

**ASANTE FOLKLORE AND KUMASI KIOSK ARCHITECTURE:**

**A VISUAL EXPLORATION OF HYBRIDITY**

**AND MYTHOGRAPHY**

**BY**

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# KNUST

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project report is an account on my project topic, solely done by me under the guidance of my supervisors, Dr. Prof. R.T. Ackam and Dr. E.C. Nyarkoh, Faculty of Art, KNUST, Kumasi. It has not been presented partially or wholly to any other university or institution for the award of any degree.

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## ABSTRACT

This studio-based research improvises on the architectonics of Kumasi kiosks. I present the ensuing body of artefacts as a working prototype which joins on-going cultural conversations on hybridity in contemporary art. The typical Kumasi kiosk is referenced as a site for negotiation of boundaries in its design, setting and function, but I have also made allusions to suggestions of hybridity and boundary negotiation in the polyvalent structure of Asante myth and folklore. I made a close study of three hundred kiosks located in the urban quarters of Kumasi. I also engaged such thinkers on hybrid spaces as Homi Bhabha, Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, etc, to discourse on Asante mythology. I laid emphasis on the myth of *ɔhyeeni* (*ɔhene*-king), a patriarchal figure who negotiates boundaries, Asante and Akan filial kinship narrative from Asante history. I employed a personal technique of painting, *-Aberphoh*, which is a reconfiguration of abstract expressionist and surrealist genres. Asante art forms laden with their myths, some of which visually portrayed mythology, especially the totems, were also studied as



the basis upon which art works were recreated in the form of paintings on sculptural structures created with plywood. I used the Asante myth of *Abubu-mmabaa* to explore the structural dialogue of inside and outside in my hybridized artefact. I have also presented an iconographic catalogue of totems and symbols which appear on the inner and outer surfaces of my structures. I present my project as an artefact to be contained in a gallery space as well as a structure or site which contains other artefacts. Like the Kumasi kiosk, these structures are not intended to be permanently site-specific. Each is collapsible and foldable and thus portable to any possible location for re-erection and exhibition. It is a cross genre installation interfacing painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry and performance.

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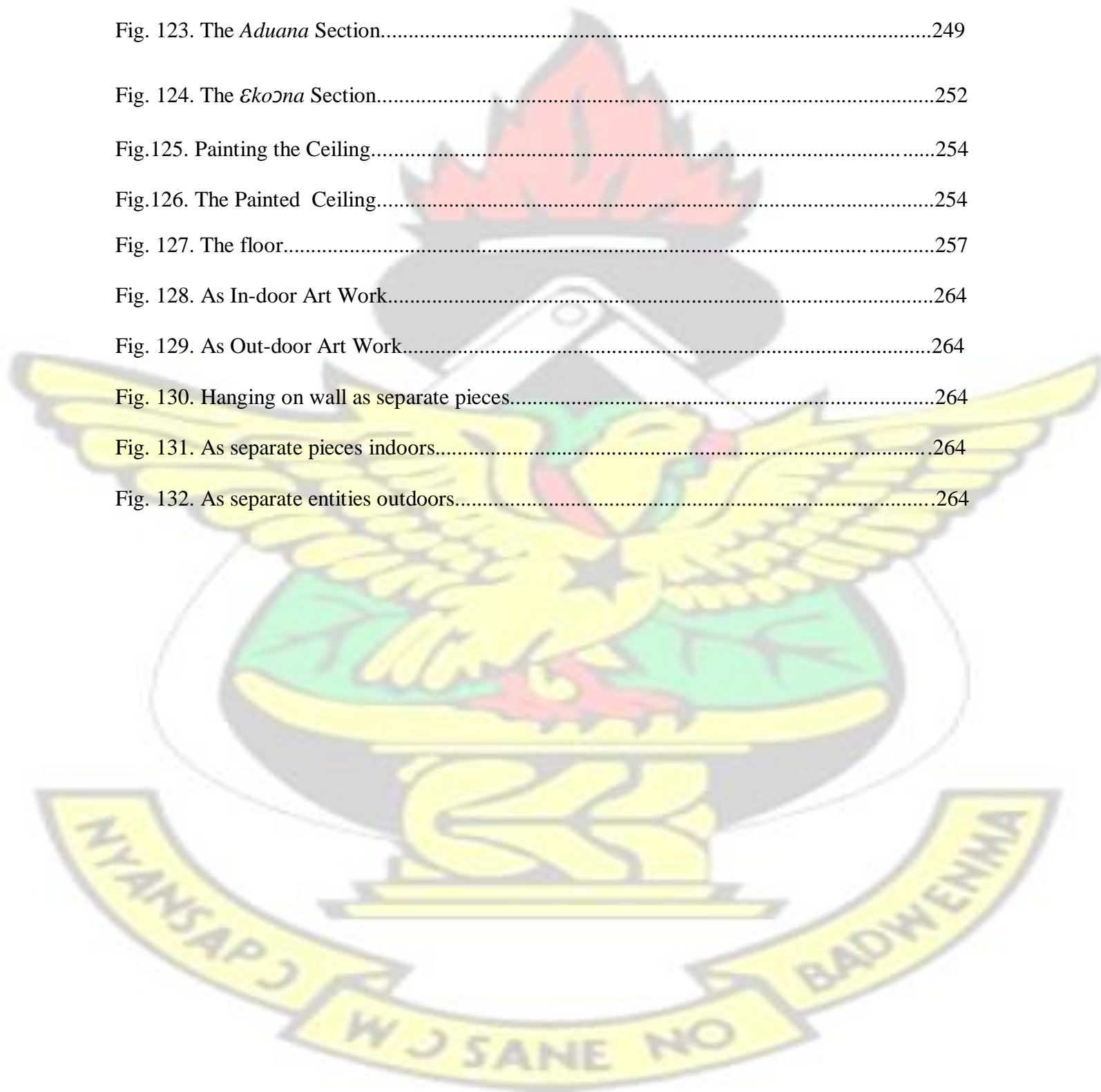
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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

This research resulted from my bid to promote hybrid art through manipulation of form, space and time. In contemporary Ghanaian visual art practice and discourse, there have been only few self conscious and reflexive incursions into hybrid art. The most notable arena where artifacts of hybridity leave space have been explored and documented in a sustained manner is the MFA and, lately, the Mphil/PhD Painting and Sculpture programmes, KNUST. The former programme has, since its inception in 1993, produced notable student projects which have sought to explore, in their different ways, the gray areas between the classical compartments in mainstream fine art disciplines, especially, between painting and sculpture (Amankwah 1996; Niklaus, 1996, Adzraku, 1996; Akoi-Jackson, 2006).

The typical 'either Painting or Sculpture' ethos of KNUST looks to exceed classicist and early modernist models which hardly acknowledge the legitimacy of the hybrid idiom. A hybridized art object involving, say, Painting and Sculpture processes is commonly understood in terms of a 'parts to a whole' relationship. More often than not, it has been observed in terms of how its respective media components correspond to fixed formal notions of early modernist 'painting' on the one hand and 'sculpture' on the other. In the projects referred to above, however, the candidates, by implication, argue against the sovereignty of this widely accepted notion. Among them, Bernard Akoi-Jackson's *Metaphorical Dialogues across Boundaries* comes closest in temperament and gesture, to my understanding of hybridity. Akoi-Jackson locates the impulse for hybridity in the *Ga Okadii* symbolism of transgress.

Following Akoi-Jackson, I interface the structural aspect of my project with traditional and historical Asante experience. But I extend this space of inquiry to involve contemporary experience of the city- Kumasi, the capital of Asante. I take the historical Asante programme as metonymous to contemporary and post-colonial city experience.

### **Research Problem**

Hybridity is only a burgeoning idiom in the contemporary Ghanaian art establishment. However, there is a significant body of examples in the historical and emergent Ghanaian culture which lends support to its more critical engagement, exploration and appropriation in art practice.

Asante culture is an appropriate example of Ghanaian culture replete with subtexts of hybridity and transgress. I propose that the folkloric aspects of historical and contemporary Asante culture could inspire insightful incursions into the subject of hybridity in contemporary art practice. I



take the Kumasi city kiosk to be a structural and functional analogue of hybridity in Asante culture. This is informed by the fact that Kumasi city embodies the confluence of Asante traditional idiom and modern capitalist culture.

I am interested in how the narrative structure of Asante folktales present a hybrid form of presentation.

Prominent among the folklore of Asantes are their folktale. Because folktales, or story- telling play very active roles in the folklore of the Asantes, and also help *Anansesem* the memory retention of audience, this report which is also a story is presented in a manner comparable to story telling.

This report is therefore, so designed to adopt the form and style of narrative as applied by Asantes in the dissemination of *Anansesem* which are collections of cleverly woven myths about life that serve as benchmark for posterity. (Arthur 2004, p.1).

### **Research Objectives**

Objectives of the project are:

1. To critically examine Asant mythology and hence identify hybrid idioms relevant in contemporary discourse and art practice.

2. To study and improve on the structure and function of the typical Kumasi city kiosk as basis for a cross-genre installation project.
3. To construct and exhibit a transgressive and collapsible art object which formally interfaces painting, sculptural, architectural, oral and performative genres and as well thematizes Asante mythography

## **Methodology**

The set goal, exploration of hybridity and mythography, permeates all the six aspects of the project which are, (1) Field work,

(2) The studio practice,

(3) The exhibition

(4) The report

(5) The oral examination.

In the study of Asante folklore, data was accessed through interviews/questionnaires and archival/ libraries and the internet respectively. Special personal interviews were made of purposively selected and informed respondents. Related oral and scripted texts, as well as lyrics of songs were perused, analysed and interpreted.

In conjunction with the tools of interviews and questionnaire, I went to the users of some selected kiosks to access data on the Kumasi kiosks and their ethnographical and mythological signification to the users.

Through their proverbial themes, performing and mostly the visual art forms of the Asantes, some of which are in cast brass, gold weight, and images that top court officials for example, linguists' staffs, which are laden with their myths, were critically observed and analysed. Most of these, which visually portrayed mythography, especially the totems, were also studied to be well informed with the mythology and to be the basis from which art works were recreated in the form of paintings on the quadrilateral sculptural structures.

I constructed one life-size artistic edifice after experimenting with two miniatures and building one prototype.

Asantes visually explore hybridity and mythography through language and art. From the study of these art forms I developed the ideas regarding the mythological concepts with which the *aberphoh*<sup>3</sup> technique was employed to depict paintings to fulfil the goal of visually exploring mythography. From the iconography evolved from Asante traditional folklore and mythology were the paintings on the inner and outer surfaces of the constructed kiosks executed.

All the art works in the literature review as well as the mythological representations on the hybrid structure were carefully analysed by describing, interpreting and evaluating.

The results of the project were, analysed and interpreted documented in an accompanying report.



### **Delimitation**

The folklore and mythology appropriated for this project were selected from those associated with the Asante kinship systems. The history or origin of the Akans and for that matter Asantes is then followed by the entire folklore of Asantes and proceeds with their art forms which visually explore hybridity and mythography.



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## CHAPTER TWO

### ASANTE ORIGINS, MYTH AND FOLKTALES:

#### A NARRATIVE ON BOUNDARIES AND THEIR NEGOTIATION

##### Origin of Asantes

*Anansesensesε o ! Yuon*<sup>5</sup>! Once, in a distant land, (probably the Jewish land), there lived an ethnic group of people by name of Asantes. They are one of the groups that constitute the *Akan* ethnicity. Nkansa- Kyeremateng et al. The history of Asante cannot be singled out without mentioning the mother ethnicity-Akan. The name Akan is derived from the word *kan*<sup>6</sup> or *kane*<sup>7</sup> meaning 'first.' They were the first to have migrated from *Ghana*.<sup>8</sup> (Akuffo, 1976, p.3) The Asante State was formed by Nana **Osei Tutu** with the help of **Okomfo Anokye**<sup>9</sup> whose real name was Agyei-Frimpon and also known as Okomfo Kɔkɔɔ, (Adubofuor, 2000, p.18).

As said described in detail on subsequent few pages, eight clans came together to compose the 'Union of clan.' All the Stools of the eight clans of the Asantes were buried together for a unitary Stool to be sent from Kwame Tweaduampɔn, the Creator. The Golden Stool which is believed to contain the *Sunsum* or spirit of the Asantes was then requested from Kwame Tweaduampɔn on a *Fofie*, a Sacred Friday in September 1698 by Okomfo Anokye.

Adubofuor (2000 p.3). Nana Kwame Ofori rather puts it at 1697, (Kwame, n. d. p.9). It is thus called *Sika Dwa Kofi* or the Golden Stool that appeared on a Friday.

As symbol for the chosen leader for the United Kingdom, the Golden Stool descended from the sky and rested on the lap of Osei Tutu. Osei K. (2004 p.7).they since then consider themselves as one unified body. Each human, according to Asante tradition,, consists of soul and a body, and so is the Asante State, which they believe, has the Golden Stool as the soul Osei (2004 p.66).

As predicted by **Okomfo Tuda**<sup>10</sup>, the Asante kingdom was annexed to the Gold Coast in 1902 after their defeat in the Yaa Asantewaa War which started in 1900 and ended in 1901, (Buah, 1984, p. 115).

Each town in the kingdom was ruled by an **ahene**<sup>11</sup>, (plural) **ahene**<sup>12</sup> or **ahenfo**<sup>13</sup>, (chiefs) (Osei, 2000, p.11) lasted for 200 years before the Colonial Regime.

Asantes were thus named because of their confederacy which was born out of boundaries merging with the intent for military strength thus **asa nti-fo**<sup>14</sup>, translated as “Because of war union.” Asante thus thrived on the conduct of wars of offence and defence (Osei, 2000, p7). But they were not always attacking or defending; in between the act of offence and defence was the period of bringing all boundaries together. The name *Asante* was thus derived out of that situation or period of in-betweens. Between the period of oppression and terror from their enemies and the period of fighting for independence from the Denkyiras at *Feyiase*, was the period of scheming and unionization. The battle at Feyiase took place in 1701. (Adubofuor,. 2000, p.2). Ward puts it at 1698-1699. (Ward, 1937, p.45). The battle was provoked by unbearable demands of Denkyira. The Denkyiras could not stay at the ‘central position’ but went beyond the margins to the extreme, - a space of extraordinary demands as follows.

1. Send the Golden Stool to Denkyira
2. Dissolve the Asante Union as no permission was sought from Denkyira



3. Desist from complaining against Denkyira men sleeping with Asante women sent to carry tributes and to serve at Denkyira.
4. Each chief should cut one of his fingers and add to some gold dust to be sent to Denkyira.
5. The favourite wife of each chief to serve at the palace of Denkyira. (Osei, 1994, pp.8-9).

That was the last straw to break the camel's back. A war of independence subsequently ensued which toppled the supremacy of the Denkyiras. The central position which was neither too mild nor harsh was the safer position for the Denkyiras, but which was traversed to the boundary, paving a passage through which entered rebellion and its subsequent cronies—subjugation and liberation.

During the period of scheming to fight the Denkyiras which started during the reign of Obiri Yeboah, the greatest problem was who was to head and who to serve, (Osei, 1994, p.6). No 'hybrid space' was considered, one either became the head or a subservient 'tail'. What is happening with the Africa Union or The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is no different from what took place at the beginning of the Asante Union.

The goal was achieved by sheer scheming qualities of Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye. Okomfo Anokye collected a small amount of hair and fingernails from each chief and burnt them together into ashes and mixed some in palm wine for all the chiefs to drink and the rest smeared on the Golden Stool (Osei, 1994, p.7), to symbolize connectivity, interface, diffusion and togetherness between all member clans – a vivacious union. Could such an antecedent and the modus operandi be adopted to achieve the Africa Union or the ECOWAS?

The Asante slogan *kɔtɔkɔ*<sup>15</sup>,—"bend low and fight," which was coined out of this war tactic is one of the activities which demonstrates hybridity in Asante folklore. The *kɔtɔkɔ* slogan is an

act of in-betweens; the act of stooping or bending low to fight the enemy was a technique which was neither fighting standing upright nor lying down to shoot.

There were several instances portrayed varied forms of hybridity, - many spaces and inbetweens with diverse magnanimity in the Asante state. For instance, Nana Otamakuro Adubofour states of the fortunes of the Asante state in the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century which was based on the account of the Asantehene, (the greatest *ɔhyeɛni*). He puts it as “...loyalty to him, intrigues against him, misunderstanding, hatred and sabotage. The surprising thing is how the Asante managed to weather their way through these vicissitude of life.” (Adubofuor 2000, p. iv). Typical example is the rebellion of Dwaben during the reign of Nana Mensa Bonsu (Osei 2000, p.65). There was also a period of civil war in 1887 during the enstoolment of Nana Prempeh (Adubofuor, 2000, p. 52). During that war Edweso had fought with Bekwai. Adubofuor (2000, p. 52). A period saturated with hybrids of conflicted ‘boundaries’ -loyalty and treasonous plots, love and hatred, evil schemes countered by supportive moves, misunderstanding and compliance, trustworthiness and sabotage etc, all of which invariably led to cohesion of the union. So much dichotomous ‘compartments’ of activities with ‘passages’ and in-betweens had to be linked for the required unity. Counterinsurgency and sedition within which existed compartments, passages meandering between the compartments, weaving them, linking and delinking unwanted ‘particles’ to sustain the authority and unity of the Asante state.

To stem the tide, in the face of the mentioned vicissitudes, stringent measures were put in place to counter any counter activity. Therefore at the cost of death, no Asante was permitted to reveal one’s past (Osei, 2000). It was painful to mention wars which might induce pride in the indigenes whilst breeding hatred and revenge in the descendants of the vanquished.

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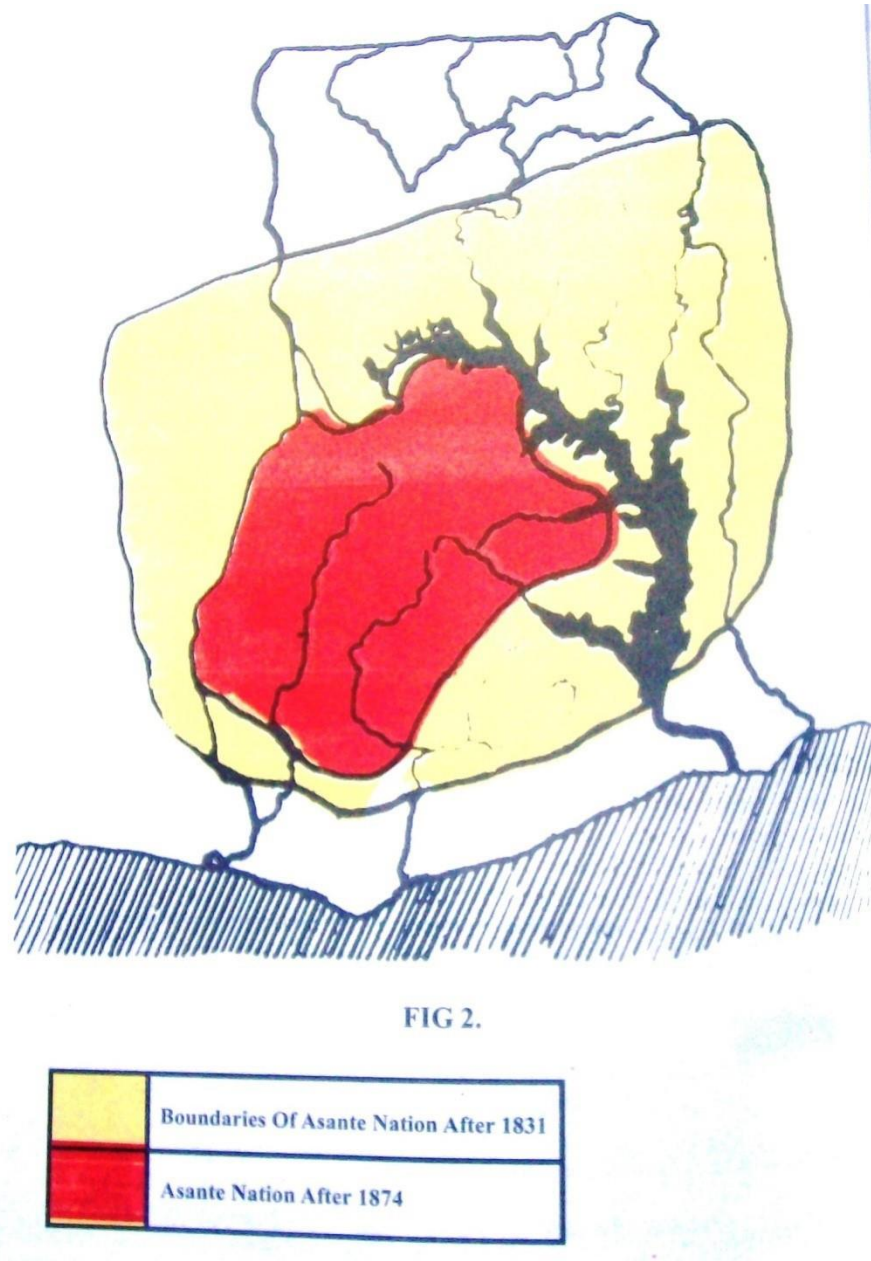


Figure 1. Boundaries of Asante Nation after 1831

Source: Osei .(1994, p.34).

The confederation of Asante, as said earlier, was born out of the concept of boundaries, but the irony is that in the quest of homing in more 'boundaries,' and to protect the existing ones, the union met the worst set-back. Other 'boundaries,' afraid of the strength and number of

‘merged boundaries’ of the Asantes, and in attempt to safeguard their boundaries, formed a coalition with other ‘boundaries’ to fight the Asantes to sublate some of the boundaries.

History is gradually repeating itself in the same manner with Asante folklore as it crosses the boundaries of democracy and globalisation to be merged, submerged and almost diffused. Thus the Asante state, as of now, is gradually compromising, fussing at the brinks and merging with ‘globalisation’ in such a manner that makes it a vivid example of hybridity and mythography as attested by the following facts about its clans, myths, kingship, the *ɔhyeɛni* and more ‘in-betweens.’

### Asante Clans

A clan is a group of people that share common blood –that is people with a common ancestress. Clan could be observed as an aspect of the Akan folklore which is a medium of identification of the various Akan groups. I define it as an identifiable group in-between the holistic Akan ethnicity and the laws and codes of ethics that constitute Akan ethnicity. Inbetween the rules, norms and values that identify the Akans and the main ethnic name or group that constitute the Akans, could be placed the clan system which also contribute to the identifiable variables of the Akans. Because members of a clan have a common ancestress, they are referred to as *ntɔn* or family, (Obeng, 1986, p .I).

But within the kingdom are groupings or families known as *abusua*. Obeng defines *abusua* as “a group or groups of people descended from one great –grand-mother on the maternal side” and clan as “a federation of four or five different groups of *abusua*.” (Obeng,1986, .P 2).

These people, due to the blood relationship are not permitted to intermarry. It is a taboo which was punishable by death in times past. (Arthur, 2003, p.1 ). Because the child is believed to have been formed with the blood - *abusua* of the mother. (Nkansa-Kyeremateng, 2001 p.32), and the sperm-*ntorɔ*, the child is said to have the *abusua* of the mother and the *ntorɔ* –spirit of the father. (Arthur, 2003, p.1 )

Meanwhile some researchers maintain that the Akan clan system consists of seven (7) by combining Bretuo and Agona. (Obeng, 1986, p.1). He is supported by (Ossei, 2005, p.65) who asserts the existence of unspecified sub groups beside the seven major ones. Nevertheless, the combination does not disprove the existence of any of the eight namely; Bretuo, Asona, ɔyokɔ, Asakyiri, Aseneɛ, Agona, Aduana and ɛkoɔna, (Arthur, 2000 et al). The eight Asante clans which are as well for all Akans are as follows.

### ***Bretuo***

They are said to have been part of those that established Bono Manso under the leadership of Otumfoɔ Osei Kofi. They migrated from Bono Manso under the leadership of Okusiase Agosu and his sister Asiama Nyame. They settled at Ayaase at Akyerɛkyerɛ (Ahensan). They use the Leopard as their totem, (Nkansa-Kyeremateng, 1996, p.24; Figure 2). Another oral tradition, according to Nana Otamakuro Adubofuor, has it that the cognatic ancestress, Asiama Nyankopɔn Guahyia and her followers, descended from the skies and landed at Ayaase in Adanse and left to settle at Ahensan, (Adubofuor, 2000, p. 9).



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## *Oyoko*

They are also referred to as Bona Nkoran (Nkansa-Kyerematen 1996). That the Oyoko Baapiesie Nana Ekuru claimed to have migrated from Asuom and first settled at Asiakwa both in the Eastern Region, and it was her daughter Nana Antwiwaa Nyame who then later led her descendants to Asantemanso in Asumegya. They are also said to have migrated from Bona in Cote D'Ivoire. They established Kwaman (now Kumasi) and are therefore the royals to the Asante throne. Their totem is the Hawk. (Figure.3).

## *Agona*

They claim to have arrived at Bono Manso in 1500. They are believed to have migrated from Mende to settle at Bono Manso as part of the Asona Family. They migrated in 1580 to establish their capital at Ntuntumbe Apeanyiasa (Nkansa-Kyeremateng 1996 p. 23) under their king Mumuromfi (Werempe Ampem). They established the Denkyira Kingdom with the capital at Abankeseeso. Their totem is the Parrot. (Figure 4). Below are representations of the totemic symbols of the eight Akan clans displayed at their appropriate places. The totems could have been represented in other means including photographs or imitationalism. But in order not to undermine the objective of the project, I chose to employ the *aberphoh* style of painting

<i>Bretuo</i>	<i>ɔsebo</i>	Leopard
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<i>ɔyokoɔ</i>	<i>Akorɔma</i>	Hawk
<i>Agona</i>	<i>Ako</i>	Parrot
<i>ekoɔna</i>	<i>ekoɔ</i>	Buffalo
<i>Asakyiri</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Kɔkɔsakyi</i></li> <li>2. <i>ɔkɔreɛ</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vulture</li> <li>2. Eagle</li> </ol>
<i>Asona</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Kwaakwaadabi</i></li> <li>2. <i>Asona-wɔ</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Crow</li> <li>2. Red Serpent</li> </ol>
<i>Aseneɛ</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Apan</i></li> <li>2. <i>Asee</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bat</li> <li>2. Robin</li> </ol>
<i>Aduana</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>ɔkraman</i></li> <li>2. <i>Aponkyerene</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dog</li> <li>2. Frog</li> </ol>

hybrid or an in-between of surrealism and fantasy.

2.

3.

4.

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5.

6.

7.

8.

Clan (*Nton*)

*Akraboa* (in Twi)

Totem (in English)

Adapted from Arthur, (2003, p.9).





**Figure. 2. Bretuo: Kurotwiamansa (ᵹsebo) (Leopard)**



**Figure 3. ɔyoko: Akorɔma (Hawk)**

### *ekoɔna*

The name *ekoɔna* is believed to be derived from *ekoɔ nana*, the descendant of a buffalo. (Ossei, 2005, p.38). A myth which might imply that there were special action(s) or performance(s) in the transformation that was either instantaneous or prolonged through a span of time. A passage or passages had to be traversed in the process of transformation. Your guess could as good as mine as to the number of spaces and passages crossed, or ‘strings’ pulled in the process of transmogrification. There is also the probability of it being a fabrication.

There are two sources of their origin (Ossei, 2005, p. 25). The first states that they migrated from Mando to settle at Bono in about 1550. They established Takyiman. They established

other towns like Asokore, and Sehwi Bekwai. According to Ossei, some claim that they migrated from Bugyeikrom near Kokofu. Buffalo is their totem ( Figure 5).

### *Asakyiri*

They are believed to have been driven from Timbuktu by the Moslems. Couldn't they have joined the Muslims and worshipped with them? They needed freedom, spaces to move freely and as such was determined to cross any boundary or passage to freedom. They thus came through Kankyeabo in Cote D' Ivoire to establish the Asakyiri kingdom with Fomena as the capital. Nkansa-Kyeremateng (1996, p. 25). They are said to have been the first family but with few members. Arthur (2003, p.7). Their totems are (1) Vulture and (2) Eagle. (Figure 6).

### *Asona*

The Asona Clan is said to have migrated from the upper part of West Africa. Some claim they migrated with the Asakyiri family when they were coming from Kankyiabo. Unification, disjuncture and separation. Others claim they originated from Timbuktu. They are those who established Mankesim and Gomoaman. (The kingdom of Gomoa). Nkansa –Kyeremateng (1996 p.26). Spaces of denials and contradictions, unification, divisions and de-linking thus surround the origins of the clan system and continue with other 'spaces' to add to the hybridity in the Asante folklore. Their totems are (1) the Red Serpent and (2) The Crow, (figure 7).



### *Asenee*

Their origin is not quite of a certainty as there are three schools. The first asserts that they migrated from the Mossiland. The other is certain they originated from Mande. The later is more credible as history has it that Wankyi was established in 1600 by the group that came from Mande. The third asserts that they migrated from a hole in Asante Akyem. NkansaKyeremateng (1996, p23). Since, there has not been any mention of a specific location of this hole. This belies the credibility of this assertion but as it could not be disputed, I feel it should be taken as it is. Their totems are the Bat and the Robin,( Figure 8).

### *Aduana*

The oyoko and Aduana clans were said to have originated from a hole at **Asantemanso**<sup>16</sup> near Asumegya while some of the remaining clans claim to have descended from the skies, (Ossei, 2004, p.1). Agyemang Ossei, quoting Rattray further states that leading the group were a dog in whose mouth was a fire brand followed by a frog, used as totems, (Figure 9, 10). respectively); then followed a worm before the appearance of man and woman, (Rattray, 1969, p.28 as cited in Ossei, 2005, p.38).

Aduana is also referred to as Aberade, (Nkansa-Kyeremateng, 1996, p22). It has other branches which are (a) Amoakare (b) Atwea (c) Abir (d) Onyanyo and (d) Adoa. Members of the Aduana clan which is in-between the said branches and the main Akan body, are believed to have descended from heaven on a golden chain to a place called Asumegya.

They claim to be the first to introduce fire, (Ossei, 2005, p. 38). Their major towns are:-(a) Dwenemu (1470 C.E.) (b) Akumu Akoto (1500 C.E.) (c) Akwamu (Asaremanke 1550 C.E.



(d) Domaa Asanteman (1600 C.E). Then later (e) Asumegya (f) Kumawu (g) Domaa (Apemredease) and the smaller towns like (h) Drobo (i) Suma (j) Domaa (k) Wam Paamu/ Ahenkro and (l) Gyaman. Their totems are (a) A Dog with a fire brand, (b) Frog (figure 9, 10).

In consideration with the various, sometimes controversial or doubtful sources of the origin of the Akans, so many schools of thought, diverse views and beliefs come into play that one could draw many parallel, diverging, converging, intersecting, merging, interlocking, disintegrating and what have you inferences to observe or formulate the extent of hybridity associated with the origin of the Akan clans and for that matter their subset – the Asantes.

The origin of Asantes has already been discussed above as an icon of hybridity by virtue of the in-betweens. The clans constitute a medium of hybridity due to the politics of threat and harassment that hedged them in. The Akans travelled down to their present position in an attempt to flee from the Arabs who had then captured the middle belt of Sub-Sahara.



**Figure. 4. *Agona: Ako* (Parrot)**



**Figure. 5. *Ḫkoḫna: ekoḫ* (Buffalo)**





**Figure. 6. Asakyiri: Kəkəsakyi (Vulture)**



and (b) ɔkɔrɛɛ (Eagle)





**Figure.7 Asona: (a) Asonawɔ (Red Serpent)**



**(b) Kwaakwaadabi (Crow)**





Figure 8. *Aseneε*: (a) *Apan* (Bat)

and (b) *Asee* (Robin)





**Figure 9: Aduana: (a) *ɔkraman a egya tua n'ano***

**(a dog with fire brand)**



**Figure 10. (b) *Aponkyerene* (frog)**

They were welcomed with harassments from the Denkyiras. They were crammed in-between the Moslems and the Denkyiras. No wonder some members of some of the clans travelled



westwards to the present day Cote D'Ivoire whilst some travelled downwards to establish Mankesim and Gomoaman, (The kingdom of Gomoa), (Nkansa –Kyeremateng, 1996, p.26), apparently to have their peace of mind.

### **Asante Diaspora**

Because there are similarities, cohesions and uniformity among members of all the clans there is homogeneity of members of the Asante state, (Osei, 2000, p1). This does not imply total unity. Though there was some extent of cohesion, due to weakness at the brinks and borders of the families, there emerged cracks, segmentations and subsequent segregations. Some portions of the Asantes broke away as some members of a clan broke away from a clan. Weakness at the 'boundaries' might have resulted in the break-away of Agona from Bretuo, Osei, 2000, p.2).

During the reign of Opoku Ware, one Asantehemaa Abenaa Pokua of the Dako branch of the *Oyoko* migrated to Bona in la Cote D'Ivoire to form the Baule Oyoko-Dako communities. (Nkansa-Kyeremateng, 1996, p.25). Because of the matrilineal lineage, the descendants of Asantehemaa Abenaa Pokua maintained her clan though at a foreign land no matter the extent of 'hybrid blood'. It would have been a different story if the patrilineal system were practiced by the Asantes. Segregation in unification in spite of various 'boundaries' crossed.

## Royals of Clan Towns

The clans established towns in which they are the royals to the throne. For instance, the Dyokoos have towns like Kumasi, Kokofu, Dwaben, Bekwai etc. Needless to state that only a royal from the Dyokoos clan could cross the 'boundaries' to ascend the throne in any of these towns. But even that an Dyokoos royal in one town could not crossover to ascend a throne in another town. He or she should have a direct ancestry to the royals of that specific town.

Not all clan members come from any of the towns established by that clan let alone qualifying to any of the thrones. For example, the Bretuo also have towns like Manpong, Bedomase, Affiduase etc. Aduana has Kumawu, Asumegya, Bompata etc. I am a Bretuo but I do not come from any of the Bretuo towns. I come from Kumawu which is an Aduana town. This also implies that though each town has a special royal clan, like a cauldron of soup that consists of various ingredients, it is a mixture of all the other clans. The other clans might not have been in the original plan of the early settlers yet like patios of buildings they have been part of the town and play very important role in the development of the town.

