OF ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

**COLLAGE AND CONTEMPORARY
GHANAIAN ICONOGRAPHY:
AN EXHIBITION PROJECT**

BY

ATTAH PROSPER KOMLA

JULY, 2011

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COLLAGE AND CONTEMPORARY

GHANAIAN ICONOGRAPHY:

AN EXHIBITION PROJECT

By

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A Project Report submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology,

In partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ART

Faculty of Fine Art, College of Art and Social Sciences

July, 2011

© Department of Painting and sculpture

CERTIFICATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the MFA and that, to the best of 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 acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores non-visual sources of contemporary Ghanaian iconography for collage. Basically, I focus on themes from proverbs, incantations, folklores, songs etc., found among the people of Avatime in the Volta Region, which can be adopted for collage making. The central idea for this project is to produce a number of collages that expresses the philosophies, ideas and values of the contemporary Ghanaian with emphasis on the people of Avatime traditional area. To achieve these objectives, I interviewed some custodians and senior citizens to tap from them meaning and moral values from proverbs, maxims, drum languages, incantations, folklores etc which I later developed into series of symbols before finally developing them into catalogues of collages meant for exhibitions and peer review. By the end of the project, I have realized that, the non-visual forms of contemporary Ghanaian iconographies could best worth their purpose, if they are represented in visual or pictorial images such as collages.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Context

The purpose of the thesis is to explore non-visual sources of contemporary Ghanaian iconography for collage. I will focus on themes from proverbs, maxims, incantations, folklore, songs, poetry, chanting and drum languages in Avatime in the Volta region of Ghana.

I come from Avatime. Avatime consists of seven towns and villages on the Trans Volta –Togo highlands. The towns and villages are Vane, Amedzofe, Gbadzeme, Dzokpe (Old and New), Biakpa, Dzogbefeme, and Fume. The language of Avatime is known as Siyase or Sideme. Traditional Avatime government is organized around a chieftancy system which informs religious and art practices. Avatime culture is syncretic, bringing together assorted ethnic, historical and modern constituents. Ganusah (1998, p. 66) corroborates this thus:

The people here were introduced to Christianity about 100 years ago, and churches were established. But traditional religion, with spirit possession, is widely practiced alongside Christianity, and believers often mix, the religious practices together.

Otsiami Togbe Kwesiku, an elder of Avatime, suggests that themes and forms from libation performance, proverbs, incantations, folklore, poetry, chanting and drum languages have found expression in local visual forms such as sculpture (umbrella and linguist staff tops, stools, drums), painting, architecture and textiles (Personal Communication, 15th June, 2007).

I take cue from this mutual relation between local non-visual cultural forms and visual culture. I propose that the former could generate interesting

iconography adaptable to the collage idiom which is at the same time perceptual and iconic in its presentation and reception.

Objectives

1. Identify non-visual sources of iconography among the Avatime people in the Volta Region.
2. Use the identified iconography as themes with which to fashion a body of collage works.
3. Mount a public exhibition with the body of collage works for peer review.
4. Make an exegesis and documentation of the process and outcomes.

In this study, collage has two general senses. In one sense it is the syncretic art idiom I employ which involves weaving together different stylistic idioms and materials. In another, it is a metaphor for hybrid cultural forms. This way, collage can be emblematic of the Avatime culture from which I have derived my iconography. For example, the Ewe adaptation of the German alphabet, which appears in the thesis as transcribed proverbs, maxims and titles of collages, is exemplary of this collage character.

I have adapted materials and techniques from the local tailoring, textiles and carpentry industries in Ghana. I have adopted early Modernist collage and painting techniques for the project.

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Guidelines to Siyase and Ewe orthography and pronunciation¹

I have retained some Ewe phrases in this thesis. However, the Ewe and English language systems vary one from the other. The Ewe make use of the German alphabet with the addition of three special letters in the English alphabet – two vowels ‘Ɛ’ and ‘Ɔ’ and the consonant ‘ŋ’. Also where the (tilde) is used over a vowel such as ‘à’, it signifies that, the vowel has a nasal sound. While ‘Ɛ’ may follow ‘e’, it corresponds with the sound ‘e’ as in egg / get, the ‘Ɔ’ as in ox. Also every ‘ts’ sounds as ‘ch’ as in chair, ‘dz’ as in ‘ju’ jute, ‘gb’ as g and b. ‘Gw’ as in ‘gu’ in guardian (this as near as possible but has no precise word equivalent). ‘Hw’ as ‘wh’ as in where, ‘kp’ as in the middle of stockpot without a pause between k and p. Further the letter ‘kw’ as in aquarium, ‘ŋu’ as in long. ‘ŋm’ as ‘gm’ as in wrong and it goes on . Notably, no Ewe sound may correspond exactly to any English sound. The foregoing guidelines are an attempt to get close to the correct pronunciation of this orthography.

1. “Siyase” or “Sideme” as appeared in the sub topic above is the original language spoken by the indigenous people of Avatime traditional area in the Volta Region of Ghana

Chapter Two

Collage and Iconography

Introduction

This chapter examines the background and philosophical significance of collage and iconography by exploring some views of some scholars and artists. It also explores how artists through various media of expression have creatively come out with various types of collages. These give a backdrop to the techniques and materials suitable for the execution of collages using selected contemporary Ghanaian iconographies.

Philosophy and Meaning of Collage

Collage as an art process has been given various descriptions and meanings by various artists and authors according to the techniques and materials which were employed, to execute it. Describing collage, the Pearson Education Ltd. (2007, p. 298) in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* suggests that “collage is a picture made by sticking other pictures, photographs cloths and others, onto a surface”. Again Jenkins and Mills (1957, p. 33) also described collage as “an orderly arrangement of parts composed unto a permanent unified whole”. The above definitions appear to have something in common. They all agree on the composition of different objects together to form a holistic pictorial idea. The use of such words as “arrangements”, “assemblage”, “sticking” and “pasting” attest to this fact. From the above definition, collage can be seen as a type of image making technique which is adopted by an artist by fixing a variety of materials onto a surface for various aesthetics purposes.

Collage has a long and distinguished history. No matter what is done in collage, chances are that it has been done before, but certainly not exactly as one would do it. One can study early collages of the Japanese or Dutch, for example and then receive an old idea with a new twist, giving a contemporary look and feel to an ancient technique.

Some artists such as Ieland and Lee (1994) as cited by Krieg (2008), support this assertion that: "artists in medieval times, beginning in the thirteenth century, often enhanced religious image with gemstones, elegant fibres, relics and precious metals".

Explaining further on the origins of collage, Krieg (2008), indicates that:

Later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nuns made bookmarks trimmed with cut and coloured papers which they carried in the prayer books. Frequently, the materials used were selected from their symbolism, a practice that continues in contemporary collage.

Then again commenting on collages in ancient African Art, Spoilt 677 (2008)

also intimates that:

After 1909, Picasso and Braque began a more systematic study of structure, which we know as "Analytical Cubism". In this period, they removed bright colors from their compositions, favouring monochromatic earth tones so that they could focus on the structure. The paintings of this period look as if they have deconstructed objects and rearranged them on the canvas. One goal of this is to depict different viewpoints all at once. After the artists had grown tired of the Analytical period, they began to develop what is known as the Synthetic period. Picasso and Braque continue to introduce new and controversial changes with the introduction of collaged objects into their paintings. Such as different types of paper e.g. wall paper, music sheets, and newspaper clippings.

This statement by Spoilt 677, is very significant in collage making of ancient Africa because it is believed that Picasso and his other exponents of the Cubism movement in art were influenced by the study of African masks.

We understand from this ongoing discussion that, collage today is a legitimate and valued art form. It allows the artist the freedom to approach the medium in whatever manner is pleasing and does not restrict him or her to any form or material. This medium is a direct form of communication for an artist. That is, it allows one to work with whatever material he or she chooses.

Then commenting further on types of materials used in collage making, Krieg (2008) again intimates:

Craftsmen in prehistoric and primitive societies in many parts of the world used seed, shell, straw, feathers and butterfly wings as collage materials. Shamans and holy men in some societies secured other materials to masks used in sacred rituals. All of these materials appear occasionally in artists collages today.

Thus having elaborated on what constitutes a collage, one can conveniently describe collage as an artistic work which may include newspapers clippings, ribbons, bits of other artwork, photographs, and such, glued to a surface such as wood, hard card or canvas .



Figure 1: A collage composed of magazine articles and pictures by Pablo Picasso – http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/sit/concept_collage.html.

The Meaning and Significance of Iconography

Just like collage, the term iconography has also been described by various artists and authors. Pearson Education Ltd., (2007, p. 298) describes it thus: "Iconography is the way that a particular people, religious or a political group and others, represents ideas in a picture or image". Corroborating the definition above, Clark (2003, p. 61) also says: "Iconography, a term used in art history referring to the study of the subject matter rather than the form of a work of art". Oxford Dictionary adds; "Although it can be used in connection with any period of art, iconography is mostly usually discussed in the context of medieval and particularly Renaissance studies"

The above definition then suggests that iconography as a cultural practice, or by extension, a subject of study has been with humankind since time immemorial. However when the specific term was first used in the 18th century, the term was confined to the study of the engravings, which were then the standard made of illustrating books on art and on antiquities in general. But it came shortly to be applied more specially to the history and classification of Christian images and symbols of all sorts, in whatever medium they happened to be rendered originally or in whatever way they were produced for study.

~~Again highlighting~~ on the meaning and significance of indigenous iconography in the form of their symbolism, Agbo (2006: ix) says;

In a number of cases, these images have become symbolic of having certain ideas or proverbs arbitrarily. Several traditional symbols have definite explorations, however the significance of others in a matter of opinion, while of quite a few, nothing at all seems to be known. The objects that are represented in symbolic art forms among the traditional ethnic groups in Ghana are the textiles, pottery, stools, umbrella tops , linguist staff gold weights , jewellery, swords architecture and many more.

This suggests that in contemporary Ghana, people's cherished ideas and values of life are expressed in verbal, graphic and plastic symbols. There is therefore the need to study and understand the concepts of Ghanaian artistic expressions which are pregnant with these cherished ideas. The symbolic motif as well as their meaning within the whole artifact should be explained.

Collage and Iconography in Western Art

Several artists have worked on different aspects of collages and iconographies. Some researchers have also shown remarkable enthusiasm over past years towards the way of making collages using various materials and techniques. With the rise of the systematic investigation of art from prehistoric ages to modern times, it has become apparent that each major phase or epoch in which the representation in Figure 1 occurs had created and developed in varying degrees of richness and elaborations; a system of iconography of its own. As used today, therefore, the term is necessarily qualified to indicate the field of iconographic study under discussion. For example the iconography of the various Egyptian deities, the iconography of Roman imperial portraits, early Christian iconography, Buddhist or Hindu iconography, Byzantine iconography and even contemporary Ghanaian iconography.

According to the Guggenheim Museums Online (2008), in an attempt to relate collage with modernism, "Collage is an artistic concept associated with the beginnings of modernism and entails much more than the idea of glueing something onto something else".

The contributor justifies this statement with an example of how glued patches which Braque and Picasso added to their canvases collided with the non-surface plane of painting. The chopped –up bits of the newspapers introduced fragments of externally referenced meaning into collision. For instance it indicated that, references to current events, such as the war in the Balkans, and to their popular culture, enriched the content of their art. This purported “collision of signifiers” is said to be fundamental to the inspiration behind collage. To this end, the Museum emphatically buttresses this argument and says. “Emphasis concepts and process over end products, collage has brought the incongruous into meaningful congress with the ordinary”

Arguably, any work of art which involves the application (with glue or by any other means) of things to a surface, but which lacks this purposeful incongruity, this quality of fragmented signifiers, is not truly collage in any important sense.

As a method of scholarly research the science of iconography strives also to recover and express the thought from which a given convention has assumed the value of symbol. The importance of identifying motif is central to iconographical interpretation. For examples, the picture of St. Catherine of Alexandria is traditionally portrayed in the presence of a wheel. This wheel is a familiar attribute that serves to identify her and that at the same time signify a miracle connected with her martyrdom. Some attributes are more difficult to understand, and their obscurity has led scholars to consult other images or literary sources in order to interpret the motif more satisfactorily. Again at times certain theme characteristics of a specific philosophy have been commonly represented during an era and iconography has been developed to

express them. Another example which illustrates this is the still life Vanitas Vanitatum of the Middle ages. The pictures show a reminder of the transitory quality of earthly pleasure symbolized by skull, candle, and hourglass (or in later versions, a watch).

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Figure 2: St. Catherine of Alexandria by Fernando Yanez de la Almedina (1505 – 1510)
 - www.bridgemanartondemand.com/art/103303/St_Catherine_of_Alexandria



Figure 3: Vanitas Venitatem by Hermen Steenwijck, c 1641 - <http://www.lib-art.com/art.php?id=1258>

Collage and Iconography in Modern Ghanaian Art

In Ghana, besides the mundane, Ghanaian iconography usually taps from such non-visual idioms as proverbs, parables, music and maxims which portray the philosophical ideas of its people. Expressing his views on sources of ideas for artistic expressions, Amenuke (1989, p. 51) says:

Sources have referred to all the ideas that relate to the natural and man-made, indigenous and modern environment. They also include the supernatural and mythology. For example that form the abstract Ghanaian spiritual values are used for sources for *Adinkra* motifs and gold weights.