In every town, the clans and the *abusua* are the 'segments' that form the composition of its folk. This does not imply that each member of the townsfolk has a clan. There are in-betweens who are non-akans and as such joins neither the *abusua* nor clan systems in the town.

The clans manifest themselves even more than its subset, the *abusua*. Each clan has an *ohyeeɛni* with the title *ohene* added as suffix to the clan e.g. Asonahene, dyokohene, Bretuhene

etc. The position of these clan heads are in-between the chyeeni of the town and their clans who are the ordinary folks. They also have smaller stools which, on occasions, they pour libation on behalf of the clans to the Supreme Being, the deities and ancestors for them to cross whatever boundaries to mingle with and assist the living.

As members of the same clan are not permitted to marry, definitely each member has to cross a 'space' or many 'passages' to marry from another clan in the town or outside.

As there are members of the eight clans in each town in Ashanti Region, so are they found in almost all the towns in the country. For instance history has it that some Asonas left to settle at Gomoa and Mankesim in the Fanteland, (Nkansa –Kyeremateng, 1996, p.26), meaning the clans were not located only in the Asante states. But are Asonas the only inhabitants of the said two towns? So many blocks of families and other clans cross, overlap, intersect, link and get linked in the development and expansion of each town.

Due to that, like a termitarium, the clan system possesses a cornucopia of vestibules for easy flow of myriads of assorted kinships that intersect, fuse or mingle, that there is a haphazard criss-crossing of borders, confluences and diffusions so much so that neither the paternal nor maternal systems could be identified with all the people in any of the clans due to inter-marriage.

It may also be impossible to sift out all individual members of each of the clans even in one town. At present there are quite a number of individuals who though might know their maternal or paternal lineage, they may not be able to tell which clan they are affiliated with let alone the *ntoro* which is less common in use.



This means there have also been fragmentations in the clans before and after the unionization of the Asante state. As said above, some parts of the *Asona* had gone to establish akyem Abuakwa, the Gomoa and Mankesim, (Nkansa –Kyeremateng, 1996, p. 26).  
Detachments, fragmentations, exclusions, and overlaps.



**Figure 11 Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II (the Asantehene) Sitting in State**

**Credit: Baafuor Osei-Akoto: (Asante historian)**

**Figure 12. Nana Afua Kobi Sɛwaa Ampem**

(the current *Asantehemaa*)

Source: <http://www.graphicghana.com/>

Such nomadism, -movements and settlements, are likely to have caused frictions and conflicts to justify Nkansa-Kyeremateng's assertion that, the Asante states emerged out of "inter-community conflicts some of which escalated to internecine wars in which the fittest survived and the weakest either annihilated or got engulfed," (Nkansa –Kyeremateng, 1996, p. 26).

### **Asante mythology and Its Cosmogony**

Some myths were created to exaggerate past glories or to conceal certain facts that were derogatory . (Buah, 1984, p. 98). Myths actually are taken as true by any group of people from whom they originate or to who belong the myths. There is therefore a distinct line between unreal or imaginary story and myth. Unlike parables or allegories which are made deliberately to illustrate a moral aspect of life, myths are assumed to be true by anyone of the group.

Myth is the type of stories considered as sacred that concerns itself with the origin of the universe and its creatures and how they came to have their present forms. In myths the active beings are generally gods and heroes.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines myth as a story which more often has doubtful origin and of partially traditional. It defines mythology as the study of myth and the total corpus of myths in a particular culture or religious tradition.

Mythology could therefore, be epitomized as the study into the origin, definition, nature, form and functions of myths. Owing to globalization and cultural diversity, hybridity are abound

in various forms. Those are indications of the susceptible nature of mythology. It is categorized into three by some researchers as (a) Tradition Observed (b) Tradition Refined and (c) Tradition Revised. (Ossei, 2005, p.120). Yet in spite of its inter-relationship, certain particular myths could be identified with some specific ethnicity or group of people.

Hence one can specify the collection of myths by a category of people as their mythology, for instance Greek mythology, Egyptian mythology, American mythology, Asante mythology, etc.

In as much as mythologies are as numerous as uncountable, I have selected specific ones as follows for the purpose of this project. The Creation; the Creator; origin of man; the deities or lesser gods; the elements e.g. the sun, rain, water, earth, wind, thunder, etc that pertain to the Asantes. I would like to commence with Theogeny - that concerning the creator.

### **Theogeny**

*“Se Onyame bɔ onifurani a,*

*Na wabɔ nea*

*Ɔbesɔ ne poma mu.”*

A popular Asante proverb which literary translates as God creates a helper for the blind; one of multiplicities of exemplifications of their beliefs in God as the creator and that he makes provisions for everyone. This and various examples that follow below attest to the fact that the belief in the Supreme Being is paramount in the mythology of the Asantes. This assertion is



reinforcement by Tufuo & Donkor in their assertion that the worship of the Supreme Being, who is considered the creator, plays the most prominent role in the myths of the Asantes. In several homes, often at a corner in the courtyard, a brass basin or pot is put on a three –forked bough of about six feet high. Into the brass an egg is periodically placed to serve as sacrifice to the creator. Tufuo & Donkor (1989 p. 73).

The Asantes mistrusted the white men (who thought the Asantes knew not God), due to their slavery and looting of the gold of the land. They perceived the bible as just a cover- up to obliterate the nefarious activities of the white, ( Akuffo, 1976, p.1).

Prince Henry was considered a madman even by the clergy in attempting to convert ‘heathen who might not exist at all.’ But when gold was found in the Gold Coast, they began to see some sense in the madness of Prince Henry, and they eagerly did for the sake of gold what they would not do for the sake of religion, (Ward, 1937).

Akans saw through the duplicity of the whites came to the Gold coast and therefore named them *Aborɔ*<sup>17</sup>-foɔ” “*Nnipa yi yɛ aborɔ papa !*” translated as ‘exploitative people.’

(Personal conversation with Opanin Agyapong of Koforidua who left us quite recently. May his soul rejoice in *Asamando*).

*Aborɔ nti*, due to exploitation and selfishness, they scrambled for Africa and did not take into consideration the tribes or families of the Africans when it was agreed at the Berlin conference (1844-1845) to partition Africa. Demarcations were made separating tribes and families. (Kyeremateng, 1996, p.1).



**Figure 13. The *Nyamedua* Forked Tree with pot for Nyame at the Besease Shrine Credit: Ossei A.(2005 p.104)**



**Figure 14. The tripod for the worship of the Supreme Being at the courtyard of unidentified Asante palace.**

**Taken from Ross (2002 p.30).**

I am back to the subject. The Africans had the knowledge of God but believed him to be 'just and principled.' (Fosu, 2005, p.62). Arthur disputes the claim that it was the Europeans

who came to show the blacks or specifically the Akans the existence of God. She reinforces her assertion with the appellations of the Supreme Being as follows. *ɔbɔɔadeɛ, Ototrobonsutɔnsuo-bɔ-awia*, (Arthur,2004, p.16). Names that were already in use before the advent of the

Europeans. As said earlier, the belief in the Supreme Being is manifest in their speeches.

They have words like;

- a) *Onyame nhyira wo*      b) *Onyame ntua woka*      c) *Onyame bɛkyerɛ*  
d) *Onyame Nnae*      e) *Onyame adom etc, etc.*

In their proverbs, the Asantes portray their beliefs in the Supreme Being. They use proverbs to show the greatness, benevolence and justice of God, ( Fosu, 2005, p. 62). E.g.

1. *Onyame mpe bɔne nti na ɔkyee din.* God shared out names to avoid wrongdoing.
2. *ɔbaako nsa nso nyame ani kata,.* One cannot cover the eyes of God with his hands.
3. *Onyame nte sɛ ɔdasani.* God is not like man who is wicked. Etc.
4. *Wo rebu ɔkɔtɔ Kwasea no, na Onyame hwɛ wo.* God sees you cheating the crab. He has seen you in all your activities and would reward or punish you accordingly.

These and the myth of creation below attest to the fact that the belief in a supreme deity was paramount in the myths of the Asantes.



# KNUST

## From Grace to Grass

The first Asante myth is that of creation. (Akuffo, 1976, p.2). He narrates the story in which man fell short of the grace of the Creator. *Onyankopon* the creator had been with his creatures till he eventually left them to settle far above to avoid the pain inflicted on him through the constant plunge of the pestle used by an old lady whenever she decided to prepare her favourite meal, *fufuo*.

The departure of the creator upwards, continues the myth, had been gradual yet the higher he hung the harder the plunge of the pestle. This made him decide to settle at a very high place. Arthur corroborates Akuffo and in a chauvinistic manner concludes from this that the downfall of man was brought by woman. (Arthur, 2004, p.19). The survival instinct of man (food), like the biblical story has caused his downfall, (Genesis 3:1-14).

There is another interesting semblance in their cosmogony to that of the Jews. The legend goes that the first people created by the Supreme Being were a man and a woman who descended to earth. They were living ignorantly of birth till they were tutored in the art of mating to reproduce. It is interesting to note that their 'lecturer' was a python that lived in the waters of Busummuru, (Nkansah-Kyeremateng, 2001, p.26). Similar blocks paralleling, but differing in terms of 'subject,' mating and fruit.

Because they believed God had left to stay far away from them, they found means to communicate with him through the lesser gods who could ascend with their messages, (Fosu, 2005, p.64).

## Peopling the Earth

Another myth is the story in which mankind decided to reach their creator for more effective communication. They therefore arranged a great pile of **mortar**<sup>18</sup> in the form of a pyramid. There required one more mortar to reach God so they decided to remove one from the base to make the tower or pyramid complete but that resulted in the tumbling down of the whole pile in an avalanche on them. In their bid to escape imminent death, they fled in groups to all parts of the earth and settled there thus populating the earth though sparsely. (Akuffo, 1976, p.2).

## The Supreme Being

Asantes believe that the universe did not just appear out of the blue. Very obviously there is the existence of a Supreme Being who created everything, (Gyekye, 2003, p.1). That Creator is supposedly the one that lives in the highest place probably beyond the firmament. Fosu. (2005, p.62). They therefore have names like *Ototrobonsu tɔ-nsuo - bɔ - awia*, given to the creator as the giver of rain and sunshine; *Onyame* you are satisfied if you have me' meaning God is the one who can give you everything.

Certain plants and objects have been given names after God, e.g. *Nyamedua*, God's tree, *Nyame Akuma* God's axe etc. Children are given names after God hence names like *Kwame Nyame*, *Nyamekye* a gift from God. With this elucidation, however brief, the truism in the assertion of the Akans concept of God as the Supreme Being is expatiated. Similarly they portray their belief in the existence of another opposite force (the Devil) with names like

*Bronsam dua* and *Boronsam bepɔ* the tree and mountain inhabited by the devil respectively.

### *Asaase Yaa*<sup>19</sup>

Asantes, besides the belief in the Supreme Being, have the belief in the existence of this creature supposedly as a deity. The Asantes believe that this female deity is the goddess of earth who is the next after the supreme Being who is considered a male, hence the name Kwame Otwereduampɔn (Kwame is the name given to male born on a Saturday). This earth deity is known to the Asantes as *Asaase Yaa*

*Asaase Yaa* is believed to be the wife of *Otwereduampɔn Kwame*. She is seen as a kind hearted mother who is generous to all humans, plants and animals. She is considered a kind mother who equally nurtures all her children, (Arthur, 2004, p.21). They have for Mother Earth an appellation of *Asaase Yaa Amponyinamoa*, they depend on her for their sustenance - meat, water and food. All creatures are supported by her, and they go to her in death, (Arthur, 2004, p.21). Her name which is second to the creator is manifest in their libations which usually begins as follows.

*Otweaduampɔn Kwame nsa !*

*Asaase Yaa nsa !*

*Nananom nsamanfoɔ nsa! Etc.*

Translated as Almighty Gods, your drinks, other Earth your drinks, Great ancestors, drinks for you.



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## Deities

The belief in deities is a culture **universal**.<sup>20</sup> Like the Egyptians, Nigerians, Chinese, Romans, the Mayas, Incas. Etc., the Akans have deep rooted belief in the existence of these deities. In spite of variations in names, the belief in these deities who play eminent roles in global culture cannot be over emphasized.

The Africans or specially the Akans have faith in their deities who are supposed to possess supernatural powers. Arthur contends that they are seen as sons of God and as such believed to be closer than mortals owing to their spiritual advancement, (Arthur, 2004, p.21). They are believed to be capable of transforming themselves or inhabiting plants, animals and man. They are feared because of their power to bless, curse and even kill. They are therefore revered by the Akans. These deities are contacted in times of war, draught, epidemic or any catastrophic occurrence. Because the deities are seen as spirits endowed with powers to protect, punish and mediate on behalf of man, special structures are built as shrines where man could go to invoke the deity through a medium who also acts as the *ɔkyeame* <sup>21</sup> linguist, ( Fosu, 2005, p. 65).

These linguists are called *akɔmfɔɔ* <sup>22</sup> by virtue of their behaviour when possessed by the spirit. The *ɔkɔmfɔɔ* is accorded the highest honour next after the King. Even the King has to go to him for spiritual protection for himself and the town. On rare occasions the *ɔkɔmfɔɔ* is called to see the king but mostly the King sends the *ɔkyeame* and/or emissaries. The king may go there himself in accordance with the demands of the situation. These deities act like *akyeame* by

playing similar roles of in-betweens,- neither up nor down, but act, like the ancestors as conduits between the Supreme Deity and his creatures. The *ɔkɔmfɔɔ* acts likewise between mortals and the Deities.

### **Ancestors**

The belief that man is composed of two elements *Onipadua*<sup>22</sup> and *ɔkra*<sup>24</sup> the soul, is paramount in the mythology of the Asantes. It is believed that the body which is mortal will eventually perish and be eaten by termites. The *ɔkra* which is endowed with immortality lives on forever, ( *The Glorious Quran*, Surah 4.134; surah 5. 33). Due to that, death is not believed to be the end of man but rather a transition to the ancestral world, (Hughes, 1960, p. 40).

Arthur supports this with the statement that death is believed to be a transition to the underworld which is the continuation of this world. One's stay here ends with death as s/he journeys to another realm.

The departed ones are referred to as *Nsamanfoɔ*, ancestors, (Arthur, 2004, p.20). They are next after the gods, (Dako, 2003, p.9). As said earlier, they act as *akyeame* or mediators. The Supreme Being is supposed to be of such a status as not worth of a mortal to directly communicate with.

The ancestors who are believed to have reached higher stages in life (the Glorious al Quran.Surah 35.19-22), are assumed to be in better positions to be able to communicate with the creator. The ancestors therefore act like mediators between the creator and his creatures.

The ancestors are believed to be capable of assisting or punishing the living. They are therefore mentioned in libations to invoke them for blessings and to ward off evil or to punish their enemies. There are special rooms allotted to ancestors known as *nsamandan*<sup>25</sup> or *Nkonguadan/ Nkonguafieso*<sup>26</sup> in palaces. The heads of the clans and blocks of family also pour libation to the ancestors for the welfare of the family, the clan and the Asante Kingdom. These ancestors are not considered the 'Supreme Powers' and as such not worshipped. On occasions they are called upon to drink and at times dine because of their interest in the affairs of mortals, (Arthur, 2004, p.20).

Because of protection and the mediation role of ancestors, they are venerated by the Asantes. Libations are occasionally poured to invoke their blessings especially on festive occasions.

### **Libation**

Is a form of prayers offered to the Supreme Deity, his wife Asaase Yaa, (Arthur, 2004, p.21), and their children- the lesser gods, (Arthur, 2004, p.24), as well as the ancestors for their assistance in the affairs of the living. It is an act performed by humans or mortals who are inbetween the ancestral world and the abode of the Supreme Being. In-between the preparation and execution of any project or programme, libation is poured at the start to invoke the said blessings. It is not performed earlier than the preparation nor after the execution but rather inbetween the said periods for its full import.

On festive occasions, libation is poured to invoke the ancestral spirits to crossover to partake in the occasion and help the living. Hybrity manifests in the daily activities in the folklore of the Asantes as libation is poured in all occasions to invite the spirits and the deities to cross and re-cross borders, bridging the barriers, linking, socializing and de-linking with humans.



After death, burial and funeral, the myth of departing to another realm or world demands rituals to usher the 'traveller' peacefully to appear at the spiritual world in honour and dignity. At all the ceremonies as 'rites of passage,' libations are performed to ensure that drinks are absorbed through the spaces in-between the soils of *Asaase Yaa* to reach the land of the ancestors underground. As symbolism it is believed to travel to its destination if even it is poured on cemented ground.

## **Anansesem**

### The Genesis of *Anansesem*

*Anansesem* are stories cleverly woven without definite origin, (Akuffo, 1976, p1). *Anansesem* is as well a collection of examples of varieties of daily experiences that has been cleverly created to serve as guidance for other generations to live good and acceptable lives, (Arthur, 2004, p.1).

The protagonist of *Anansesem* is 'Kwaku Ananse,' (an allegorical figure or personification of the spider who acts cunningly, deceptively, cleverly but at times foolishly). He is said of as the custodian of the Supreme Being's wisdom, (Ossei, 2005, p.29).

There are many Asante folktales that are told about the Creator and his creatures. The first is the story which narrates how one of the heroes of the folktales - Kwaku Ananse, through wisdom, bought the title of *Ananse-sem* which hitherto had been *Nyankon-sem*,<sup>27</sup> the preserve of the creator - Nyankopon, with the price of live python, a bunch of hornets, the dwarf and the leopard submitted to Onyankopon in his palace, (Kani, 1965, p.13).

The narration vividly portrays the determination with which Ananse schemed to produce the said price, cleverly outwitting his three victims. Hence the general name for folktales was changed from *Nyankonsem* to *Anansesem*.

The above narration induces the possibility of every feat; provided determination and proper scheming are taken. *Anansesem* also portrays the beliefs of the Asantes in the Supreme Being, (Kantanka, n.d.,p.57).

The folktales or Ananse Stories are told in the evenings or at night where the family and friends gather after a hard day's work. Udoukpong vividly describes the informal setting of the family of Ibibio, one of the tribes of Nigeria who, like the Asantes enjoy their folktales after a hard day's work, (Udoukpong, 1970, .p.29).

Due to the advent of technology and modernism, the former mode of transmitting *Anansesem* by the fireside has crossed so many 'borders.' One cannot, though, rule out the probability that stories are at present still told by the fireside in the rural habitations. Now Ananse stories abound in textual matters both electronically and hard prints. They are at times telecast (sometimes in a drama form) on television and frequency modulated stations to reach very wider audience. These are stages, transitions and passages that transport part of the Ananse story across boundaries of villages, towns districts, regions and nations to their present stage.

Like the Ibibios of Nigeria, the Asantes belief in the creation as an act by the Supreme Being, (Udoukpong, 1970, .p.29). Just as an Ibibio refers to the Creator as 'father,' (Udoukpong, 1970, .p.29). an Asante similarly refers to him as a male thus the name Kwame Tweaduampɔn.

# KNUST

## **Narrative Style, the Hero, the Narrator and the Audience**

Folktales are told in two major categories. The first and commonest is the narrative type to be followed by the play-acting genre.

Two types of **attention** are also employed. The **reciprocal attention** is portrayed by the actors and the audience. The audience have **an object-oriented attention\*** where they all look at the same dramatists throughout the ‘story-telling.’

All the three forms of narrative (a) True narrative (b) Personal narrative and (c) Process narrative, (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2003, p. 399), are utilized in Ananse story telling. Even though some aspects of true narratives are borrowed and utilized for this report, the mind of readers are disabused as not to misconstrue it to be one by virtue of the experiences of the writer and the portrayal of some processes, (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2003, p. 403). Reported and direct speeches are interchangeably used as is and when necessary depending on the particular stage in the story.

In the narrative of the Akan folktales - like any other legend - the hero is usually referred to as the third person singular or plural as the case may be

This form of oration is usually employed for variety, to indicate particular character, and to mentally engage the reader who arduously, though enthusiastically, takes in the opus of the narration. A story is something that creates visual images to the reader or audience to enhance enjoyment and remembrance. A mental exercise is quickly performed at each relay of actor and stage to fully enjoy the maximum corpus of zest in the *anansesem*.



The audience, (reader of this story), by choice, could take the place of a faceless narrator by reading aloud to the hearing of others. By so doing, s/he metamorphoses into a 'shareholder' in the narrative by actively divulging the story to another/others who then become the audience.

His/her status as the audience could, however, be maintained by being silent, 'listening' to the 'silent orator' who talks to the subconscious with letters and figures as the eyes take the stead of the ears.

The audience, the second person singular/plural are also drawn into the vortex of the introduction by actively endeavouring to (in the form of answers) find outlets out of whirlpools of eccentric queries, to provide suitable answers either in the negative or the affirmative. It behoves on the orator (in *anansesem*) to change the story if majority of the general answers are in the affirmative (but such are usually not the case), an implication that what is intended to be imparted could not be considered as contribution to knowledge.

## **Structure**

Any member of the audience is a would-be narrator who could take turns in the narration. The audience is a conglomerate of people with diverse ages, religion social status etc. The narrator never forgets the status of some of the audience and accords them due respect by presenting in a manner please the various status to be more appreciative by all. He/she carefully weaves the story within the 'spaces' of the audience, bonding them together as one class, playing on their minds and imaginations, creating suspension and at times admiration or repulsion with the hero or a character, dragging the audience along through each stage of the story.

Play acting is another technique the narrator could adopt at certain stages of the story, especially when it comes to mimicing the hero/heroine or a character in the story. The story

itself has to be woven as an idea to form a meaningful folktale. In the process of ‘weaving,’ so many spaces and passageways have to be crossed. It could transgress from its state of words and songs to a dramatized form. Within the story which is based on mythology, so many boundaries could be passed as with the artistic piece which also visually portrays mythography. So many panels had to be pieced together.

Based on myths, a child is born and rites are performed to usher him/her to the world. At the puberty stage, rites are performed. Mythographically, death, burial and funeral rite are passages that are at times performed as passageways to lead the initiate as does the narrator and the audience who cross and re-cross, leading to the various stages in the folktale as the story slowly unfolds in dramatic but suspensive mood.

The narrator and the audience are not directly involved in the story but could switch from positions to assume a role in the story. The narrator could at times invigorate the audience by cleverly mimicking the hero or a character in the story. At that moment a passage has taken place for the narrator to enter the field of play and crosses back to assume his/her outside position. Swapping of positions does take place as the narrator and audience weave their ways at certain stages of the story.

By attentively listening in suspense, the audience bring themselves into the story by following or premeditating certain stages ahead of the narrator. At such moments the audience conceptually crosses the outside position to the world of the story. The audience could also leave their position as audience to be involved in the act particularly when they join the narrator to sing a song raised by the narrator assuming the role of a character. Such types of songs that are part of the story are known as *anansesem mu nwom*, and are started by the story teller to be joined in by the rest.

## ***Mmoguo***

It is a short song started by one of the audience for the rest to join in as interlude to rejuvenate the *Anansesem*, (Arthur, 2004, p.3). Before the commencement of the *mmoguo*, permission is sought from the story teller with “Agya”( or “ena”) “sɔ wo bɔdua mu.” “Please hold your breath.” The speaker then pauses for the commencement of the musical interlude which s/he (the speaker) joins. At times some of them may stand to dance. Like the *anansesem mu nwom*, - a song or music which forms part of the story, *all* present could dance to the rhythm if they so prefer.

Any member of the audience could raise the *mmoguo* to be joined by the rest including the narrator. The member of audience who raised the *mmoguo* has, at that moment, crossed the boundary or position of audience to be with the narrator.

The inside and outside positions that could be assumed by the narrator and the audience are like the artist and the viewers of the artistic edifice. The inside and outside positions that could be assumed by the viewers of the artistic edifice does not, like the story, necessarily imply that being able to enter and reappear makes it just an inside and outside object. But like the story, the art piece possesses both positions but could be neither of both depending on the viewer.

## **Significance**

Folktales are told as corrective measures and also to educate the youth to live acceptable lives in society. Much as a folktale, *Anansesem*<sup>1</sup> or story- telling plays very active roles in the



transmission of folklore, it further serves as entertainment and recreational venture and also help the memory retention of audience.

As J.H. Nketia notes, folktales could adapt to the environmental change. Storytellers respond to realities of the environment which is constantly changing, but ensure to maintain the stereotypes and the positive and negative aspects of human behaviour which form the cradle around which evolve the central stories and explanations. These realities of the environment are not what are perceived with the physical sense but rather the subjectivity which includes moral ethics, norms and beliefs etc. which also, like time, keeps changing, (Owusu-Sarpong, 1998, p.xv). Changing through crossing of spaces, boundaries and passage. These realities of the environment as well as the philosophical derivations from the folktales are what are perceived only through reality or reasoning. Besides, these Akan folktales and culture are portrayed with representations and techniques which are sensuous but developed from the subconscious rather than what are perceived with the senses. Interchangability between the physical and the conceptual.

Asantes folktales are observed (besides proverbs and maxims) as the most effective system for the propagation of mythology and most aspects of folklore which includes all aspects of culture which is under the custodianship of the head or ohyeɛni who is as well the custodian of ‘boundaries.’

### CHAPTER THREE

## The Genesis of *ɔhyeɛni*<sup>28</sup>

The story continues that the clans that united to form the Asante confederacy were ruled by leaders, eg. Obiri Yeboah (Osei, 1994, p.5). The clans were nomadic and as such had to live basically on the skill of hunting. There were general movements and as such boundaries had to be crossed and re-crossed in the bid of finding rich hunting grounds or for vantage points for trade and commerce. Such movements were apparently led by the hunters who negotiated the sharing of boundaries among themselves. The hunter subsequently became the 'demarcator' of boundaries or the *ɔhyeɛni*-(plural-*ahyeɛni*) as they were joined by their families and others, (Osei 1994, p.2).\*

The *ɔhyeɛni* whose genesis appeared from the politics of boundaries and an opposing source that also has its own dichotomous boundaries encompassing it in a manner that disallows it to be crossed by the former source, thus serving as a 'hardener' in the hybridity of boundaries. The *ɔhyeɛni*'s origin is itself a myth

\*Similar parallel passage leads to another school that claims that the name *ɔhene* is derived from the itchiness of the

leader. *Ne ho ye hene*. Akuffo B.S (1976 p.4). He is so itchy that if you entangle with him you will not feel comfortable, a mighty one as such.

of opposition and contradiction by virtue of these two dissenting stories each of which has its own independent boundaries and spaces that has to be traversed to reach the *ɔhyeɛni*. When the

boundaries of both sources are traversed to be fused together, the *ɔhyeɛni*'s position as being itchy as well as being the owner of boundaries, is well emphasized by virtue of the itchiness one will feel when tediously crossing spaces in-between the boundaries to reach him.

The *ɔhyeɛni* was thus the owner of the land and as such those who later joined his hut(s) or *nnanso*<sup>29</sup> became his subjects as his descendants also became the owners of the boundaries- *ehyee no ye won dea. Won na wɔde ehyee no. Wɔ ye Adehyee*<sup>30</sup> (royals) (Akuffo, 1976, p.5).

Thus as the huts grew into a cottage, village and town, it was headed by the *ohyeɛni* or *ɔhene*. Chieftaincy therefore shares common similarity with hybridity which also thrives on the concept of boundaries. The *ɔhyeɛni* is thus in-between the people who have come to sojourn with him and the 'boundaries' which are owned by him. One does not get to the 'boundaries' except through him. Up to date no one can access any portion of land within the boundary without the *ɔhyeɛni*'s permission.

When the chiefs and their families or clans and their lands came together to form the Asante state, the boundaries of individuals' lands and the political boundaries were all conglomerated. Through wars and conquest, more lands and boundaries were drawn and added to the state. The conquered state was not made to feel as a vassal state but was made to be part of the Asante kingdom.



The new state comes with its culture which could have significant impact on the skills of the Asantes. New myths and boundaries are thus incorporated. Through more wars and conquests, more cultural assimilations and *hybridity* emerged.

However, the boundaries had to be well tended to be sustained since there was the tendency of rebellion from some of the new members. To sustain such volatile boundaries, drastic measures which at times involved violent actions had to be taken to bring the boundaries under control. Even in the act of bringing more boundaries to the fold of the kingdom, a crack in the state resulted due to the stringent arm of the then Otumfuor, Nana Osei Tutu, -controller of the boundaries. This was when the Dwabenhene refused to surrender the booties along with the head of Nana Ntim Gyakari, the King of Denkyira state which was the then master of the Asantes (Osei, 2000, p.65).

Careful measures ought to be taken by maintaining the 'boundaries' of the artistic structure. Lockers and hinges are to be checked to be re-nailed or screwed or if possible, changed periodically to ensure their strength in holding the 'boundaries' together.

The term *chyeeni* later corrupted to become *chene*. The *chene*, as said earlier, is a derivation of boundaries and scientifically, he himself being a by-product of boundaries, transitions from spermatozoon through foetus to the full-fledged form at birth. Many boundaries have been crossed as a result of the parents crossing boundaries of their clans, families and *ntorɔ* to get married.

But to be an *chyeeni*, one ought to cross so many boundaries as said earlier to qualify. For instance, one could be a Bretuo but does not qualify to the throne of any of the Bretuo towns by virtue of the royal system which are but the only passageways leading to any of the qualifications

to become an *ɔhyeɛni*. The only passageway to becoming an *ɔhyeɛni* has more smaller ‘passageways’ tapering, like a funnel, towards the throne. Conversely, at the opposite passage that leads to the ‘exit’ of the throne are numerous passageways each of which, unlike the number of qualifications required for the office, could lead the *ɔhyeɛni* out of office.

To ensure effective governance, further boundaries in the form of rewards and punishments are created for his subordinate chiefs.. Elevation to paramountcy are offered deserving chiefs as reward for their services whilst distoolment is meted on offending chiefs as punishment.

As if by design to fortify his position, the *ɔhyeɛni* applies the division of labour principle which also emerges along with more boundaries which, albeit, possess the influence of cohesion. There is, as a result, the expansion of numerical strength by creating more smaller demarcations. More boundaries are created as more compartments emerge with their respective *ahyeɛfoɔ* or *ahenfo*, -heads. Spaces like *Kuronti*, *Akwamu*, *Gyaase*, *Apesemaka*, *Abrafoɔ* etc are given an *ɔhyeɛni* each with titles like *Kurontheɛni*, *Akwamuhene*, *Gyaasehene*, *Apesemakahene*, *Abrafoɔhene* etc.

These spaces are neither the spaces of the town folk nor that of the chief but a third space which is neither. These *ahyeɛfoɔ* or *ahenfo*, (plural of *ɔhyeɛni* or *ɔhene* respectively), are within

the *Gyaase* which is also within the *Kuronti* which is within the *ɔhyeɛni* in the palace within the community which is also within a paramountcy which is as well within the Golden Stool.

Like the stools, the first miniature is within the second miniature which is within the prototype which is also within the life-size piece exhibited within the museum which is within KNUST Campus within Kumasi within Ashanti Region and so on and so forth to ‘infinity’. Endless compartments and spaces, boundaries within boundaries of boundaries which are within boundaries like the palace ‘boundaries’ which are within the folklore of the Asantes who are within the Ashanti Region of Ghana of West Africa and so forth and so on. Endless boundaries within boundaries ranging in levels of magnanimity.

Another very important boundary, link, passageway, etc, is the *ɔkyeame*, the chief’s linguist, who serves as dual conduit to and from the *ɔhyeɛni* as well as to and from the town folk.

Interestingly the *ɔhyeɛni* is the custodian of culture, and in other words owns the culture, (Akuffo, 1976, p. v). But is it actually so? It may interest the reader to know that he is supposed to be at absolute liberty yet the contrary is the truth as he is saddled and entangled in the entanglements of culture which is, ironically, under his custodianship. He is ironically more of a servant to the culture which is presumably serving his interest. The concept of owing and being owned equals to having nothing! Hybridity in ownership, a space between owning and being owned. Neither and both hold at the same time. The *ɔhyeɛni*, upon all his authority, is saddled with so many dos and don’ts found in the central and the opposite exit-way described above respectively. The dos are his responsibilities some of which are; 1. Ensures the safety of the



town, folks and property. 2. Adjudicates and 3. He ensures the development of the town (Fosu 2005, pp. 27-28).

The don'ts are what are considered taboos and such actions or practices are contrary to the accepted norms, mores and values of the society, (Sarfo, n.d, p.54). One or two of such 'entanglements' could spell the *ɔhyeɛni*'s demise. Below are the said 'passageways' the

*ɔhyeɛni* should avoid as they lead out of the throne;

- a. Seeing a corpse. He is to purify his soul at the event of seeing one.
- b. Defiling his soul-he is to purify his soul once each week on his soul's day.
- c. Touching a woman in her menses or eating food prepared by her. As such there were special men called *osoodofɔ* who prepared the king's meals.
- d. Removing his sandals
- e. Eating or drinking wine in public
- f. Being deformed
- g. Carrying any load
- h. Playing any game in public    i Going to the stool house unaccompanied (Fosu 2005, pp.32-35).

The *ɔhyeɛni*, so saddled with responsibilities and taboos, is living a life of ambivalence, a hybrid sensation of joy and uncertainty, power and fear; and thus always at the boundary of

authority and distoolment. So many boundaries and spaces have to be carefully traversed each day to maintain his position. He is taken on by his subjects or superior (the *ɔmanhene* or the *Otumfuor* in the case of an *ɔmanhene*), if a ‘slip’ occurs at any of the boundaries, (Obeng, 1986, p.46-48). The paradigm of ownership ends at the brinks and any slight slip beyond it could cause a shift resulting in another ‘space.’ A space of drastic change or action, - distoolment, or a fine in any form, for instance, sheep and/or rum for propitiation of the gods and the stools.

If such is the situation, the rhetoric question is put again as, “who then owns the culture? The *ɔhyeɛni* or the townsfolk? Or both? Or neither?” The ambivalence of power and trepidation, owing and being owned, having and losing, living and dying, climbing and falling. All such spaces are nether created by the chief, - the *ɔhyeɛni*, nor the people, but by a third party living in its own space. A space of illusions, disillusions and realities of culture; - a medium of connectedness and disjuncture.