Interestingly, it is worth noting that it is only in recent times that Ghanaian artists are beginning to employ *Adinkra* motifs extensively in the field of

contemporary textiles, painting, pottery and sculpture and architecture to reflect their African identity.

Among the people of Avatime for instance, fewer examples of graphical and plastic forms of traditional iconography are extant. Again as compared to other visual art processes such as painting and film making for example, contemporary Ghanaian collage is constricted and almost strictly falls within the spectrum of the Landscape and Genre. Some examples of contemporary Ghanaians who distinguished themselves in the discipline of contemporary Ghanaian collage making are Theodosia Okoh who uses corn stalk as her basic material, Adiamah who uses a wider range of assorted materials, Benjamin Menya who uses fabric, Philip Amoono and Charlotte Hagan.

Benjamin Oppong Danquah, for instance who in his collages titled "After a hard day's work" (90cm x 60cm). "The bright and sunny day" (90cm x 60cm) and "Drinking palm wine" (90cmx60cm) shows a collage scene of landscape that portrays a farmer and his wife returning from the farm after a hard days work. In the same work, one sees a woman carrying vegetable. With regards to the second composition which is also in landscape (90cm x 60 cm), Ben depicted a life style in northern Ghana with emphasis on their architecture and everyday activities. The third work is a scene at a palm wine drinking spot. All the works were rendered in mixed media.

Another Ghanaian artist who also works in collage but limited his themes and scenes to that of seascape is Patrick Turkson. He also employs the use of mixed media such as plantain barks, fabric, sawdust and acrylic paint in his works, to express his feelings.

Ebo Richard Quayson is another versatile and creative collagist who combines his skills in Ghanaian philosophical ideas from Ananse's folklores in pictorial entities to demonstrate this researcher's ideas and notions about collages and contemporary Ghanaian iconography. In one of his outstanding collage works titled *Ananse Meditation* (42 inches x 24 inches), Quayson vividly depicted the Damfopow story of *Kwaku Ananse and his wisdom Pot* a popular Ghanaian folklore. In that version, he depicted Ananse's deepest search for wisdom, but in his hideout forgot to pull the ladder which definitely may lead someone to him.

According to Quayson the moral lesson behind this story is that, Ananse who is often portrayed in Ghanaian folktales as a trickster, an imposter and a very wicked individual, is depicted in this collage work. However, notwithstanding his diabolical attitude, *Damfopow* as referred to Ananse is seen meditating by reading a bible, a sign of turning over a new leaf. To Quayson this implies that, there is the need for all to have a change of heart, better life – purity of mind, quality character, an ultimate attitude and good behaviour to meet modern day challenges and for a brighter future.

Finally, another attempt by contemporary Ghanaian artists to incorporate iconography into collage is that which was initiated by the artist, Agyeman Ossei. He opens up the field with his series of collages which reference Ghanaian proverbs and folktales on the one hand, and "highlife" maxims on the other hand. The implication of his iconography is yet to be fully tapped in contemporary Ghanaian collage making. There are resonances of Ossei's

approach in mine, especially, in the visual and textural interpretation of the ephemeral in Ghanaian culture.

I identify non-visual sources of Ghanaian iconography especially with references to the Avatime canon which I have interpreted in collage.

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Figure 4: The bright and sunny day by Benjamin Oppong Danquah

Size: 90 cm X 60 cm

Medium: Mixed medium

Source: Faculty of Art Gallery, KNUST

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Figure 5: After hard days work by Benjamin Oppong Danquah

Size: 90 cm X 60 cm

Medium: Mixed medium

Source: Faculty of Art Gallery, KNUST



Figure 6: Drinking Palm wine by Benjamin Oppong Danquah

Size: 90 cm X 60 cm

Medium: Mixed medium

Source: Faculty of Art Gallery, KNUST



Figure 7: At the beach by Patrick Turkson

Size: 90 cm X 60 cm

Medium: Mixed medium

Source: Faculty of Art Gallery, KNUST



Figure 8: At the beach by Patrick Turkson

Size: 90 cm X 60 cm

Medium: Mixed medium

Source: Faculty of Art Gallery, KNUST

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Figure 9: *Ananse meditating* by Richard Ebo Quayson

Size: 42 inc X 24 inc (110cm x 80cm)

Medium: Mixed medium framed in glass

Source: Faculty of Art Gallery, KNUST

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I engage some selected contemporary Ghanaian iconographies and their interpretation, some of which were finally projected into pictorial imagery as a corpus of collages. One feature about this corpus of collages is that, apart from the techniques, styles and processes employed in the production, the materials used were mostly obtained from both artisanal and macro textiles industry. In the collection of these iconographies too, I had to limit myself to those which were made available and those which in my estimation can be educative to Ghanaian youth. Since I had to source the corpus of data from personal interviews and personal observation it took so much of the project time that in-breath collection and in-depth critique and analysis were compromised here and there. Further work had to be done to transcribe iconographic themes into ideograms before finally deriving the collage pictograms from them.

I visited three of the seven towns of Avatime, where the meaning and educational background of songs, dirges, libation acts, drum language among others, were sourced from. For instance, at Vane, which is my hometown and the paramount seat of Avatime, during the funeral of Togbe Adza Tekpor VI and the Late Osie of the traditional area, I chanced upon the divine drummer Togbe Ametsi Kwesi who explained the significance of the drum languages to me. According to him, they are used as appellation to acknowledge the presence of chiefs and other prominent citizens of the land who are present at such festivities. At Amedzofe another town visited, Togbe Akyemfoli Kwami

on February 2007, also expressed his knowledge on proverbs and intimated politely but firmly that, proverbs reflect the philosophy of a society and thus mirror a society's customs and traditional ideas concerning moral behavior and ethical standards. They are therefore used to cut the length of necessary conversations and as expression of wisdom. Again they are used to caution society about the dangers that it is bedeviled with as well as to expose the evils of society, prevent and resolve conflicts and also used as means of encouragement. Finally at Gbadzeme another town visited during the celebration of *amu* (rice) festival, in August 2007, the chief linguist Togbe Akrong Kwami explained that, the libation act is one of the many rituals performed during such occasions to invite the gods and ancestors. Because it is believed that they are the custodians of the land and therefore protect them from all calamities.

The following considerations were made before the selection of the materials from the macro and micro textile industry was made:

- a. the availability of the material
- b. the rate at which the material has been used especially in collage making
- c. the uniqueness of the material
- d. the materials adaptability for iconographic expression and symbolism in collage.

Upon a careful deliberation on the title and materials to be used, I realized that pieces of textile fabrics as well as sewing thread were rarely used as materials for collage making in Ghana. Based on this, various observations and inquiries were made into the form and extent to which fabrics and sewing threads have

been used as a material for collage making. The finely – shredded nature of the numerous coloured sewing threads and yarns was considered appropriate for the collage making since they could easily represent the various colours in the form of pigments. Another material was also considered for the lining of the pieces of fabric to make them stiff so as to enhance and facilitate their easy fixing on the background with adhesive. Vinyl or what is popularly known as ‘stiff’ was therefore introduced into the collage processes so as to harden some of the fabric pieces.

The process started with the gathering of materials such as pieces of fabrics – which might have been considered as waste apart from being sold out for pillow makers as left-overs. These were obtained from the tailors shops which are dotted all over the KNUST campus. The weaving section of the Industrial Arts Department and other traditional weaving studios were the source for fibre yarns which were discarded and no longer in use. However a variety of sewing threads were also bought from the open market. The sewing threads and the fibre yarns were shredded into smaller pieces with a pair of scissors whilst the vylin was fixed to the pieces of fabrics using hot pressing electric iron. Due to the nature of materials considered for the execution of the project, three techniques were adapted. These are the additive, pasting and assemblage techniques. The additive technique involves the creation of an image on the glued – surfaces by sprinkling the shredded – thread pieces over the glued areas, whilst the pasting involves the fixing of the stiffened materials onto the surface.

Chapter Four

Avatime Iconography and Symbolism: An Annotated Catalogue

Introduction

Avatime abounds in contemporary iconographies most of which are expressed in the form of proverbs, maxims, folktails, drum languages and more. The subsequent pages in this chapter include some selected iconographies in the form of proverbs written in Ewe and then followed by their literal translations in English. This is then followed by an explanation, where necessary of difficult words, metaphors and phrases in the particular proverbs, and any allusion to customs, religious beliefs and historical events implied in them. The exposition is then followed by a statement of the moral lesson of the iconography and an illustrative graphical ideogram where necessary. I have adapted Agbo's (2006) schemes which I find instructive in the literary presentation of proverbs.

Avatime Iconography

ICONOGRAPHY 1

NAME/TITLE: *LIYAXŃE/DŃSĔSĔ* HARD WORK².

Proverb: *Veve sese mee vivi doa gotsona alo 'dŃsĔsĔ me gbaa fu o.*

Literal translation: 'Bitter life experiences are always followed by sweet satisfaction or enjoyment'. Or 'Hard work does not break bones

² "Name/Title" entries are written in three respective languages; they are arranged in this order: Avatime (Siyase)/ Ewe/ English. "Proverb", "Appellation", "Incantation", etc. entries are written in Ewe.

Meaning: *Veve sese* or *dōsēsē* in the proverb refers to difficult undertakings or tasks. *Vivi* on the other hand refers to good things of life. The proverb therefore suggest that good things in life are achieved through hard work.

Background: Traditionally, farming, fishing and to some extend trading are done with people taking a lot of risk. These ventures are not only arduous but very risky at times as much depends upon the weather which cannot be predictable or people going bankrupt in case of trading.

Moral Teaching: The lesson of the proverb is that through hard work you may get what you need. The good things of life do not come on a silver platter but through hard work.



Figure 10: Symbol of Hard works depicting an Ant

ICONOGRAPHY 2

NAME / TITLE: *KUBLABLA PLĖ / DZADZRADO / PREPAREDNESS*

Proverb: *Koklo be yemenya gbekagbe fia ado se be woan̄ af̄ deka dzi o, eyata yen̄ esr̄m.*

Literal translation: 'The fowl says it does not know when the chief will pass a law that everyone should stand on one leg, and so he is practicing it'—

Explanation: The fowl is a two – legged domestic animal unlike some other animals that walks on four legs. The fowl is therefore

in anticipation for any mishap in terms of an accident that may lead to it loosing one leg; a situation which may be very disastrous as it may be left with the option of standing and walking on the remaining one. This thought about its future plight, prompts the fowl to start practicing with standing on one leg.

Moral value: The proverb is another way of saying that everybody must prepare himself to be able to meet some future eventualities. You do not live only to develop the ability to solve problems either in a familiar or new situation for your actions.



Figure 11: One – legged fowl depicting the symbol of preparedness.

ICONOGRAPHY 3

NAME / THEME: *AXŌEWAWA / DŌWŌWŌ / HARD WORK.*

Drum language: *Ha dome ss ha ku atike! Ha dōme ss ha ku atike! Amesī mawō dō nebla dōme! Nebla dōme! Nebla dōme. Afiade kpō kpō nyowu yame kpōkpō.*

Literal translation: 'It is when the pig's stomach is strong that the pig uproots trees. He who does not work should tie his stomach, for looking somewhere is better than looking into space.'

Background: Traditionally the pig is a domestic animal that is noted for digging the ground in search for earthworms and other insects. In the process, this activity usually leads to the removal of soil around the tress. However this activity or exercise can only be undertaken when the pigs stomach is strong or has energy.

Moral value: This drum language, according to the divine drummer Togbe Ametsi Kwesi, encourages people to engage themselves in some form of endeavour or other. Thus it pays to work, no matter how menial the job might be. It promotes hard work and discourages laziness.



Figure 12: Symbol of a domestic pig depicting hard work.

ICONOGRAPHY 4

NAME / TITLE: *DASEDODO / AKPEDADA / GRATITUDE*

Proverb: *Patipre be Mawu woyɔna hafi doa go ɛdi.*

Literal translation: 'The dusky – bulbul says that you call God first before you go out'.

Explanation: Dusky – bulbul called *Apatupre* in Twi and *Patipre* in Ewe is a very common grey bird. It is one of the first birds to sing very early in the morning, usually between 5:30 am and 6:00 am. This habit of the bird is interpreted as an act of thanksgiving to God. Begin the day with God.

Moral value: This proverb is also stressing the importance of showing gratefulness to God and men. In the family, children are taught to be grateful for any kindness done to them, and later on they learn from adults to give

thanks to God for the general blessings of life. This is done by the use of two Ewe expressions which all means the same as:

- (a) *Mawu w5d5* that is 'God has done it' or 'it is the act of God'
- (b) *Mawu se ɲu* that is 'God has shown his power and both of them mean 'thanks be to God'.

These are common expressions of gratitude that you hear on occasion when somebody has been delivered from danger. Example motor accident.



Figure 13: A symbol of a bird depicting gratitude singing.

ICONOGRAPHY 5

NAME / THEME: *KUDENU DADRA* / *M5KP5KP5* /
OPPORTUNITY

Proverb: *Madze fiat5wo yome ne maf5 adzaa*

Literal translation: 'I will follow those who have axes so that I will collect the twigs'

Explanation: This proverb comes from the experience of women and children who go to the forest to gather firewood. Usually those with axes gather larger pieces, but those without, have to content themselves with the twigs, refereed to here as *adzaa*.

Moral value: Do not use the limiting conditions to your life as an excuse for doing nothing, for you can always do something with the talent you have. Make a good use of your opportunities, however limited they may be. The

proverb can also be used to mean 'if you associate yourself with more fortunate people, you will benefit from them'.



Figure 14: A symbol of an axe on a tree depicting opportunity.

ICONOGRAPHY 6

NAME / THEME: *KEDEWŌWŌ* / *MEGBETSITSI* /
PROCRASTINATION

Proverb: *Klo be ame yi xoxo menya tuna o 'or 'tsotso kaba enye dodo kaba.*

Literal Translation: 'The tortoise says, it is difficult to catch up with an early starter or 'Starting early means arriving early'

Explanation: This proverb comes as a result of some people who cultivate the habit of delay or lateness to every endeavor or function they are suppose to undertake or attend. They often give various excuses for nonperformance of the assignment. This has another version of promptness by Agbo (2006, p. 2) which says: *Klo be ame yi xoxo menya tuna o.* This proverb also has it English version which says that, 'the early bird catches the fly'.

Moral value: The proverb encourages people to be time conscious and to avoid lateness as delays are often seen to be setbacks for the development of the progress of societies and the nation.

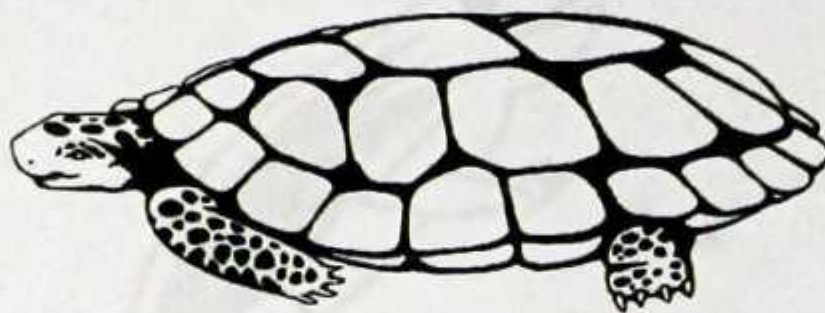


Figure 15: Symbol of promptness depicting a tortoise

ICONOGRAPHY 7

NAME / THEME: *KAHŌLITSAPLIKPA* / *AGAMAGBALE* /
CIRCUMPECTION

Proverb: *Agamagbale s̄a amesiame*

Literal Translation: 'Chameleon skin fits everybody'

Meaning: *Agama* or chameleon is a kind of small lizard found in the tropical forest with skin that changes colour to match the environment around it. This is done in order to camouflage itself from both its enemies and preys. This phenomenon is equated to a life situation where no condition is seen as being permanent. Good as well as bad fortunes are bound to come along the way of man once he is alive.

Moral Teaching: Life here is compared to the way the colour of the chameleon's skin changes. Since times change as well as the fortunes in them, people are always cautious to behave with circumspection.



Figure 16: Symbol of circumspection depicting the chameleon.

ICONOGRAPHY 8

NAME / THEME: *KUPŌNŌ / BANAMEE / HELP.*

Proverb: *Banamee wobana na*

Literal translation: 'He who on occasions gives generously is given in a similar manner'. *You sympathize with a person who sympathize with you.*

Explanation: The proverb comes as a result of some people who usually go to the aid of friends or neighbors who are in difficulties. Others on the other hand, seems not to care about the plight of others who are suffering. Thus, in case of any such situations, this proverb is always said to justify the situation.

Moral value: this proverb refers to the importance of assisting to each other; for one good turn deserves another.

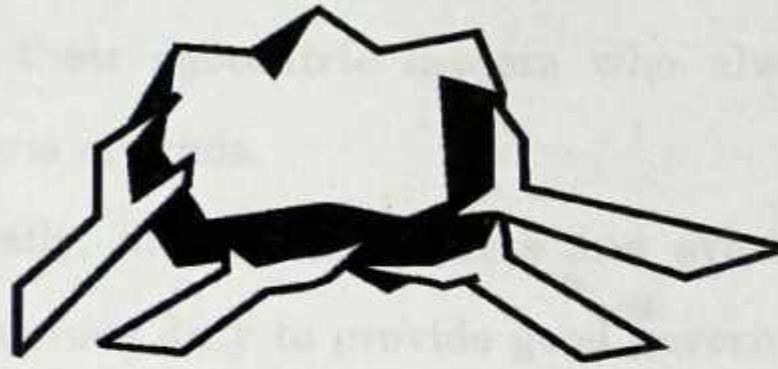


Figure 17: Symbol of help depicting two people fitting a load together

ICONOGRAPHY 9

NAME/THEME: *DASEDODO / AKPEDADA / THANKSGIVING*

Drum Language: *Agudze mifɔ kaba! Agudze mifɔ kaba! Mifɔ kaba! mifɔ kaba.*

Patripre be mawu woyɔa! Hafi doa go ɲdi! Mifɔ kaba mifɔ kaba.

Literal Translation: 'The sun has risen wake up quickly!'

The sun has risen wake up quickly wake up quick. Wake up quick!

The dusky – bulbul says you. It is Gods' name that one mention before one comes out in the morning.

Moral value: As stated in iconography number four in chapter three.

Symbol of gratitude depicting a bird as shown in iconography 4.

ICONOGRAPHY 10

NAME/THEME: *KUMADIMENɔ / MALɔMALɔ /*

UNCOMPROMISED

Proverb: *Malɔmalɔ tefe gbe gbana le' or 'Ne atiglinyi eve do go la, gbe kpea fu.*

Meaning: *Malɔmalɔ* means grass. The grass therefore becomes the victim when two elephants fight. *Malɔmalɔ* or *atiglinyi* in this proverb refers to the high class, self – seekers, power drunks and the warlords in our society, especially the developing or third world countries. *Egbe* on the other hand also refers to the third or lower class citizens in the society. They more often than not seem

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to suffer from the consequences such as poverty as a result of the power struggle by their egocentric leaders who always engage themselves in all sorts of feuds.

Background: Generally, all opinion leaders and overlords in our societies have the onerous duty to provide good governance for the ordinary citizenry. They are expected to emancipate them from all sort of mental slavery, hunger, poverty, sickness and oppression. Instead, they fight each other in order to satisfy their own personal need whilst their subordinates wallow in perpetual poverty.

Moral value: This proverb teaches against the act of causing suffering to others in ones attempt to acquire ill gotten power, the less privileged in the society suffers.



Figure 18: The symbol of danger depicting a human skull and two
— crossed bones.

ICONOGRAPHY 11

NAME / THEME *EXOLA / HOTSUI / RICHES*

Proverb: *Hotsuit5 fledze meflea agbe o*

Literal Translation: 'A wealthy person can buy salt but cannot buy life'

Background: Wealthy or rich people in every society are much cherished and respected. The reason being that, their wealth whether genuinely or dubiously acquired are capable of solving every problem that comes their way without any difficulty. However the only insurmountable obstacle in their endeavors is almighty death which cannot be bribed or purchased by their wealth.

Moral value: The proverb advises that wealth or riches is not everything and so nobody boast of his riches.

This is because despite ones earthly vanities, everybody will eventually die leaving all these properties behind.



Figure 19: The symbol of riches depicting a cowry that signifies wealth.

ICONOGRAPHY 12

NAME / THEME: *AYEKO / EYAKO / EXCEPT GOD*

Appellation: *Mawu ga osogbosali! Mawu ga osogbosali! Oklemegugu! Oklemegugu! Oklemegugu! Baba le k5 me, k5 se, baba do le k5 me k5 gba xexeame kata w5la, Afisiafi n5la kple ekp5la, 7usewo kata fe fia. Woew5 xexeame, ne egblela amekae adzrae do.*

Literal Translation: Great God *Osogbosali Oklemegugu! Oklemegugu! Oklemegugu! Baba* is inside the anthill. It is sealed when *baba* is outside the anthill. It is, crushed when *baba* is not inside. Great God, *Osogbolisali*, the creator of the universe, Omnipresent and Omnipotent God, the owner of all powers who created the universe. No one lives who will see its end and for that matter repairs it except God.'

Meaning: God in this appellation is likened to *baba* which is the Ewe or Avatime version of the name for the queen of termites, which lives in the *ek5* or the anthill. Because of its important role in the production of the termites, the queen is highly protected by other termites. Because it is seen as their creator and so when it is out from the anthill, it eventually collapses.

Moral value: The appellation, using the queen of the termites reflects the supremacy, power and dominion of God over all situations and creations.

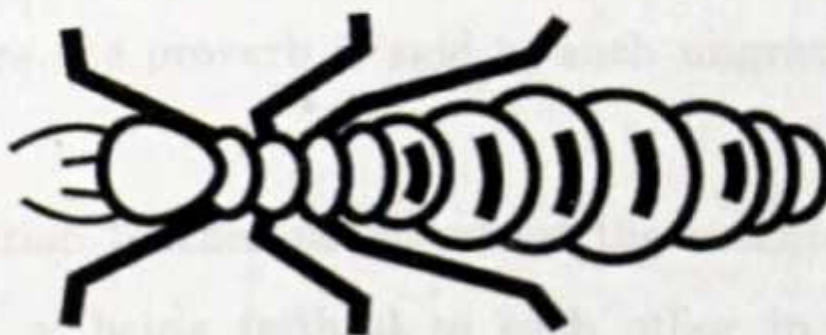


Figure 20: The symbol of the queen of termites signifying Gods supremacy

ICONOGRAPHY 13

NAME / THEME: *KUDIDRI / DIDRI / INGRATITUDE*

Appellation: *Didri Koku kpa aha mana ahat̃ o, aha ha vim, eze ha vim.*

Literal Translation: *Didri Koku* taps the palm wine without given to the palm wine owner. The palm wine cannot be accounted for, the palm wine pot too cannot be accounted for.

Meaning: *Didrit̃* means an ungrateful person or somebody with a questionable character. *Aha* on the other hand also stands for palm wine or drink. The proverb means that there are some people in the society, who are never satisfied with whatever good done to them and will always reciprocate with ingratitude or render thanksgiving to those who came to their aid in times of difficulties.

Background: Traditionally, the owners of palm plantations or farmers who are usually heads of families, or clans and societies are responsible for properties, especially farm lands of their families. It is the duty to control these properties to the benefit of their members. In case of any financial constraints, they look into the forest and give some of these properties such as palm trees or timber to people to tap and sell so as to settle these problems. At times some of these tappers abuse this trust entrusted in them and misused the funds from the sales without proper account. When such situation arises the proverb is said to such ungrateful tappers.

Moral Value: The appellation teaches people about the essence of honesty and the benefits of being faithful to each other in the society.



Figure 21: The Symbol of a broken traditional palm wine pot signifying ingratitude.

ICONOGRAPHY 14

NAME / THEME: *KUBOETE / NUNYA / KNOWLEDGE*

Proverb: *Tago gede, numya gede.*

Literal Translation; 'Many heads, much knowledge'

Background: Traditionally, whenever there is arbitration or an issue in the family or society, many thoughts are raised from all quarters as to how the problem could be solved. After lengthy arguments and discussions on such issues, the elders or the arbitrators usually seek permission to refer the case to the *abrewa* or the old lady. It is after this that an amicable solution is arrived at. When this happens the proverb is administered.

Moral value: The English equivalent of this proverb is 'Two heads are better than one'. It is a warning to those who think their knowledge ability, can take decisions for everybody. It stresses the importance in arriving at sound judgment using different opinions.



Figure 22: Symbol of wisdom depicting a human ear.

ICONOGRAPHY 15

NAME/ THEME: *KUZEMONI / DZUDZO/ REST*

Proverb: *Ne wole ava sim ha, wobena de k5 xa nyia blafe.*

Literal Translation: 'Even when you are escaping from your enemies in time of war, you hide yourself by a mould to eat pawpaw'

Moral Teaching: Even in time of emergency certain human needs must be attended to; always make allowance for a breathing space in any emergency situation. This proverb teaches the importance of intervals of rest or relief in pressing situations. Holidays can be considered as the application of this principle to living.



Figure 23: Symbol of rest depicting a person resting under the shade of a tree.

ICONOGRAPHY 16

NAME / THEME: *KUNEMIWAWA / DEKAWŌWŌ / UNTY*

Proverb: *Ŋuse le dekawŌwŌ me' alo 'dŏsŏgbŏ mewua asi gedee o.*

Literal Translation: 'There is strength in unity' or 'many hands makes a light work'.

Meaning: If many people cooperate and work a task, they avoid a situation where the same task would have otherwise being performed by only one person. In other words it takes many people less time to perform an arduous duty than it will take a single person to do the same work.