The said spaces of culture, act like the hinges and lockers of the artistic structure of this project which connect and disconnect the panels. Like culture the lockers are at the in- between, spaces and transitions. Removal of one or two could dislodge other panels and subsequently the tumble down of the assemblage. Like culture, the lockers and hinges could be replaced with new ones as they get weaker or ‘outmoded.’

The ambiguity and ambivalence of the spaces lived by the *ɔhyeɛni* weave meanderingly between taboos and privileges, knotting the dos and don’ts, honour and dishonour, power and

vulnerability that bond together all spaces or in-betweens of culture to enhance the power and dignity vested in the *ɔhyeɛni*.

When the *ɔhene*- king dies, one of the royals is selected to succeed him. The heir is thus supported spiritually by the soul(s) of the departed king(s). Therefore, whoever is chosen as chief is referred to as 'Nana' Grandfather, if even he is a child, (Fosu, 2005, p.30). He is considered as the spirit or personification of their ancestors, (Akuffo, 1976, p. 2).

After the death of Nana Osei Kwadwo, a minor by name of Osei Kwame was enstooled to the Golden Stool and a regent appointed for him, (Adubofuor, 2000, p.49). According to Dr. Ellison, Nana Agyemang Prempeh I was nineteen when he ascended the throne as Asantehene in 1888. (Ghana Review International. April, 1999- issue).

The throne or the *ɔhyeɛni*'s title knows no boundary. Irrespective of spaces created by age, wealth or categories of position, the passage to the title transcends all such barriers. Any qualified 'block' or 'compartment' could fit the space reserved for the *ɔhyeɛni*. However the 'block' or 'compartment' might be able to operate efficiently by being strong and mobile enough. It is therefore not advisable to appoint a babe or an old man who will be too frail to preside over the affairs of the town. The said compartments, blocks or specifically the qualification in terms of age could not possibly exceed the said age levels. Neither high nor low but rather an in-between of the set age levels.



In the absence of a chief or the *ɔhyeɛni* of the town the queen mother acts as the captain in times of war, (Fosu, 2005, p. 39) (as did Yaa Asantewaa in 1900). Nana Afia Kobi Sɛɛwaa Ampem is the present queen mother of the Asantes on whose shoulders rest the said responsibility.

The position of the queen mother does not reach the level of the *ɔhyeɛni* but it is not on equal level with the townsfolk. The queen mother is as such an in-between that plays a very contributory role in the administration of the *ɔhyeɛni*. The *ɔhyeɛni* and the *ɔhyeɛmaa* are, as Homi Bhabha would put it, like the verso and recto of the same sheet of paper. Even though the status of the queen mother is subordinate to the king, they play parallel roles towards the development of the town, people and property. Like the overt and converse, the inside and outside, they are at the same opposite edges of the same block, opposite positions that bear no oppositions; they represent the interest of their people and further act as intermediaries between the people and the outside world. They are the custodians of culture and myths all of which are abound with, and proliferate hybridity.

### **Hybridity**

Hybridity, an act of in-betweens, margins, rims, passages and passageways, is a byproduct of boundaries resulting from the existence of compartments, blocks, segments some of which are overlapping, juxtaposing, creating joints, confluences, diverging points, parallels, and crisscrossing passages all of which could be ‘stirred’ together to result in a ‘whirlpool’ of almost fused and ‘confused’ divergences. A whirlpool which, if further ‘disturbed,’ creates incomprehensibilities. A kind of hybridism resulting in complexities and awe similar to the concept of the *Abubumabaa*’s structure and also that of the artistic structure titled “the Ethnic

Centre” described in detail in Chapter Four below. A kind of hybridity which involves everything and nothing eventually; or nothing and everything eventually. Everything because anything could be presented to achieve in-betweens, spaces and boundaries. Nothing because nothing could be identified as predominant, ‘owning’ or ‘owing’ the ‘hybridity.’

Asante folklore consists of so many ‘compartments’ and ‘in-betweens’ that have been imbibed by almost everyone including foreigners. Now Asantes themselves could not be identified as owning the entire culture which has been assimilated by ‘everyone;’ other cultures also being assimilated by Asantes. Everyone owns the folklore but ‘no one’ or individual also owns it, not even the custodian.

The format of presentation of this report which is in the form of Ananse story-telling or folktales is neither a drama nor poetry. An in-between that takes into consideration the compartmentalized format of thesis presentation which include (a) Introduction (b) Review of literary materials (c) Field work review (d) Studio Work Review (e) Analysis and Discussion and (f) Summation, Conclusion and setting of Recommendations.

The story-telling technique applies the narrative style of folktale to wander between the boundaries of the blocks comprising the thesis format. The narrative mode weaves the six parts together employing the communication style of Anansesem to rove about the spaces in between the said components mindful of the academic requirement of lexis and structure to achieve a balanced syntax that appeals to the audience.

The Kumasi city itself from which the kiosk was selected as a medium of hybridity for the exploration of hybridity is it self an icon of hybridity.

There has been inclusion of more but ‘modern boundaries’ in the Asante state by virtue of the spaces of democracy. Regional, districts, constituencies and unit boundaries. Modernism,

eg. the Assembly concept has brought in its wake more demarcations and boundaries and as such more 'hybridity.' Hybridity in authority. Authority of the chief or king, the Regional minister, the District, Municipal or Metropolitan Chief Executive, the Assembly man and the Unit Committee membership. All the 'modern blocks' have brought about more boundaries in the authority hitherto reserved for the chief and elders.

The artistic structure evolved from the gray areas in-between the spaces of the kiosks in Kumasi urban prefecture. The holistic consideration of the said kiosks discovers diverse designs with parallels, commonalities and divergent forms.

When individualistically observed, a kind of uniqueness could be associated with each kiosk. When each kiosk were to be critically analysed, it could be observed that it possesses a quality and certain features which might make it different from a similar type constructed by even the same artisan. Each is in itself a hybrid type- it is neither this nor that. It fits in its own 'space' in-between others of its kind.

The artistic structure is itself an epitome of hybridity comprising of bonds and disjoints. The hybridism further considers the links and disjunctions that manifest the margins, rims and borders of compartments to ensure a conceptual weavings between the expressive medium of painting and sculpture which further fuses with time-histories and the concept of the deities and the spiritual realm which are timeless.

### **Kinship: *Abusua*, *Ntoro* and Inheritance**

Kinship is the connectivity or relatedness of a group of people through blood and sometimes marriage. Such group of people are known in a broader sense as *abusua* (family) within which



is a smaller component also known similarly as *abusua* or lineage which is composed strictly of people with a common blood and ancestry, (Obeng, 1986, p1).

Like the lineage system, kinship is regarded through matrilineal which is the family system considered from the side of the mother due to the myth that the child is formed from the blood of his/her mother (Nana Adubofuor ). The maternal system is subsequently composed of two segments called the *Abusua* (lineage) and the *Nton* (clan) both of which involve blood.

This system demands that all members of one's mother's family are the 'home' or true family of the child. All such family members are supposed to be from the same clan and town. This is so because they are all believed to have one common great ancestress (Obeng, 1986, p1).

### **Abusua**

Abusua or lineage is defined as people who share common blood, ( Obeng, 1986, p1). This is considered true by many other authors, but how true is this claim in the light of the maxim

Se obi repe abusua bi mu ako a, na oko mu awaree," one marries into the family one intends to join. Does this new member share common blood or one ancestry as puts (Obeng, 1986, p1)?

Rattray (1954 p.52), confuses *ntoro* with abusua and *nton* which is not the case. Obeng, notwithstanding, also confuses the Abusua with the clan system by associating it with the names of eight clans which he claims to be seven by combining Bretuo and Agona, Rattray, 1954 p.52).

He however, later attempts to clarify abusua as a subset of clan which is true but why does he refer to clan as abusua, and the same clan being composed of four or five clans? He would however be well concurred by asserting that a clan is *nton* and is consisted of four or five abusua

groups. In this light, one would not be far from right by considering that Obeng does not know the Twi word of clan which is *ntɔn*.

The genesis of the *abusua* or family system, according to Kwame Fosu, is that there lived a man named Abu who was in dire need of money and as such went to a money lender for the required amount. As equilateral security, Abu was required to provide his son to be in servitude till the loan was repaid. The wife of the borrower (Abu) was not in agreement with the agreement and resisted Abu's attempt to allow their son to be in thralldom for the required sum of money. When the sister of Abu got wind of the matter, she asked her own son to act as surety and to be in servitude till Abu could pay back the debt. Later Abu got the amount and went to pay for his nephew to be released. Abu later became very rich but before his death he willed all his estates to his nephew who helped him in time of trouble. The second reason being that, his wife might have involved in adultery the issue of which was the son who was thus prevented from being a 'ransom' for 'somebody.'

Some people admired Abu's action and decided to emulate him with the idea that it is the woman who truly knew the father of her son. *Sua*, which is the *twi* word for the act of emulation was added as suffix to the name of Abu to be Abu-*sua*, emulation of Abu. This practice was taken up by many till it was adopted as a culture.

Fosu continues with another seemingly more plausible story which goes that the Akans had a rich and mighty king whose name was Abu. He was so wise that when he willed his property to his nephew, his subjects thought he might have had a good reason for doing that and began to follow his example which, like the former story led to 'Abu- "*sua*,"' imitation of Abu, (Fosu, 2005, p.12).

Whether either of the two stories were the truth or that both did take place, or neither was true, the idea that succession was effected at the maternal side of kinship was espoused. The *Abusua* -lineage, considered from the maternal side or as matrilineal, has thus been a memorabilia since time immemorial.

The abusua is a group in-between individuals and the clan system which manifests itself in every town as said earlier. *Abusua-panin* is the title of the head of the *abusua* which on no account, should be based on paternal lineage. The head of the abusua is also an '*ɔhyeɛni*' who links the *abusua* to the substantive *ɔhyeɛni* of the entire town, but since he heads a small segment of the clan, though an *ɔhyeɛni*, he is of less authority. He is not an ordinary person in the town by virtue of his status. He holds the title of *abusuapanin* which is in-between the ordinary members of the *abusua* and the *ɔhyeɛni* of the clan, (who is also in-between the *abusuapanin* and the *ɔhyeɛni* of the town).

*Abusua te sɛ kwaɛɛ*, the family is synonymous with a forest, which, from afar, is seen as a block, but various spaces surface when one draws close by. There are many spaces, groupings, linkages, compartments, disintegrations and cohesion in the composition of the Asante kinship. Even among siblings may be 'spaces' created by their mother being married to different husbands at different times. Though such children are siblings they are known as *mma-mma*, -siblings from one mother but different fathers. Conversely children from a polygamous father or different mothers but one father are also known as *agya-mma*.



There are other blocks like *nsewnom*-the in-laws, *wɔfaaseɔnom*- nephews and nieces, *nkontafoɔ*-brothers-in-law, *nananom*-grandchildren, etc that compose the family. Some are not often considered but like the concourse of a building which is neither part of the rooms nor kitchen and lavatory but plays very effective role, such distant relations also play very important roles in the family. The family is composed of linkages and disjoints which are respectively created through marriage and divorce. New members join through births whilst others through deaths are detached creating a wider perpetual vacuum that could never be filled nor eroded from memory and the history of the kinsmen.

Among the kinship are various ‘circles’ created by virtue of political, religious, social or any other affiliations. Unless one draws near the family to be told, hardly would the extent of its segmentations be noticed. Socially their status may differ in terms of academic, wealth, poverty, fame or notoriety. Even among each *Royal Abusua* may be people who are more royal than others. This is due to hybridism in the family which involves members with ‘foreign blood’ some of which may even be half-casts.

Even among the lineage or ‘true’ kinsmen could be traces of difference in dialect owing to the geographical location of the individual or group of people. For instance, a brother staying in *Atwima* may speak in a dialect slightly differing from his brother or sister staying at the *Sekyere* area, (Osei. 2000, p2).

Within the culture are segments like language and rules which guide the Akans. Inbetween the language and rules (consisting of by-laws, norms mores and values) which identify the Akans is the clan system which has the two main groupings as patrilineal and matrilineal from which emerge the *Ntorɔ* and *Nɛn*.

The *ntorɔ* and *Ntɔn* which are not as ‘visible’ as the paternal and maternal are concepts within the kinship which is in-between the Akan culture and the entire Akan membership. Within the culture are segments like language and rules which guide the Akans. In-between the language and rules (consisting of by-laws, norms mores and values) which identify the Akans is the clan system which has the two main groupings as *Ntorɔ* and *Ntɔn*.

Through marriage, new members, with their *ntɔn* or *ntorɔ*, join the abusua without leaving behind their ‘identity’. In the case of a woman, she comes with the taboos of her father to add to that of her husband which might be different from that of her father’s. A joint that could also be disjointed through divorce. If the man were to be a polygamist with children from one or two divorcees, the children (with his *ntɔn*), might also be leaving with their mothers to join other marriages and *ntorɔ* of the new husbands without losing their identity howbeit adulterated. Such unifications, mergers, adulterations, transitions and transformation has become the order of the day by virtue of marriage and divorce as well as the advent of globalization, universalization, unionization and any available ‘tions.’

Now there is no ‘pure’ or unadulterated *Abusua*-lineage, *ntɔn*-clan or *ntorɔ*- ‘soul’ as new ‘hybrid’ members join or leave.

## *Ntorɔ*

*Ntorɔ* is the name given to the spirit or soul of the father. The father is believed to transmit the soul or *Ntorɔ* to the child. The lineage thus traced through the father is termed as patrilineal. This is so, as a child is the result of the fertilization of the ovum which is the blood of the woman by the sperm of the father, (Arthur, 2003 p.1, Nkansah-Kyeremateng, 2001 p.33).

Asantes have the belief that the child is protected by the spirit of the father, (Kantanka, p.59). This is further reinforced with the assertion that, the children are not the only ones to abhor the taboos of their father but as the wife is also protected by the spirit of the husband, the wife also considers the taboos of the husband as hers, ( Arthur, 2003, p. 8). Arthur further states that the woman does not dare to slap the man nor indulge in sexual promiscuity the result of which may be catastrophic at the period of child delivery (Arthur, 2003, p. 8).. Rattray makes a similar claim but calls the man's *ntorɔ* as *ntɔn* of the man, (Rattray, 1954, p.52).

I here impugn Rattray as he confuses *ntɔn* which is the maternal lineage with *ntorɔ*. He wrongly continues to assert that the spirit is believed to inhibit the *ntɔn*. Rattray further erroneously refers to *ntɔn* as *ɔbosom*<sup>31</sup> (Rattray, 1954 p.154).

*Ntorɔ* is the soul of the man or father as asserted by (Kantanka, n. d. p.59). The 'okra' or soul of a father could cause the death of a child when offended, (Osei, 2000, p. 4). Because the



*ntorɔ* is considered to possess spirit, a day is set aside when the man and the children bath or purify their particular spirit. The said act of purification is known as *akradwareɛ*.<sup>32</sup> (Osei, 2000, p. 4). Within the *ntorɔ* are passages demarcating twelve compartments or divisions, (Kantanka, n.d., p.59). They have their days of purification or soul days, taboos and totems as tabulated on the next page.

Because the child bears the *ntorɔ* of his father, certain names are given to identify the type of *ntorɔ* that protects the child e.g. Pra, Siaw, Adu, Apraku, Asare, Addo, Amankwa, Obeng, Sarfo, Kwaakye, Bonsu, Tutu, Kusi, Afram, Afari, Minta, Gyedu, Agyei, Boakye, etc. (Kantanka, n.d. p. 77). The *ntorɔ*, as just one aspect of the Asante folklore, is described below with each *ntorɔ*'s taboos, totems and soul day.

### **Inheritance: Maternal and Paternal**

At the event of death, the next younger sibling succeeds the dead. A male succeeds a male and females do likewise. However it is permissible for a senior to inherit the younger if there is none qualified to do so. Similarly a female or male could succeed the opposite sex if there is no

*Ntorɔ*: Soul Days, Taboos and Totems

<i>Ntorɔ</i>	Soul Day	Taboo	Totem
Bosompɔra	Wednesday	White fowl, water yam and <i>Pobire</i> ( a kind of black snail)	Crocodile
Bosomtwe	Sunday	Monkey <i>ɔtwe</i>	Antelope
Bosommuru	Tuesday	Tortoise Dancing on Tuesdays	Python Mouse Cattle
Bosompo/Nketia	Tuesday	Tortoise Dog	Hippopotamus
Bosom- Dwerɛbe	Wednesday	Spotted animals	Lion
Bosomakɔm	Tuesday	Tuesday palm-wine	Tortoise Dog
Bosomafi	Friday	<i>ɔmampam</i> water yam	Goat
Bosomayensu	Friday	White fowl Antelope Black snail	Hog
Bosomakonsi	Tuesday	Tuesday palm wine	Tortoise

1.

2.

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8.

Bosomsika	Friday	Mixture of food	Monitor Lizard <i>ɔmampam</i>
bosomafram	Saturday	Goat Antelope	crocodile
Bosomkrante	Thursday	Ape Carcass	Python

9.

10.

11.

12.

Adapted from Arthur (2003 p.9).

qualified member of the same sex as the deceased. In terms of succession to stools, most Asante stools are ascended matrilineally through the abusua system (Osei 2000, p.4). Obeng explains that sex generation and age are stressed in the event of inheritance to stools. The matrilineal or nephew inheritance is not an automatic issue. When all the brothers of the deceased, in the order of age are exhausted, the male sons of the female members of the mother's family are considered in the same order. After that a female could be considered, (Obeng, 1986, p.8).



At the event of a king's death, similar process is followed, the deceased king is inherited by a sibling from the same womb as the deceased. In the absence of a befitting successor among the sibling, the son of the dead king's sister (from the same mother) is then chosen as the heir. (Obeng, 1986, p.8).

Osei Kwadwo, however, states that there are other stools inherited paternally or through the *ntorɔ* system. It is believed that the occupants of such stools have specific functions and qualities that are passed on from the father to the son but not to the nephew, therefore the saying that *ɔkɔɔ nwo anoma*, like father like son. Some of the patrilineal stools are the Bantama stool created by Nana Osei Tutu to serve as the *Kurontire* or head of town, to lead wars (Osei, 2000, p. 4), and others *Ntumpankafo*, *Twafoɔ*, *Akwamu*, *Gyaase*, *Kyidom* etc.

### **‘Hybrid’ Inheritance**

There are other stools created for men and women alike; that is, there are certain stools classified according to the sex of the user, (Sarpong, 1971, p.17). For instance, the *nkɔsɔɔ* stool created by Nana Opoku Ware II is a typical example, (Asante, 2000, p.4). However, after commanding the individual states to create the said stools, the first occupant by name of Nana Nkwantabisa was assured by the Asantehene that any of his (Nana Nkwantabisa's) family could be enthroned as *Nkɔsɔɔhɔne*, (Osei, 2000, p.6). This is a system of inheritance that is neither through the matrilineal nor the patrilineal. It is a 'bisexual' stool that has neither connection nor

link with kinship. It occupies no space in the kinship system but could involve both patrilineal and matrilineal.

It is also a neutral or 'third space' that has nothing at all to do with kinship. It could be created for or inherited by anybody from any lineage. It is used to honour those who have played very meaningful roles towards the development of the community or town, (Osei, 2000, p.6). Since there are no 'wide spaces' or boundaries to cross for the stool, even a foreigner could ascend the *Nkɔsɔɔ* Stool. A sort of bisexual stool that has many 'passages' leading to and from it.

### **Hibridity and kinship**

The *abusua* system does not imply that all members come from the same town. A clan is consisting of various 'blocks' or 'compartments' of separate families. Different 'boundaries' or the 'blocks' therefore come together to compose the clan system. These compartments sometimes overlap due to inter-marriages, divorces and remarrying after the collapse of another marriage. Due to that the clan system, though could be seen as orderly co-existence of more 'boundaries,' the situation is more fickle and 'volatile' than it seems.

This is as a result that many Asantes could inherit both maternally and paternally. This is as a result of inter-ethnic marriages which breed 'cross-borders' in terms of kinship. For instance, virtually all tribes in the northern part and the Volta Region of Ghana practice paternal inheritance, and any marriage contracted between any of them is likely to result in the children possessing dual heritage.

When the male members that practice paternal inheritance marry an Akan woman, the child is entitled to inherit the father as well as well as the mother. When many members with such

dual lineages involve in inter and intra-clan marriages, what will be said of the ‘hybridity’ of such ‘hybrity?’

It will not be a surprise if it comes to light that a large percentage of Asantes with dual heritages have managed to cross over with their ‘block’ of families to overlap, merge, or get diffused with other blocks of families most of which are possessing similar ‘dual hybridity.’ There is a trite among the Asantes which states *Se obi repe abusua bi mu akɔ a, na ɔkɔ mu awareɛ*, (one marries into a family he/she intends to join). Implying one automatically becomes a member of the spouse’s family. Owing to that there are at present myriads of Asantes that could be said of as ‘hybrids,’ in terms of kinship.

Lines, cracks and passages therefore do exist but perceptible only to insiders. Lineage segregations and vilification of a block of family do exist particularly among the family of royals. Such act of affront and bigotry are premeditatively carried out by certain royals to prevent non-royals especially the *ɔdonkɔ* -(slave), from claiming a right in the family let alone the idea of ascending the throne. This occurs probably in all palaces and around the smaller stools like ‘Kurontihene,’ ‘Gyaasehene,’ ‘Akyeamehene,’ ‘Kyidomhene,’ ‘Apesemakahene,’ etc.

Care is therefore taken to prevent marriage between a royal and a slave. But when the inevitable could no be prevented and such a marriage is contracted, it becomes a paradigmatic point of departure which turns the status of the ‘*ɔdonkɔ*’ to become a royal. As said earlier, the Akan saying *Se obi repe abusua bimu ajo a, na oko mu awareɛ*, there and then, arrises a paradigm shift in the ‘passageway’ of the family.

Unlike other forms of hybridity that could compete independently as an entity, that in relation with kinship does not possess such liberty as ‘isolation,’ due to the structure and system of Asante



cultural kinship. Kinship is not, 'as an enabling part of the other as the recto and verso of a sheet of paper,' as Homi Bhabha, would have put it, which is observed as advocacy of wholeness. It is akin to a system where are many passages leading to a divergent point without the point being considered as the end result of the merger but as a new entity and entry point. A new entity which could, if needs be, become a diverging point for other more or less passages.

It is an entity by itself but not isolated but rather links with the rest like the artistic structure of this project. Each part or panel has an individual but collective role to play by linking with the rest of the parts. Taking the ceiling for instance, it has all the panels leading to it. Without the panels it cannot stand; but it is not the end result of the panels but a part by itself which covers the top parts of the panel and as well acts as the link from which other parts of all the panels do descend to be finally supported by the base. Though the ceiling is an entity it does not live in isolation but as a link which fully completes the art piece.

Such does marriage, a 'tool' of kingship, perform 'bonding' duties in the family. One marries into a family and becomes an in-law to the parents and their siblings. Being an in-law is not the end result of the great grand -parent giving birth to the grand -parents who in turn gave birth to the parents of the spouses and thus the subsequent outcome of the marriage. It was not a premeditation by the grand-parents of both families to have the said couple as their future in-laws but by providence so has it been. Any body at all could be a spouse in place of each of the couple. The marriage is thus, not an end result, but the beginning of a new block of family and as wells being a bond between the two families. A link and continuity in the affairs of the two families is here created.

Yet they are a new set of entity with a new name of *Asew*, in-law or *nsewnom*, in-laws, but not in seclusion from the entire family as they are expected to play their effective roles in appropriate times, especially at the event of deaths and funerals. The family was not made for

the two of them to specifically get married but providence has brought them together as conduit for their respective families. Like reading between the lines to find which was neither the lines nor the scripts. A new meaning which might not have been intended. This meaning also has the potential of leading to something else, as would the couple to the family.

By the said marriage the status of either or both families may alter in accordance with the royal status of their new in-law. Any child from such a royal marriage becomes a royal and could become an *ohyeeɛni- ɔhene*, or *ohemaa*. For instance, when the Asantes were under the subjugation of Denkyira, Osei Tutu was sent to serve at the palace of Boamponsem. He impregnated the sister of Boamponsem who gave birth to Ntim Gyakari who became the next king after Boamponsem. Though Osei Tutu was then a slave, because Bansuaa was a royal, their child whose lineage was traced through the maternal system was also a royal.

### **A ‘Third Space’: The ‘Clanless’ Clan**

There however a ‘third space’ which is neither ‘this’ nor ‘that.’ A child born from the different clans that of the father and mother, is neither one nor the other but a merger or diffusion of both. The child is therefore a newly created space. An in-between the *ntorɔ* of the father and the *ntɔn* of the mother. A hybrid member of the family which culture unifies with the lineage of the mother who accepts the already ‘hybrid space’ to be a new member of the mother’s clan to carry out the process of continuity in ‘hybridity.’ Even the ‘baton bearer’ is thus a hybrid product in the process of transmitting the culture of clan system.

Another form of hybrid ‘baton bearers’ who seem to be fully immersed in the pool of hybridity are the motherless/fatherless kinsmen. Like any of the ethnicities globally, the fatherless

or bastards could not be disowned by their Asante kinsmen. Such are those born premaritally and rejected by the supposed fathers. But the highest form, as I put it, is the ‘hybridity’ of possessing neither father nor mother. Do such ones possess *ntorɔ* or *ntɔn*? These are those who do not possess nor are identified with neither the *ntorɔ* nor the *ntɔn*. These occupy what Homi Bhabha would call the third space. “... of elements that are *neither the One* (unitary working class) *nor the Other* (the politics of gender) *but something else besides*, which contests the terms and territories of both. (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 18-28).

Bhabha may safely position them at ‘the third space’ but my *aberphoh* theory would rather place them at the “vacuum.” They have no space to occupy. Such breeds, mostly located at the Children’s Homes and orphanages, eventually emerge to find spaces to fill by joining families through marriage.

Such calibre of membership has no specific ‘space’ to be fixed as it had not been anticipated by the progenitors. No space or portion had been reserved for such kinsmen and it’s high time we started creating one, at least in the academic sense.

But the rhetoric question is “can such a catastrophe befall Art?” Art, no matter the form or situation, occupies a space. No part of the artistic project could be ‘disowned. ‘The facial ‘boards’ of the project has no special position in the project yet they play silent but important roles in enhancing the beauty and roofing of the structure. They are neither made to support the panels nor the ceiling but play connectivity roles of linking the structure holistically as a block, as do the orphans in the creation of kinship in whatever family they marry into. What clan are children of an ‘orphanage lady’ to join? What is the *ntorɔ* of a father from an orphanage? As more and more such ‘kinsmen’ join the family, and no remedial scheme put in place, the more certain is the natural death of the kinship concept. One thing for certain is that the *ntorɔ* and *ntɔn* concepts are gradually dying their natural death as few of the youth who are the ‘baton’ bearers to the next generation



even bother to ask their parents what *ntɔn* or *ntorɔ* they (the youth) are born into. ‘Holes’ are continuously being punched in the set up as death randomly picks his fair or foul share which include those who know their *ntɔn* and *ntorɔ* and could transmit to their progenies. If such trend persists, I can vouchsafe that the kinship concept would be a myth, mayhap excluding the abusua, which has the potential of longer life but is actually being ‘narrowed’ of late.

Asantes, who are part of the eight clans of the Akans, consider themselves as strangers crossing to another world through death. There is another realm which is the continuation of this world, (Arthur, 2003, p. 46). It is therefore believed that there is indeed live after death. (The Book of Mormons, Alma 40:11-14 p.308). It is also said that man is believed to have come from ‘*Asamando*,’ the ancestral world, (Osei, 2004, p.132). They believe to be living inbetween the period of birth- arrival from the underworld, and the time of death- the period of departure to the world of ancestors. They cross boundaries at birth, cross more boundaries through different stages in life and cross to the underworld to be re-born. The vicious circle of boundaries and transitions continues on and on.

The vicious circle that has sustained the clan till now is crossing a space of tempestuous terrain and if it continues in like fashion, the *ntorɔ/ntɔn* or kinship, even the clan system, might be a history.

### **Rites of Passage**

Rattray asserts that the ‘Rites de Passage’ translated as ‘Rites of Passage’ was coined by M. Arnold Van Gennep in his work so titled to imply the types of rites performed by “certain primitive people.” Their rites in connection of “passing through a portal or crossing over a threshold; formalities in dealing with strangers; rites in connexion with adoption, initiation; with

the changes of the seasons of the year; and lastly, rites practiced at birth, puberty, marriage, and death.”

It is not just a collection of rites but then with the express objective of not only proving the sequence but also the bond between each, (Rattray, 1954, p. 48). The cardinal rituals, as puts Van Gennep, are that pertaining to the various stages from the entry to the exit of mans life on the material world, (Rattray, 1954, p. 48).

The rites of passage which play eminent role in the folklore of the Akans could be categorized into four stages. (1) Birth (2) Puberty (3) Marriage and (4) Death,. (Rattray, 1954, p.48). All these stages in life are not the beginning or ending but in-betweens which link each stage to the next. The rites are also not the stages or the next stages but rather performances that usher the former stage to the new. They are more of connexions than the stages in life.

Starting with birth, it is a transitional period which I would prefer to state as in-between the period of mating when the woman have ovulated, to the life as a human. As proved by science, the Asantes believe that conception results from the fertilization of the ovum by the male's spermatozoon. The child is therefore associated, as earlier said, with the *ntorɔ* of the father. (Nkansa – Kyeramateng, 2001, p. 33).

This assertion is reinforced by Rattray (1954, p.52) who further states that the wife also adopts the man's *ntorɔ* after marriage but the performance of certain rites pertaining to the *ntorɔ* actually commences after conception. Birth takes place after nine months of conception.

After successfully delivery the child is welcomed as new member of the family. The child is neither the mother nor the father but observed as in-between, them. The child has crossed a portal from the father to link the space in-between the man and woman. At birth the child crosses over

(through his/her mother) from the spiritual or underworld of the ancestors to the portal of this material world of more spaces, passages and boundaries some of which could link and/or unlink him/her.

### **Naming Ceremony**

Naming ceremony is the rites performed for the child on the eighth day after birth., Kantanka, n. d., p. 75). It is among the three obligations of the parent to the child. The others are puberty and marriage, (Arthur, 2003, p.16). It is a rite performed between the period of birth and that of living a living being.

Custom demands that the sister of the father, the child's aunt, is the one usually delegated to name the child, (Arthur, 2003, p.21). She crosses over the threshold of her house to that of the house of the mother of the child, crosses the passageway to where family and friends are gathered. She receives the baby from her mother and puts it on her lap, covers the child with white cloth and then gives the child the supposed name; for example "from now onwards the name by which you would be known is *Kofi Obeng* or *Akosua Tiwah*. She then adds "*εna anaa agya, ɔkox*". She says this as a sign of pity probably for the problem ahead in the nurturing of the baby to adulthood. This is in anticipation to the tribulations the parents would be meeting in bringing up the child. Anticipation of the 'ragged surfaces', 'cracks' and myriads of 'spaces' to cross to properly nature the child through puberty to adulthood.



With the index finger she dips wine to the tongue of the babe three times saying at the end of each session, “Kofi Obeng or Akosua Tiwaa, sɛ wose nsa a, nsa.” It should be wine and nothing else if so you say.

The same process is repeated but this time with water as she says, “Kofi Obeng or Akosua Tiwaa, sɛ wose nsuo a, nsuo;” if you mention water, water should it be. This indicates truthfulness which is one of the cardinal principles of the Akans. She then dips *adwera*,<sup>34</sup> (a type of plant) into water and sprinkles on the baby. This, like the previous ritual, is repeated for the third time, (Arthur, 2003, p.21). This probably is used to clean and ward of any ‘evil eye’ that has seen and planned evil against the baby.

She requests long life for the baby. She then requests happy marriage for the parents of the child. A gun or cutlass is shoved into the hand of the baby if he were a male. On the other hand a basket is used to cover her in three continuous motions if she were a female. This is done to ward of laziness from the baby. She should work hard to be successful in life and to be able to marry and give birth to a baby as done to it.

After that she presents what was brought for the baby as mentioned above. After her presentation to the child, the one after who the baby was named offers his/her presents to be followed by all that have something to offer, (Dankwa, 1988, p.10) asserts that a gift of golden ring is worn on the babe’s finger as part of the naming ceremony, but I feel it is not obligatory. Not all families could afford a golden ring.

Through initiation of naming ceremony, the myth of possessing the qualities of a living or deceased family member or friend is portrayed as the name is attached to the child as an identity, a union of the tangible and the conceptual. The barrier of being ‘nobody’- nameless, is traversed

through the ceremony. Further boundaries are crossed at the puberty stage when certain rituals based through to the period of marriage.

### **Marriage/ Matrimony**

Marriage is a transition from spinsterhood/bachelorhood to marital life. Before the “boundary” is crossed, a rite or ceremony is performed as symbolism to usher both bride/bridegroom into the ‘new world’ of marriage.

A boundary is crossed not by the couple alone but the entire members of both families as the marriage now acts as link to both families. More ‘hybridities’ occur as each member crosses over to join the other family. This ‘hybridity’ or ‘crossing of boundaries’ do not involve only the humans but the entire dory rate. It is ‘broken’ to reach every one of the bride’s family. This may include money, drinks, jewellery and clothing; in short more crossovers and transitions as the family apportions the dowry rate accordingly.

But whatever comes from the marriage goes to the family of the bride. In other words, the issue, which are children, do not belong to the man and his family but that of the woman. Any child that results from the marriage is therefore a member of the mother’s family. S/he will join the family abusua or clan of the mother.

### **Death**

Death, according to Asantes, is a transitional period. It is a journey to another realm which is the continuation of this world, (Arthur, 2003 p. 46). It is thus a journey in-between the material and the metaphysical. It is a common knowledge therefore, that there is indeed life after death.