Moral value: This proverb teaches society to adhere to togetherness or unity which is the main solution to poverty, hunger and under development in our society. Every organized society therefore needs the collective effort or power from every citizen to move the nation forward, hence the English adage which says "nobody is an Island"



Figure 24: Symbol of unity showing two human hands shaking each other.

ICONOGRAPHY 17

NAME / THEME: *LIBOEMATEMATE/ NUMANYAMANYA / FOOLISHNESS*

Proverb: *Ku dzea tomasenu yome eye yayra dzea tosenu yome.*

Literal Translation: 'A deaf ear is followed by death and an ear that listens is followed by blessing'.

Meaning. *Ku* or 'death' is associated to unpalatable human experiences in life whilst *yayra* or blessing are seen as joyous or happy situations in life. The proverb means that a person who is a good listener and always follows the advices and instructions of elders, does not go astray and is always successful in whatever endeavor he undertakes. However a foolish or unwise person who fails to heed to the advice from the elders usually stands the chance of failure in life like death.

Background: Traditionally this proverb is used by elders to educate the youth against disobedience and foolishness. Also during peace meetings among tribes, societies and communities, when a disagreement occurs, the council of elders will call a meeting among the feuding functions to look for a way forward in resolving the conflict. In the process of trying to persuade the feuding group or youth to listen to them and settle the disagreement, the elders use this proverb to warn those who do not listen that they risk suffering for their disobedience.

Moral value: The proverb is seen as an allegory that means that those who humble themselves and follow advice from elders will achieve fruitful results. But those who do not heed to such wisdom, will be followed by wrath of failure. This proverb has the same iconography of danger as figure 18 on page thirty five.

ICONOGRAPHY 18

NAME/THEME: *KEPAKAPÉ / ATFENYO / PATROTISM*

Proverb: *Koklo be dzanie dzea ame, eyata yebɔbɔa ble hafi yia kpome' alo 'afe doko nyowu dume xɔasi.*

Literal Translation: 'The chicken says it is for the sake of dignity that she lowers her tail while entering her coop' or 'A poor home is better than a rich town or place of domicile'

Meaning: The hen coop is where the hen sleeps and hatches her eggs. The fowl defecate inside it, yet when it is night the hens goes back to sleep in the same coop.

Moral Teaching: The proverb admonishes people not to be ashamed of their places of birth no matter how deprived or remote that place may be. They should always come back home and participate in its development and upliftment.



Figure 25: Symbol of patriotism depicting a local hen coop.

ICONOGRAPHY 19

NAME/THEME: *IDZIDODO / DZIDODO / ENDURANCE*

Appellation/proverb: *Tsi fo hɔ deviwo kpɔe be akanga, kaka ɲudɔ vu deviwo gakpɔe ko ezu be eya ɲutɔe.*

Literal Translation 'The rain beats the eagle, the children saw it and say it is a vulture, but when the sun shone on it and the children saw it, it was the real eagle.'

Meaning: *Eh5* in Ewe or *kropono* in Avatime is 'eagle' in English. The Eagle is one of the strongest and most feared birds because of its ability to prey on small animals and birds. However when beaten by the rain, its feathers becomes wet and looks like a vulture, another large but harmless bird that feeds only on dead animals. The appellation means that the sufferings and misfortunes in life should not put fear or failure in peoples life. They should therefore not abandon their undertakings but rather fight on until they preserve and conquer the problems.

Background: In the ancient times, the eagle was perceived to be a great hunter of other smaller animals, including small children who go astray in their environments. Parents usually cautioned such wayward children against the presence of the eagle because it may look like a vulture when beaten by rain. Again the appellation can also be used as a proverb to caution against people who pretend to be saints and philanthropists in society but usually have ulterior motive behind such characters. They may be dangerous and be seen as sheep in wolf's clothing.

Moral Value: When used as an appellation, the saying encourages people to be brave and determined in times of hardships. They should not give up, but rather fight on until they succeed; for when one door is closed they should look for the other which has been opened.



Figure 26: Symbol of an eagle depicting endurance and courage.

ICONOGRAPHY 20

NAME / THEME: *LIKPOKPEKPE / L5L5*

LOVE / AGREEMENT / UNDERSTANDING

Proverb: *L5l5 tefe gbe megba le o.*

Literal Translation: 'Where there is love (agreement) the grass is not trampled upon.'

Explanation: The noun *l5l5* comes from the verb *l5* which has more than one connotations. In one sense it means agreement or mutual understanding or harmony. According to this concept of love if both of you agree about the same issue then there will be no cause for dispute and thus you will be said to love one another. This is made clear by the root word of *l5l5* which is the verb *l5* and *l5* meaning 'to agree with what a person is saying'. This concept of the meaning indicated in Agbo's (2006, p 74) which says *Koklo be yewole avu w5m ha, yewole nku kp5m na yewo n5ewo* meaning 'the fowl says though they are fighting they are mindful of each other's eyes.' Thus the fowls here have entered into a mutual agreement never to peck out the eyes of each other during fighting.

Again the word for 'mother - in - law' in Ewe or *onadze* in Avatime also confirms this primary meaning and origin of *lɔlɔ* as agreeing to accept what a person has said. The word is 'lɔxo' which means 'she has already agreed.' According to the Avatime practice to asking for a girl's hand in marriage, first the girl is chosen for the boy, and his paternal aunt introduces the marriage proposal to the girl's mother. If she agrees, she will go on to introduce the proposal to the girl's father. If the proposal is agreeable to the father he will refer the marriage broker to the girl's mother to find out what she thinks about it. The boy's aunt will then say *Elɔ xoxo*, that is 'she has already agreed'.

Also in another context, it has been contended that *lɔlɔ* comes from another meaning of the verb *lɔ* which means 'to weave' example basket or cloth. *Lɔlɔ* then means 'weaving together' or 'joining together' into one whole and the emphasis on oneness in this concept of love. This is a possible understanding of *lɔlɔ* and it fits the Christian marriage ideal that the two shall become one flesh. *lɔlɔ* is then what binds husband and wife together into one flesh.

Moral value: The proverb is a way of saying, where there is understanding love and harmony there is no disagreement or quarrel.



Figure 27: Symbol of a shuttle, an important tool used in weaving cloth.

ICONOGRAPHY 21

NAME / THEME: *KUKŌTSATSA / TSŌTSŌKE* / FORGIVENESS

Proverb: *Anyimlōla medzea anyi o'* or *'wome hea to na kukudevi o.*

Literal Translation: 'He who lies down does not fall' or 'A child that begs is always forgiven'.

Background: Lying down is a way of saying, go down on your knees, or to prostrate oneself, that is to be in a penitent mood. The proverb also teaches the lesson that humility is an antidote for a fall' which can also be seen as a prediction. Its English equivalent in this sense is 'he that is down needs fear no fall'. The proverb is also equivalent to an ewe proverb which says *Klodzela mexea agɔdzefe o.* The person who has gone down on his knees does not pay the fine imposed on him'. It is also a way of saying, the repentant are always forgiven.

Moral Value: He who acknowledges his offences is not punished again, but forgiven. Forgiveness follows humble confession. The proverb is used as advice to offenders to humble themselves which is to lie down and ask for forgiveness in humility.



Figure 28: Symbol of forgiveness depicting a figure kneeling down.

ICONOGRAPHY 22

NAME / THEME: *IDZIDODO / DZIDODO / COURAGE*

Proverb: *Amesi sina le fukpekpewo nu la dzea efe fukpekpewo de edzi.*

Literal Translation: 'He who runs away from difficulties increases his woes'

Meaning: *Fukpekpe* or 'difficulties' in the proverb refers to unpleasant tasks or situations in life. They come in the form of disappointment, social responsibilities and failures in life. The proverb is suggesting that such mishaps should not put fear of failure in people so as to run away from their genuine responsibilities. This is because the more they run away from such responsibilities the more their plights are worsened.

Moral Teaching: The proverb can be used to urge a person who because of fear of failure is afraid to undertake a project, or even go ahead with it. In that sense the proverb means, do not let failure prevent you from doing what you want to do. The proverb accepts the risks involved in living but urges people to defy them or take them as they come and continue to live adventurously and courageously.



Figure 29: Symbol of courage depicting the head of an Eagle; a strong and fearless bird.

Chapter Five

Appreciation of Collages

This chapter examines the techniques employed in the production of twenty four (24) collages which constitute the main project. It also deals with the appreciation of some of the major works that were produced. The chapter further examines how I used the iconographies created based on contemporary Ghanaians with more emphasis on Ewe iconographies. These collages successfully achieve and satisfy the topics. I chose to showcase contemporary Ghanaian iconographies through the medium of collage making.

I used the symbols primarily as the base theme for all the project works. I reserved for myself the freedom, with few inhibitions, to manipulate these symbols as I deem fit to work out my composition. Thus some of these symbols may not be readily recognizable or may appear in parts while others may be easily identified.

Further, in these collages I address sociological as well as political issues that today's youth and adults face in their societies in particular and in the country generally. I also applied both indigenous and contemporary Ghanaian notions of colour, significance and symbolism in some of the works to achieve my objectives in the various works. I have also incorporated in literal ways, recognizable objects in my collages through appropriation of found objects and painting.

In this chapter also, I developed a number of collages as my main project which portray the contemporary Ghanaian with special reference to the Ewe ideas and philosophies towards life. To drive this fact home, my perspective

and approach to the subject bears resonances of citation from Adashie's thesis (2002):

Anything incentive to picture making is as good as any other. There is no poor subject. Picture making is always strongest when in spite of composition, colours etc, it appears as fact or an inevitability as opposed to souvenir arrangement. Picture making relates to both art and life. A pair of socks is no less suitable to make a picture with than wood, nails, turpentine, oils and fabric. A canvas is never empty.

Finally, it has to be noted that, in coming out with my project, I adopted the process of collage making, except in some few occasion when I vary my techniques to suit the type of material that was used. The unique idea about my works was that, materials used were basically obtained from both the macro and micro textile industry. Then in addition, all the collages produced were mainly based on proverbs and their corresponding symbols identified in the previous chapter.

Major Works

COLLAGE 1

TITLE: *KEPAKAPÉ / DUMENYO / PATRIOTISM*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Dumenyo mesua afe o*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: A town is good, but it does not compare ones hometown.

SIZE: 40" x 30" (108 cm x 82cm)

APPRECIATION: The collage *Dumenyo* or 'Patriotism' was coined out from iconography number eighteen of chapter four, figure 25 on page 43 depicting a hut which signifies a humble place of abode. Other features

include silhouetted figures and the symbolic *sankofa* symbol which expresses the concept of the proverb *dumenyo mesua afe o*.

In the collage, appropriated materials such as coloured – sewing thread has been shredded into smaller or tiny bits and has been combined with pieces of fabrics and pasted onto the surface of the plywood. This gives the collage a life of its own; especially the silhouetted figures joining in the pictures which symbolize a returning from unknown journeys back home, after having gone away to seek greener pastures as shown in Figure 30.

COLLAGE 2

TITLE: *DZITRETOKO / ŊLŊEBEGATSO / REVERSION*

PROVERBS CONCEPT: *Ne enlɔbe eye neɔbugbo vatsɔ la menye busu o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: It is not a taboo to return to take back what you forget.

SIZE: 20" x 16.5" (51cm x 42cm)

APPRECIATION: The collage work *ŋlɔbegatsɔ* or 'reversion' or the Akan version *sankofa* talks about fetching back a useful or important past to project the future through which many have discovered their true identity and authenticity.

The collage shows a beautiful traditional bird which is shown moving forward and at the same time turning its neck back to look over its shoulder into the past with an egg stuck in its beak. This collage was also developed from the idea and philosophies based on the proverbial *sankofa* adinkra symbol.

It is worth note that, today efforts are being made to retain the indigenous arts into the present ways of living. Our concern as Ghanaians therefore, is to learn how we can use our arts to help us in our daily lives. For instance, how we can use our *Kente*, pots, carvings and others in the social and economic development of our nations; as shown in Figure 31.

COLLAGE 3

TITLE: *IJIDODO / DZIDODO / COURAGE*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Menye avatsitsi ta woagbe ava de o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: One does not refuse to go to war because of death.

SIZE: 20" x 16.5" (51cm x 40.5cm)

APPRECIATION: I was inspired to work on this collage based on the idea that success is not accomplished or come about by sheer luck or laziness, but as a result of hard work and perseverance in life. It is a situation where one usually encounters diverse problems and frustrations. War as we all know refers to dangerous and difficult undertakings, endeavours and uncertainties of life. Death in the Ghanaian society is also usually related to disappointment and failure in life. When such situation arises, people out of desperation and frustrations usually ~~abandon~~ and even neglect their responsibilities.

In the collage itself, two major items featured prominently. The head of an eagle bird standing for courage and determination and the text 'don't give up'. In the background is a mirror reflection of an animal 'Horn hat' that has also been brought into the collage. In the olden days this hat was usually worn by

hunters or old warriors. All these items introduced into the collage suggested the fighting spirits of the people; as shown in Figure 32.

COLLAGE 4

TITLE: *AXOEGAGLA / DOSESE / HARD WORK*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Dzo wotsona dea anyi.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: It is fire one uses to extract honey

SIZE: 40"x30" (102cm x 90cm)

APPRECIATION: Once again I was motivated to work on this collage based on the idea that success is usually not achieved on a silver platter. It is a situation where one usually encounters diverse problems and frustrations. Fire in the adage signifies hard work, dedication and perseverance which are the hallmarks for success in life. Honey on the other hand in the proverb represent or refers to good things of life, achievements and success. Thus, the artist during the making of this collage, brought in some recent graduates at the right top corners of the picture. This is a sign of success in our society. I also used the techniques of superposition and superimposition to introduce the symbols of the honeycomb into the picture background. It also forms the basis for this collage. Other elements in the collage which also evoke the spirit of hard work include three huge bees located in the middle and four hardworking construction workers, located at the extreme end of the picture. These elements combine effectively with the colours produced by the finely – shredded tiny sewing thread, rendered in their various hues to add an aesthetic value to the whole picture. As shown in Figure 33.

COLLAGE 5

TITLE: *KUNEMIWAWA / Nɔviwɔwɔ / HARMONY*

PROVERB: *Koklo be yewole avu wɔm ha, yewole ŋku kpɔm.*

LITERAL MEANING: The fowl says, though they are fighting, they are mindful of each other's eye.

SIZE: 35.5" x 23.5" (108cm x 82cm)

APPRECIATION: I used the symbols of two fighting fowls as found in figure 34 to highlight this collage. It encourages friends and neighbours to dwell in peaceful harmony. They must be devoid of conflicts which prevents progress and development in the society. Prominently, I used two fighting red cockerels, which with the intensive nature of their fights, are seriously guarding against their eyes. The eye is an irreplaceable vital organ of the body and when it is destroyed, it cannot be replaced. The cockerels, aware of this basic fact therefore, do not go for it when fighting. I also in my attempt to project the scene, used warm colours like yellows and oranges around the fighting cockerels, while at the same time uses dark blue colour which is a cool colour at the background. This help show how intensive the fight is.

My main concern in this work was for the society to encourage the peace that is being enjoyed in the country at the moment, to be maintained and protected jealously so as to enable people go about their daily chores without any interruptions.

COLLAGE 6

TITLE: *KUSUBUBO / DOKUIBUBO / HUMILITY*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Abɔ mekɔa wua ta o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: The arm does not grow taller than the head.

SIZE: 20" x 15" (51cm x 45cm)

APPRECIATION: The collage *Dokuibubo* (humility) dwells on relativism of humility and respect for the elderly in the society. Staying with the basic idea that gives use to the proverb, I drew on everyday phenomena which characterize the sociological life-style of contemporary society.

In the main work, a bust with raised hand above the head has been used. The abstracted human bust has been rendered in the colours violet to give prominence over a lighter background. The colours which were in the hues of red, light violet, pink and light blue were aesthetically maneuvered in a way such that, they were separated from each other with curved lines making the whole background look as if there were sunrays coming out from the human bust.

COLLAGE 7

TITLE: *KUBOETE / NUNYA / WISDOM*

PROVERB: *Nunya gedee me nusɔsrɔ duago tsona' alo 'nyaseto menye abake o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: In the depth of wisdom abounds knowledge and thought or a listening ear is not like a basket that leaks.

SIZE: 33.5" x 20.5" (51cm x 45cm)

APPRECIATION: This collage which has been titled the 'Thinker', dwells on the relativism of knowledge and wisdom in today's world. Staging the basic idea that gives rise to the proverb, I drew on everyday phenomena which characterize the sociological lifestyle of the contemporary society.

I used the *adinkra* symbol *Ntesie* (wisdom) as the basis to highlight this philosophy in the collage. The symbol looms in the background of the composition in the colours dark blue to the left side and pink to the right side.

Finally a relatively abstracted – seated human figure has been superimposed on the symbol. The figure shows someone in a thinking mood. The figure which has been treated with the colours of army green, grey and highlighted with white seems to be completely lost in thought. I further used variety of blues and greys of varied modulations to draw on the diversity of growth, knowledge and wisdom.

COLLAGE 8

TITLE: *KUBLABLAPLE / DZADRADO / PREPAREDNESS*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Koklo be yemenya gbekagbe fia ade se be woano afo deka dzi o eyata yele esrom.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: The fowl says it does not know when the chief will pass a law that everyone should stand on one leg, and so he is practicing it.

SIZE: 36.5" x 20.5" (110cm x 52cm)

APPRECIATION: I represent the proverb with a colourful cockerel which is resting on one of its legs. The fowl has two legs, therefore in case one should be lost under any circumstances, the option for it is to be left with one. As a result there is the need to start practicing so as not to be taken aback with any unforeseen circumstances. The proverb is another way of saying that everybody must prepare himself to be able to meet some future eventualities. You do not live only for developing the ability to solve problems either in a familiar or new situation; Learn to take initiative for your actions.

In the background, I introduced shades of yellows, blues, pink, and violet in a spiral manner, a situation that suggests movement and change. This also brings to fore that no condition is permanent, as such each and everyone must be prepared for any eventuality; as shown in Figure 37.

COLLAGE 9

TITLE: *DASEDODO / AKPEDADA / GRATITUDE*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Patrippe be Mawu woyona hafi doa go ndi.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: The dusky –bulbul says that you pray to God first before you get out.

SIZE: 30" x 20" (90cm x 51cm)

APPRECIATION: The dusky –bulbul called *Apatupre* in Akan and *Patrippe* in Ewe is a very common gray bird that sings very early in the morning. This act of the bird is therefore interpreted as a sign of giving thanks to God for making you see yet another day. The proverb is therefore stressing on the importance of showing gratitude to God and man.

In the collage, three characters featured prominently. These are the rising sun, the bird dusky-bulbul and a figure with raised hands.

In the background of the collage is seen rising on the horizon the early morning sun that rises slowly but majestically into the sky. Its rays illuminate the whole background with warm colours, such as; yellows, grays and oranges. Between the human figure is the representation of the dusky-bulbul bird.

All the three characters from all indications seem to be showing gratitude to God and man for giving them the chance of seeing yet another day.

I based this collage on iconography number four in the previous chapter as shown in Figure 38.

COLLAGE 10

TITLE: *KUSETATA / VODADA / FALLIBILITY*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Tomedela gbaa ze.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: The water drawer is the one who breaks the water pot.

SIZE: 40" x30" (102cm x 90cm)

APPRECIATION: The traditional way of getting water for all domestic use was from rivers, streams and dugout wells. Until the advent of the use of modern receptacles like aluminum and rubber buckets, the only facilities for such purposes were fragile earthenware pots and gourds. It is normally those who engage themselves in these activities who break them. The proverb came about as a result of the castigating nature of people towards those who offer this useful, service but sometimes make mistakes in the process by breaking the pots.

The main collage shows two figures each carrying a pot. One of them who is behind has his pot on the head. This figure shows only the bust. The other figure faces the viewer and holds his pot close to the body. The first one seems to be carrying water while the second seems to have hers broken and so there is no water in hers. The two figures seem to tell the whole story about what the adage says concerning fallibility; as shown in Figure 39.

COLLAGE 11

TITLE: *KAHÖLITSAPLIKPA* / *AGAMAGBALE* /

CIRCUMSPECTION

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Xexeame nye agamagbale, de wotrɔna hesia yi.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: The world is like a chameleon skin, it changes every time.

SIZE: 32" x 22" (81cm x 56cm)

APPRECIATION: This proverb comes about as a result of changes that come in man's life. Life is compared to the way the colour of the chameleon's skin changes.

It means that time and the situation of people in life are not permanent and so one must be prepared for the unexpected to happen anytime. The proverb was coined to admonish resistance to endure hardships, and to those who have suffered, the possibility of better future prospects.

The collage *agamagbale* or 'circumspection' was designed to conform to its theme. The collage is designed in the form of a concentric circle which is the only feature found in the picture. However various hues of colours were used or introduce into the collage that move round the chameleon. The chameleon itself in the collage was in semi-abstracted form.

Colours used for the collage included shades of greens, yellows and shades of violet which marks the edges or borders of the work. The colours were administered in a way that portrays instability in the face of the viewer. This was done in consonance with the theme.

The work teaches people to act with circumspection since ones fortunes change with changing times. Nobody knows exactly what tomorrow will bring so it encourages people to live with due regards for the future. The proverb however warns against under confidence in ones present fortunes. As shown in Figure 40.

COLLAGE 12

TITLE: *KUKOTSATSA / TSOTSOKE / FORGIVENESS*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Mawu medzia vi wo wune o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: 'God does not kill his own child'

SIZE: 31"X 22" (79cm X 56cm)

APPRECIATION: The proverb came about as a result of the nature of some people in the society. Such classes of people are noted for meting out punishment to everybody including children and woman and even their own wives and other close relatives. They normally refuse any plea for mercy by their offenders. When a person refuses such pleas, this proverb is often said to him or her.

Once again the collage for this wise saying among the contemporary Ghanaian, reflect its theme. The collage has two figures, one standing while the other figure knelt down before the standing one. At the far end, is a pale symbol of *tsotsoke* (Forgiveness) being represented by a two-pronged stick which signifies the presence of God. The three current objects connected to it represent the children of God.

The standing figure and the kneeling figures both clothed in blue and violet robes respectively evoke a spirit of forgiveness.

In order to create an environment that denotes leniency I used light yellows and orange colours for the middle section of the picture, a treatment that looks as if there is light for peace and forgiveness at the end of the tunnel.

The source of ideas for the collage was from iconography number twenty in the previous chapter; as shown in Figure 41.

COLLAGE 13

TITLE: *ISUWLAMEZEZE / ABLODE / EMANCIPATION*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Wome flea kluvi kple efe dzi o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: One does not buy a slave with all his heart.

SIZE: 20" x 15" (79cm x 56cm)

APPRECIATION: In the past, slaves were maltreated by their masters. They were forced to undertake tasks which were against their wishes. However, occasionally the slave disobeyed all orders, no matter how severe they were punished. It is the above circumstances and similar cruel instances that brought about this proverb.

In order for the contemporary Ghanaian to have a clear, contentious and visual perception of what is intended in the adage, the collage really demonstrate its theme.

The collage is made up of three elements that are brought together to compose it. These include two seated figures and an arch-like object that enclose the two seated figures.

The position of the seated figure raised a question of not being of comfort. They appear to be under some sort of pressure and extreme tension from an oppressor. Their plight seems to be worsened by the arch-like object which

seems not to give them a breathing space either. The two seated figures are referred to as the slaves. The 'heart' shaped symbol within which the slaves are located is the handcuff. It is usually used to prevent the freedom of the people. The liberty of individuals is therefore said to depend on it. The cuff is therefore seen as an emancipating tool or symbols for the oppressed in the society. This is illustrated in Figure 42.

COLLAGE 14

TITLE: *AXOEWAWA / DOWDWO* / DIGNITY IN LABOUR

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Afiade kpakpa nyo wu yame kpakpa.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: Looking somewhere is better than looking into space.

SIZE: 40" x 30" (102cm x 90cm)

APPRECIATION: The proverb comes about as a result of lazy attitude of some individuals towards work in the society. These people prefer particular jobs of their interest to other jobs. Such people consider certain jobs as menial or not belonging to their areas of specialization and therefore cannot engage in them. I in my attempt to enable people have a better insight in what role agriculture plays in the lives of the society have come out with this collage in a visual form so as to educate the general public about the usefulness for agriculture for the country's economy.

The collage, a fairly large one, contains almost all the activities that goes into the activities that comes under the ministry of agriculture. These include food crop, farming, fishing and animal husbandry.

In the area of crop farming, crops like maize, plantain, carrots, cocoa, and oranges can be seen. Some fishermen fishing and three large fishes are also visible in the picture to represent the fishing industry. Piggery and poultry in the picture also represent animal husbandry.

The colour scheme which is mainly of various shades of green that were introduced into the collage also symbolizes growth, fertility and maturity.

In conclusion, the whole or entire collage represents an agricultural industry; as shown in Figure 43.

COLLAGE 15

TITLE: *LITSOLITSO / NTSO NETSO / PROMPTNESS*

PROVERB CONTENT: *Klo be ame yi xoxo menya tuna o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: The tortoise says it is very difficult to catch up with a person who has gone ahead of you.

SIZE: 20" x 15" (51cm x 45cm)

APPRECIATION: Some people are noted for postponing every task they are supposed to undertake. They give various excuses for non performance of their duties. The proverb was developed as a result of the procrastinating attitude of such individuals.

Having realized the negative attitude this is having on the society, I came out with this collage to educate the society on the side effects of such lifestyles.