(The Book of Mormons, Alma 40:11-14 p.308). It is also said that man is believed to have come from *Asamando*, the ancestral world, (Osei, 2004, p.132). Hence the saying “*deɛ ekuu me maa me firii Asamando baeɛ ne...*”, then s/he mentions what that thing is. This happens when s/he hears or sees something s/he does not like. *Asamando*, then, is the implied destination from where one returns to be reborn at a later period. When one dies s/he is believed to be travelling back to the ancestral world. Ostensibly, someone claimed that “the fear of death is the fear of life,” (Kavanaugh, 1972, p.41). One is living as a result of death from *Asamando*. One continues to live in *Asamando* after death. To be afraid of death is to fear living in *Asamando* and to be reborn.

Such is the philosophy of the Asantes as regards the continuum of life. A reincarnation-recycling of life –*Nea ekuu me Asamando...* and also ...*Ne maame a ɔwɔ Asamando*, (Arthur, 2003 p. 28). You are born from *Asamando*, and dies to leave for the same place to be reborn. Everything is in a flux – and cyclical. Life man, plant etc

Death is categorized into two main groups by Arthur, (2003, p. 46). The first is what is termed “natural death.” When one dies a natural death and is given water on the moribund before final departure, s/he is said to have died a sort of death known as “*abodwuwuo*,” meaning death of relief. (Fosu, 2005, p.96). If one dies from sickness or on his bed, he is believed to have died naturally or honourably.

But other researchers have it that there are more than four types of death, namely; *atɔfo wuo*, *apranaa*, or *Asaase wosoɔ wuo*; *abayisem ne adutoɔ*; *nsramu-wuo*; and *owu pa*, (Fosu,



2005 pp.93-95). But summing up all the four, I discovered that apart from death from old age or sickness which is considered *owu pa*, a natural death, there is the *nsramu-wuo*, which is death at battle field which is also *owu pa*. The rest fall under *atɔfowuo*. I would consequently conclude that there are two categories of death.

The *atɔfowuo* is described as death of dishonour. This type of death is not entertained for fear of further recurrence. Until recently no funeral rites were performed after burial. Their souls therefore do not qualify to be venerated as ancestor. The first type is given a befitting funeral ceremony according to the status of the deceased, (Fosu, 2005, pp.93-95). And the soul venerated.

### **The Soul**

The body of a living being is composed of the flesh and a metaphysical element known as 'Okra' soul. It continues to exist after the death of the body. It is the immortal aspect of the body. (Osei, 2000, p.4). The Okra is the manipulator of the body and is responsible for its successes or failures. It is the spiritual aspect of the body which emanates from it after death to become *ɔsaman*.

It is neither the physical body nor the spiritual aspect that lives after death- the *ɔsaman*.

The spirit or *saman* of a person who meets a premature death through accident, suicide or homicide becomes *saman twentwen*,<sup>34</sup> the *ɔsaman* who is waiting and waiting till his actual time ordained by the creator to leave this world.

Some souls are considered greater than others. For instance the soul of a King as puts Rattray is deemed more powerful than the almost negligible soul of a slave, (Rattray, 1954, p.2). This is an indication that all souls of men are not of equal importance. Even among the Kings some are greater than others. “*Ahenfo kyinieɛ, ebi deda ebi akyi.*”

Among the Asantes is the belief that humans are not the only creature endowed with souls that survive after death. Animals, mountains and plants are also endowed with souls, (Fosu, 2005, p.64). Nketiah also confirms this assertion by further naming some of the animals that possess souls as elephants, rhinoceros, *kwaduo*, *ɔtentɛ*, *anaa satare*<sup>35</sup> etc, (Nketia 1978, p.8).

Any hunter that kills one of the said games has to perform certain rites of fortifications against haunting and harassments from the souls of such games, (Fosu, 2005 p.64). The statuses of the souls of animals are not on equal level. Bigger animals like the elephant or the buffalo are not of equal souls as rats or grass cutters. In fact certain animals, like some trees, are not considered to have souls. Humans and animals are not the only creatures that have souls but few trees also have souls, (Rattray, 1954, p.2).

Due to the role the soul plays in the myths of the Asantes, it is at times used to clarify certain points or claims; e.g. “*Akokɔ kra ne obirekuo deɛ nse,*” literally, implying that the lives of the fowls reared at homes are not on equal risks as those living wildly in the bush, manifests itself in their daily communications and proverbs.

## Proverbs

A proverb or adage is composed of a word or group of words whose meanings are not easily fathomed. They are not understood as they are nor from their literal implications. A proverb is understood in a similar situation as “reading between the lines,” which is ironically a proverb by itself. The meaning is neither the ‘words’ nor the ‘lines on which stand the words’, but is rather located in-between the spaces created.

Proverbs are believed to be wise sayings handed down from earlier generations. Proverbs are not taken literary or on the surface value but considered beyond that to unearth the philosophical underpinnings. In spite of the variations in their origin, proverbs are not limited to any specific ethnicity but could be applicable to any ethnic group or individual globally.

Proverbs are intricately woven wise speeches. Nkansa- Kyeremateng describes it as the diamond among words or salt, sugar or onion that improves on the taste of food. Proverbs could be equated with spices without which the broth would be less tasty. (Nkansa- Kyeremateng, 2004 preface). It is used to simplify lengthy sentences whilst clearly bringing out the meaning. In Akan one that usually employs proverbs in his speeches to drive home his point is considered very wise. This is manifest in their maxims one of which is “*ɔba*

*nyansafoɔ yebu no bɛ na yenka n’asem*” translated as “a word to the wise is enough.” It is also a yardstick with which one’s level of intellect could be measured, (Nkansa- Kyeremateng, 2004 preface).



There are various functions of proverbs but for the purpose of this research only the most salient ones are selected and unelaborated as follows.

1) Correction (2) Guidance (3) Commendation (4) Insinuations (5) Reproach (6)

Inculcation of the belief in (i) The Creator (ii) The spirits and deities and (iv) life after death.

The Asantes have the tradition of telling folktales and proverbs among themselves and especially to the young after taking their supper in the evening or at night and more often beside or around a burning fire.

Proverb telling could also be in a debate-like fashion between two competitors, the winner contested by another till one is declared champion at last.

### **The Visual forms of Hybridity and mythography in Asante Traditional Kinship**

The Asante folklore is a conglomerate of diverse forms of hybridity as already demonstrated. Parallels could also be drawn with the practical aspect of the project. Like the Golden Stool and the Asante Kingdom, the artistic structure is borne as a symbol of unification of different clans, views, and 'authorities', - boundaries and passages linked to represent a metaphor of parallelism, diversity and tolerance in the face of skirmishes and dissension.

Through the legend of the Golden Stool, the structure is employed as an icon of unity to inflect on the concourse of the Asante clans. When the Golden Stool is taken away, disintegration occurs, as the unity and Strength of the Asantes is believed to have been taken away, (Buah, 1967, p.112). When this 'Union of Clans' is collapsed or taken away, all the paintings depicting the unity and mythology of the clans that explore hybridity and mythography go with it.

Within the unitary authority of the Golden Stool are other stools arraigned in order of authority as an Asante would say *Ahenfo kyinieɛ, ebi didi ebi akyi*. Even among the umbrella of chiefs, some are greater than others. There are other stools that owe allegiance to the Golden Stool which are the *Amanhene, ahenfo* and *Adikro* in the descending order. Therefore within the structure are smaller ones which are within the inner perimeters of their superiors to denote the hierarchical order of stools owing allegiance to the Golden Stool. In the form of a pyramid, (the apex of which is the Golden Stool), so many passages lead downwards, spreading at each different intersection and multiplying as they draw close to the base, finally settling on the base as one body with one foundation.

On the surfaces of the project are the Totems and mythologies of the eight ethnicities that united to compose the formidable Asante Kingdom. The ideas for these paintings mostly emanated from the art forms of Asantes each of which possessing branches as the intersections of the analogy with the pyramid.

Asante art forms are laden with their myths, some of which visually portray mythology, especially those in connection with their totems. These were studied as the basis from which art works were recreated in the form of paintings on sculptural structures. Asantes visually explore hybridity and mythography through language and art. The prevalent aspect of language with which mythology is explored is proverbs and poetry. The themes for the art forms which are mostly based on proverbs depict the mythological aspects of Asante folklore.

Through proverbs, the visual and performing art forms of the Asantes are laden with their myths some of which are in cast brass, gold weight, and images that top court officials for example, linguists' staffs. Through the study of these art forms which are Drumming, Music and Dance, Painting, Sculpture, Bead making, Cire Perdue -Metal Casting, Pottery, Textiles, Black

Smithing and Goldsmithing evolved the mythological concepts adapted and recreated in the form of paintings on the artistic structures.

From the study of these art forms evolved the ideas regarding the mythological concepts with which the *aberphoh* technique was employed to depict paintings to fulfil the goal of visually exploring hybridity and mythography with folklore and the Kumasi kiosk.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### KUMASI KIOSK CULTURE AND URBAN MYTHOGRAPHY.

#### **Kumasi** <sup>36</sup>

Kumasi, the seat of government and the capital city of the Ashanti Region was formerly known as Kwaman, (Ward, 1937, p.40). It is believed that Oti Akenten who moved from Amansie bought the place from Nana Adwoa Nkrawire and established the town of Kwaman. Another oral tradition has it that the land was bought by Koba Amanfi from Aberewa Yeebetuo, (Adubofuor, 2000, p.10).

There is a sort of discrepancy between these two assertions in between which, or peradventure, their addition or the subtraction of one, might however, be the undisputed idea that



it was bought from a certain old woman. Therefore the origin of Kumasi city as a medium for establishing hybridity is itself of doubtful circumstances that could sway it to either side or be neither depending on the judgement of the critic.

History has it that Kumasi was sited at the area currently occupied by Adum extending to Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital and then to the Ministries and the Post Office including the Prisons, (Osei, 2004 p.115). Osei Kwadwo continues that the first ruler was Kobia Amanfi of the *ɔyoko* clan. He was succeeded by Nana Oti Akenten, his nephew. Oti Akenten was succeeded by Nana Obiri Yeboah

A similar 'hybrid' circumstance surrounding the changing of the name from Kwaman to Kumasi asserts that Obiri Yeboah was succeeded by his nephew Osei Tutu I who, with the assistance of Okomfo Anokye changed the name of Kwaman to Kumasi through the legend of the 'kum' tree that could not survive at **Bankafo**<sup>37</sup> (Osei, 2004, p.116).

Another researcher names **Agyaase**<sup>38</sup> as the former name of Kumawu, (Adubofuor, 2000 p.17). Similar 'hybrid' circumstance also affected the contender for the seat of governance. Interestingly, one author brings in another 'block' of the genesis of Kumasi by alleging that, after being told that there was no name for the place where they were staying, Okomfo Anokye produced a single kuma tree from under his clothes, planted it there and named the place as Kumase, (Brown, 1965, p.52). But as could be ascertained, there is no Asante village or even a hut that has got no name let alone a town and the then seat of government.

Though Asante had not then united as a nation, it was the seat of government of the *ɔyoko* clan. As a result the assertion by Brown does not hold enough water but it rather adds to the

contradictions that enhance the hybridism of Kumasi city. Since the controversial ‘naming ceremony,’ the town of Kumasi has been the seat of government of the Asante Kingdom up to its present status as ‘Garden City of West Africa.’

According to Nana Osei Kwadwo, the Nkwantanan which is currently replaced with the Kumasi Home Stores was the King’s palace. The durbar grounds extended from Central Police Station to the Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. It is alleged that it was on this grounds where ‘Sika Adwa Kofi’- the Golden Stool was commanded from the skies by Okomfo Anokye to rest on the lap of Nana Osei Tutu I. On the same grounds is a spot where the black stools of all the chiefs were buried and marked with a sword which exists at the Manhyia museum as site for tourists, (Osei, 2004, p.117).

Now the city is buoyant with industries and commercial activities. The city is ripe with diversity of culture owing to influx of foreigners from all walks of life.

The city gradually developed from the status of District Assembly to Municipal Assembly. It is currently a Metropolitan urbanity with various Assemblies under a Chief Executive. The city has since crossed more boundaries in terms of expansion and political directions. Reckoning from Nana Osei Tutu 1 to the current Asantehene Nana Osei Tutu 11, there have been sixteen Asante Kings residing in Kumasi, (Osei, 2000, p.28). And there have been twenty seven Metropolitan Chief Executives since the political administration from 1913, -W. ClassPeter to the mayor Madam Patricia Appiagyei, (the mayor at the time I conducted the research), who assumed office in December 2005, (Osei, 2004, pp. 204-208). The city as a result, being controlled by diverse blocks and segments with their traditional leaders of various indigenous and ‘foreign’ stools, the western democratic leaders of various Assemblymen, members of

parliament, the mayor and the Regional minister not mentioning religious ministers, authorities of various transport groups, market queens, and directors of governmental institutions, the police, military, teachers and what have you.

Similar segments in the form of materials,- different sizes of nails, different types of wood, plywood, two-inch-by-two planks, battens, metal beams and lockers, tarpaulin, myriads of colours intersecting, overlapping, crisscrossing etc, etc, on the surfaces of the panels etc also draws parallels with artistic structure. The city and the art piece are, at present, abound with a cornucopia of variegated segments, boundaries, species of authorities etc., etc. that add 'spices' to the 'pudding' of hybridity.

Obviously subsequent to the proclivity for cultural diversity and particularly modernity, the city of Kumasi has, since her 'birth and outdooing,' undergone series of changes especially in architecture.

### **The Kumasi Urban Architecture**

It goes without saying that the architecture of Kumasi did not begin as is currently observed. As said earlier, Kumasi gradually developed into its present status through a wide span of time.

In times past two types of buildings were distinct in Kumasi. The first was the type which was built with swish (mud) and was plastered with clay and roofed with thatched palm or raffia fronds, (Osei, 2004, p.118). The other type which obviously belonged to the rich or nobles was built with large, open verandas in front facing the streets with another at the back. Such houses were consisted of twenty to thirty rooms with a common court yard. Osei Kwadwo asserts that the tenants of such houses numbered not less than thirty to two hundred depending on the status



of the landlord. This probably is subsequent to the extended family system and the communalistic spirit of the Asantes.

The streets of the town were about fifty yards wide along which were the houses of the nobles. The houses of the poor were like huts and scattered at the outskirts of the town. Osei Kwadwo has it that Nana Osei Asibe Bonsu (1800-1824) caused wide streets measuring about fifty to sixty yards to be constructed from Breman to Asafo. The huts along the streets were destroyed for the owners to build better houses along the streets or rather move to the outskirts



Figure.15. The Courtyard of Asantehene's Palace, 1896

**Credit: Ross ( 2002 ).**

of the town. Other streets were built to separate the cluster of houses from others. These streets were named after the generals in whose care they were. The city had well been developed by 1874 but was mercilessly burnt down by Sir Garnet Wolsely when they defeated the Asantes. (Osei, 2004, p.2).

Buah quotes one British official who visited Kumasi in 1817 as saying “four of the principal streets are half a mile long, and from fifty to hundred yards wide. The streets are all named...Every household burns its rubbish every morning at the back of the street and the people are so clean and careful (Osei 2004, p. 118). Such was the Kumasi during the colonial period which was quite different from its present state of modernism. But the level of the former sanitary condition of the town could not be said of the current metropolis owing obviously to the population explosion in the urbanity.

The architectural constructions have drastically been affected by hybridity by going through several stages of transitions and transformations including juxtapositions of some modern types with some very old types. There have been tremendous improvement in the construction yet the former communalistic considerations have almost been abandoned when designing modern architecture which are mostly ‘self-contained’ types. One notable episode is the effect of the

population explosion that has also brought in its wake make-shift constructions popularly known as kiosks.

### **The Kiosk**

The word kiosk is a polyvalent term used to describe a sort of structure with multipurpose usage. Owing to the diversity of the usage of the term, kiosk has been variously defined. The variations of definitions of kiosk bear much dependence on the type and purpose of the particular one. The following two definitions are given by different authors.

It is defined as a small enclosed retail outlet, normally without toilet facilities and in the retail area, frequently located in a public can course or other place where it may remain open only during peak times and be closed securely when there are no customers. There are other definitions for other various types of kiosks some of which are World Art Kiosk; Information Kiosk and Internet Kiosk.

Another parallel passage leads to a definition which sees it as the structure and organization of a computer's hardware or system software; "the architecture of a computer's system software." To achieve the end result which is the aesthetic, and functional and the artistic aspect; mass, texture, volume, light, space, shadow, program, materials and systematic means of construction, should be well utilized or employed.



The structure kiosk, in spite of the melange of purposes, cannot be said of as devoid of gray areas which require further exploration. For the purpose of this project, the second of the above definitions is what suitably describes the type of structure professed to the research.

The idea of using kiosk as support for the dissemination of Asante folklore has not been well explored. The research was geared towards the study of the architectonics of a variety of kiosks in the metropolis of Kumasi. Four prototypes were identified as models from which a hybridized type was derived out of which emerged the life-size art piece which also bears resemblance, albeit the added hybridism, to the common Kumasi kiosk architecture.

But for space and more especially the level of comprehension of my audience, I could proceed on and on with more examples to expatiate the warranted claim of my art piece being an epitome of hybridity. With the above premises, I deem it a high time I set my foot on the accelerator towards the subject and object of my objective, the architectonics of the Kumasi kiosk which has a brief preamble below.

### **The Kumasi Kiosk**

Kumasi, the principal city of the Ashanti Region is a symbol of confluence and coexistence of traditional idioms pertaining to Asantes and the modern mercantile culture. The quest for greener pastures which characterises migration of culture and for that matter folklore seems to assert itself in the urbanity with its economic aspirations. Rural-urban migrations have impacted on the limited space created by the resultant explosion of population. Owing to the rural-urban migration, which has also resulted in hybridity in culture, many make-shift structures have come up in attempt to solve the problem of scarce space for commercial purposes.

The Kumasi Kiosk could not be identified with one particular group of people. It could not be identified with 'foreigners' or the indigenous people. The Kumasi kiosk, like the Golden stool, is a communal object with so many passages leading to and from it. The Golden Stool though ascended by special people from the Oyoko clan alone, could not be said of as being owned by one particular clan.

The Kumasi kiosk knows no 'boundaries,' nor compartments. It is also not located at one particular place; many distances and spaces could be crossed to be re-elected. It could be located almost in every village, town and city in Africa and even the entire surface of the earth. It crosses virtually all boundaries in terms of structural design as well as usefulness.

There are some of the kiosks which are neither for example, entirely bricks, metal nor planks. Materially, the kiosk has no limitations in terms of its construction. Cement blocks or any other types of material could go with metal or wood in the construction of the kiosk.

Figure 28. The kiosk is therefore an icon of more boundaries, spaces, compartments, uses(which conceptually could be compartmentalized).

Modern commerce is thus increasingly widening its scope through the influx of rural urban migration. Thus congestion emanating from the rural-urban migration has adversely affected space for commercial activities, the dwindling of which have paved way for creation of more spaces through structural constructions.

Termed 'Kiosk,' the make-shift or improvised structure, as a result of lack of stores and space for shelter and commercial activities, thematically embodies the interface of culture and mercantile dispensations. The Kumasi Kiosk is subsequently an embodiment of hybridity in its form and function. It is the symbiosis of urban and rural concept of culture, resultant to 'Folklore migration.' I term it 'folklore migration' as the rural folk undoubtedly migrate with their culture.

The culture of four-walled abodes and space from where the basic needs of man; food, clothing and shelter, (Osei, 2002, p.144), are acquired. From this space his/her livelihood is earned, s/he acquires shelter either directly or indirectly through the proceeds from the activities in the kiosk. His/her clothing and food are similarly acquired. Other modern significance are provision of services by communication network providers, water and sewerage, electricity, toll booths and at times as offices.

The structure of the kiosk further embraces the symbiosis of the respective traditional Painting, Sculpture and Architecture idioms. The Kumasi kiosk, a befitting reference object with which the artist could explore both formal and thematic hybridity, requires a critical survey of its architecture for a hybridized type. The Kumasi kiosk when architecturally and critically observed could be said of as epitome of all levels of craftsmanship. Various levels of skills manifest in the multiple shapes and heights. Most of the kiosks seem to have been constructed by experts with few others amateurishly constructed. Most of the kiosks have similarities when compared with global, regional and local ones.

Some samples as seen below are entirely different in size, appearance, form and height. The Kiosks are further treated in the field work review in the next chapter.

### **Comparative Analysis:**

#### **The project and architecture of the kiosks in Kumasi**

The prevailing architectural designs of Kumasi kiosks as observed during my research could be categorized into the following shapes; (1) Rectangular (2) Square (3) Cylindrical (4) Polygonal. These are further treated at the field work review in chapter five.



Of those mentioned above, the commonest design observed was the rectangular type. Even though the shape is under the umbrella of quadrangle, the Kiosks were constructed with variety of designs and techniques.

The average ones approximately measured about 244cm x 366cm with 244cm high. The major materials used in the construction of these types were metal. Others were constructed with plywood whilst the few ones were constructed with the combination of plywood, stakes, boards and sometimes bricks. Figure 28. Most of these Kiosks, especially the metal ones were constructed with mostly one or two windows. The windows were often fixed with louvre blades, figure 29, reinforced with iron rod 'burglar proofs.' Others were made with plywood whilst a few were constructed with combination of plywood and strips of boards.

The types with four equal sides are mostly the smaller ones which are often used as lotto kiosks and the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly Revenue collection points. These ones on the average measured 122cm x 122cm with the average height of about 195cm. Each of these ones had a single entrance like most Kiosks. They were roofed with corrugated sheets like any other Kiosk in the metropolis. These types possessed one window each. These windows usually adorned the front view of the structure.

The cylindrical ones were that constructed mostly by Georofix Company for Cadbury Ghana Limited to serve as beverage outlets. Figure 76. The last types are the polygonal ones. These were mostly used as mineral spots by companies like Coca Cola. Figure 79. These types were mostly constructed of metal sheets including the roofing.

Most kiosks were observed to be painted in variegated colours. The prevalent colours observed were blue, green, yellow and pink with streaks of white or other colours adorning the battens that usually demarcate the surfaces. Most users prefer inscriptions on the facial board or

sign boards pasted conspicuously at the appropriate place to sign paintings. Others used foldable sign posts which usually included paintings and letters. Figures.18 & 61. Only a handful of



**Figure 16. Variations in kiosks constructed in metal:**

### Case study 1



**Figure 17. Variations in kiosks**

constructed with plywood.

### Case study 2





**Figure 18. Kiosk with Double Slopes On Opposite Sides**



**Figure 19. Kiosk with Single Slope Roofing:**

### Case Study 3: Style of Roofing



**Figure 20. Top View of Project Showing Hybridized Slope**



**Right Side View of Roof Showing Slop**

**Figure 21 Positions of Door**





**Figure 22. Windows and Doors.**





**Figure 23. Position of windows of the Project.**



**Figure 24. Collapsible with hinges and hooks**





**Figure 25. Picture of project**



**Figure 26. Parts of project Hanging As Separate Panels in Exhibition**



**Figure 27. Pix of project displayed in 'A' shapes  
As Separate Panels for In -door and Out-door Exhibitions.**



Kiosks were observed as having some paintings which usually advertised the purpose of the structure especially the chop bars and the drinking spots.

The rectangular ones which had paintings like the hybridized project varied in construction. The project has two opposite windows, two doors, a foldable ceiling and tarpaulin roofing. Besides the paintings found on the surfaces of the project, it could be knocked down for easy parking and transportability. These features of the project vary with the rest of the Kiosks in the Kumasi metropolis thus making the project an improvement on the existing structures. The architectural designs of most Kumasi Kiosks make provisions for one door. Where there happens to be two, the sizes and heights of the doorways are mostly considerably small. In effect my design, though collapsible, does not noticeably differ much in terms of shape, most of which are polygonal but precisely quadrilateral.

But in terms of doorways mine differs from most of the architectural constructions of the Kumasi Kiosks. Mine are two whilst most have only one doorway. As said earlier, there are others that have made provisions for two doors like mine but most of them are proportionately small. Those with two doors are mostly the bigger ones that serve as drinking spots, chop bars and salons. These ones, as if in observance of a particular rule usually have one window opening at the frontal view.

The difference between the hybridized project and the bigger ones are not doors but rather windows. The windows of most of the bigger and smaller kiosks mostly act as service outlets to customers and as such constructed to span the full or at least the major part of the frontal section. That of the project is a proportionately smaller sort purposefully serving as ventilator and also as source of light and above that positioned at the opposite ends of the frontal and rear views of the structure.

Another addition to the difference is the roofing style. Virtually all the samples have direct slopings, which is tilting without interference in a straight line from the upper to the lower end. A few also had two opposite slopes. I have taken cognizance of the two styles of roofing. Figures 18 & 319. I therefore hybridized the two to compose a single sloping but with two levels. Figures 20 and 21.

Among the samples, none of the subjects was of collapsible type. The hybridized one is constructed in such a way so as to be knocked down to be packaged for easy portability. Virtually all subjects of the population were roofed with corrugated metal sheets, some flat but majority with corrugated surfaces and permanently nailed. In the stead of metal sheets, mine utilizes tarpaulin for the sake of swift portability in the event where the structure requires to be collapsed for re-erection elsewhere. Figure 21.

The said parallels and differences are drawn not only as analysis but more importantly, to emphasize the idea of creating a new structure of aesthetics that could be observed as a hybrid type originated from the prevalent match-type architectonics of the kiosks in the Kumasi metropolis. The art piece is used as a metaphor which is a hybridized work derived from the survey of the Kumasi kiosk architecture to transfigure the resulting design into an art piece which serves as personification or embodiment of kiosk and folklore. The result is therefore not a kiosk any longer but a sculptural piece -an artwork.

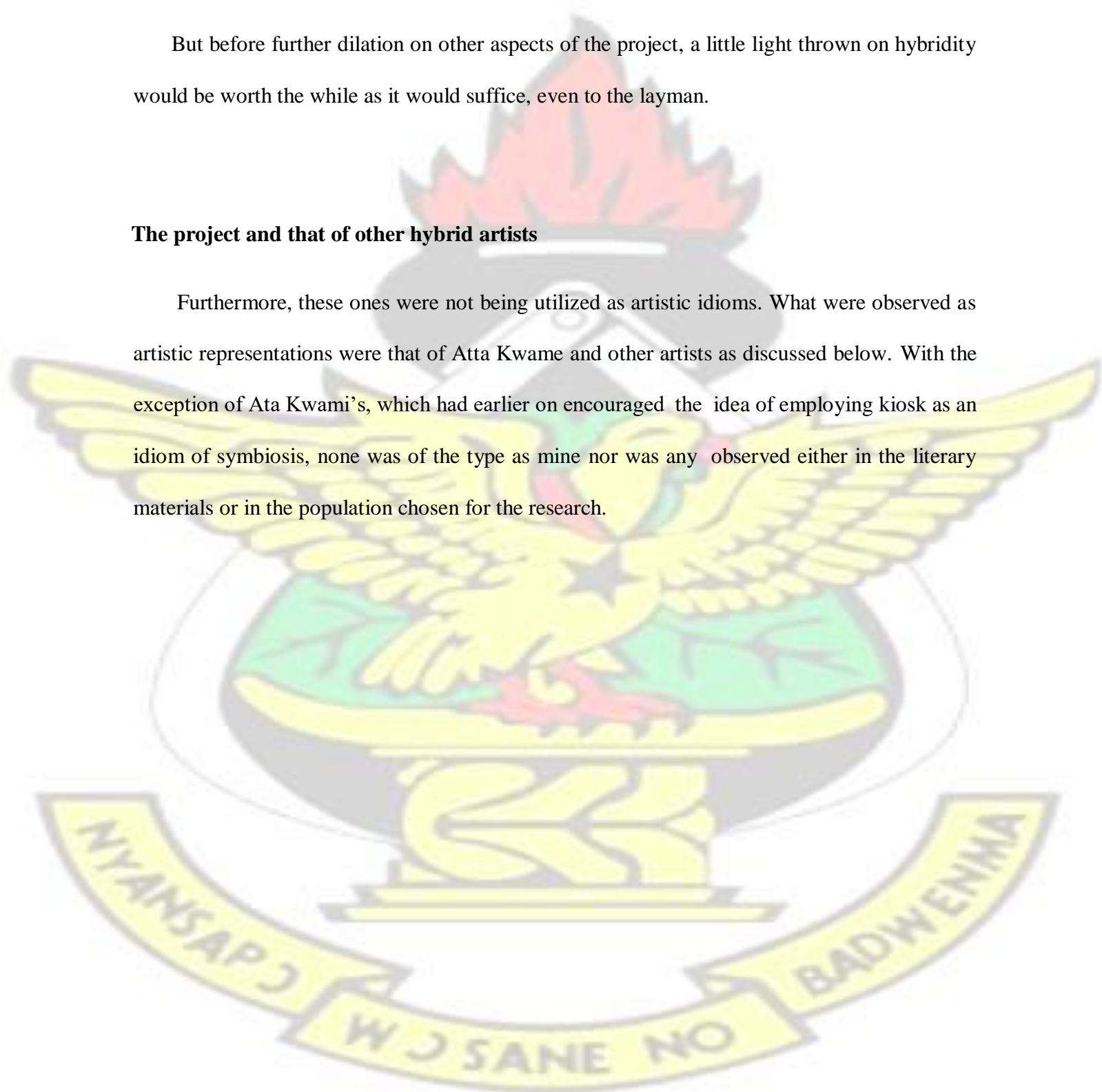
It would suffice to note that though there were few more picturesque designs, the sculptural structure was purposefully created out of the match-box design of the said kiosks which was also the prevalent archetype. That model could also enable proper dedication of the eight outer and inner sides to the eight clans of the Asantes. The four clans with two totems each taking the lengthy sides as the ones with single totems occupying the widths.

Due to the differences in construction, four types as seen in figures 30-33. Pp.96-98 were identified and selected for the composition of a prototype out of which emerged the hybridized project as earlier mentioned, the kiosk is further treated at the field work review in the next chapter.

But before further dilation on other aspects of the project, a little light thrown on hybridity would be worth the while as it would suffice, even to the layman.

### **The project and that of other hybrid artists**

Furthermore, these ones were not being utilized as artistic idioms. What were observed as artistic representations were that of Atta Kwame and other artists as discussed below. With the exception of Ata Kwami's, which had earlier on encouraged the idea of employing kiosk as an idiom of symbiosis, none was of the type as mine nor was any observed either in the literary materials or in the population chosen for the research.







**Figure 28. Kiosk**

**Built With Wood, Plywood, Metal and Bricks**



**Figure 29. A Large Metal Kiosk with Louvre Blades.**

**Atta Kwami**

Atta Kwami, a Ghana artist, was formerly a senior lecturer at the Department of Painting and Sculpture and curator of KNUST Museum, Kumasi,- (the formation of which was his brain

child). He has lectured at various international universities as visiting lecturer. Atta Kwami draws his themes from the visual culture of Kumasi.

As the life patron of SaNsA Group of artists, Atta Kwami, an installation artist, a painter and printmaker, is one whose works have been variously reviewed internationally. Spring cites an exhibition of 11 Kumasi sign painters organized by Atta in 2002 at Oriel Mostyn Gallery, Llandudno, UK. Spring C. (2008 p.8).

Following are a few of his works selected for the purpose of this research and which, like most of his works, have received various reviews some of which I have subsequently cited.

### ***The untitled***

There are also some similarities in this type of structure captioned 'untitled, 2002,' and which was covered with paintings. This construction was compartmentalized into three adjoining centres into which viewers could perambulate from another room. The paintings were done in vibrant abstractions and drew on the visual culture of Ghana particularly the street painting kiosks in Kumasi. Here the theme was 'street painting' but the idiom employed was the kiosk.



**Figure 30. *Untitled 2002*, Nicholas Krupp Contemporary Art Gallery,  
Basel, Switzerland**



**Figure 31. *Kiosk*, 1997, Johannesburg Biennale.**

**(From Atta Kwami's Collections)**

Herein lies the similarity which is the theme. 'Street painting kiosks' is a sub-set of the 'Entire users of the kiosks in the metropolis' which is the sample population of my project.

Like mine the culture of the metropolis was visually explored by Atta Kwami on the surfaces of the kiosk. The difference is his technique of employing strip-like wide strokes in abstraction whilst mine synthesizes surrealism and fantasy –*'aberphoh.'*

His construction was done in such a way as to provide adjoining rooms through which visitors could move about viewing the paintings. This is unlike mine which has a single room. There are nevertheless similarities in the idea of collapsibility and the theoretical foundations of the paintings.



## ***Tiger***

The kiosk titled as 'Tiger' is another of Atta Kwami's works built like most kiosks in the urbanity. It is a mixed media work taken from a catalogue *Besprechungen* (2001, p.29 ). The piece which measures 270 x 250 x 220 cm has been variously referenced by different artists and curators some of which are in German. The outer is painted in bluish grey whilst the inside is painted blue. Inside the structure is a shelf-like structure that occupies a major part of the right side of the entrance. There is a small window at the middle of the right side view of the kiosk. The ceiling and the facial board are pinkish in very pale hue. There are similarities in form but not in the exploitation of space as mine utilizes paintings whilst his are free of paintings. The major difference is the collapsibility.

## ***The African Archways***

The African Archways was exhibited by Atta Kwami in 1999 in Kenya. The African Archways was installed in Jeevajee Gardens, Kuona Trust residency, Nairobi. Besides the *Triangle Workshop*, The African Archways has been documented in other books some of which are (*Action And Vision*, 1989 p.37) and (b) (Burnet, 2000, p8). It was constructed in the likeness of a colossal gateway with two passages between three rows of nine giant pillars. It had the height of 305 x 488 x 244cm deep. In each row are three pillars arranged in a column one behind the other, with spaces in between each pillar. The top is occupied by three sets of twain- arches each taking the upper part of each space. Each of the lines has its own twain – arches. Fig. 33. All the nine structures are painted in very lively broad horizontal, oblique and perpendicular stripes of bright colours that characterize Kwami's paintings on most structures.

As described above, the African Archway has nine compartments to compose the structure that, like mine could be knocked down. Besides the commonality of nine compartmentalized components of both structures, the inner and outer parts of both structures are covered with

paintings which, though vary in style, draw their thematic or theoretical frame work from the folklores or visual culture of the Kumasi urbanity.