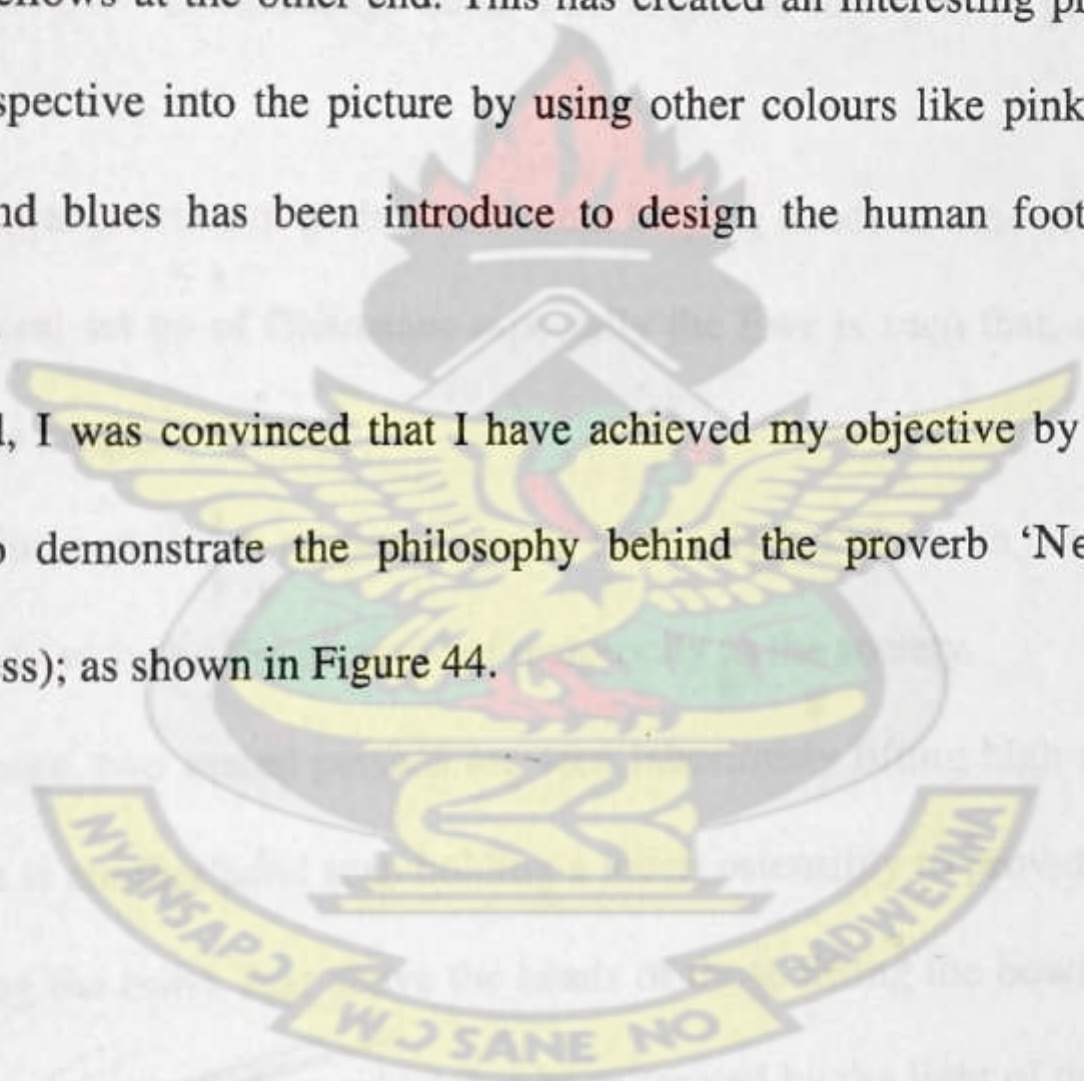
The collage contains a large tortoise which is placed at the right side of the picture plane. I then introduced human footsteps into the picture an indication that some people might have already gone ahead or passed by. The footsteps

move from where the tortoise is in the picture towards the other end. At this point some figures in silhouette are seen disappearing towards the horizon.

What the tortoise was trying to do was to chase those figures and if possible catch up with them. But then this was going to be a difficult task for the already slow-walking creature.

I, in order to personify the tortoise, have decorated it with fabrics meant for humans. I also choose dark colours for the left portion of the collage. However I reduced the intensity of the blue towards the other side and eventually ended up with yellows at the other end. This has created an interesting principle of aerial perspective into the picture by using other colours like pink and dark browns and blues has been introduced to design the human footsteps and footpaths.

In the end, I was convinced that I have achieved my objective by using the collage to demonstrate the philosophy behind the proverb 'Netsone' (promptness); as shown in Figure 44.



COLLAGE 16

TITLE: *MLA VUU! MLA VUU! / MILEE! MILEE! / RECIPROCITY*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Milee ! milee! ame wolene na.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: Hold it. Hold it! You only hold it for someone.

SIZE: 32" x 22" (81cm x 56cm)

APPRECIATION: The proverb comes from the practice of one person asking his friends to help him lift a heavy load from one place to another. Usually when a load is being lifted, some of the helpers will be exclaiming 'hold it! hold it!' to encourage those who might be losing their grips on the load.

This is a usual practice of giving each other helping hands in time of need. The socio-cultural set up of Ghanaians especially the Ewe is such that, everybody is another's keeper.

It is this situation which purported me to form a visual image in the form of a collage to drive home the message of reciprocity to the society.

In the collage, two seated persons are seen laboriously lifting high a bowl. In the middle is another hand seen holding a touch ostensibly to provide light for those lifting the bowl. Just above the heads of those lifting the bowl, one sees the illumination atmosphere which has been created by the light of the touch.

The area has therefore assumed a bright colour of yellow. The area where the hand is holding the touch has a light blue colour. The bowl and the touch have deep brown colours. The other areas has green colour which has been shaded towards the framed portions of the picture.

The proverb acknowledges the fact that, one needs the assistance of others in all aspects of life and particularly in certain undertakings and situations. It is

therefore only fellow human being who can help solve whatever problems one has. I therefore, in order to drive home the need for this exercise, decided to use the symbol of reciprocity as bases for this collage as shown in Figure 45.

COLLAGE 17

TITLE: *TIABANEE / VENŊ*/ FAIRNESS

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Vedzila memlɔa axa deka dzi o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: The mother of the twin does not lie on one side of her body.

SIZE: 30.5" x 24.5" (77cm x 63cm)

APPRECIATION: Twin nursing mothers normally breast feed their twin babies by lying on both sides alternately. They do this in order to share their breast milk among their twins.

However, if a mother lies on one side only, there is the possibility of starving one of the twin and over-feeding the other. It is this situation that the proverb seeks to caution against. The proverb evolves as a result of discriminating and partial attitude of some people in authority and advices such people to take a cue from the attitude of good nursing mothers.

The collage presents itself with a seated nursing mother on a stool. The mother is carrying two *akuaba* wooden dolls that represent the twins on her laps. The environment surrounding the figures is treated with the intensities of green.

The dominance of the green colour suggests fertility and growth as far as colour symbolism in the indigenous Ghanaian society is concerned. It is used significantly during out-dooring and child naming ceremonies. The green colour was therefore very suitable for the titled collage *VenŊ* which has

something to do with newness, fertility growth and vitality as shown in Figure 46.

COLLAGE 18

TITLE: *AYEKO / MAWUKO / GOD'S SUPREMACY*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Mawue wɔ xexeame, ne egble ɪa, amekae adzrae do?*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: *Xexeame* which means that world creation of God, originated from the known past, no one lives who will see its end and for that matter repairs it except the God.'

SIZE: 42.5" x 32.5" (102 cm x 90cm)

APPRECIATION: God is placed above all other lesser gods, deities and ancestors. God is 'Great God father – Great Grandmother. In certain cases he is regarded as the 'over –lord' of all, who should not be approached directly. Because of God's supremacy, all requests are routed through the lesser gods by their priests and priestess who serve as intermediaries to him.

Based on this assertion and perception towards God by all humans who approached him with their needs through various means, I decided to create an all inclusive collage which portrays that no matter your religious background, it is the same God that cares for as all.

The collage under this project consists of all the three major religious groups found in the country. These are Christianity, Islamic and traditional religions. In the picture, I in my own creative way manage to incorporate all these three major religious groups into one body with the *gye nyame* symbol. This serves

as a unifying symbol in the collage. In the picture itself, one identifies the following:

A Christian preacher preaching with raised hands and looking towards heavens. Just above him is the Christian cross. Below him is the Muslim mosque a worshipping place for the Muslims. Then coming down towards the right bottom corner, is the traditional fetish priest who raises his whiskers to the skies as a sign of his authority. He is seen in front of his shrine. Then at the left bottom corner of the collage, one can identify a chapel and below that church and some figure ostensibly praying to God almighty. I finally introduced the famous *gye nyame adinkra* symbol to enclose all the figures so as to signify that they all have none but God Almighty to worship, as shown in Figure 47.

COLLAGE 19

TITLE: *KUDIMEND / LOLO SAKO / LOVE*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Ne lolo sako la menya tuna o.*

LITERATURE TRANSLATION: When love entangles, it is very difficult to unfasten.

SIZE: 40" x 30" (102cm x 90cm)

APPRECIATION: Bead craft is normally practiced by the elderly women with thread. Most often, during the process the cotton thread gets tangled thereby creating close knots. These knots became difficult to untie. The only solution is to sever it loose with a knife. The elders as a result likened love to the thread used in threading beads.

I in my attempt to create a visual concept with this proverb came out with the collage that consisted of two seated figures in abstracted form. One of them a female with deep red colour and a male in an army green colour. They are entangled in the love symbols of twisted ropes which were designed to form two heart shapes. The shape that moves upwards is having the colour pink while that which moves downward has the colour violet. On each side of the legs, are some features which are treated with the colours green. These are said to represent the children in the society. Finally in the background the artist introduced the shade of blues to push the figures forward.

The colour blue has been used for the environment because it has a symbolic meaning in indigenous Ghanaian society in terms of love. In Ghanaian culture, the beauty of colour is in both its visual qualities and social meaning. Indigenous meaning assigned to colours is not based on modern scientific theories but on philosophical, psychological and spiritual meanings related to life. It is based on these ideology for which the colour blue in Ghana means early down love, newness, female tenderness, serenity and others. It can also be used for love charms, puberty and marriage ceremonies; as shown in Figure 48.

COLLAGE 20

TITLE: *KUMADIMEDIME / MALOMALO / UNCOMPROMISED*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Malomalo tefe. Gbe gbaana le or Ne atigliyi eve do go la, gbe kpea fu.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.

SIZE: 40'' x 30'' (102cm x 90 cm)

APPRECIATION: Generally all the opinion leaders and overlords in our societies have the onerous duty to provide good governance for the ordinary citizenry. The former are expected to emancipate the latter from all sort of mental slavery, hunger, poverty, sickness and oppression. Instead the former in their quest to amass illegal wealth and power, turn to fight each other in order to satisfy their personal needs whilst their subordinates wallow in perpetual poverty.

Having realized the obnoxious attitudes of these leaders, I decided to add my voice to the fight against this social cankers through one of my collages.

In the collage which I titled 'political upheaval', I tried to bring into focus the scenario in the developing countries.

The collage as usual was solely constructed with materials from both micro and macro textiles industry. There are several activities represented in the collage and which were brought about as a result of greediness on the part of some few individuals. The collage which is highly metaphorical by nature consists of both human beings and animals such as the python, buffalo, and an elephant. At the top, the buffalo is seen going wild by chasing and knocking down innocent and vulnerable. Like children and women in the society. The

buffalo in this situation can be likened to poverty in the developing countries. Then as if that is not enough, the python of sickness such as the six killer diseases is also seen swallowing the children. The scenario in the middle is not different. The warlords are seen tightly locked in bloody feuds, eating each other's hearts and livers because of their political expediencies and selfishness.

Then standing below in the picture is ignorance like an elephant that looks on without any remorse about what is taking place. Such is the situation in almost all the developing countries today and unless we change our attitudes we shall all perish one day; as shown in Figure 49.

COLLAGE 21

TITLE: *ISAMIMOM / DZIDZOKPOKPO / CELEBRATION*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Menye ku ta woagbe alo do lo.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: It is not because of death that one should not sleep.

SIZE: 40" x 30" (102cm x 90cm)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Collage on strawboard supported or enhanced with plywood and framed.

APPRECIATION: The main philosophy behind the making or construction of this collage is to highlight the idea of people taking rest after strenuous activities like farming, studying or learning and even fighting in wars. It has been coined out from an Ewe adage which says *Asanteva nya ame de nu ha, woto na dua nu* when literally translated into English, it means 'even during the time of escape in Ewe Ashanti wars people had time to eat'.

The adage advised people that even in time of emergency certain human needs must be attained, so make allowance for breathing space in any situation. It teaches the importance of an interval of rest or relief in all working situations. Thus activities such as farming, holidays and celebrations can be considered as the application of this principle to living.

In the picture or in the collage, a lot of people are seen celebrating and jubilating by dancing and merrymaking as shown in Figure 50.

KNUST

COLLAGE 22

TITLE: *IJINEAPOPJA / HAKPALAWO / MUSIC MAKERS*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Wotsɔa edu ha woto noa ze.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: Even when people carry kegs of gun powder they smoke pipe.

SIZE: 40" x 30" (102cm x 90cm)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Collage on straw board secured with plywood and framed.