Unlike my project, the theoretical frame works of all of Atta's bear on the visual culture of Kumasi. He symbolizes mental and emotional situations with the composition which is of urban context. The hustling and jostling that typify the need and pursuit for livelihood, the musings and scheming that emanate from the mental propensities, the belief in the need to work, work for survival that triggers the scrambling for space, space that could not be easily improvised, the scarcity of which begets the quest of temporary and cost effective structure – '*The Tiger*' .



**Figure 32. The *Tiger***

Acrylics on wood. 270 x 250 x 220 cm



**Figure 33. The African Archways.**

Acrylics on wood. Multivariate dimension.

Exhibited in 1999 in Kenya

At this juncture, I continue with the review of the literary materials with one Mr. Amankwaa currently known as Dr. kari kacha sei'dou but whom I call "Prof" obviously out of verisimilitude of the fountain of knowledge 'hoarded' by the "Prof" behind his monkish beard.

### **Edward Kevin Amankwah**

Currently known as kari'kachä seid'ou, Amankwah registered for Painting at the MFA level yet undertook to stretch his brush an extra mile beyond the then mode of painting. Nana decided to review his works as hybrid owing to the strange nature of the project then. It was strange because he (Amankwah) preferred an extraordinary support to the then usual ethos of canvas and wall paintings.

For support he selected sixty-eight royal palm trees lining both sides of the road in front of Paa Joe Stadium. Hullabaloo triggered owing to the extraordinary nature of his project which was probably observed as 'poisoning' through 'toxic pigments' or was it 'disturbance on the



natural surfaces or was it their natural beauty that was disturbed? With ‘synthetic beautification’ and particularly with ‘unconventional’ mode of representations? Ah, All is well that ends well, and by providential intervention, it ended well with successful completion of the project.

An interesting aspect of the project is the coming to pass of the ephemeral concept or is it ‘the prophecy according to saint Amankwah?’ Now only skeletal films of the pigments are discernable and even at close range on a few trees. On the rest it would be even doubtful to believe that there were paintings on them. Another more interesting episode, says Nana, in fact, is a sort of ‘art attack’ that had acted like ‘heart attack’ on Amankwah’s project when certain posters campaigning for Dr. Edward Mahama, (1996 CPP’s flagbearer) were pasted on the ongoing paintings of Amankwah’s and as such causing attack on the heart of the project so much so that it had to be swiftly resuscitated by getting the posters promptly peeled off.

That is a new form of art that has since attempted the use of the said surfaces and even extending to other trees on campus. These, like the forbearer, have met stiff oppositions. Unlike the pace setter, these types of ‘collage’ some of which Nana Tiger has dubbed ‘**homicides**,’ keep suffocating Amankwah’s works ‘**the moribunds**’ which are ‘returning to the soil’ as ordained by their creator, and which he (Nana) named ‘**the reincarnation**’ (of Amankwah’s paintings? or rather art) and *Asante Kotoko, se wokum apem a, apem beba*, keep resurfacing after frequent removal by the university sanitary staff. The paradox of substitution (with reincarnation) by elimination, (through suffocation). Art never dies. Even when cleaned, a new surface (other than the former) is at least created.

Amankwah’s project is reviewed as hybrid art as Nana would not feel comfortable classifying as painting a clear manifestation of marriage between two separate and diverse metaphors; (an action tantamount to committance of fallacy or is it intellectual dishonesty? And

maybe punishable with penalization?). A marriage between nature and the creation and creativity of a creature. The handiwork of nature and the creation of the artist; (combination of natural objects and the skills of the artist for a composition), to Nana, merit more than sheer painting. The ingenuity of the artist to enhance nature; and nature yielding as a medium through which art could be enhanced. An eclecticism of the creativity of the creator and that of the artist coupled with the syncretism of the sculptural form of the royal palm, with the two dimensional application of pigment could be equated with 'hybridized synthesis' if ever were such a metaphor.

Some of the royal palm trees selected by the artist had some dedications to well contributors to the values and mores of the African and particularly the African Artist.

Dedications of the themes of Nana tiger's project were made to the roots (founders) of the Asante ethnicity. An African ethnic group that holds on to the mores and values of the African, and what they stand for with their totems and mythologies.

Another co-relation of Amankwaah's project and his is the idea of impermanence. The ephemeral nature of Amankwaah's pigment and the temporary nature emanating from the collapsibility of the kiosk, draw a close compatibility. The paintings on the royal palms were meant to be observed temporarily; -yesterday it was observed; today it is gone. The kiosk is mounted today for exhibition, it is nowhere the next moment; within the twinkle of an eye it is collapsed and is nowhere; or elsewhere?

The Final Exhibition would be dubbed "Divination of the roosting ethnicity;" a hybrid word coined from "the Divine Presence," "the Ethnic Centre" and "The Roosting Hen."

Observing from afar, the 'hen' is seen without the chicks; but draw nearer and you are attacked by the hen displaying her chicks in the process. Draw nearer the kiosk and you are

confronted with bizarre-like representations of the totems and mythologies of the Akan Clans- the Ethnic Centre. Entering the “Centre” you come face to face with Creator and his children. In the “divine Presence” Your imagination and perception are disorganized, (albeit temporary) maybe attacked by the deified atmosphere, yet, like the roosting hen, the attack relents when observed as an ally-appreciator of art. You then begin to understand certain details but maybe in your own way as such paintings are conceptuals.



**Figure 34. *Homicides***

Medium: Oil on wood. 1996





**Figure 35. *The moribund***

Medium: Oil on wood. 1996



**Figure 36. *Death and Burial of Amankwaa'***

Medium Acrylics on wood. 1996



**Figure 37. *Re -incarnation: The ‘Asante Kotoko, Sɛ Wo Kum Apem A,...’***

Medium Oil on wood. 1996.



**Figure 38. *Wrestling hawkers***

Pen and ink on paper. 1994





**Figure 39. *Hunter's journey***

Pen and ink on paper. 1994

And as said a philosopher, a concept is not a concert yet it should be born in mind that certain amount of concert could not be avoided, (Amankwah, 1996, p.12). To elaborate a concept requires a bit of drama- a demonstration. The elaboration of Nana's concept takes the form of fantasy and bizarre-like paintings akin to that of Edward Amankwah. Figure 53p.123 and Hunters journey, figure 52, Wrestling Hawkers and their Match above.

The commonalities with that of Amankwah as far as the theoretical foundations are concerned make amends with the dissimilarities thus creating a homogeneous co-relationship. A co-relation that existed amongst the projects of the then contemporaries namely Nicklaus, Adzraku and lately Akoi-Jackson all of whose works are sooner to be reviewed.



## **Caterina Niklaus**

She graduated from the same department (Painting and Sculpture), KNUST, Kumasi in 1996. Niklaus attempts to solve social problems with statements derived from art works. Being in a new environment, she required all her senses to quickly adjust to the new environment. That is not strange and behoves on anyone at a strange land to quickly adjust – acculturate.

As a stranger, there are more than enough for the eye to see. To see is to analyse, interpret and understand. On a strange land one is bound to encounter different ideas from what one already has about the place. There are so many goings-on that require understanding. There are so many that have to be explained and experienced. And who would like to isolate him /herself when there are good people around to socialize with? What is good about being eremitical in a sociable society? ‘Who prefers solitude to the hope of rescue?’

The marrying together of prejudice and actuality after confronting reality lends her enough to ponder of, to eliminate and to substitute and to well acculturate. She makes wistful statements with her works. When she ‘wants things not forgot,’ ‘she builds a mountain’ probably as monument. Things she had earlier learnt or heard most of which have been proved to be false, things she has later learnt and intends to retain. She breaths around nothing when everything or too many are taken in. When too many are assimilated, what is to stand out or to submerge the other? Nothing. Nothing to breathe about.

Nicklaus, a contemporary artist, frequently creates statements to serve as catalysts to facilitate understanding, appreciation of problems and issues. She presents her claims and premises with masterly in her poetic report. Her project would be equated to spices that enrich the pudding if Kyeremateng were to peruse the metaphoric phrases and proverbs that form the core of her literally style, (Nkansa-Kyeremateng, 2003, preface). The Akans hold such a speaker

in so high an esteem. She elaborates her points with variety of ‘spices’ gathered through extensive reading and allusions to philosophers like Gyekye, Bataille, Morrison, Bachelard and others.

She asserts various claims with a variety of art works ranging from carvings, paintings and installations some of which are stated below as found in the figures of her project report. These were three of the works she selected for the purpose of her statements above.

a *Who prefers solitude to the hope of rescue?* (1994.) b. *She builds a mountain for herself when she wants things not forgot?* (1995)..c. *Breadth around Nothing.*

One may ask, where then lies the co-relation between two projects? Is it the hybridity? Hybridism in various forms which also account for dissimilarities in the two projects.



**Figure 40. *Who prefers solitude to the hope of rescue?***

(n.d) Dimension. Multivariate.



**Figure 41. *She builds a mountain for herself when she wants things not forgot?***

Dimension. Multivariate.



**Figure 42.***Breadth around Nothing*

(n.d.) Dimension. Multivariate.

She discusses the use of material and other artistic idioms e.g. Space. She, like Nana's project, elaborates on the philosophical underpinnings of the works which basically borders on the issue of transience, change and constant flux.

### **Adzraku Kwamivi**

Adzraku is currently a lecturer at the Department of Art Education, University of Education, Winneba. He is a part-time student pursuing PhD in Painting and Sculpture at the Department of Painting and Sculpture, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and technology, Kumasi. He completed the MFA Programme in 1996 in the same Department from where he is currently receiving his Doctoral Education.

Adzraku's project, '*Synthesis*,' is a collection of hybrid art works. He shares the same idea of synthesis with Tiger in spite of the difference in the mode of representation. Like Tiger's paintings, his works are quite conceptual and require more elaborations. Unlike Tiger's project



which is focused on the creation of kiosk as synthesis, his works are unpredictable and could take any form to make required statements. Some of his works are;

(1) *Impossibilities* –figure 57page 130 (Mortar and Block).

(2) *Passenger Number One*, figure 58page/130 and

(3) *The Security Guards*. Figure 59page 130.

With the *impossibility*, it consists of an old ‘frail man’ deftly balances a young and energetic ‘man’ on the head. Is it a possibility? Yet there is it. He plays on the imagination of the novice who expects to see a painting or sculptured work or combination of both. S/he (the viewer) stands aghast thinking, questioning and attempting but fails personally to connect, not able to find answers to the burgeoning questions. What Impossibilities!

Similar sentiments run through the Security Guards and the Passenger Number One.

The idea of deception and the temporary nature of the luggage-impermanence, symbolized with bound shredded papers in red cloth to represent a luggage to lure the driver to take a fee for the load as prerequisite for ‘boarding.’

The concept of deception which is also observed in the “security guards” which consist of three scare crows, could not have lasted had the victims (the crows) or the driver investigated. The concept of deceit as observed in the clan house which is perceived as one painting does not last long as the viewer draws nearer to vividly discern the eight divisions.

Like the collapsible kiosk that could ‘vanish’ and resurface, the scare crows and the period of hardship termed as *kalabule*<sup>39</sup> could not permanently last but could recur in the near future.

The bottom lines are the idea of deception, impermanence and the questions - evoking nature in the idioms of his work and that of Nana’s both of which are nonetheless a syncretism.

## Akoi -Jackson

Akoi - Jackson, a former Master of Fine Art Student of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, College of Art and Social Science is a hybrid artist, a poet and a performing artist who deftly employs one, two or more of the said idioms to manipulate space and form as premises to warrant his claims. He executed a similar project of synthesizing Painting and

Sculpture as an



**Figure 43. *The Impossibility***

Mortar and Stone (n. d.). Dimension. Multivariate



**Figure 44.  
*Passenger No1.***

Shredded wood

bound in Cloth (n.d.). Dimension. Multivariate.



**Figure 45. *The security guards***

Wood & odds and ends. (n.d.). Dimension. Multivariate.

(All three pictures taken from Adzraku's thesis)

installation art in 2006. He carved sculptural works in wood and painted them among various installations to seamlessly interface painting and sculpture.

The difference between his techniques is the utility of smaller forms as against the colossal support and the structural aspect of Nana Tiger's hybrid kiosk. As implies the title of his project, metaphors (artistic idioms) are defused (with in-depth discourses) across borders

(‘boundaries’ of painting and sculpture); blurring the boundaries drawn between the two idioms.

With themes derived from Ga language, he employs variegated spaces and surfaces (not excluding the body) to create metaphors to achieve his purpose of eclecticism. Two of his works were (1) Wɔbɛ ʒɛkɛ (Migration) (2) ɔyɛ a hyɛ atar pa! (Put on good cloth).



It is an installation composed of three old logs. The three logs are composed in a triangular form. The biggest one, half of which is charred measures about 120 cm and stands perpendicularly, and on top of it is the shortest and smallest that measures about 26cm high and 14cm as the diameter. The third which is tilted against the first has about the same height but smaller in size. The installation is composed in a right-angled triangular form and could easily be mistaken as one object when viewed at a distance. Like the hero's kiosk, the w

Turkson in 2006. At the background are pieces of Ghanaian made 'authentic' (*kente*) cloth and Chinese imitations put together as co-competitors.

The composition possesses a surface similar to the multiplicity of designs, emblems and totems of the hero's project in spite of the differences in the materials employed. The performance portrays the impermanence of the structure-like surfaces that could be easily collapsed and folded away. The portability of that project and even the surface that includes the performer makes mobility easier than Nana's kiosk. The performing aspect of that project adds more impetus to the symbiosis of performing art and the visuals. The visuals consisting of the three dimensional objects in the performance (not excluding the performer himself) and the collage aspect of the textiles summing up to painting and sculpture thus defining the eclecticism of painting and sculpture and even textiles

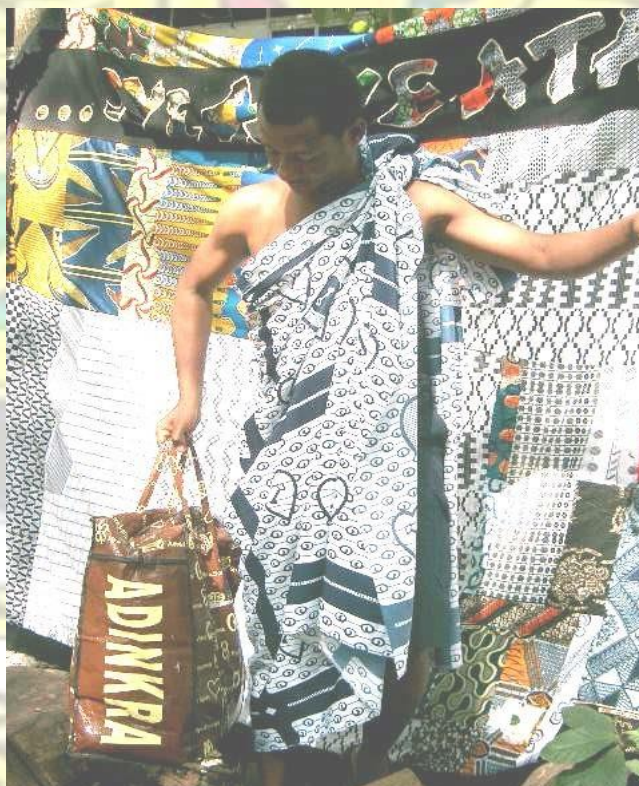
The said exhibition castigates Africans who prefer foreign- made items no matter the inferiority, to the locally made ones (like the *kente* and the Chinese imitations of *kente*). A deeper statement is also made of the "prevailing economic state of the world in general and Ghana particularly." His project reflects on impermanence of nature,-existence and expiration characteristic of most predecessors of synthetic art.

The use of diverse materials to compose the two art pieces below that could be easily dismantled and be transported to another exhibition site to be re-assembled in no time draw the inference of temporality and impermanence which foreground my project.



**Figure 46.** “*Wɔgbɛ jɛkɛ.*” Med. Wood (n.d.)

Dimension: Multivariate.





**Figure 47 “*ɔye a hye atar pa!*”**

**Akoi-Jackson in performance Exhibition**

In spite of differences in materials, media and spaces employed in the execution of Nana’s project and that of the reviewed artists, certain traits could be observed as commonalities pertaining to all the projects but a few. At least the basic physical qualities that explore hybridity and collapsibility could be discerned as co- relational linkages that run through all the projects.

Conceptually, the idea of impermanence could be observed as transcendental and as a bottom-line that attempts to refute the worn out cliché of permanence in art.

After the review (which even went on throughout the research and could not be justifiably said of as having been completed before the full project), (as if there is the justification of not referring to the search for related literary materials as field work) the field work was commenced with zeal as observed in the next chapter.

***Nsaasaawaa* (Fragments)**

The object is the surface of a table measuring 175.5 by 126cm on the extreme left part and on the right. The left part has a backwards projection that curves to meet the rest of the parallel side forming a straight line to the end.

The support is 1.3cm plywood segmented into many sections by acrylic paintings of various pieces of different cloths. So many pieces of cloth in between which are seamless spaces coming together to compose one big cloth. At a distance it is observed as one cloth but coming closer, one observes the individual patches. Such is the piece called ‘*Nsaasaawa*.’ Unlike the clans that come from a common ancestry, Obeng (1986, p.I), the pieces were from cloths that were produced from different factories and varied thickness, quality and colour. The painting has



brought together these pieces that have diverse background to constitute the idea of unity. Such is the theoretical foundations of the Asante kingdom. Different tribes and families coming together to form a formidable force. A unified kingdom.

Like the collapsibility of the kiosk, the support could be dismantled from the whole table to be exhibited either on the wall or exhibit the table as a full epitome of unity – the *Nsaasaawaa* and as the composite of painting, sculpture and textiles.

The owner, kaŋi'kacha seid'ou, had instructed me to ensure transparency in the application of the acrylic to produce visibility of the wooden support. In that way the support which was unprimed plywood could be discerned in its natural colour beneath the layers of the variety of acrylic colours. A 'trompe l' oiles' was thus created with the acrylic which is naturally not transparent. The composed cloth could be seen through. The surface or support is observed underneath the cloth.

But at a little distance from the table, the transparency is no more discernable. The *Nsaasaawaa* is therefore covering something that could be seen only when critically observed. The Akans have a saying *twedee hye ntoma mu*, there are noted fists behind the cloth. A hot temper is covered by a cheerful face. *Ntoma kata adee so*, something is being covered by the cloth. There is no motion without motive. Every action or statement need be thoroughly investigated before forming a sound opinion. For there are deceit and pretext permeating the social strata of man; another connection with the philosophical statements of the main project which include unity and deceit among others. Nana was agitating how he was going to coin the eclecticism of the symbol of cloth (textiles) with that of paintings on a sculptural object? He eventually preferred "tripartite symbiosis" to symbolize the composite of painting, textiles and sculpture.

It is used to forefront my project by virtue of the commonalities of collapsibility, impermanence, unification and the concept of transience as observed in the art piece and Asante folklore. Each piece of cloth, clan, culture, creed, race etc. coming together. Each piece, compartment and panel of the kiosk, -family, tribe, clan, creed, race etc grouped together.-unity: abhorrence of nepotism, segregation and diversity.

Such is the philosophy of the Asantes as regards communalism, togetherness and equality of man in as much as one calamity awaits all eventually. The departure being a continuum of life else where. Then returning; reincarnation- recycling of life –“*Nea ekuu me Asamando...*” – “*Ne maame a ɔwɔ Asamando.*” You are born from Asamando, and dies to leave for the same place to be reborn. Everything is in a flux – and cyclical. Life of man, animal, plant etc. Fluctuations in economic situations, in affairs individually, societal, nationally and globally. Mental perceptions where people marry and divorce and maybe got remarried and re-divorced eventually.

### **Victoria Adu-Amoah: The Ayigya Kiosk**

The artist, Victoria Adu-Amoah, was a student of Painting at the Department of Painting and Sculpture of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. In her final year, she did an installation with the above caption ‘The Ayigya Kiosk.’ The exhibition was observed as laden with suggestions of clear abundance of aesthetics and iconography that merit exploration.



## Sections of karî'kachä's Table



**Figure 48. The Fragments: Upper Section (Top)**

Med. Acrylics on wood. (n .d.)

Dimension: Multivariate



**Figure 49. The Tripartite Lower Units Shown Separately.**

Med. Acrylics on wood (n .d.)

Dimension: Multivariate





**Figure 50. Table Showing Top and Disconnections**

Medium: Acrylics on wood (n. d.)



**Figure 51. Sections of Dr. kârî'kachä seid'ou's table 2:**

Med. Acrylics on wood. (n .d.) Dimension: Multivariate

### **Close View of Top.**

The various kiosks in the urbanity, as said earlier, bear on the ethnography of the indigenous users. Hardly would a kiosk be constructed for the sake of art. "The Ayigya kiosk" was an

installation exhibited under the caption “Topology of Kiosks in Ayigya,” which took off on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, 2006 at Ayigya near Best Man Photos behind the Ayigya market.

The object is a kiosk constructed with hand painted cardboards. It had a varied dimension. On the surfaces of the four sides are pasted drawings executed with assorted materials and tools.

I was much intrigued to review the said kiosk which he believed was the only kind then constructed in the Kumasi metropolis solely for aesthetic utilitarianism.

One would marvel at the ingenuity of the artist in her taste for so strange a portfolio. As common knowledge, portfolios are created to store art works. To observe the artworks, the contents of the portfolio are brought out.

But the objective of this portfolio is dichotomous to the status quo. This sort of portfolio is the type covered by the ‘contents’ inviting viewers who are attracted. She might be making the analogy of the ‘lantern and the vessel.’ Matthew 5:14. Like the portfolio the physical body encases the deeds of the particular person. It is high time to show your ‘faith’ with your deeds. Like the Ayigya kiosk, one should be covered with good deeds than to harbour them. A manifestation of confidence and pride in what the artist had produced *Yenso kanea nhye kodoo ase ...*, the lantern should not be hidden, as said Jesus, Matthew 5:15. Why should she utilize a portfolio which would only harbour her works which she feels should be exposed? Need we to always accept the status quo if even we are not comfortable? Then where would innovation and creativity be? She deemed an installed kiosk as a befitting surface for the display of her artistic statements than an object which would rather harbour them.

She interprets the kiosk which seems vilified in terms of mercantile space and habitation but is so significant to the inhabitants of Ayigya on a level of elevation by utilizing it to invoke thought provoking discourse.

The Ayigya kiosk, in spite of the multiple functions of my project, shares certain common interest as far as aesthetics are concerned. Her project as well as that of the hero's border on the ethnographic issues of the users. Both projects were also constructed with the basic aim of aesthetics, specifically the synthesis of painting and sculpture and the display of portfolio.

Unlike the pictures of Nana's project which were painted in acrylics directly on the surfaces of the structure, her *Ayigya Kiosk* was covered with drawings on papers pasted on the surfaces.

In spite of the differences in the materials – plywood and cardboard, then the technique – painting and collage as well as the themes – portfolio of Art works and mythological paintings, they share common grounds on certain considerations which are as follows.

### **Unity**

Eight clans grouped to form the clan house, different art works on different papers coming together as one to make a unified statement with the *Ayigya Kiosk*.

### **Deception**

From afar one can not conceive the idea that it is a kiosk that has been covered with papers. At a distance one is deceived into thinking that Nana's kiosk is confetti of colours emanating from a single painting.





**Figure 52. The Ayigya Kiosk on exhibition**

Medium: Paper on wood (n.d.)

Dimension: Multivariate

## **Transience**

Both projects exude the idea of impermanence. Nothing is destined to last permanently. Not even the universe. 2 Peter 3:13. No condition is destined to be permanent. Thus the cliché of permanence in everything including art is a notion observed to be devoid of copious of water.

## ***Kusi Agyemang & Kezia Owusu-Ankomah***

### **Self Expression**

The caption is an exhibition which took place on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 at Ayeduase, Kumasi. The object of the exhibition is an installation built in the likeness of a kiosk by two final year students by name of Kusi Agyemang & Kezia Owusu-Ankomah of the Department of Painting and Sculpture of the College of Art and Social Sciences, KNUST, Kumasi.

It has an oblong shape with the dimension of approximately 757cm x 320cm x 240cm high. The main material used is canvas built around the structure composed from 2x2 planks. The structure is divided into three adjoining compartments. It is roofed with black polythene at the two extreme sides but with a transparent type over the middle section.

The first apartment which is entered through the only outer entrance takes the one of the two semi-circular compartments which has been added to the rectangular structure to give it an oblong shape.

From the first compartment is another opening leading to the central one which is rectangular and roofed with transparent polythene. At the extreme right it a rectangular tunnel projecting backwards and ending with the wall of the central apartment through which one enters the third compartment crawling on all fours.



Half of the third compartment is taken by part of the main structure whilst the other which is an additional attachment is in a semi-circular shape. The walls, like the other two, are covered with paintings of diverse themes with some taken or at times superimposed by inscriptions.

As observed on pages 137 & 138, the structure which measures 757cm long and 320cm wide is covered with paintings on the inner and outer surfaces like the hybrid kiosk of my project. It is not a knock-down structure like mine yet it is roofed with polythene which is foldable like the hinged plywood or the tarpaulin roof of my project.

### **Interpretation**

The basic philosophy of “Self Expression” is freedom of the artist to freely express him/her through any medium or colour. Like the folklores of the Asantes, the statements of the artists include the belief in the Supreme Being and the existence of another realm obviously *Asamando*. This assertion is made with a simple statement of “Breath cut-off Breath again in another realm.” I have consequently named the structure as ‘Universe’ which encompasses all the planets; the physical and the metaphysical worlds.

The rectangular tunnel is observed as ‘death,’ the transition from the light area to the dark room which is symbolic of *Asamando* which is said of as a place of darkness. From that room, there is no outlet, one definitely ought to return to the central room,- (at birth ) to the world of light and the place of abode of the physical body. As the picture on the next page denotes, she pauses for her umbilical cord to be severed after leaving the womb- free at last. Free to express herself. A freedom which was hitherto denied. *She pauses at the transit point bewildered, comparing with ‘beyond.’*



These two beliefs, (a) Death and (b) Re-incarnation are paramount in Asante folklore and are also portrayed in the paintings on the collapsible kiosk of my project. The kiosk shares certain commonalities and disparities with my project.

### ***Mary Kelly***

Mary Kelly is an artist born in 1941 in the United States. She resides in Los Angeles. Her works are basically centred on political themes and mostly on feminism. Her installations titled 'Love Song' was featured in the 2007, Documenta Exhibition held from June 16th to the 23rd day of September in the city of Kassel-Germany.

It is an installation built in the likeness of a kiosk but which she terms a 'Multi-Story House.' Her theme, according to the review, is based on Feminism; -Emancipation of the woman.

There is more likeness in the structure of her 'Love Song' to 'My Roosting Hen.' Instead of few inscriptions that adorn certain inner and outer surfaces of her structure, my project fully utilizes space with multiplicity of paintings. Still on the use of material; her structure is not built with double doors like mine. Mine is collapsible yet they all serve certain aesthetic purposes.

Her ambition to gain political scores towards the empowerment of women has thus limited her scope in terms of the thematic derivations and significations of object. The major aspect that



**Figure 53. The Universe: Three-quarter View**  
**Showing front of Universe**

Medium: Acrylics on wood and Canvas

(n.d.) Dimension: 757cm x 320cm



**Figure 54. Three-quarter View Showing back of Universe**  
 Medium: Acrylics on wood and Canvas

(n.d.) Dimension: 757cm x 320cm.





**Figure 55. Back View of “The Universe”**

Medium: Acrylics on wood and Canvas

(n.d.) Dimension: 757cm x 320cm.





**Figure 56. As babe, she pauses at the transit point bewildered,  
comparing with ‘beyond’ – *Asamando***

Medium: Acrylics on wood and Canvas

(n.d.) Dimension: 757cm x 320cm draws a borderline is ethnography;

the idea of ethnographic values which form the core of the theoretical foundation of the frame work of my project.

Following after her are two kiosk-like structures which, as far as aesthetics is concerned, could be perceived as on similar pedestal with my project. They are installations captioned ‘Shate 1’ and the ‘Shack’ by Mauttloa and Kay Hassan respectively.

**Mauttloa**

**Shate 1**

At the upper part of the next two pages is the said installation which is in the semblance of kiosk built by Pat Mautloa in 1998 in Darkar. The main material is corrugated roofing sheets and two glass windows with one slightly opened ajar. It is a quadrilateral structure that seems to permit minimal amount of air.

The enclosed nature of the structure and the material used are symbolic of the heat and stress that could be felt by the occupants. Unlike mine which produces ample of ventilation to signify comfortability, the shate makes a statement of how uncomfortable live could be with some people.

The combination of both statements make the assertion of inequality of all men as denoted by the axioms “*nsateaa nyinaa nye pɛ da*,” “the fingers are not the same,” and “*Ahenfo kyniee, ebi deda ebi akyi*,” “the umbrellas of chiefs vary in authority.”



**Figure 57. ‘Love Song’ A kiosk exhibited at the 2007**

Exhibition By Mary Kelly.

Med. Acrylics on wood. Dimension. Miltivariate

Installation View, Neue Galarie, Documenta 12,  
Kassel, Germany, 2007  
[http://www.marykellyartist.com/love\\_songs.html](http://www.marykellyartist.com/love_songs.html)

### **Kay Hassan (*The Shack*)**

The shack is an installation which took off in 1996 in Berlin. Flood R. et al (1997 p.60-61). This installation was done by Kay Hassan in collaboration with Pat Maurina. According to the description of the installation, the dimension of the shack varied. It was an installation not well assembled like my hybridized kiosk.

As depicted by the name, the installation is built in the likeness of a shack which, in nature, is not a well structured structure. The structure is erected within the exhibition space. It is roofed with found roofs derived obviously from asbestos. Beside the structure is a box which is presumably placed to signify either preparation to leave or preparation for settling which is the more obvious if the performer outside is actually cleaning the compound with a handled broom.

On the left and in front of the door is a container probably placed there to collect rain water; from that roof? On top of the roof are assortments of items that could not find their way into the inner space and which, obviously, owing to their nature, could withstand the elements and as such sent out to battle the elements or possibly to ease the intensity of their velocity directed at the structure. At the extreme left and further beyond the shack is another bundle probably belonging to another 'escapee' who is destined to stay in the open as is the case with most people at different times then. As earlier said, it was composed of mixed media materials.

Figure 73 p.151.

Now back to the artist, Hassan is an installation artist who hails from South Africa. Everyday life scenes in South Africa serve as the Theoretical foundations of the frameworks of his works. In other words his works are influenced by apartheid. In an interview with Susan



Robeson, on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1996, he recounts his experiences growing as a child in South Africa. He recollects the violence and unstable lives he lived with his parents, friends and the black community who were, like nomads, always on the move, from one place to another, settling under trees, in the open and when fortunate, in shacks.

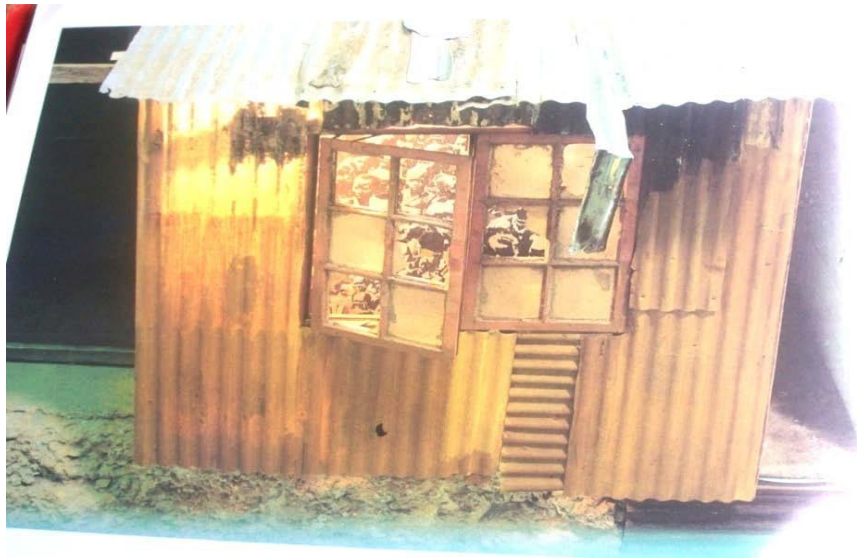
Davis has this to say about shack; in crowded living conditions, the shack is divided into “rehearsal, eating room, reading room, sitting room and sleeping room...” (Davis, 2003 p.181).

In his works, he incorporates items like boxes, bundles, cases and migratory objects that depict fleeing. Fleeing from what? From violence. Among his works is the ‘Shack’ installation which I find have some bearings on my project.

The structure is symbolic of make-shift abode of constant migrants. The impermanence nature of installation is akin to the theoretical foundation of my project’s framework which stresses on provisionality and transience among other things. Life is like the fleeing clouds, always on alert to move along, and at the least provocation, as said Hassan “ghetto life is fast.” (Flood et al, (1997 p. 31).

### **The Hybrid Stool**

The creative skills of the Asante artists are often employed for the benefit of their mythological concepts. One of these objects is the stool which plays a vital role in the folklore of the said ethnic group. The stool, which bears much on their culture, among other art pieces has been cleverly hybridized to exhibit the effect of synthesis on the prowess of the artist. A stool is armless yet there are others that have been synthesized to own armrests. Figure 60. it is stuffed like a modern sofa, and has been raised high enough to fit the status of the occupant who is



**Fig.58. Shate 1.** by Pat Mautloa

Medium. Corrugated iron sheets, wood and glass. 1998  
 Dimension. Miltivariete, Installation Biennale 9. Dakar.

(Davis, 2003 p.181). *Books. Google.com.*



**Figure 59. The Shack: No Place Like Home**

By Kay Hassan in collaboration with Pat Maurina.

1996 in Berlin. **Dimension.**

**Miltivariete**

Flood R. et al (1997 p.60-61).

more revered than a traditional chief.

This stool was reviewed by virtue of its hybridized form which had parallelism with the hybrid structure. This chair could not be called a stool in the traditional sense; neither is it an arm chair nor sofa in the modern sense, but a new 'breed'. Besides being a hybridized stool, it visually explores mythography with the theme *Akokɔbaatan ne ne mma*, the hen and its chicks.

This stool portrays the mythological concept of the Asantes concerning their Creator nown as **ɔbɔɔadeɛ Kwame Tweaduampon**. It further denotes the caring nature of the Supreme Being over his creatures. The hybrid structure of this project visually portrays the mythological concepts of the Asantes regarding the Supreme Deity in the form of symbolic circles on the collapsible ceiling whilst the hybrid stool dispenses this idea through the carved symbol of the hen.

The unknown artist has symbolized Opanin Abraham—the General Superintendent of Saviour Church, -Osiem, with the hen that continuously feeds and protects her chicks. On the side of the stool is the symbol of 'Gye Nyame' only God can save lives and as such he, the occupant is ready to help souls to be saved through the Saviour Church.

Owing to the symbiosis of the art forms of the Asantes, which very obviously culminates from the creativity and the malleability of the prowess of the artists, the genius of the Asante artists could well be said of as dynamic and innovative.



# KNUST



# KNUST

**Figure 60. Akokɔbaatan Ne Ne Mma**

Medium: Wood. Dimension: Multivariate A  
hybridized stool donated to Opanin Abraham  
(The Gen. Superintendent of Saviour Church of Ghana).

## **General Comparative analysis**

There are however, in spite of similarities and commonalities, certain peculiarities observable in this project that enables it to stand in isolation on certain perspectives. The major eccentricity is the theoretical foundations which are sturdily centred issues triggered from traditions or specifically, from ethnography.

Though the project borders more on ethnography; it does not preclude aesthetics per se. Much cognisance is taken of the artistic aspect yet I do not overlook certain pertinent concerns which are involved with the ethnographical aspect of the people of Asante ethnicity. The socio-cultural aspect of the indigenous users of the kiosks. The effect of the kiosks on the lives of the people of Kumasi urbanity.

The socio-cultural aspects of my scope, the Asantes, provide varieties of themes. Themes derived from the values, mores, beliefs and norms of such a large ethnic group lend much impetus as far as thematic compositions are concerned. As far as signification of the objects (kiosks) are concerned.

### **Objects and Their Signification**

The term **object** is made in reference to the variety of kiosks that adorn the urbanity of Kumasi. It covers a broad spectrum of type-classification as well as its use; the functional language. It is described as a “polysemic sign in contemporary era.” author [www.dictionary.com/kiosk](http://www.dictionary.com/kiosk). The kiosks are observed as objects which significantly affect the socio-cultural, economic and the artistic aspect of the metropolis.

The significations of the object, kiosk to the project, though have certain connections and similarities, involve a bit of diversity than those reviewed above. The objective of the said structures though may have certain underpinning motives, the most noticeable are what concerns with the aesthetic, economic and cultural values. Adu-Amoah describes some of the kiosks as,

“They served as confluence of both residential and [sic] concerns. Depending on the time of the day, some in the extreme situation serves[sic] as bath room, kitchen and bedroom”, (Adu-Amoah, 2006, p.1)

### **Food**

In spite of the multiple uses, I would like to commence the signification with the basic necessities which are air, food, clothing and shelter, (Osei, 2002, p.144) to be followed by other merits.



Aside of air, the paramount human need, -food, immensely affects the life and activity of humans. Though most food are produced on the farms and transported to the urbanity from various towns, there are diverse outlets in the city where the raw foods are processed for human consumption. Beside the homes where food is cooked for the family are other industries like canteens, restaurants, chop bars etc.

Most of the food processing industries are sited at public places to be patronised by the general public. Most structures put up for such purposes are kiosks. Certain kiosks are operated for the purposes as chop bars, restaurants, confectionary stores, drinking spots, mineral service points and beverages sales points and what have you.





**Figure 61. Kiosks Used as Chop Bars**

**Where Local Dishes Are Served.**

### **Clothing**

Some of the kiosks are observed as workshops for textile designers. Most experienced tailors and seamstresses who are not working in buildings could be seen as comfortably utilizing kiosks as workshops.

Some kiosks are used by tie and dye producers in the urbanity of Kumasi. Such kiosks are used as stores and shelters for the batik, tie and dye producers who usually operate in the open spaces in front of the kiosks. It is worth noting that second-hand clothing as well as readymade clothes are sold not only in stores. Some kiosks are used for such purposes as wholesale outlets for retailers. At the Central Market along the railway lines popularly known as the “18 Mu” is the main base for the sales of second-hand goods. The sales of second-hand clothing are not



limited to the kiosks at the market. Certain business-minded individuals utilize their kiosks for dual or multipurpose activities.

A kiosk where MTN transfers and credit cards are sold is used to sell second-hand clothing as well. A relative is asked to sit outside the kiosk to monitor the sales of the clothes for optimum utilization of the kiosk figure 76 on the next page.

### **Shelter**

Some of the objects, much as they serve the economic aspirations have the quality of serving as shelters. The purported shelters are not limited to temporary shelters against the elements, but also serve as places of abode. Some kiosks in addition to serving economic purposes also provide accommodation for the owners. Such occupants, owing to scarcity of means to afford exorbitant rents, utilise the dual propensity of the structure. The said types of kiosks help alleviate the accommodation predicament of the metropolis.



**Figure 62. MTN Credit Sales Point**





**Figure 63. Dual usage of kiosk –communication**

**And second-hand clothing**





**Figure 64. Kiosk used as Administrative Centre**

### **Beautification**

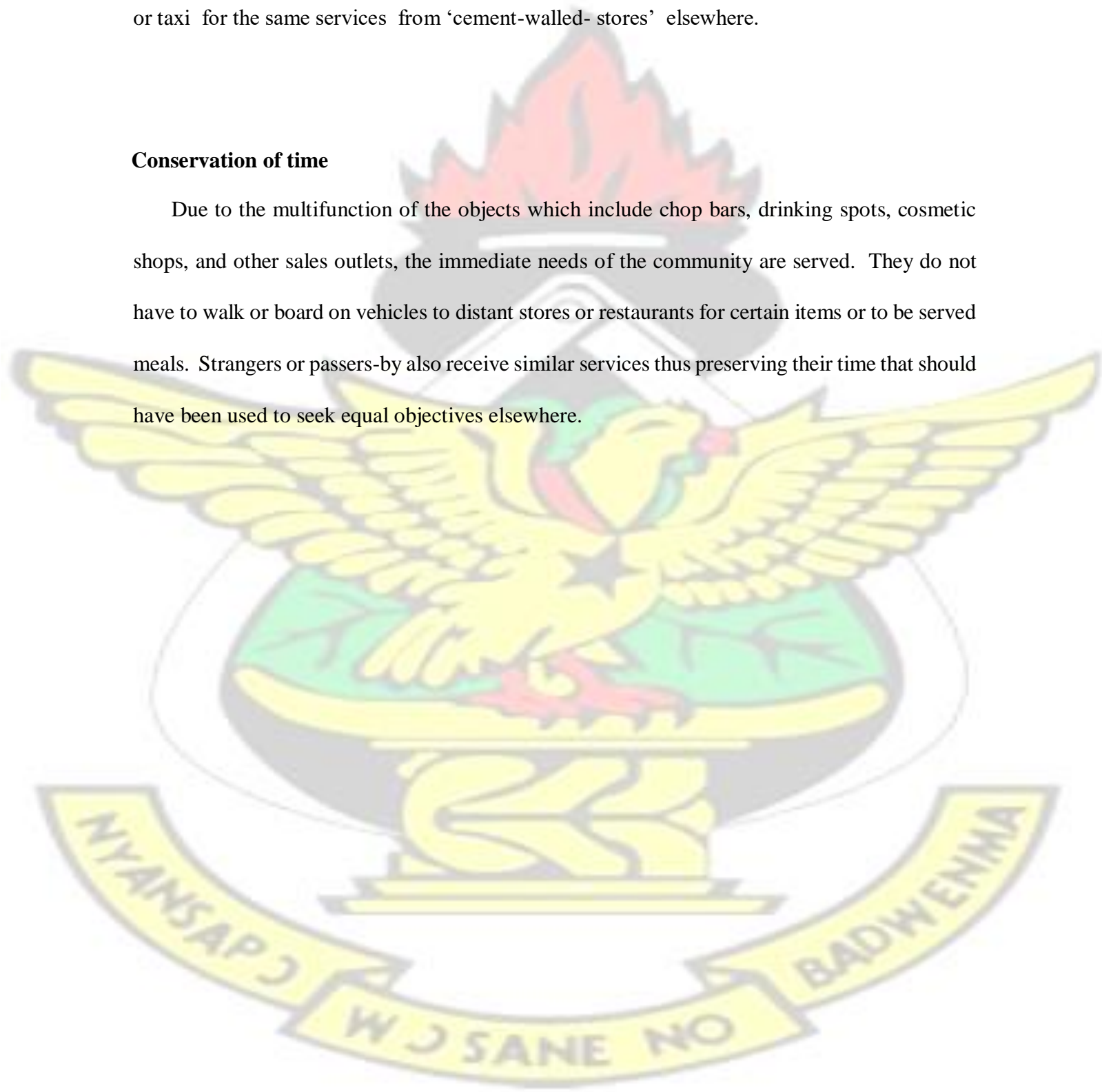
The artistic architectural constructions of some of the kiosks in the metropolis, besides their major functions, serve the purpose of beautifying the environment. The ways such structures are brightly and artistically painted make them the centre of attraction at where they are situated. Besides beautifying the environments some of the objects serve as hair salons, manicure, pedicure, facial, cosmetics and barbering shops which aim at beautification.

## **Economic Miscellany**

The objects, in spite of multiple economic purposes, have the tendency of providing economic gains to the owners. The community, through the services provided from these objects has the opportunity of conserving extra monies that might have been used to board on *trotro*<sup>41</sup> or taxi for the same services from ‘cement-walled- stores’ elsewhere.

## **Conservation of time**

Due to the multifunction of the objects which include chop bars, drinking spots, cosmetic shops, and other sales outlets, the immediate needs of the community are served. They do not have to walk or board on vehicles to distant stores or restaurants for certain items or to be served meals. Strangers or passers-by also receive similar services thus preserving their time that should have been used to seek equal objectives elsewhere.







**Figure 65. Object used as places of abode**

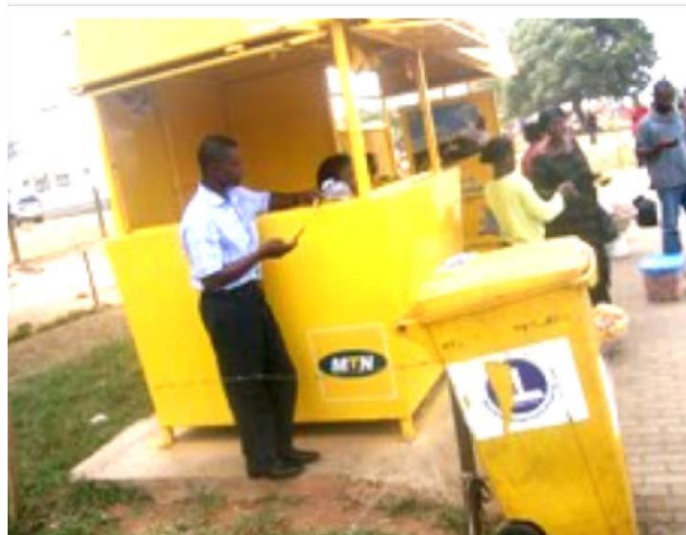


Figure 66. As hospitable place for travellers Strangers and



Figure 67. Used as Painting Workshop





**Figure 68. Used as painting studios**

**Taken from pp.132-133 of Appendix C.**

**Photographic documentation of the painting Workshops in Kumasi, 1993-2005. By G.D Atta Kwami Advertisement**

Probably due to its portability or affordability in terms of finance, most artists in the metropolis frequently adopt kiosks as their workshops. These artists design funeral and other advertising posters in their kiosks to serve their clients. The walls of most kiosks also serve as 'bill boards.' In other words they serve as surfaces for advertisement of various functions. Variety of posters advertising newly launched albums, films, funeral ceremonies, weddings, festivals, to name but a few are found on the walls of kiosks. On unusual frequency posters, at times superimposing on others, adorn the surfaces of the kiosks in the urbanity. The above



mentioned significations of kiosks among others that might not have been mentioned, immensely contribute to the fulfilment of the cultural aspirations of the urbanity.

The adoption of the kiosks as artistic idiom therefore rests more on the significance to the indigenous users than its mere aesthetic qualities. The Kumasi kiosk, in consideration with the said utilitarianism, makes it an idiom of various ‘boundaries’ and ‘compartments,’ coupled with the diverse forms of in-betweens of its architectonics, as dilated upon in the next chapter, exemplifies it as an epitome of hybridity.

On that note the curtain is drawn over the review of literary materials to usher in the *Field Work Review* which encapsulates ideas development, methodologies or modes of ‘weavings’, adopted for data collection and the tools and materials used among others.



**Figure 69. Beauty hair salon**



**Used as Store**

**Figure 70. Kiosk**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### ***AKO-NE-ABA NE ANWENE: METHODOLOGIES OF TRANSGRESS***

This chapter describes the ideas development, methodologies and processes I adopted in the review on the many designs of the Kumasi kiosk which makes it an idiom of hybridity, and also how he gathered tools and materials for the studio practice.

But before that permit me to elucidate on the title *Ako-ne-aba ne anwene*. It literally means that moving here and there and/or in and out, makes a salutary weaving. The hand of the weaver moves in and out, right and left and at times up and down. It is so coined to denote the mode of gathering data for the research otherwise known as *Field Work Review*. Now be ready for the idea development and the methodologies employed in the ‘weaving’.

## Development of ideas

*Ko!*

*Ko!*

*Ko!*

*Na edane po !*

Little drops of water

Make the mighty ocean.

Development of research ideas springing from weak foundations and unhealthy social and / or academic conditions lack the special impetus to the acceleration of growth. It is therefore imperative on researchers upon whom are incumbent the duty of educating society with new found knowledge, to critically ponder over the basis of the research, in other words the clue to the development of ideas.

Like the body which develops out of the digestion of variety of food intake – nutrients, artistic ideas develop from various seen and unseen sources and artworks. Comparability and analysis of variegated employable idioms of artists and artistic representations whet the creativity and ingenuity of the artist and for that matter the researcher. But he is left in a maze when the question of finger-pointing requirement is raised.

In the burbling sea of sources for idea development that have been unconsciously nurturing for some time, the act of attribution to a particular direction as the ultimate source is not so simplistic. Nevertheless, in the turbulent sea of artistic influences, it is quite prudent for the artistically inclined researcher to, whilst casting his net wide, keep keen eye on the immediate influential statements from words, works and toponymy. Hence the development of ideas for



this research which emanated from frequent surfing of the web's artistic sites like 'artthorp' and other art related sites took impetus from various contemporary artists who sought for and others still seeking for syncretism of two or more mode of artistic representations. The most noticeable immediate influential statements and sources of inspiration are Dr. Atta Kwami and researchers of the theses projects submitted by four past MFA students namely, (Amankwah 1996, Niklaus,C., 1996; Adzraku, 1997; and AkoiJackson, 2006) the titles of which are Caricature Royal Palm Paintings, More Eyeworks, Synthesis and Metaphorical Dialogue Across Boundaries respectively.

From the above mentioned resources, the major part of the theoretical foundation of the frame work was laid requiring the idea development of the practical aspect; what generated the idea of adopting kiosk as the medium of hybridity and dissemination of mythography of the Asantes.

The use of Akan themes especially that of the Asantes commenced from my post secondary teacher training education at Asokore-Koforidua in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The title for my thesis project then (May,1988) was "Textile Printing in Phases with Asante Motifs." Incidentally, I used themes derived from Akan folklores for my paintings at the undergraduate level and followed suit at the MFA level.

When it became imperative to hybridize painting and sculpture to disseminate folklore or mythology, I needed a particular structural medium which could well serve the dual purpose of hybridity and visual dissemination of mythology. The said medium while serving the said purpose was to have an ethnographic signification on the indigenous community whilst serving the said dualism of purpose.

I discarded the first idea which was to employ buildings (which I considered to have much bearing on the socio-economic lives of the Asantes) owing to the immobility of the support which would be a fatal hindrance to the idea of disseminating folklore through sporadic exhibitions at various places.

The better option which later proved to be the best to me was the kiosk. Its signification is fully discussed at the latest part of the review of related materials in chapter two. Four types with common characteristics pertaining to majority of the kiosks were identified and selected for the composition of a prototype out of which emerged the hybridized project.

But then, how mobile could a kiosk be? Its transportability to exhibition centres in other towns would be a cumbersome and almost futile venture. I therefore decided to explore means of constructing a collapsible type the experiments and process of which are comprehensively described in chapter four.

Having settled on the space and form, I had to select a sample population for a case study of kiosks utilized by the Asantes. I had to limit the population size to the Kumasi metropolis, due to the time lag and the fact that the kiosks in other parts of Ashanti region or any part of Ghana have no particular difference from those in Kumasi metropolis. The research population and methodology are exhaustively discussed at its appropriate location in the subsequent pages.

Having acquired a sound footing on the development of the background of the project, it became essential to ascertain the feasibility of the research which was subject to availability of funds and resources. I had to know beforehand how much funds I would need to sink into the project which determinately rested on a meticulously planned estimate.

A financially demanding task is quite daunting and so challenging but if the rewarding prospects are high, it would not be abandoned by any enterprising researcher who is worth his

salt. It was therefore imperative on me to have the realization and fulfilment of my aspirations regarding the project.

As one does not scheme crossing the river until he is close by, the mode of financing the project could not be put in place until a firm decision as to the practicability of the project was taken. The next hurdle after the decision was the financial consideration. How could the project be financed? One does not attempt to wash the hand with spittle when the possibility of securing water is high. Why bother and fret myself whilst the possibility of securing sponsorship could not be ruled out? **nsuaee nye ɔko.**<sup>42</sup>

To that effect, a letter was sent to the then Head of Department of Painting and Sculpture, Dr. Prof. R.T. Ackam, requesting for introductory letters to prospective sponsors.

I made as many as two hundred photocopies of the letters of introduction and attached one to each my personal proposals to would-be sponsors.

On the priority list of prospective sponsors were the wood industries in Kumasi metropolis. As the majority of the wood industries are located at Asokwa and Kaase, my first point of call was Naja David Veneer and Plywood Company popularly known as BONDPLEX. I submitted one of the letters and after three days came to see the managing director who referred me to the personnel manager who had in his custody the minuted letter. He eventually provided an authoritative note to be delivered to the manager of the company's stores for twenty pieces of plywood. .

Another fifteen pieces were offered by MOW. Unfortunately some of the companies were wounding up due to increment in tax and lack of raw materials, -wood. Some were willing to help but were on the verge of folding up like a few that had already closed down. My quest became a bit eventful one day when Mr. Muller, the manager of Fomma Timbers offered a cash



of twenty Ghana cedis (GH ¢20.00). Having been offered these materials, I put the shoulders to the wheel by first drawing the scheme of my research.

### **The Scheme of Research**

As said earlier, the ground had been fertile before the commencement of the programme. I had already made a sketchy scheme which required a little more enhancement to set the ball rolling.

The plan was to spend six weeks in my quest for sponsorship with one more week to forestall any eventuality. The plan then was to finish the sourcing of funds within the span of approximately seven weeks commencing from the 15<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2006 to at most the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2006.

August 14<sup>th</sup> to August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Snapshots of the cases were taken during this survey. In actual sense the estimated time of completing this survey was about one week, 21<sup>st</sup> August, which meant an extra period of four days for contingencies.” Presented as Appendix ‘A’, is a prepared sheet detailing his scheme of research which was religiously adhered to.

In as much as the project is a twain segmented research, namely (a) the ‘Field’ and (b) the ‘Studio Practice,’ two sets of methods were utilized. The first was employed to gather and analyse data from the Field Work whilst the second (Studio Work Methodology) was that pertaining to the construction of the kiosk to represent Studio Practice. That of the Field Work is described directly below whilst the later is observed in chapter four.

With or without sponsorship, the project had to proceed successfully to its logical conclusion. The immediate attention was the population which required effective sampling. As

effective results depend on how big the sample size is, I mapped out the population size to encompass the entire Kumasi metropolis. To achieve the said goal, I had to employ various research methodologies.

I mapped out and divided the sample population by virtue of its geographical layout and also to facilitate a smooth study whilst avoiding repetition of certain sample areas and objects.

The sample population was segmented as follows.

- a) -Oduom to Abuakwa
- b) Buorkrom to Gyinyase via Angloga
- c) Tafo Nhyiaeso through Kuroforom via Asawase to Brewery through Baba Yala Sports Stadium.
- d) Dompase through Ahodwo to Adum via Kejetia to Pankorono.
- e) Buoho through Sofoline to Santasi and then
- f) Tech Junction through Ayeduase-Kotei via Gyinyase to Ahensan.

The commonest type of kiosk in each of the above subdivisions were the “commercial types” which were rectangular in shape. The average types were metallic ones with approximately similar measurements of about 3545cm x 2950cm with the height of 2240cm each. Thirteen were selected by virtue of their number which is a bit less than that constructed in wood. Though each kiosk had a different kind of colour as suits the owner, the prevalent colours of these ones were blue streaked with white when necessary.

Seventeen were selected from the wooden types which were mostly constructed in plywood. There were however few very large ones and some smaller ones which were constructed in either metal or wood but were not worth measuring owing to the variations in their sizes that could not







The medium of construction of the former was wood and had approximately similar measurements of 622cm as the circumference and 280 as the height. These had the same colour-brown, and had the design and trade mark of Cadbury. Figure 76. The later which were usually painted in yellow, (the colour of MTN company), had the circumference of 568cm and the height of 286cm each.

Four polygonal types pertaining to the Coca-Cola Company and constructed in metal were selected. Each structure consisted of six panels each measuring 130cm thus having the circumference of 780cm and the height of 221cm at the edges and approximately 280cm at the central peak. These ones had one door each opening at the rear with three windows in the three front panels. These were painted in red and had the designs of the coca-cola company on the surfaces. These had similar polygonal metallic roofing painted in red. Figure 79.

Eight square types were selected from those involved in the lotteries. These had approximately similar architectonics. They had one medium, -wood, and the same corrugated metallic roofing. Each had one small door at the right side, (though there were few others that had theirs at the left), and one window with broad outward projection sill spanning (in most occasions) the full length of the front view. They had the approximate dimension of 184cm x 184cm x 244cm high. Even though there were in certain situations lotto kiosks which were of immense dimension, as figure 72, or of very small space; the major category is what was selected. Though the prevalent colours were that of the national colours, - red, yellow and green, their colours varied in accordance with their respective companies. These lotto kiosks were so numerous but for the sake of their similarities in construction, only eight which selected to represent different operating companies.



Four were square in shape but with about 180cm of each side. The height measured about 230cm. These were constructed with wood and painted yellow, the trade colour of MTN mobile network.

That brings the number of samples in the metropolis to three hundred, taking fifty from each of the six sample populations to represent the entire number of kiosks in the “mother sample population.” As said in the review of related literature, four out of the said figure were used as case study to design a hybridized type.

Since the kiosk in general bears on the socio–economical aspects of the indigenous users, its ethnography was given precedence in terms of selection as subjects and for easy classification. Below are the kiosks classified in terms of their architectonics including shapes, medium, style of roofing, colour and even their usage.

Major traits observed to be inherent in the architectural construction of most cases of the population out of which were to emerge the syncretised type were vividly described in minute details. It was also employed in the analysis of art works that were reviewed in the second chapter of the project report as well as the hybridized kiosks and the paintings.

With regard to the users of the kiosk, these were the category that could provide enough information regarding the signification of the kiosks. It was aimed at identifying the various uses





**Figure 72. Two of the Square Type**

### **Shape and Roof of Structures**



**Blue streaked with white battens. Multicoloured. Mostly used by**  
**used as “Store” the National Lotteries**

**Figure 73. Colour and utility**



**Figure 74. Structures With  
Sloping Roof Double- Sloping Roof**

**Figure 75. Structures With Single**

**Shape, Medium and Usage**





**Figure 76. cylindrical: Wooden Type  
used used as Beverage Outlet only**



**Figure 77. Cylindrical and Metallic: Utilized as  
Mobile credit Recharge Centre for MTN**



**Figure 79. Polygonal with Metallic “conical” Roofing**

**Figure 78. Wooden But With  
Metallic Single Slope Roofing**



**Medium and Style of Roofing**



**Figure 80. Metallic “semi-open” structure with only  
Company Colour (1) and logo.**

of kiosks in the Kumasi urbanity. These were the types that could well appreciate the import of a collapsible kiosk. How handy it would be to them to ascertain the extent of capability of the project towards the solution of ‘portability of structures’ in times of crisis, the likeness of which is the recent Decongestion Exercise embarked on by the City Authorities.

In all, eighty questionnaires were directly submitted and collected directly either instantly or at a later periods. For convenience and the sake of time, most were interviewed filling the forms on behalf of the respondent on the spot. There were about 96 percent (96%) return of the eighty questionnaires owing to the said type of approach.

**The First Interview**

**General interview of artisans**

Most artisans or constructors of kiosks and users in the population were interviewed formally by being given questionnaires to provide the data needed. Since there was nothing so peculiar about them he treated each respondent as any other.

**Heaven’s Gate Information Centre**

There was however one peculiar ‘architect’ and user, Mr. Kofi Antwi, who required enough attention and extensive interview after the questionnaire. I needed to interview him to familiarize myself with the technique employed in the construction and more so, the actual signification of the kiosk to him and the indigenous community.



**Figure 81. Heaven's Gate**

**Structure showing the stairs linking the upper and lower storeys**



**Figure 82. Closed Structure showing stair case and ground floor**



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**Three-quarter view of the hybridized kiosk**

**Figure 83. Heaven's Gate 2**

The architectural construction of his kiosk was so unique that qarî'qachä who had spotted it at **Kotei** <sup>43</sup> later informed me about it. I went to him the following day, the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2008, for directions but to facilitate my research he offered to drive me there in the company of Micheal Adashie, a lecturer who was so enthused by the mere mention of a storeyed kiosk.



Refer to pages 171-2 below. The structure was a storey-type and was used for Information Services. It had the name of 'Heaven Gate Information Centre' affiliated to New Mercury FM, one, of the radio stations in the city of Kumasi.

In fact the user was actually the architect who had designed and constructed the artistic edifice the upper part of which measured 244 x 150 x 274 cm high. The lower which was a mixture of wood and mostly concrete had similar measurement in terms of the length and the width but the height was about 150 cm, the reason being that the ground floor had been excavated about 50cm deep.

The structure had the national colours of red, yellow and green studded with the black stars. For variety he painted the lower door with turquoise. The insides were painted white which he explained as purity. He further explained that his best colours were red and white. In answer he explained that he usually had to exert much energy and blood to achieve his livelihood hence his choice of red. Unlike most kiosk users, he was more particular about his colours namely patriotism and the philosophy of purity and hard work which I term as 'honesty through labour.

An interesting thing was that it came out during the interview that he was neither a carpenter, a mason nor an architect.

The conglomeration of the said variegated designs and concepts justifies the claim that the *Kumasi Kiosk Architecture*, is a suitable medium for visually exploring hybridity.

## **The Second Interview**

The types of respondents for the third batch of interview were experts on the unscripted history, beliefs, mores and values of the Asantes. These were royals who had specialities as far as the purpose of this project was concerned. One of them is a performing artist, specifically a musician who has through music well propagated the beliefs mores and values of the Akans.

Attention was also focused on certain individuals who were well informed on traditional matters regarding the cultural and historical facts of the Asantes.

The said four interviewees who are mentioned above, and are all classified under the 'Third Interview' are;

1. Nana Afari –(Abakomahene of Aburi, Akuapem, in the Eastern Region and at the same time the Gyaasehene of Asumura of Akrodie Traditional Area in the Brong Ahafo Region).
2. Opanin Boateng (a.k.a. Mr. Boat) of Osiem Saviour Church in the Eastern Region
3. Opanin Kwaku Duah of Aburaso and royal to the Asante throne.'and
4. Nana Kwame Ampadu 1(Erstwhile president of MUSIGA-Ghana).

### **The Third Interview**

#### **Dr. Ossei Agyeman**

Dr. Ossei Agyeman, currently the Director of *Abibigromma* Ensemble, and senior lecturer at the Department of Art, Legon, Accra, At the Master of Fine Art level, he did a research on the folklores of the Asantes and crowned it up with further research on the same folkloristics at the doctorate level.

Dr. Ossei Agyeman was interviewed on issues was interviewed on issues regarding ancestors, Asante tradition and his summarised response gave insights on Asante beliefs in the existence of ancestors In response to whether there were relationship between the Asante traditional and the Christian religion his answers confirmed some relationships. With his

answers I could perceive that he shares with me that there is a sort of symbiosis of the Traditional form of worship and Christianity.

### **Nana Afari**

At his residence at Asumura of Akrodie Traditional Area of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana, Nana Afari who holds two traditional positions as Gyaasehene of Asumura and *abakomahene* of Aburi Akuapem, and who, incidentally, was Nana Tiger's first teacher, was interviewed on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008. He had these to say about Nana Afari.

Nana Afari is a staunch Christian and specifically a Methodist. I wanted his version of the relationship between the traditional religion and Christianity and how comfortably was he marrying the two (seemingly dichotomous) religions together. In fact one ought to have been present to better appreciate the eloquence and masterly of Biblical precepts which emanated from him.

The content is thus summed up. He commenced with the slaughter of sheep which is practiced by the Asantes as synonymous with that of the former Jewish religion which he believed had been carried down by the Asantes. He referred from the Old Testament part of the bible. (Hebrews 13:11 and Leviticus 16:28). He referred to the relationship between the traditional religion of the Asantes and Christendom with (the Holy Bible) Leviticus chapter 3 which describes the rites performed by the priests of Israel which were (according to him) not different from what is currently practiced as the Asante traditional religion. He asserted that Christ came to confirm the laws and to modernize the old type of religion, and that he changed water into wine. St. John: chapter 2:3-11. He emphasized that it was therefore in order for the



Asantes to use wine in prayers (libation). He concluded his interview with what Nana Afari said as below.

The Israelites requested for kings and God gave them kings who were to lead them to worship Him as the kings of Asante; though some led the Israelites astray. The implication was that God himself endorses that the Asante kings should lead the community in serving Him. In spite of the presence of priests (Levites), some kings made offers to the Supreme Deity. (2Samuel 6:17-18). So do traditional priests and kings of the Asantes offer prayers to the Creator. He then continued with his research by interviewing Mr. Boat. of Osiem.

#### **Opanin <sup>44</sup> Boateng**

The interview with Opanin Boateng, known popularly as ‘Mr. Boat’ but to his cronies as Joe Sam Boateng, had taken the informal type as I have had the occasion to frequently chat with him. His wealth of folkloric knowledge which probably stems from his royal lineage and arduous studies is a marvel. I would raise certain issues that bordered on the historical and mythological aspects of the Akans particularly the Asantes. He would reply with the torrential flow of mythology and historic facts which he at times buttressed or clarified with books stuffed in his shelves.



**Figure 84. After interview, Nana Tiger and Dr. Atta Kwami**

**Pose beside the packed African Archways**

Mental notes were more often taken than scribbling as he narrated in answer to certain pertinent questions relating to mythography, which were more often quite corroborative to what majority of the authors whose books a have read had to offer. The returns of the interviews with him are reaped specifically, in certain pages in the review of literary materials for this project.



## Artworks as catalysts for Mythology

I went with my digital camera in search of art objects in the metropolis which had significations on the myths of the Asantes. The objects were representations of certain historical sights or legends. The first object selected and photographed was the statue of Okomfo Anokye. Figure 85. It is a statue of a traditional priest holding a stool, depicting a historical myth which signifies the active role of the famous Anokye who helped Nana Osei Tutu to unite the Asantes, (Ward, 1937, pp.40-46).

According to Ward, Okomfo Anokye known in Private Life as Agyei Frimpong hailed from Awukugua in the Eastern Region. He came with Osei Tutu (then residing in Akuapem) who had been sent for to be enstooled as king at Kwaman now Kumasi, (Ward, 1937, p. 40). Others assert that he was a chief of Agona near Mampong in the Ashanti region. He succeeded his brother Okomfo Yamoah, who helped Obiri Yeboah as his chief priest., (Osei, 1994, p. 8). Anokye lived a hybrid life of in-between the people and the deities as well as another 'inbetween' the people and the Otumfuor (Asantehene).

Okomfo Anokye helped Osei Tutu I to unite the Families and towns to compose the Asante Kingdom. The unification was borne out of oppression from their arch enemy the Denkyira.