APPRECIATION: This collage has also based on the same philosophy of the previous one that preaches on the need for rest. It also advocates for people to take a rest after certain strenuous human activities. The collage featured two prominent music makers, a guitarist and a xylophonist playing music with their audience enjoying the music behind as shown in Figure 51.

COLLAGE 23

TITLE: *KUBOETE / NUNYA / QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Nunya la avemexevie, ame deka melene o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: Knowledge is like the forest bird, one person can not catch it.

SIZE: 40" x 30" (102cm x 90cm)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Collage on strawboard and enhanced with plywood and framed.

APPRECIATION: The philosophy behind the production of this collage is based on the Ghanaian notion of knowledge and wisdom.

This collage dealt with people making frantic offers towards the acquisition of academic laurels. It consists of abstracted human figure and learning materials such as book apparels that goes with graduation as shown in figure 52.

COLLAGE 24

TITLE: *KUBOETE / NUNYA / THE SKY IS THE LIMIT*

PROVERB CONCEPT: *Nunya adidoe, asi metunae o.*

LITERAL TRANSLATION: Knowledge is like a baobab tree, no one person can embrace it.

SIZE: 32.5" x 22.5" (83cm x 57cm)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Collage on strawboard enhanced with plywood and framed.

APPRECIATION: Having the same philosophies as 'Quest for knowledge'.

In this collage, a figure is represented and surrounded with a lot of teaching and learning materials such as books and chalk board and others. The

environment presented suggest a situation for serious learning as shown in

Figure 53.

KNUST



Exhibition: *The Viewpoint*

In this project I have derived iconographic themes from proverbs, songs and folktales and others, from Avatime and translated them into collages.

At the end of the exercise, I mounted an exhibition of the collage works. The exhibition took place in the MFA block on the 4th of March 2010. It started with the preparation of the space for the exhibition, publicity at vantage points of the University Campus especially the painting and Sculpture departments, as well as giving out brochures to students and lectures, inviting them to come and witness the event. The collages, twenty four in number, were mounted in the exhibition hall.

The exhibition was opened in the morning. It attracted a good number of viewers. Some of them critiqued the works and the display. I documented the show and the critique sessions.

One spectator wanted to know if the Euro-Western frames had any link to the Ghanaian iconography and the collage subject being explored. He also noted that the frames were all identical and could not be speaking the same language in all twenty four collages. A few others questioned the labels and titles which were pasted directly on the picture plane without recourse to their possible function as collage elements. By the end of the exhibition, I was satisfied that my works and display had prompted such critical comments. I knew at once that they would be useful in my future career as an artist. By about 5.30 p.m. the curtains on the exhibition were brought down.

Chapter Six

Catalogue of Collages and Exhibition Views

This chapter is presented in the form of a photographic essay. It presents annotated catalogue of collages described in chapter five and a photographic documentation of ensuing exhibition.



Figure 30: *KEPAKAPÉ / DUMENYO / PATRIOTISM*

~~"A town is good, but it does not compare ones hometown".~~

Size: 40" x 30" (108 cm x 82cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.

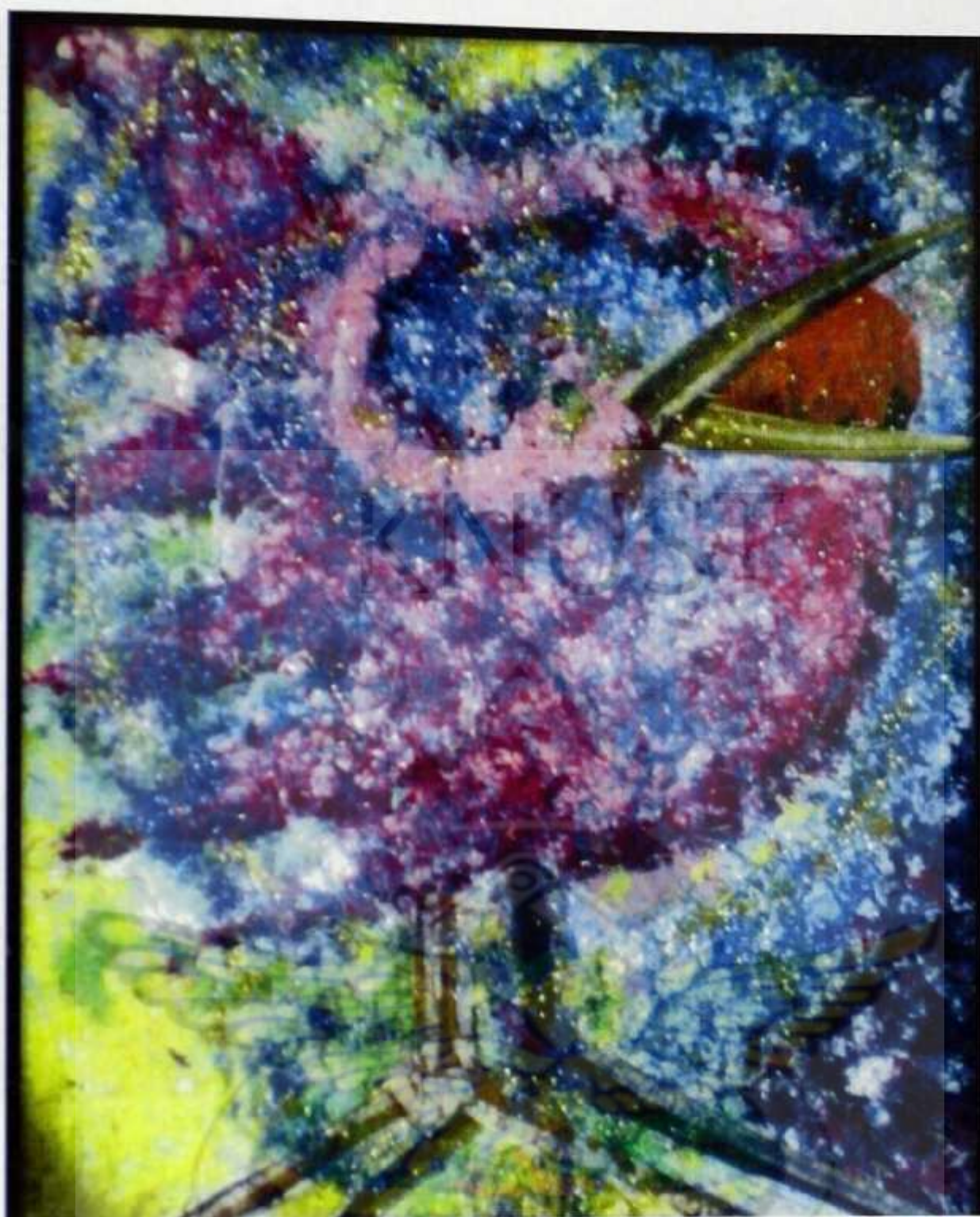


Figure 31: TITLE: *DZITRETOKO / ȦLĖEBEGATSO / REVERSION*

"It is not a taboo to return to take back what you forget".

SIZE: 20" x 16.5" (51cm x 42cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and framed in glass.



Figure 32: TITLE: *IJIDODO / DZIDODO / COURAGE*

"One does not refuse to go to war because of death".

SIZE: 20" x 16.5" (51cm x 40.5cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth
on straw board and framed in glass.



Figure 33: TITLE: *AXOEGAGLA / DOSESE / HARD WORK*

“It is fire one uses to extract honey”.

SIZE: 40”x30” (102cm x 90cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 34: *KUNEMIWAWA / NCVIWCWD / HARMONY*

“The fowl says, though they are fighting, they are mindful of each other’s eye”.

SIZE: 35.5” x 23.5” (108cm x 82cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 35: TITLE: *KUSUBUBO / DOKUIBUBO / HUMILITY*

“The arm does not grow taller than the head”.

SIZE: 20” x 15” (51cm x 45cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 36: TITLE: *KUBOETE / NUNYA / WISDOM*

“In the depth of wisdom abounds knowledge and thought or a listening ear is not like a basket that leaks”.

SIZE: 33.5” x 20.5” (51cm x 45cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread on straw board and enhanced with play wood and framed.



Figure 37: TITLE: *KUBLABLAPLE / DZADRADO / PREPAREDNESS*

“The fowl says it does not know when the chief will pass a law that everyone should stand on one leg, and so he is practicing it”.

SIZE: 36.5” x 20.5” (110cm x 52cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 38: TITLE: *DASEDODO / AKPEDADA / GRATITUDE*

“The dusky –bulbul says that you pray to God first before you get out”.

SIZE: 30” x 20” (90cm x 51cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 39: TITLE: *KUSETATA / VODADA / FALLIBILITY*

The water drawer is the one who breaks the water pot.

SIZE: 40" x 30" (102cm x 90cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and yarns on straw board
and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 40: TITLE: *KAHŌLITSAPLIKPA / AGAMAGBALE /*
CIRCUMSPECTION "The world is like a chameleon skin, it changes every time".

SIZE: 32" x 22" (81cm x 56cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and yarns on straw board
and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 41: TITLE: *KUKOTSATSA / TSOTSOKE / FORGIVENESS*

"God does not kill his own child"

SIZE: 31" X 22" (79cm X 56cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and yarns on straw board
and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 42: TITLE: *ISUWLAMEZEZE / ABLODE / EMANCIPATION*

“One does not buy a slave with all his heart”.

SIZE: 20” x 15” (79cm x 56cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and yarns on straw board
and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 43: TITLE: *AXJEWA WA / DOWDWO / DIGNITY IN LABOUR*

"Looking somewhere is better than looking into space".

SIZE: 40" x 30" (102cm x 90cm)

Medium: Mixed media



Figure 44: TITLE: *LITSOLITSQ / NTSONETSQ / PROMPTNESS*

“The tortoise says it is very difficult to catch up with a person who has gone ahead of you”.

SIZE: 20” x15” (51cm x 45cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.

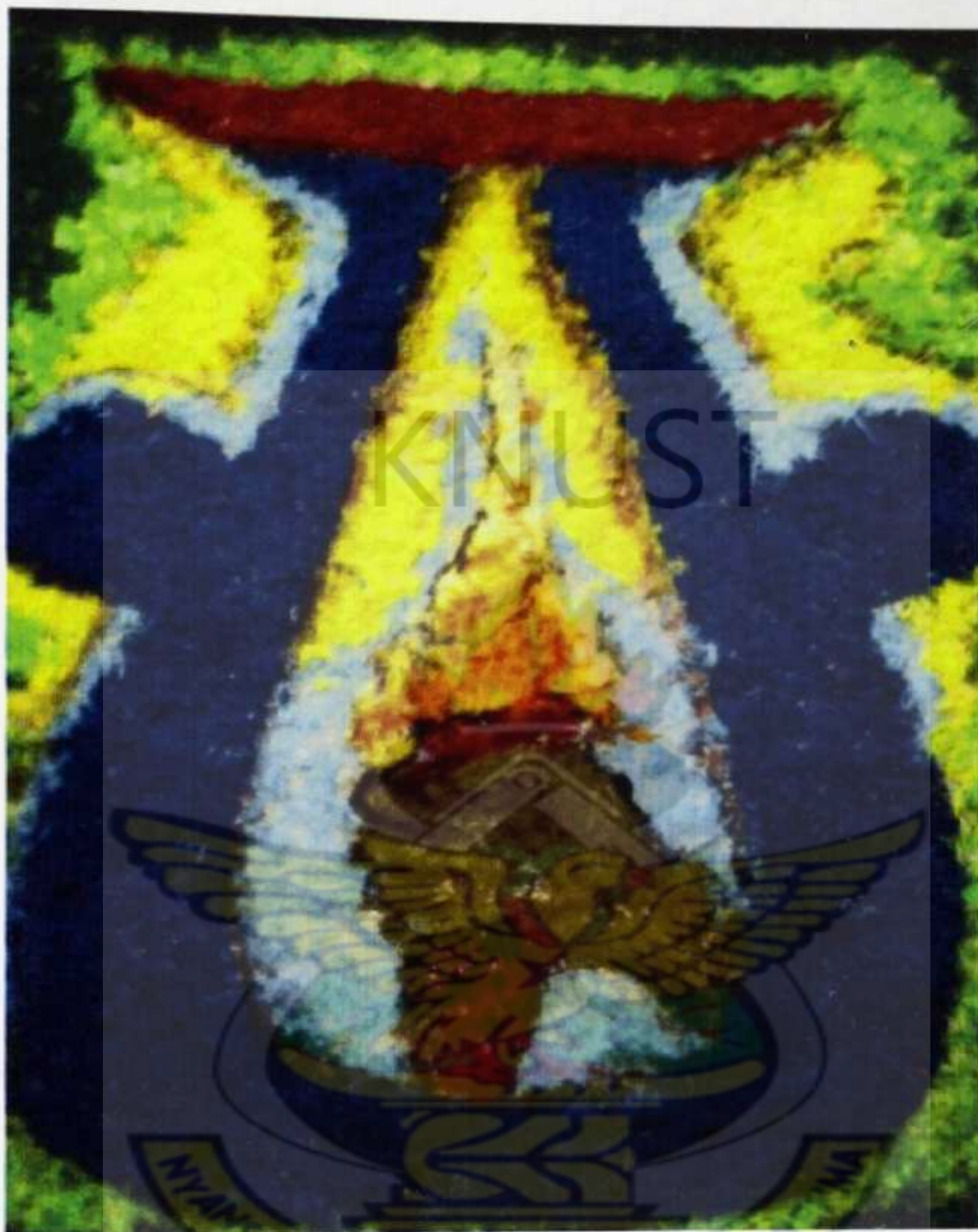


Figure 45: TITLE: *MLA VUU! MLA VUU! / MILEE! MILEE! / RECIPROCITY*

“Hold it. Hold it! You only hold it for someone”.