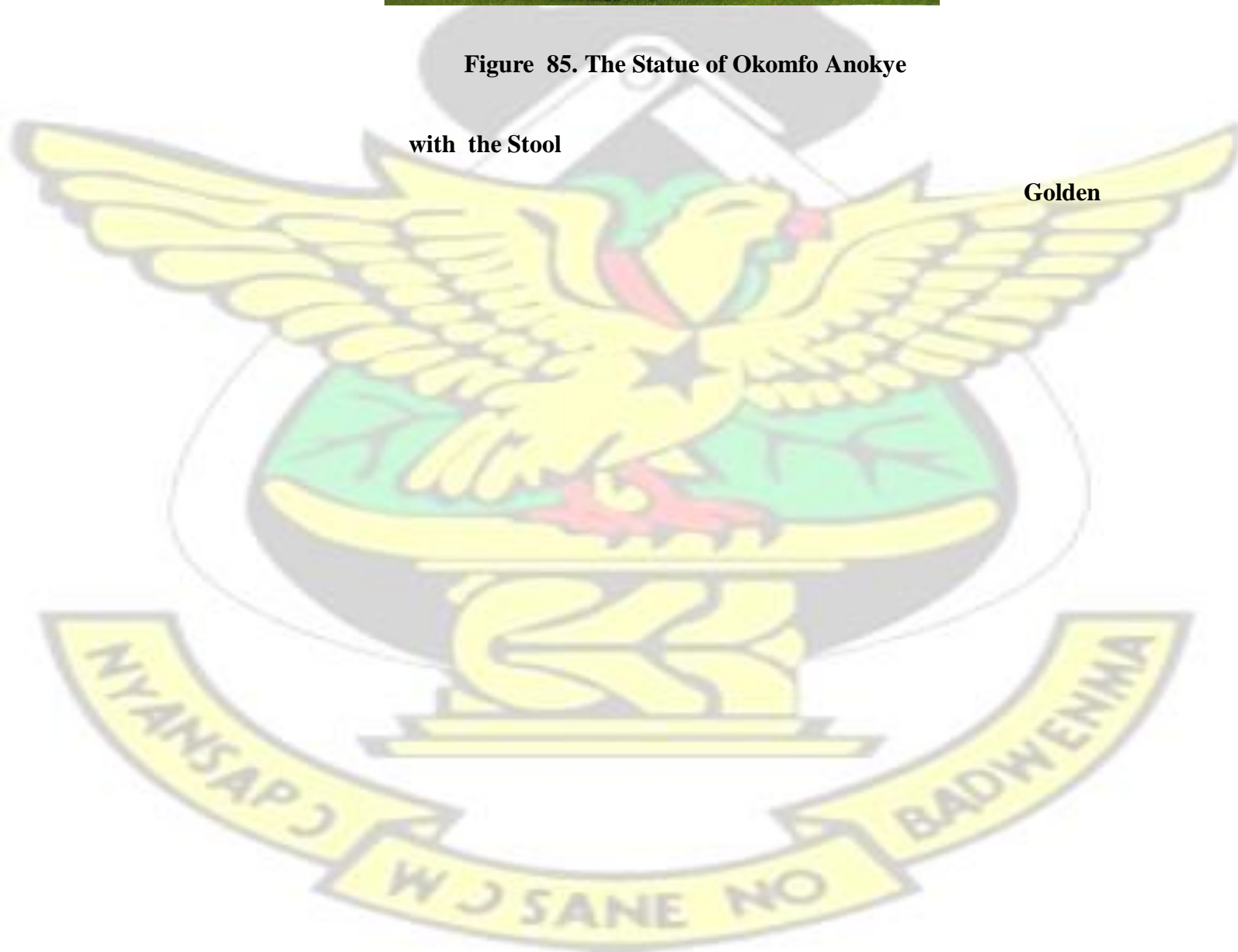




**Figure 85. The Statue of Okomfo Anokye**

**with the Stool**

**Golden**



### **Figure 86. Nana Osei Agyemang Prempeh (Osei Kyeretwie ) They**

were uniting as a result of war. Hence their name *asa-nti-foɔ* corrupted as Asantefoɔ

(Due to war); people united because of war.

The story commences that; Okomfo Anokye summoned all the kings to a grand durbar. He collected all their stools and buried them together. The Kings were made aware that a golden stool was to descend from the heavens to rest on the lap of one of them who was to be their King. He commanded the golden stool which came to rest on the lap of Osei Tutu. From then on the

From there I visited the Manhyia Museum at Bantama near Okomfo Anokye Hospital to take a snapshot of the sword which was placed on the spot where the stools of all the kings were buried but was denied the request. The statue of Osei Kyeretwie which was erected at the round about near the Prisons in Adum was also photographed. Osei Kyeretwie is the pseudonym of Nana Sir Osei Agyemang Premeh 11. The statue depicts Osei Kyeretwie with a gong in hand standing on a lion with his back to the head of the lion. Figure 86.

I went to the military museum which is a bank of historic facts and artefacts of the Asantes. The museum itself is said of having been built by Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh I to serve as his palace. From there I went to Dunkirk to photograph a statue of a man pouring libation at Dunkirk near the Asafo Market fly-over. I then went to the cultural centre where there are varieties of artistic representations of the mythology of the Asantes.”

### **Tools and Materials**

After the library visits which seemed to set a pause on the field data collection, attention was directed towards procurement of tools for the Studio Practice aspect of the research.

Every studio based project, like any practical endeavour, requires up-to-date tools and materials for successful results. In this light, preparations which were basically centred on procuring the said accoutrements had to be made before the commencement of the actual studio work. Following are the summary of tools and materials which were purchased in preparation for the miniatures as well as the actual project which is described in chapter four.

Detailed data of tools, materials and miscellany are produced as Appendix ‘B’”

I entreat you to stand up and release any fatigue in anticipation of the most interesting part of the story, -the Studio Work Review thematized as “Abu-bu Mmabaa.



## CHAPTER SIX

***ABUBU-MMABAA*<sup>45</sup> ETHNIC CENTRE: DIALECTICS OF INSIDE AND OUTSIDE**



## Introduction

This chapter presents a structural analysis of my project. I take my analysis on an Asante myth which explores the dialectical relationship between inside and outside of a structure or a site.

The story goes that *ɔdomankoma* (the Creator) once wanted to award a prize to the best builder among all his creatures including man and animals. He therefore set a committee to implement the said terms of reference. The committee eventually nominated Abubu-mmabaa's (the caterpillar's) building to the annoyance of most men and animals. To resolve the matter *ɔdomankoma* challenged anyone who disagreed with the committee to reproduce a copy of the controversial structure. Figure 87.

For a period of a hundred years no one had been able to make a copy after several attempts. The prize was consequently awarded to the caterpillar. Many people, out of envy or respect went to the caterpillar, for an insight into his technique. But since he refused to divulge his secret, he still holds his envious title as the best builder to date. He has therefore won a name *Abubu-mmabaa*, "the builder with twigs and faggots,"

This anecdote which is a story within a story draws semblances with the exhibition within exhibition concept I have adopted for the project.

### *Abubu-Mmabaa*

*Abubu-mmabaa* as a kind of caterpillar which is neither a coarctate nor has the physiology of growing wings as do other insects like the butterfly. *Abubu-mmabaa*, living in this hybrid

state, is without any biologically protruding limbs acting as arms or fingers, yet considering the dexterity and complexity of its house which involves the crossing and merging of spaces between silken material and twigs, one would be left in a maze of incomprehensibilities. A hybrid sort of awe in-between the appraisal of its frail and limbless stature to admiration of the extent of the craftsmanship of its hybrid structure.

*Abubu-mmabaa's* mansion shares 'silken and wooden' commonalities with the artistic structure of this project. The silken nature of the tarpaulin is akin to that of the cocoon-like inner material of *Abubu-mmabaa's* structure whilst the rigidity of the metals, wood and plywood draws similarity in the twigs forming the outer part of *Abubu-mabaa's* structure.

The frailty of *Abubu-mabaa* seamlessly blends at the borders with its strong willpower and high artistic skills for the construction of its house. The artistic piece has many 'frail-like' panels strongly pieced together as *Abubu-mmabaa's* castle which is a conglomerate of different pieces of twigs.

Like *Abubu-mmabaa's* structure, the boundaries of the separate panels or pieces are 'fused' together with the soft roofing providing the mixed impression of strength and weakness. A similar ambivalence could be likened to the Asante state. A hybrid feeling of joy resulting from victory/strength linking with the weak-feeling/fear of losing the conquered or added geographical and political boundaries. To ensure that the conquered stayed as brethren, measures or rules are made to bind them to the Asante kingdom. The boundaries of the conquered lands, political power, people and their culture are blurred as they join the Asante state.

Who knows what measures the *Abubu mmabaa* takes in maintaining the boundaries of its structure? Your guess could be as good as mine. To ensure that the sticks or twigs or the walls

do not break nor come off, they are tightly glued to the silky material which surrounds and protects the *Abubu mmabaa*.

The puzzle surrounding *Abubu-mabaa*'s structure or place of abode is whether it was built from within, –inside out, or from the outside to the inside. A parallel myth is that of the Golden Stool. How did it come into being? Was it just a concocted myth? Did it actually come from the skies as purported by the legend? If so, was it sent by the gods, or the Supreme Being- Kwame Tweredumpon? Or both, or neither of them?

The boundaries of such beliefs are so knitted in such a manner that the level of 'hybridity', 'diffusion,' or is it truth?, is depended on the individual. It is still a myth like the structure and *Abubu-mmabaa*'s castle. A myth goes that the Asante kingdom will collapse when the Golden stool is taken away, (Buah, 1967, p.112). What will happen to *Abubu-mabaa*'s fortress if the 'glue' that bonds the twigs and the 'cocoon' were to loose their adhesion? What happens to the artistic edifice if the lockers or 'boundaries' that link them together are released?

The complexity of methodology entails more materials and skills. More materials, more skills, and more methodologies- more boundaries. The method of construction has been a marvel to many thus the trite *abubu- mmabaa, ne buo yi se ɔkɔ mu na ɔyee anaase ɔyee na ɔkɔ mu?*; (Did it construct its structure from the inside or outside?), is used to denote the peculiarity of any marvellous enterprise such as this project.



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Actual Size of the Abubu –Mmabaa Structure



### **Figure 87. Detail of the Abubu –Mmabaa Structure**

This rhetorical question reverberates in my quest to explore hybrid spaces in Asante mythology, the modern city and contemporary art. Let's head towards the studio to learn how the works were executed.

#### **Experiment 1: The First miniature**

##### **Description and Procedure**

The length of the structure was 45cm and the breadth 30cm; the height of the front view is 30cm while the back which is a bit shorter measures 27cm. The height of the front door is 24.0cm and 10cm as the width. The back door measures the same as the one in front. The structure was built in a manner as seen in figure 88.

With the exception of the collapsible roof which was later constructed with plywood, and measuring 53 x 39cm, the main material used in the construction was strawboard. The strawboard was measured to the stated specification. After the measurement, the straw board was cut into four separate sheets in accordance with the measurements of the two sides (length and the breadth). Part of the chipboard was cut into thin strips to act like battens to frame each compartment in accordance with its dimension as below. (Figures 90-92).

With the use of palette knife, cellulose glue (popularly known as solution), was applied to the slices and pasted on the borders of each portion which consisted of half of each long portion measuring 15cm x 15cm. or less depending on the specific size of each compartment.

Having completed the main construction, I joined three pieces of strawboard stripes of 1cm apiece and cut at the length of 6cm each to serve as stands for the miniature.

The objective of the experiment was to ascertain the aesthetic effect of the main project upon completion. How would the actual hybrid construction seem to metamorphose painting and sculpture? The general overview of the construction and paintings would also be achieved to act as guide to the actual project. Hitherto, paintings are mostly done on canvasses. How fast could the pigment adhere to the primed wooden surface? How would the structure appear aesthetically? How would the paintings relate to or differ from others? Through this experimental research, the said questions would be answered. The result of the project is also based on the assumption that a Kiosk of such enormous dimension could;

- 1). Be constructed as a medium of hybridizing or blurring the boundaries of painting and sculpture, (names among others that have and are unconsciously creating disintegration of ones artistic talent that eventually limit the potentialities of the artist to a fraction or parts of his capabilities).
- 2). Be easily collapsed to be re-erected elsewhere.
- 3). Portray the aesthetic properties and related visual culture of the Asantes through artistic representations.

### **Interpretation of first miniature**

The first miniature is symbolic of conglomeration of paintings representing the totems and mythologies of the various Akan ethnicities. From a distance the work represents a single painted object. It is not clear whether four walls are clasped together or could be separated. The fact is, they are joined together as one but there are latches that could be released to get the whole kiosk folded. These latches are locked to fasten the walls together again to form a solid structure.



There are various groups that consist of the Akan ethnicity and are bound together as one under the name of Akans. That single name when perused is observed as having eight clans and various groups of which Asante is just but one. “*Se wo pinkyɛ asu kɛsɛ ho a, na wo hunu sɛ, sɛ kɔtɔ bɔn mu wa.*” (You could only see how deep the crab has dug only when you are so close to the river). The collapsible parts of the structure symbolizes ‘Akan’ that seem to hold the whole ‘set of languages’ together but when released seem to expose the different dialects, Asante, Fante (even among the Fantes are variety of dialects), Akuapem, Kwawu, Brong, etc. The structure has four different segments which, when dismantled, ceases to be the kiosk.

## **Experiment 2: The Second Miniature kiosk**

### **Description and Procedure**

The second miniature was constructed with the same measurement as the former. This time round he used plywood as the main material unlike the former which was constructed with chipboard. Because he did not intend to have the inner walls panelled, he did not employ the use of frames.

The length and breadth of the structure measures 45cm x 30cm respectively. The height of the front view measures 30cm high while the height of the rear measures 27cm. There are two doors flanking both lengths of the miniature. Each door measures 24cm high and 10cm wide.

Because I did not intend to have the inner walls panelled, like the former, I did not employ the use of frames. This miniature was also meant to be collapsible only at the four corners. I cut each of the four compartments as a whole block with the measurement for both lengths as seen on page 191, figure 89. (a) The widths were composed of two different heights so he cut the front

elevation at the height of 30cm. He then measured and cut the rear elevation at the height of 27cm.

The next step was to cut strips from chipboard to serve as battens for partitioning the surfaces of the miniature. With the exception of the doors and the adjoining compartments, each of the four parts of the kiosk was partitioned into two parts with the lower parts measuring 30cm x 30cm each but with different measurements for the upper parts.

Some of the upper parts measure shorter depending on the height of that part of the structure. Each of the two lengths had six compartments. The two widths had four compartments each which he bordered with battens as any other compartment of the structure.

I fastened a set of two interlocking metal hooks at each of the four corners so as to be easily knocked-down. Each of the two lengths had six compartments. The two widths had four each. Three pieces of battens were joined together and cut at the length of 6cm apiece to serve as stands. I constructed the slope of the roof in such a manner that it consisted of two levels. Fig. 88. It was roofed with collapsible plywood with four parts which, joined with five hinges, could be folded backwards and sideways and have the measurement of 59 x 40cm.

I employed the same technique and procedure as the first miniature but the major differences are the main material which was plywood, the collapsibility of the four parts of the roof and the paintings used to cover the surfaces. (Figure 89).

### **Interpretation and Evaluation of Second Miniature**

*Se deε nsuo yee no, saa ara na awia nso beye,* (what is good for the goose is also good for the gander). If cardboard has successfully been utilized to build, how couldn't plywood be?

It could be interpreted that if something could be achieved with little resources then there is the likelihood that with better resources higher returns could be yielded.

At the base is a pedestal the processes of execution of which are described below. The processes were carried out with the objective of performing two experiments which he described as follows.

### **Experiment 3: The Two Miniature Pedestals**

#### **Summary of process**

Before the construction of each pedestal, the measurement of the miniature was taken into account in order to reasonably support the structure and to make provision for some sort of veranda encompassing the structure.

The base of the two miniature structures were separately constructed to serve as pedestals. A 5 x 5cm was used to construct the two rectangular bases. The first measured  $53\frac{1}{2} \times 43 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  cm high and the second  $58 \times 43 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  cm. Each of the bases was covered with 0.07cm plywood measuring as the base itself. I.e.  $53\frac{1}{2}$  cm x 42cm and 58 x 43cm respectively.





**Figure 88. The First Miniature**



**Figure 89. Second Miniature**

Three different repeated experiments were conducted with the miniature pedestals which I have labelled as Experiment (a), (b) and (c). The Experiment (a) was conducted on the

construction of two wooden pedestals for the miniature Kiosks. As white glue has usually been active in bonding all forms of paper, how strong would it be with wood? It was observed in the process of construction that, white glue or carpenters glue is capable of bonding two pieces of wood together. It was also observed that bonded edges when reinforced with large nails tend to crack or split the wood in the process. However smaller types of nails like 4cm or 5cm types could further strengthen the linkage.

The second experiment was conducted on the first pedestal but through a different process which was repeated on the second one. Two pieces of plywood were nailed over the frames to serve as bases for the miniature Kiosks. Masking tape was used to cover the joints of the first wooden frames. I did not repeat the masking on the second as I was doubtful of the adhesion over a long period of time.

It was observed that with wood and plywood, a pedestal could be constructed to serve as base instead of the usual cement and mortar ritual or process. It was also discovered that masking tape had enough adhesive property to be well absorbed by wood and plywood for strong adhesion.

(a) The third experiment was conducted on the same pedestals. This time round, the experiment was conducted to ascertain the reaction of acrylic on unprimed surfaces. A sandlike colour (beige) was created by mixing yellow, black and white with different percentages. After diluting the pasty pigment with turpentine, a fluidic flow of pigment was resulted. This was used to paint on the inner and outer surfaces of the pedestals. It was observed that acrylic is absorbent to the surface of plywood and wood. It was also observed that it required several washes to attain the desired smooth texture. It was finally discovered that acrylic, when carefully applied in succession, provides a glossy effect.



# KNUST

## The Prototype

### Description

This is the actual prototype from which emerged the project.

The main material used was plywood. The length of the structure measures 90cm. while the breadth measures 75cm.

The front elevation is 60cm high while the rear measures 56cmhigh. There are two doors flanking both lengths of the prototype.

The Left Side View has three panels and eight compartments. The upper part of the first panel measures 26cm high on the left side and 27 on the right and has the length of 30cm. The lower compartment measures 30 x 30cm. The upper section of the middle panel measures 27cm on the left and 29 at the right with the length of 30cm. The lower one has the dimension of 30 x30cm. The third includes the door which measures 50cm high and 20cm wide. Above the door is a compartment measuring 9cm on the left but 9.5 on the right and has 20cm as the length. The rest of the panel is taken by two equal compartments measuring 30 x 10cm each.

The right side has the first compartment measuring 30cm on the left, 29cm on the right and 30cm as the length. The lower has the dimension of 30x30cm. The next has 29cm high on the left and 27cm on the right with 30cm as the length. The lower is 30 x 30cm.

The last panel is taken by the door which measures 50x20cm and two vertical ones the upper of which measures 10x26 and the lower 10x30cm. Above the door is a section which has 7cm high on the left, 6.5cmhigh on the right and 20cm as the length.



The structure has two windows, one opening on the front view and the other at the rear view of the kiosk. The window in front measures 30cm x 30cm. but the rear one measures 30cm long and 26cm high.

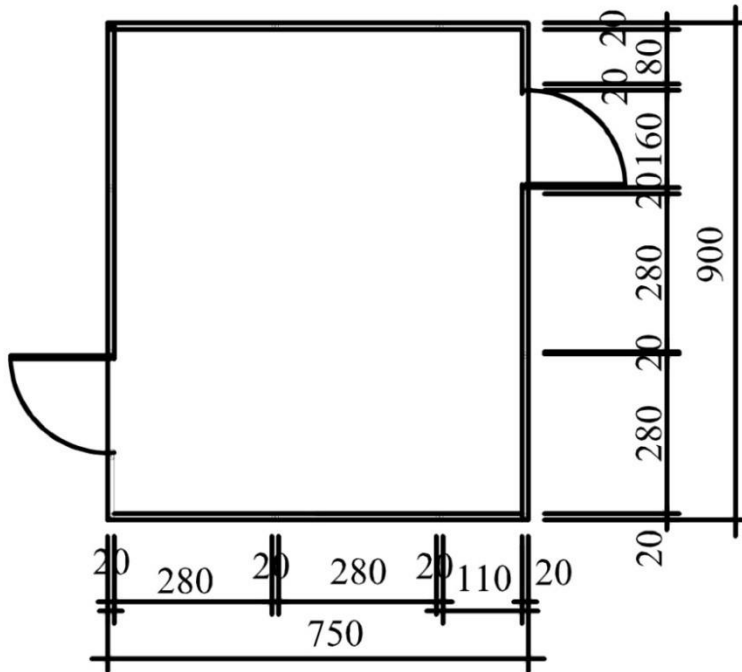
There are nine collapsible compartments put together to compose this structure. It is roofed with plywood could be collapsed as any of the other miniatures. Like the preceding two, the slope of the roof is designed to possess two levels.

### **Procedure**

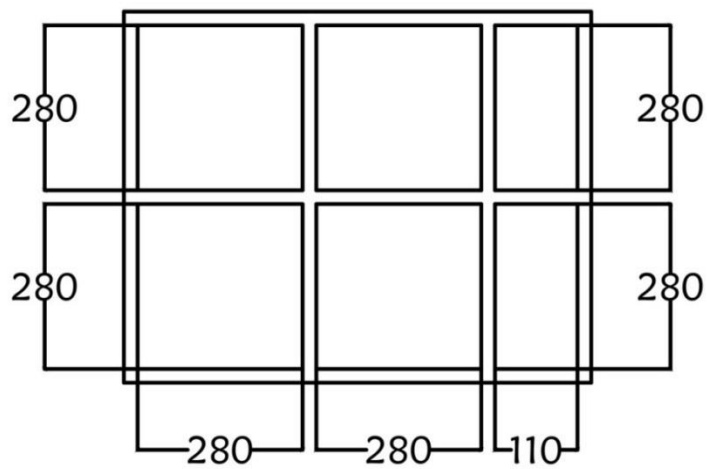
As plywood was the main material, I did the sketches with the appropriate measurements on the surface of the plywood before cutting. Like the two preceding miniatures, the prototype which has more collapsible compartments did not require the use of frames. I cut the nine collapsible parts and at the measurements as seen in figure 94 -7.

I cut and nailed battens with 1cm width and the length according to the size of the compartment. I joined the two parts of each collapsible compartment with two 5cm hinges. I joined three pieces of battens together and cut at the length of 6cm apiece to serve as stands for the prototype.

I painted the inner and outer surface with white emulsion to serve as primer for the paintings. With themes derived from the myths and proverbs of the Asantes, I covered the surface of each



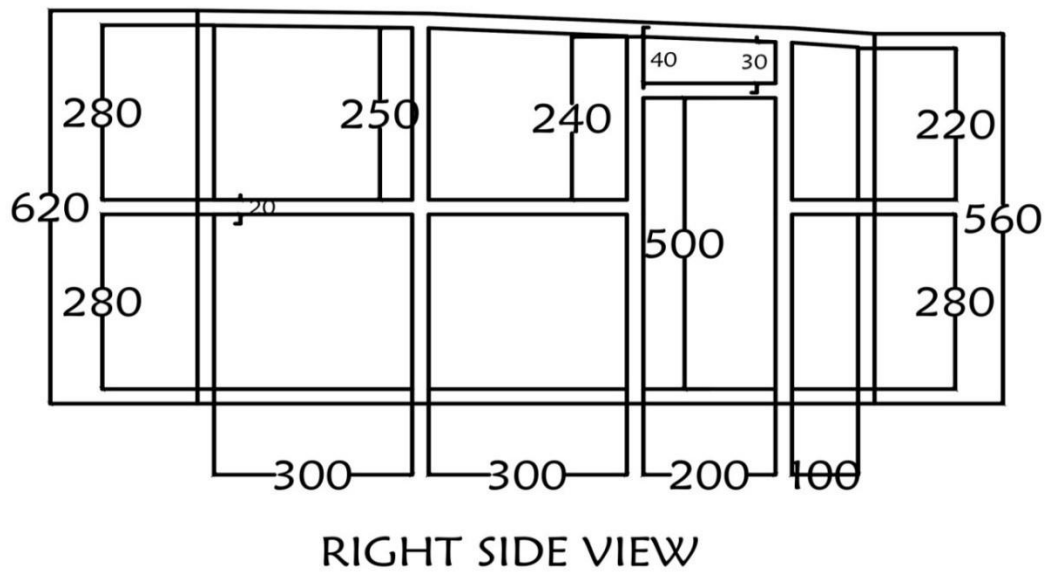
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



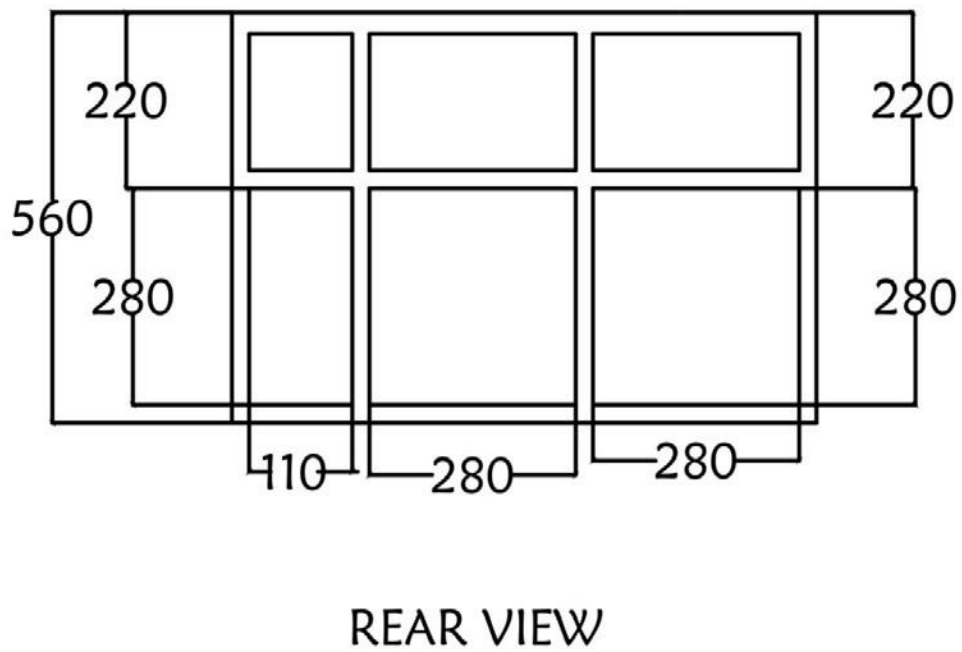
FRONT VIEW

**Figure 90. Plan of Prototype**

**Scale 1:15**



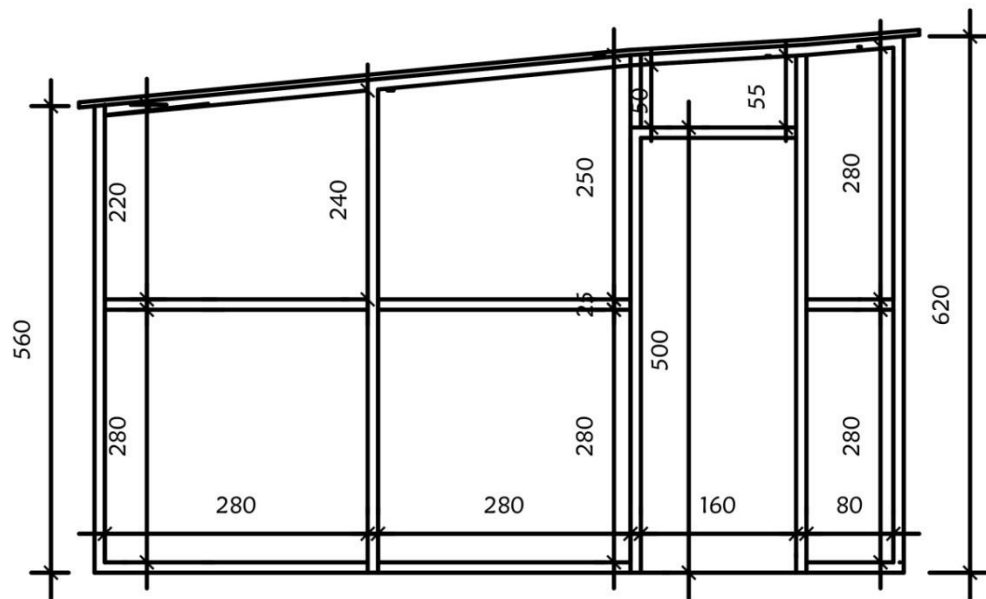
**Scale 1:15**



**Figure 91. Plan of Prototype**



# KNUST



LEFT SIDE VIEW

Scale 1:15

Figure 92. Plan of Prototype

compartment with paintings. I improvised with metal hooks meant for leather bags to serve as hooks to join each compartment together.

Owing to the paintings which I had intended to be on the outer and inner sides of the roof, I made use of plywood that could be collapsible for easy accessibility to viewers by folding it backwards in the opposite direction and rolling it into place or remove it in entirety to be put back after viewing.

## **Interpretation**

Like I was saying, the prototype was a yardstick with which the finished project could be measured. Like the Asante proverb *se aburoo bebɔ akɛsɛ a, efiri ne mfifiries mu*; (the growth of the corn is determinant by its sprouting); and *se ɔba anse oni a, ɔse ɔse*; (like father like son).

The success of the prototype could be interpreted as ‘a pivot for the revolution’ of the conjectured main project.

## **The Pedestal of the Prototype**

The two sides, representing the length of the base measuring 120cm each, were cut out with a saw. The other two sides representing the breadth were also sawn at the measurement of 59cm. With the palette knife, a reasonable amount of glue was applied to the joints where the opposite sides were to be fixed. After fixing the pieces together a rectangular frame was achieved. .

With the help of the hammer and 2.05cm nails the edges were stuck together to reinforce the



**Figure 93. Picture of Prototype**

adhesion of the white glue. A piece of the 1½ cm plywood measuring as the frame was sawn and nailed on the frame to form a sort of pedestal for the structure. After that the pedestal was painted with acrylic pigment.

### **The Main Project**



## **Summary of Description**

The kiosk measures 366cm x 305cm and the height of 244cm at the front view and 216cm at the back. It is composed of twelve panels interlocked to compose the kiosk structure. There are twenty-eight compartments including two doors. The inner and outer parts are covered with sixty-four different paintings with each allotted to its own compartment. The ceiling and floor also had their own paintings which also numbered ten.

## ***Process***

### ***Overview***

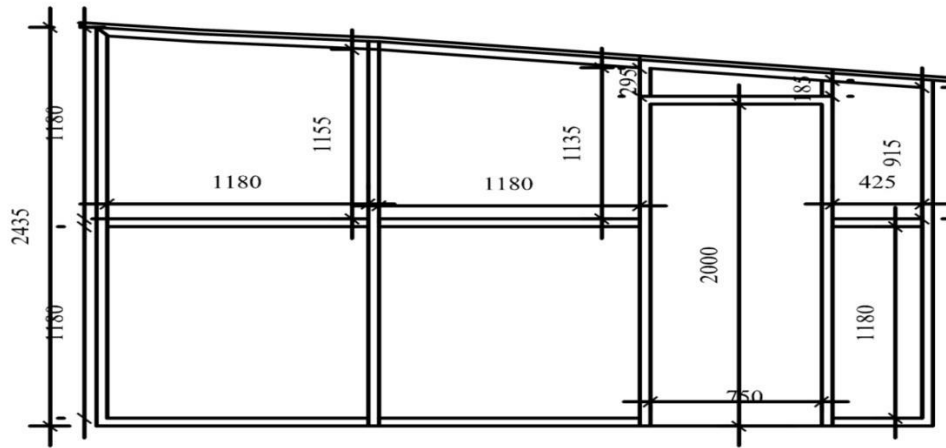
I continue with the practicalities of the research. Such calibre of project requires skilled hands more adept in wood construction than myself.

The lot fell on Mr. Fosu, a Senior Technician of the College of Art who, with some of his workers Mensah, John and Akator, assisted me. The kiosk was designed to be collapsible and therefore had to be composed into twelve panels; three panels consisting of each of the four sides. Each panel consists of two parts (one upper and one lower). We constructed each frame by applying white glue at the joints of four 5 x 5 cm wood (cut in



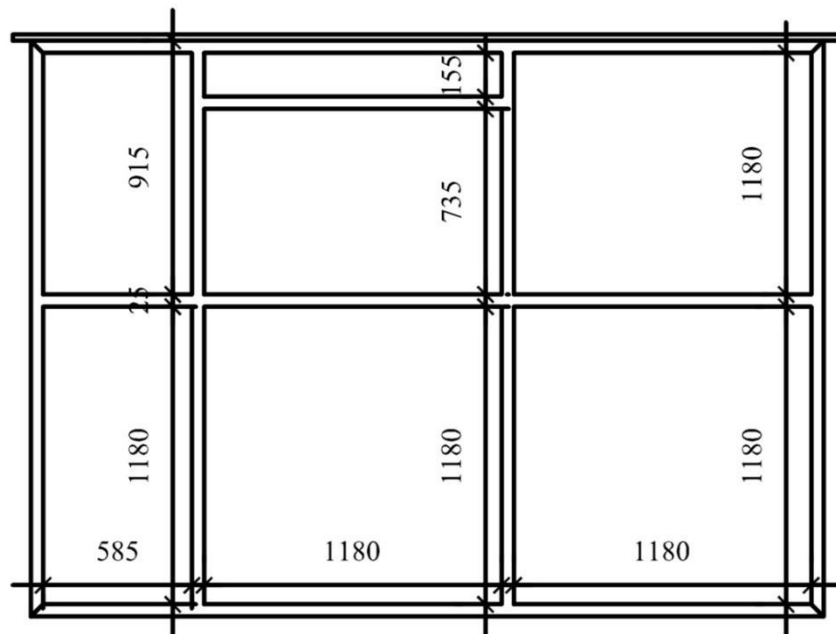
### Figure 94. Plan of Main Project

**Scale 1:25**



*RIGHT SIDE VIEW*

**Figure 95. Right Side View**



*BACK ELEVATION*

**Figure 96. Plan of Main Project: Back Elevation    Scale 1:25**





*Asante Kɔtɔkɔkɔ, wo kuuum aaapem, apem bɛɛba- yeyɛ Asantee- mma... etc, etc.*

In accompaniment with rhythmic clapping of hands, various students who usually trooped to the scene of construction and music at such times joined in the contextual application of ‘work and happiness.’ The workers were such thrilled that one or two would occasionally lay down their tools and step in the opening to gyrate and gesticulate with the students in like manner as the Asantes dance in festive occasions. Thus the ‘music ensemble’ was rekindled to double their effort consequently attracting more participants to the zest.

I wish you were all there. It is a pity none of you were around to partake in the glee and hilarity. With nostalgic reminiscence I recount the actual process without alluding anymore to those hilarious occasions that intermittently but with bits of frequency characterised the periods of construction.

### ***Phase 1: Construction of Frames***

#### ***The Front View***

We started constructing the first part which is the front view by building the frames ( Figures 98-101). We bisected twenty 10 x 10cm planks into forty 5 x 5cm pieces of board. With 5 x 5cm planks, we constructed each of the six frames which constitute a particular part of the structure. We measured and put together these frames which measure 122cm each.