SIZE: 32” x 22” (81cm x 56cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and yarns on straw board
and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 46: *TIABANEE / VENO / FAIRNESS*

"The mother of the twin does not lie on one side of her body".

SIZE: 30.5" x 24.5" (77cm x 63cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 47: TITLE: *AYEKO / MAWUKO / GOD'S SUPREMACY*

"*Xexeame* which means that world creation of God, originated from the known past, no one lives who will see its end and for that matter repairs it except the God".

SIZE: 42.5" x 32.5" (102 cm x 90cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 48: TITLE: *KUDIMENO / LOLO SAKO / LOVE*

“When love entangles, it is very difficult to unfasten”.

SIZE: 40” x 30” (102cm x 90cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and yarns on straw board
and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 49: TITLE: *KUMADIMEDIME / MALOMALLO / UNCOMPROMISED*

“When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers”.

SIZE: 40’’ x 30’’ (102cm x 90 cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 50: TITLE: *ISAMIMOMO / DZIDZOKPOKPO* / CELEBRATION

"It is not because of death that one should not sleep".

SIZE: SIZE: 40" x 30" (102cm x 90cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 51: TITLE: *IJINEAPCPJA / HAKPALAWO / MUSIC MAKERS*

“Even when people carry kirks of gun powder they smoke pipe”.

SIZE: 40” x 30” (102cm x 90cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and yarns on straw board
and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 52: TITLE: *KUBOETE / NUNYA / QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE*

“Knowledge is like the forest bird, one person cannot catch it”.

SIZE: 40” x 30” (102cm x 90cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 53: *KUBOETE / NUNYA / THE SKY IS THE LIMIT*

"Knowledge is like a baobab tree, no one person can embrace it".

SIZE: 32.5" x 22.5" (83cm x 57cm)

Medium: Finely-chopped coloured sewing thread and pieces of stiffened cloth on straw board and enhanced with plywood and framed.



Figure 54 Some of the works on display

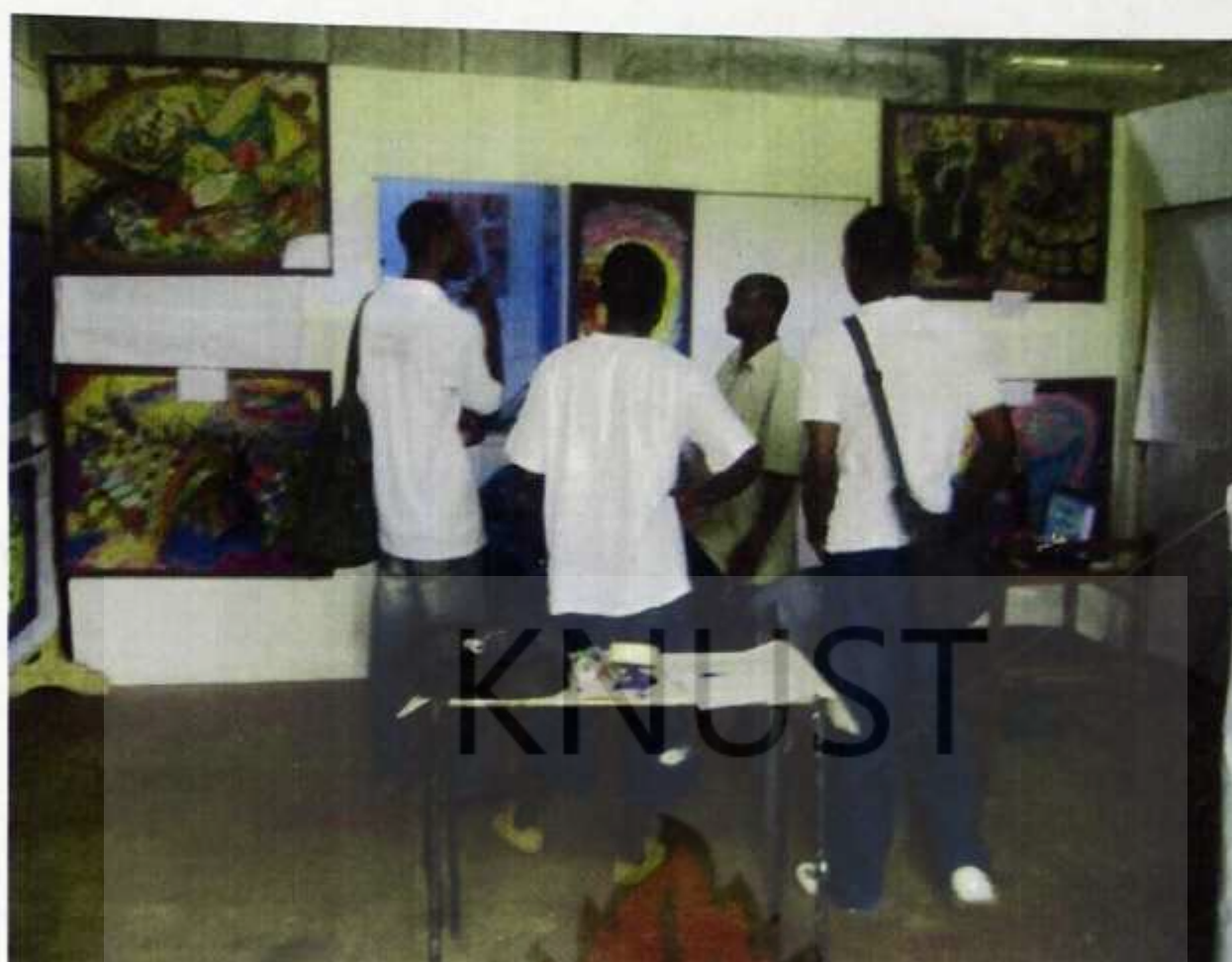


Figure 55 Interaction with viewers



Figure 56: Appreciation of works by viewers

Chapter Seven

Conclusions, Recommendations and Promise for Future Work

Conclusions

In this project, I have employed contemporary Ghanaian iconographies (with special references to Avatime/Ewe proverbs and symbols) in collage making. The purpose is to showcase the iconographies through collage making. I mostly used materials from both micro- and macro- textile industries. The themes or titles serve as aid to my idea of popularizing Ghanaian iconographies, which are mostly written in Ewe, with their English translations.

The collages presented are related to my background and reflect the social life of the contemporary Ghanaian. They show how rich traditions can have relevance today through the interpretation in the Modernist medium of collage.

I further observed that my colour scheme – the tertiary colour range juxtaposed with warm or hot the colour range – makes the collages on the proverbs and the symbols captivating. This pleasant antagonism is intended to sustain the viewer's attention while contemplating the collages. I took this sublimity to be a positive formal device in painting and spectating. I also exhibited in a basic ethnographic format, labelling each collage like a teaching aid and leading the viewer into the proverb, or maxim which prompted a particular iconography and its collage interpretation. This maneuver may seem naïve or old-fashioned in the 21st century but the spectre of the Avatime canonical text is important to me.

I observed that at the end of the project, I had indeed succeeded in my quest of using collages in expressing contemporary Ghanaian iconographies. The Avatime-Ewe proverbs which I mostly referenced proved to be a bank of resourceful and creative ideas not only for collage making but for other picture making techniques as well.

I have a very modest expectation for my art practice. I expect the collages to be part of the concrete and daily lives of people; in homes as well as other public places where the encounter with them is not deliberated in the touristic sense. I expect to complement the ethnographic exhibition format with a monographic catalogue in both print and electronic form.

The success in rendering the proverbs in collage can be further combined with or used by themselves in architecture, sculpture, communication design, pottery, social networking sites on the World Wide Web and so forth.

Recommendations and Promise for Future Work

I recommend that principles presented in exploring our Ghanaian cultural environment for ideas in collage making be strongly encouraged. That is, it should be integrated into Ghanaian modern art. I also further recommend the experimentation and use of other materials and techniques in the making of collage into the various institutions of studio art and art education.

As a final note I recommend that further collages be done using iconographies from other parts of contemporary Ghanaian society.

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Figure 3.1: Materials for the project

Appendix

In general, the following materials were gathered for the developmental works and the projects:

- a) Pieces of fabric materials
- b) Fibre yarns and sewing thread with various colours
- c) Adhesives which include polyvinyl acetate (white glue) and brown glue
- d) Vinyl (stiff)
- e) Dye – Stuff
- f) Strawboard
- g) Ply-wood
- h) Frames (wooden and glass)

Materials



Figure 57: Materials for the project

The following are the tools and equipments employed in the working process

- a) Set of modelling tools made up of palette knives and brushes
- b) Scissors
- c) Cutting knives
- d) Pressing Iron
- e) Drawing tools (pen, pencil , markers)
- f) Drilling machine

Tools

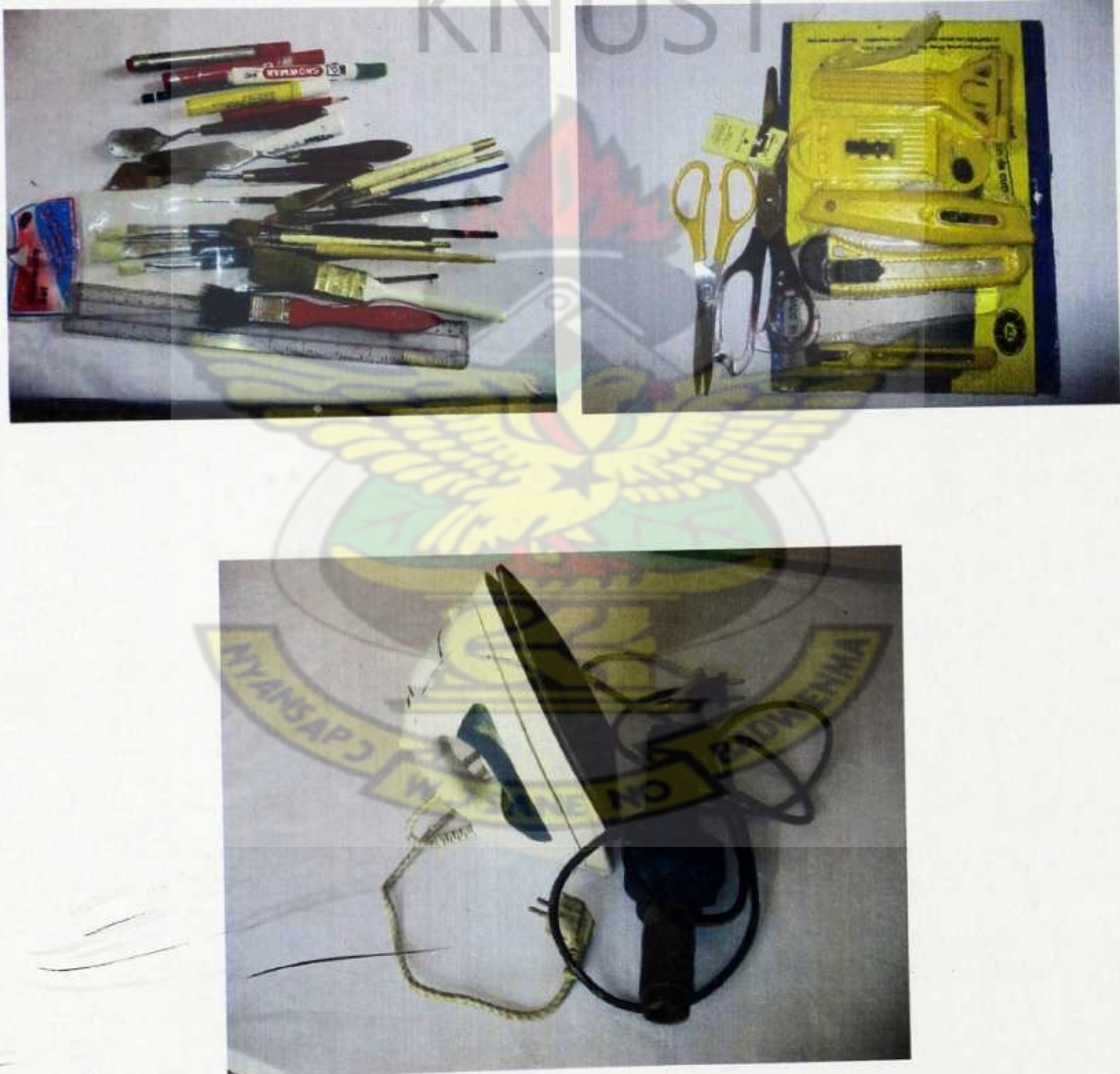


Figure 58: Tools for the Project