We used these pieces to construct four square- frames. We then cut two of the remaining pieces into two parts each. With four of the 122cm long ones and four of the 61cm ones we constructed two rectangular frames measuring 122cm x 61cm each. With reasonable application of white glue to the corresponding edges of each frame, we later reinforced the bonding with two

7.05cm nails at each corner. Four equal ones, 122 x 122cm each and two halved ones measuring 122 x 61cm apiece constituted the six frames of the front view.

### **Right Side View**

We constructed the frames of the right side view which, like that of the opposite side, consisted of eight compartments. We commenced from the extreme left with a frame which measured 122cm high on the left and 120cm high on the right and 122cm long. The lower compartment measuring 122cm x 122cm was then constructed.

The upper part of the second panel measures 120cm high on the left side and 110cm on the right with the length of 122cm. The lower part measures 122cm x 122cm. Similar method of construction was also employed.

The third panel was composed of four parts. We constructed the door with the measurement of 200cm x 80cm. The next compartment which is directly above the door was constructed by cutting the left side which measures 32cm and the right 21cm with the length of 80cm. The last two compartments which had equal measurements of 122cm x 42cm each were also constructed together to complete the final stage of the left side view.

### **The Back View**

With similar method as described above, we constructed the back view which had three panels and six compartments with the following measurements:

#### **(1) First Panel:**

- a. Upper section - 94 x 61cm.
- b. Lower part - 122 x 61cm.



## **(2) Second Panel**

a. Upper part - (1) 18 x 122cm. (2) 76  
x 122cm.

b. Lower part - 122 x 122cm.

## **(3) Third Panel**

a. Upper compartment - 94 x 122cm.

b. Lower compartment - 122 x 122cm.

## **The Left Side View**

We then constructed the frames of the left side view by first building the upper part of the first panel. We cut the height at 94cm for the left side and measured and cut 96cm for the right side as the height. We constructed the frame with two lengths measuring 122cm each. We constructed the lower part with four frames measuring 122cm each.

We began the second panel by building the upper frame with the left side measuring 96cm and the right 118cm. Two frames which constituted the length were cut at the measurement of 122cm each and fixed with two others measuring 96cm for the left side and 118cm for the right side to form the upper frame of the second panel. We constructed the lower part with wood measuring 122cm each to compose the four sides.

The third panel was composed of the door and three smaller ones. The frame of the door was made at 200 x 80cm. We constructed one smaller frame which is above the door. It measured

80cm x 40cm on the left and 44cm on the right. We constructed the last two frames at the measurement of 122cm x 42cm each.

## **Phase 2: Building the Surfaces**

We started the second phase by covering the said frames with 0.5cm plywood. We started covering the frames by cutting the two covers of each frame using the same measurement of the particular frame. We accordingly nailed the covers over the frames. We covered the outer and inner sides of each frame before proceeding to another. The panelled frames of each compartment and parts of the structure are displayed on the next page.

### **The front view**

We then 'walled' the panels of the front view which were three but consisted of six compartments. The upper part of the second was demarcated to form a window measuring 76 X 122cm and another compartment above the window measuring 46 x 122cm.



Figure 98. Frames of the Front View



Figure 99. Frames of Right Side View



Figure 100. Frames of Rear View



Figure 101. Frames of Left Side View

### **The right side view**

The compartments of the right side view were covered in the same procedure as had been employed by cutting the measurement of the plywood in accordance with the size of each frame.

We then constructed the door which also, like the door of the left side, measures 200cm x 80cm.

The next step was joining the compartments to form panels.



### **The Back View**

We treated the back view with the same methodology as that used for the front view. The window was also constructed with the same measurement of 76 x 122cm but 18 x122cm for the upper compartment.

### **The left side view**

We then covered all the inner and utter side of all the compartments which constitute the left side view. The door which measures 250cm x 80cm was also constructed.

### **Phase 3: Joining compartments**

Each panel consisted of two compartments. We joined these compartments with 4inch hinges to be foldable inwards. We methodically treated each panel as part of its side of the structure – that is by application of variegated measurements and also following sequential order from the left to the right. The joints of each panel were fixed with interlocking hinges. Two hinges were fixed to connect to the corresponding ones on the opposite side. We further strengthened the rigidity with bolts to hold the structure firmly upright. (Figure 106).

### **Phase 4: Fixing battens on outlines**

We measured and cut battens in accordance with the size of each compartment and nailed them at the borders of each compartment. Only the outer surfaces were bordered. The inner was not battened as that could hinder the smooth foldability of each panel.”

### **Phase 5: Fixing Clasps (Lockers)**

After battening the edges of the compartments, we found that there needed to be lockers that could stiffly hold together the hinged two compartments of each panel. We had to make various try- and- errors with different hooks and clasps before finally succeeding with a type that could strongly hold two opposite edges together without folding over.

With the aid of hammer and screw drivers, we fixed the two opposite parts of each set of lockers to their appropriate corresponding places to form formidable walls of plywood.

### **Phase 6: Fixing Hinges as Clasps**

Having ascertained that each section of the structure had been well fixed together as described above, they found that each panel could be held in place with lockers to enable it to stand rigidly upright as if there were no joints. They then had to decide on how best the various panels could be put together in such a way as to be erected as one giant structure that could be easily knocked down.

They first decided using bed lockers to join each compartment together. They tried two different types which could not properly hold. The third one could firmly hold but after joining three other panels together they decided to test its strength by lifting up the three pieces that



Figure 102. The Front View



**Figure 103. The Right Side View**



**Figure 104. The Rear View**



**Figure 105. The Left Side View** had been put together. They realised that the hooks could not possibly stand the test of time as the structure is designed with future exhibitions in mind.

They unscrewed all the lockers and finally decided on taking advantage of a type of hinge that had the quality of being easily separated. They tried that type with one side of the structure but realised that because it was designed to be fixed with only three screws, the probability of the structure becoming weakened after one exhibition could not be ruled out. I therefore had to leave for **Paul Segoe Lane**<sup>46</sup> where he I had been directed to search for the kind which had four apertures that could also hold bigger screws. They unscrewed all the smaller ones and fixed these



ones in their places. Fortunately this type perfectly worked for them so much so that they joined the rest of the corresponding edges with this type of hinges. In all thirty-six pairs of this type of hinges were used including the two doors and the two windows.

We had earlier on envisaged that the hinges recently described above ought to be supported with another type of locker that could hold the edges firmly without turning on the hinges. We therefore fixed the said lockers to complete the sixth part of the process.

### **Phase 7: building the base of structure**

The base of the kiosk was constructed with 10 x 10cm planks. It consisted of twenty-four independent stands which act as support for the structure. The height of each stand was cut at the measurement of 10cm. Each stand was purported to independently support its part of the kiosk. To firmly hold the base in place we had to create an aperture in each stand measuring 5cm wide, 2cm deep and 10cm long spanning the whole length and at the central position of the upper part of the support. In all twenty-four stands were produced to serve as pedestals.



## Mr John Helps with the Erection



**Figure 106. The Erection Process**



**Figure 107. The Washing Process**

**Finishing the Washing (Mr Akwasi Adande)**





**Figure 108. The Washed structure: Right Side and Rear View**

#### ***Phase 8: Roofing the Structure***

I contacted one Mr. John, a welder and expert in upholstery at ‘Santasi Round About’ to assist in the roofing process. They designed the roof in such a manner as to be collapsible as any other part of the kiosk. They bought a tarpaulin measuring 456 x 395cm and sew it in a quadrilateral form measuring 426 x 365 x 30cm.

They used three square metal rods each bent to take the roofing shape of the structure and measuring 426cm each as beams. No rafts were used. Two more of these were used as facial boards to span the two lengths of the kiosk. Two straight ones measuring 365 each were used as facial boards for the front and rear views. On these two were welded five receptacles to hold in place the bent ends of the three beams and the two facial boards of the side views. In fact each of all the beams and facial boards had 10cm metals welded in the right angle form pointing downwards at both ends. One pair of receptacles was hooked at each of the four corners of the structure. Into these were fixed the 10cm right-angled ends of two rods measuring 30cm each



and to act as support for the front and rear view facial boards. Both ends of these rods had similar shapes as all the other bars.

After fixing the corner receptacles and supportive bars, the front and rear facial boards were supported on these to receive the three beams and the other two facial boards in the apertures welded against these two facial boards. They fixed the beams and the facial boards in their respective apertures on the two sides as in figure 111. We then covered the beams and the facial boards with the ceiling before draping it with the tarpaulin. (Figure 111).



**Figure 109. The Painted Stands**



**Cutting the metal Rods and plates**



**Shaping apertures for Metal bars**



**Welding the Metal Bars  
for the Beams/Rafts.**

**Master John Welding aperture**

**Figure 110. The Roofing Process (a)**



**The beams and facial boards of front and right side view**





## **The tarpaulin**

### **(1) Roofing with the tarpaulin**



### **(2) The Roofed Structure**

**Figure 111. The Roofing Process (b).**

## **Building the Ceiling**

### **The Ceiling**

Having finished the roofing, the next hurdle was the ceiling. In order to effectively construct a good ceiling, I had to dismantle the whole structure. I reset the frame as used to roof the structure on the ground. (Figure 112). I then measured and cut pieces of plywood in accordance with the measurement of the spaces between each metal raft which was 92cm each. As each plywood measures 122cm as the width and 244cm as the length, one piece of plywood was divided into two equal parts. In all the pieces with similar measurements (122x122cm) numbered twelve. For the veranda of the front and rear elevations, eight pieces were cut each measuring 92cm x 30cm. to be divided equally for the two. I joined the first four which took the front row spanning from left to right, with two 7.5cm hinges for each three joints. Similar process was employed for the second, third, fourth and fifth rows. These were spread on the rafts which rested



on the front and rear view rods which had round receptacles for the rafts thus serving as beams. (Figure 112). I later on joined each of the hinged rows together with lockers.

### **Phase 9: Execution of Paintings**

I employed Mr. Akwasi Adande, a staff member at the Department, to assist in whitewashing the inner and outer surfaces of the structure with emulsion paint. Aside from few touches of oils here and there, acrylics were the main medium applied in the paintings. With broad brushes, a seven and half centimetre broad squeegee, a scraper and a palette knife, I treated each background with *the* preferred colours before executing the paintings on the surfaces. In all sixty four panels which constituted the compartments of the kiosk were covered with paintings.



**The Ceiling Frames**



**Ceiling With Plywood**

KN



**The final Stage  
Frames of the Roofing And the Ceiling Process**

**Figure 112. The**

The said paintings drew their themes from the plethora of Akan and specifically the Asante folklore. They are the visual representations of philosophical thoughts subsequent to their mental propensities which manifest in their mythology, proverbs, maxims and adages.

As I believe in spontaneity as the spur of creativity, I do not prefer painting from sketches which, to me, limits creativity by attempting to copy what is already created. By so doing the desire to mentally visualise variously and to make well informed instant paintings which may be more unique is vitalized yielding fruitful creativity.

Below are pictures depicting the painting processes. Then follows the description of an Exhibition as follows. It was such a grand occasion when we could all fete our sights. It briefly describes the actual art works which are elaborately analysed in the next chapter.

### **The Exhibition**

This exhibition, though part of the main story, is presented as another story told by a faceless narrator to facilitate the full gratification of its gusto. A story which is within a story of a story-



The story about an exhibition within an exhibition which is mounted in an exhibition which is exhibited in an exhibition centre.

### Caption

In line with visual exploration of hybridity, this exhibition which is the crux of the objective is therefore the centre of Hybridity. The title is a syncretism of “Devine presence and Ethnic centre. To compose ‘Devine Ethnic centre ‘which is further synthesized with “Roosting Hen’ to evolve as **Divination of Ethnic Roosting**.

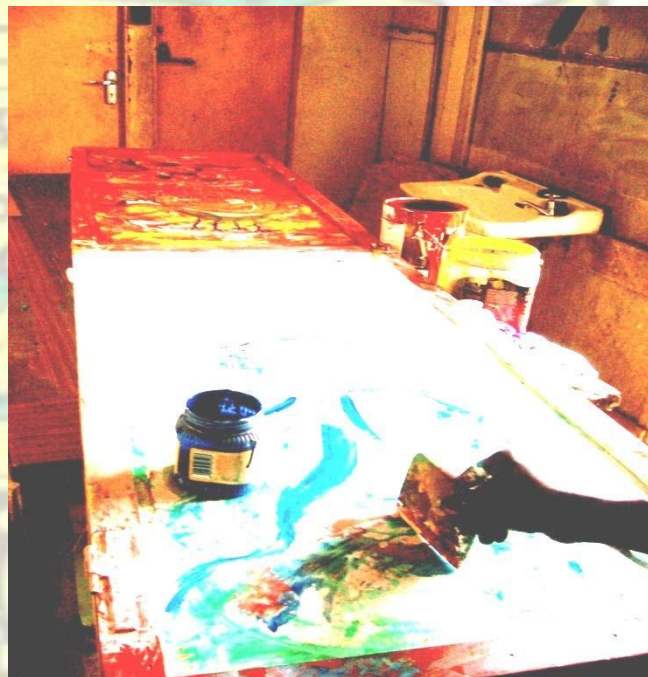






**Figure 113. The Beginning of the Painting Process:**

**Pouring pigment on the surface and treating the background**





**Figure 114. Execution of Paintings:**

**Using trowel, squeegee and brush**







**Figure 115. The Finished Project**

Owing to the conglomerate of three diverse themes, this exhibition is a “*Tripartite Exhibition*” under the banners of (a) Divine presence (b) Ethnic Centre and (c) Hen Roosting. In accordance with the object of exploring hybridity, these three captions have been merged to form “Divination of Ethnic Roosting.” The divine aspect of the folkloric representation of Asante Ethnicity, symbolic of a roosting hen. The Devine-(God) and his children-the gods, (Arthur, 2004 p.21), shelter the eight clans as does the roosting hen to her chicks. The Devine, in whose presence is the Ethnic group, is symbolic of roosting hen.”



It is assumed that whoever enters is ‘seeking’ Divine assistance to fully appreciate the works of the exhibition (which ironically include the ‘Divine’). It is subsequently cocooned together (like Pneumonic) under the caption of *“Divination of Ethnic Roosting.”*

### Description

(a) The structure itself, a conglomeration of the eight clans, is thus sub-titled the Ethnic centre.

It is covered with **sixty-four** paintings.

(b) The prototype has **sixty-five** paintings

(c) The first miniature has **thirty-seven** paintings

(d) The second miniature has **forty-one** paintings

(e) The ceiling-**five** and

(f) The floor-**five**

(g) The Exhibition therefore has **217 paintings** to offer.

The exhibition is an exhibition centre within which is an exhibition centre which also displays an exhibition centre. It is comprised of the two miniatures and the prototype which are themselves exhibition centres. One of the miniatures is displayed in the prototype which is also displayed within the main life-size kiosk which is in turn displayed in a museum.

The life size kiosk which is on exhibition, is an exhibition centre itself within which are the other three miniatures each of which could be displayed independently as an exhibition centre to display the paintings on the surfaces. *Adee wo bi na awie bi*. The head of the Asante state is the Otumfo Asantehene but under him are paramount chiefs who also control certain chiefs under them who are also lords over sub-chiefs under their jurisdiction.

The life size kiosk and the three miniatures are symbolic of a hen roosting- sheltering its chicks. One of the chicks though close by, is outside the folds of its mother, an action which usually prevails in nature symbolic of diversity, dissent view, coice of outside instead of inside. *Efie biara Mensa wɔ mu*, there is bound to be a deviant in every society to bring about non conformity –and innovation. The art pieces representing diversity in the Asante folklore, their mythography, their filial kinship, their laws and bye-laws etc.

All men are under the “wings” of the Supreme Being yet there are people who act as they please with the idea that there is no God. Psalms 53:1

On the ceiling is the Supreme Being and the ‘word;’ the manner in which he communicates with man-religion.

On the floor (*Asaase Yaa*) are the sons of God (the Deities). Arthur (2004 p.21).

The base or stands of the structure, symbolic of its sandals were accordingly allotted to each side. Each side has two clans and are allocated three pairs of sandals which represent the three supernatural forces–the Supreme Being, the gods and ancestors who influence their (the Asantes) fates and actions in life.







**Figure 116. Exhibition within Exhibition**

When the ceiling which represent *Ototurobonsu Kwame Tweaduampon*-the Supreme Being, and then the floor, *Asaase Yaa* and the smaller deities were added to the structure, the clans had to remove their “sandals” which are aesthetically arranged flanking the sides of the walkway and to serve as guide to the visitors who come to “seek divine assistance.”

### **Admission requirements**

The Asantes, as well as other Africans are quite reverential in matters pertaining to Divination and more especially when in the presence of these deities – either the Supreme Deity or the lesser ones. As such sandals or shoes are not permitted in their presence. Even before



their paramount chiefs (who are symbols of their ancestors), Ando (2004 p. 2), sandals are not permitted. And before such a chief, the left shoulder should be laid bare before (with a bow) greetings or hand shaking with him (the chief) could proceed.

Above that, certain acculturalized foreign religions like Islam and some Christian churches do not override the divine reverence of being barefooted before the Supreme Deity. Even though among the exhibition are but representations of the said Divinities, it is imperative to remove any footwear (excluding socks) to feel as the Asantes feel when in the presence of the said Beings. This transforms the viewer by crossing over to become an Asante. Boundaries are crossed during the 'transformation,' the viewer now possessing a hybrid feeling of 'self' and 'the other' as he or she gets into the shoes of an Asante (meanwhile being an other) and feels as an Asante feels when before the Divine presence for the full import of the objective of the exhibition which aims at portraying hybridity. Hybridity in terms of aesthetics and the folklores of the Asantes, the paramount amongst which is their mental propensities, norms, mores and values.

The examiners who are the prime target of this academic exhibition are the first to set the ball rolling by entering the Divine presence (either barefooted or in socks) to be followed latter by others.

### **Occupancy Rating**

Owing to the size and space of the inner part of the structure which is approximately 366cm x 305cm, it is estimated that a maximum of ten people should be admitted at a time for a period of thirty minutes without intensive expatiation but a maximum of forty-five minutes for all questions.

The time and number of viewers for the outer space could exceed the stipulated quota. However this should be after the official examination when **docents** would take over the expatiation. Two **docents** would be available for group-viewers, tourists or individuals who wish for explanations.

## **Security**

To avoid “liberation” or “inadvertent exchange of shoes,” two or more security personnel or any qualified individuals would be detailed to present each entrant with a tally card which should afterwards be returned for the correspondent foot wear.

However, hand bags or any accompanying baggage are carried by the owner if s/he so wishes. Otherwise, the same process of “tallying” would be effected.

## **Special Consideration**

Provision is made for the physically challenged who could access the facility with clutches and wheel chairs. However only wheel chairs measuring less than 75cm in width could enter through the door.

As the exhibition is taking place at the University Museum, facilities for catering for nature’s calls are available. However, portable joining facilities would be available when the Exhibition is mounted at an open space elsewhere for the public.

So ends the episode of the Exhibition which has obviously alerted you as to what to expect and to be required of when we leave for the Exhibition. The full analyses of the paintings just described are observable at the museum for where we are presently to leave. But before that, I request that someone amongst you rejuvenates us with *mmoguo* as some of you seem so haggard

having sat through such lengthy a story. You are to enjoy yourselves with dancing and/or clappings to release stress and boredom as you arduously join in the chorus already floating in the atmosphere. As we do justice to this hilarious interlude, I entreat all and sundry to quietly file out to the exhibition centre to fete our eyes and senses.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **“ETHNIC CENTRE”: AN ICONOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION**

#### **Introduction**

The project which I have labelled as “Union of Clans,” is employed as a metaphor of the hybrid unification of the Asante clans as does the Golden Stool which signifies similar type of union of the Asante people. This pictogram is an idiom employed as metaphor to further denote the unifying authority (in spite of all dissensions) of the Golden Stool and for that matter the Asantes. The unification factor which is the function of the unitary authority of the Golden Stool is appropriated to recreate an idiom which could personify the conglomeration of the eight official classifications of Asantes.

The kiosk is purposefully adopted as a befitting idiom by virtue of its four sides which could provide eight surfaces (considering the inner and outer surfaces) for visually representing each



of the Akan clans. The background of the art piece also has similarity with the *Sika Dwa Kofi* and the creation of the Asante Confederacy. Rural-urban migration and the influx of foreigners to sojourn together as one people within the confines of one city, Kumasi, has resulted in congestion at the city centre and the creation of numerous make-shift kiosks for commercial and social activities thus the creation of the make-shift structure–kiosk. The kiosk therefore reflects various cultures unified under the folds of Kumasi.

Moreover, the hybrid structure which, was created out of different panels linked together is a metaphoric medium due to its ability and viability to represent linking, de-linking and collapsibility, bundling together, being transported across several spaces or boundaries of places to be unified again.

#### **Iconography: The Outer Sections Front View: (Section 1) The *Bretuo* Clan**

The project which is a life-size kiosk measures 244cm high at the front view and 216cm at the rear. The front view measures 305cm and is partitioned into three parts. Starting from the left, the first two panels measure 244cm high and 122cm long. The third is 244cm high and 61cm long. Each of the compartments is divided into two equal parts that could be folded inwards on hinges. On the lower section of the upper part of the second panel is a window which opens upward on hinges to be propped with a 5 x 5cm wood. The front elevation consists of seven compartments covered with different paintings.

This section which is the frontal part is dedicated to the Bretuo Clan. The members of the clan are noted for their bravery which has thus earned them the title *Aberempɔn* or *Sabarima*.

*Barima a ɔso akoraban kye*. (The warrior with the hat of feathers), (Kantanka, n.d., p.64). In

war times the leader of the battalion should be a brave warrior and as the Bretuos are noted for their bravery, dedication of the front view is made to them.

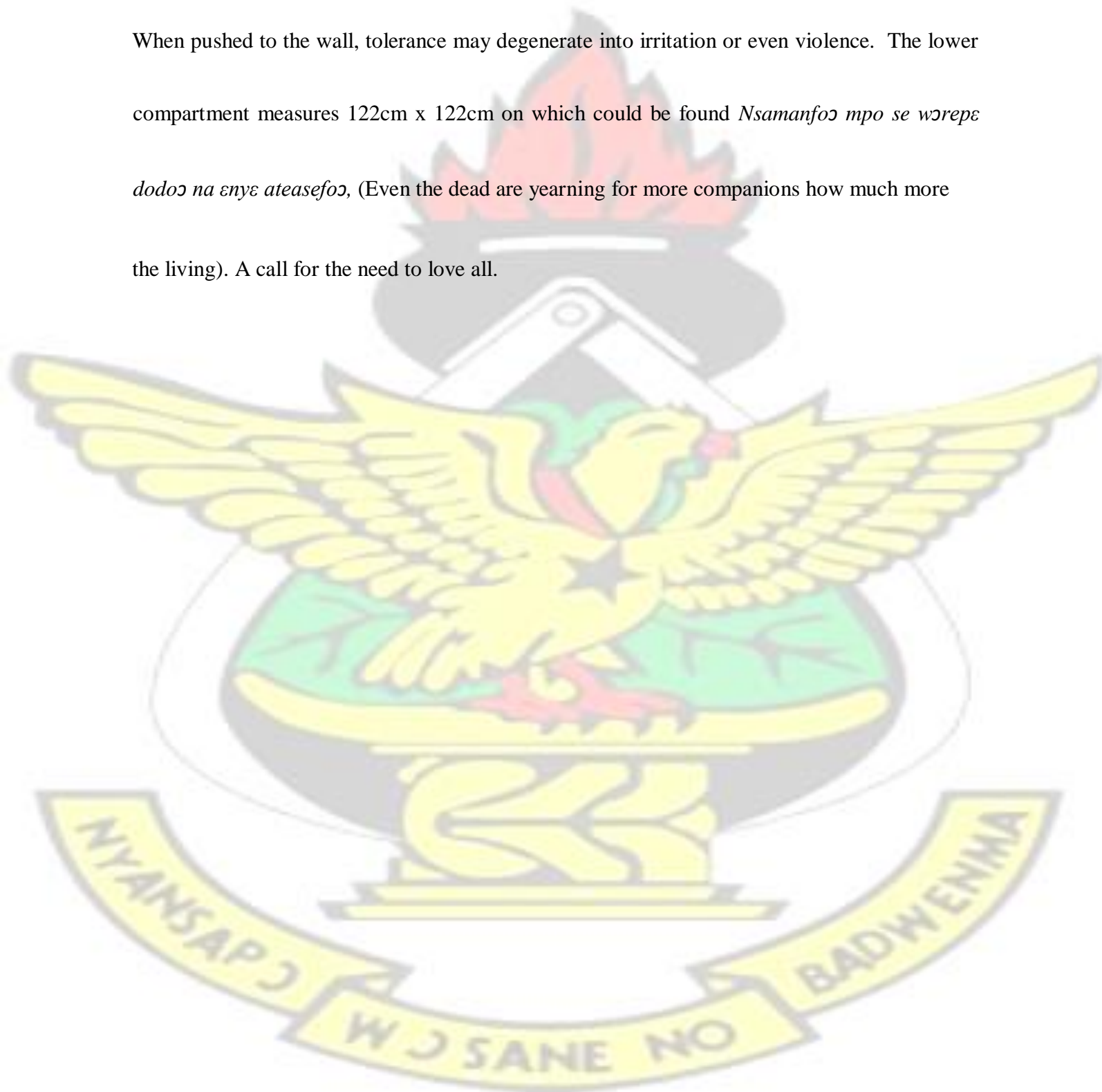
Commencing from the extreme left and in a clockwise motion, taking each entire panel (top and bottom) before the next, (which prevails throughout the exhibition), it could be seen on the upper compartment of the first panel a representation of the clan's totem which is *Kurotwiamansa*, the leopard. On the lower part of the first panel is a painting titled *Kurotwiamansa de ne ho hu na ewen n' afuo*, implying names carry certain significations and influences.

The upper part of the second panel has *Kurotwiamansa Gyansaabofo, wo to no tuo a, wo sɛe wo akoraboɔ*. (Better not attempt impossible ventures to worsen situations). Bite what you can chew. The window which occupies the lower portion of the upper part has the title *ɔsebo kwakora, ɔnkɔkyere aboa nanso aboa biara ntwɔ mu wɔ n'nim*. (The old leopard does not go ahunting, yet no prey ever crosses him). Never under estimate another. Below it is the picture titled *Sɛ wo bu ɔkɔɔ kwasea a, Onyame hwɛ wo din*. (God sees you as you cheat the crab). Nothing is hidden to God, and note that you are bound to be rewarded at the appropriate time. On the extreme right is *Sɛ abirekyie ani nnsɔ adeɛ a, na enye nankwaaseni ponoso*. (The goat could not be rude at the butcher's table). Look before you leap; consider before taking any action. And finally, *Sɛ Onyame nkum wo a, ɔteasefoɔ yɛ kwa*. (One's destiny could not be changed by another). In spite of the colourful paintings, the whole section looks more like any other wall with murals. As one would not easily identify the wall of a hybridized kiosk from any ordinary one, one has to be in close proximity for effective comparison, since one's bravery could not be displayed nor observed except at the battle field; as an Asante would say, "*sɛ Bɛkoe din sɛ no a, a, yɛ hu no wɔ ako no.*"

### **The Right Side View: (Section 2) The Asona Section**

It has three panels with equal lengths. The first consists of two parts. The upper measures 122cm high on the left but decreases slightly to 120cm on the right. The length is 122cm. It shows a painting with the title of *Aboa ɔwɔ se, ɔka anibere*. (The snake bites under duress).

When pushed to the wall, tolerance may degenerate into irritation or even violence. The lower compartment measures 122cm x 122cm on which could be found *Nsamanfoɔ mpo se wɔrepe dodoɔ na enye ateasefoɔ*, (Even the dead are yearning for more companions how much more the living). A call for the need to love all.







**The Front View ( Bretuo Clan ) as seen in the Museum**

**Figure 117. The Bretuo Section**

The middle panel has pictures of the two totems of the clan which are (a) The ‘Red Serpent’ on the upper panel and measures 118cm high on the left and 96 cm on the right side and has 122cm as the length. Then (b) The ‘Crow’ taking the lower part which has 122cm x 122cm as its dimension.

The third panel consists of the door and three other compartments. The door portrays two paintings which are *Toa na ɔpe na ahoma sa ne kɔn*; (decisions and choices in life are optional).

It has the dimension of 80cm x 44cm, and below it, *Futukokɔni ne ɔkɔɔ nsere afe korɔ mu*. (The creator has the allotted time for answering each individual's prayer at the right

time). It also measures 122cm x 80cm. The next picture, *Dodoɔ kyiri baako asem*, (the stranger is vulnerable), is the next above the door the height of which measures 37.5cm on the right side and 37.0cm on the left, with the length of 75.0cm. The stranger should mind his steps and mouth.

The next measures 122cm x 42cm and could be seen on the upper portion of the last panel.

Below it is a picture measuring 122 x 42 cm and titled "*ε wo de w;ano dɔ nwere a, ebi nwɔ wo*."

(Easier said than done). *Nyansapɔ wɔsane no ɔbadwenma*, (the knot of wisdom is unknotted only

by the intelligent), is the title of the last panel. Solution to a knotty problem requires a wistful

scheming. It requires corresponding energy for a particular task. This also has the dimension of

122 x 42cm

A lesson is here derived from the totems. Two animals with two dichotomous characteristics representing one people with common ancestry and interest. If these two creatures with different qualities are picked to co-exist, how can not mankind harmoniously fraternise with his/her specie.





**Fig. 118. The Asona Section**

**Back View: (Section 3) ɔyokoɔ**

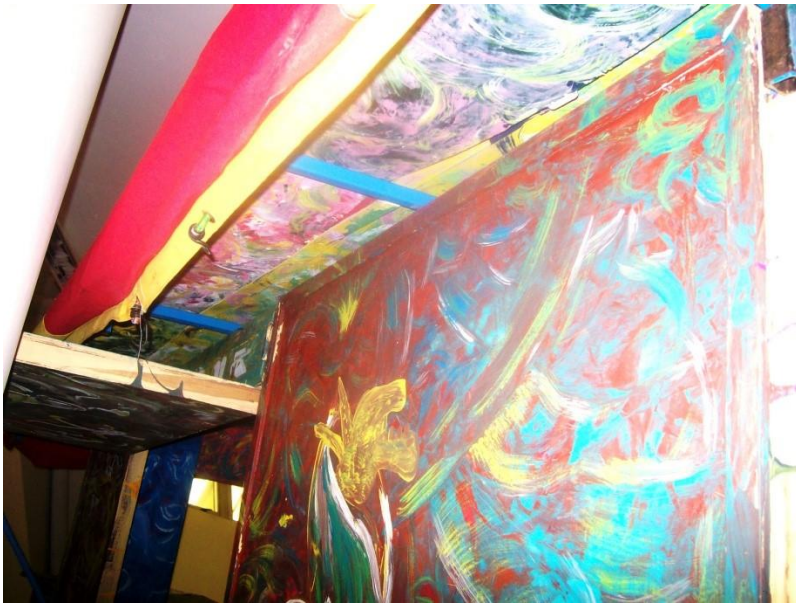
This is the ɔyokoɔ section of the clan house. It is comprised of three panels and six compartments covered with paintings. Each of the three panels is divided into two compartments joined together by hinges. But unlike the front view, which has two equal parts, the lower parts of the rear panels have bigger compartments than the upper.



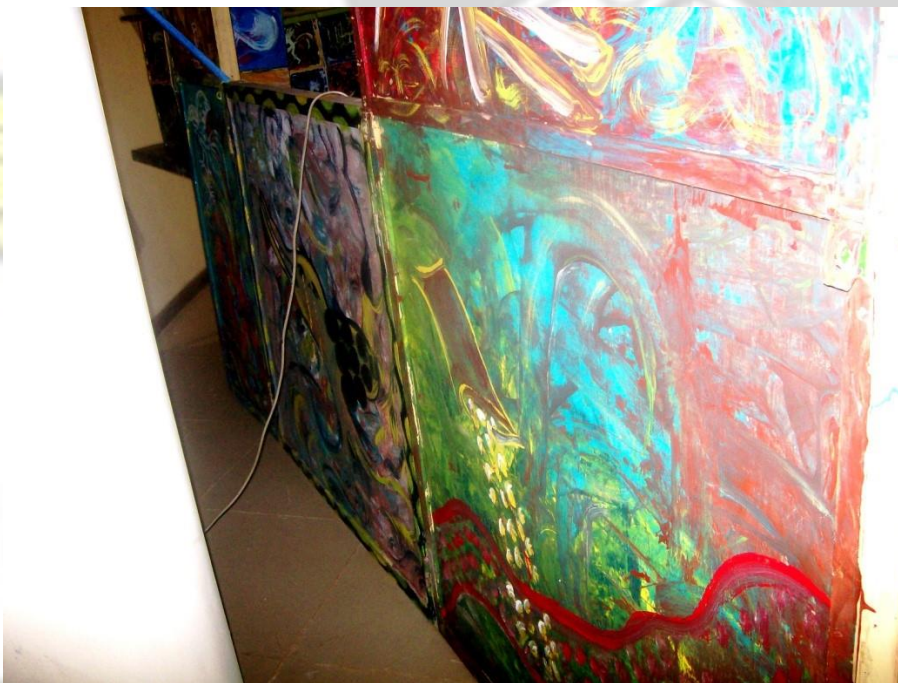
Standing behind the edifice and facing the rear view, the first panel on the left measures 216 x 61cm. The upper part of this first panel is 94cm high and 61cm long and plays host to a painting of *Akorɔma se 'komm ye akyi wɔ asem*. (We shouldn't misconstrue quietness for forgiveness). Subsequent to offending someone, an apology should be rendered even though the offended may not seem to be affected. The lower compartment has the picture of *Aserewa sua agyenkuku su a, ne to pae*; (cut your coat according to your size).

On the upper part of the middle section is the rear window above which is a compartment which has a picture of *ekaa deɛ onni ntoma nko a, anka daa yegoro asafo*, (preoccupation rids the mind of sorrow). It has the dimension of 28 x 122. The window takes the measurement of 76cm x 122cm and exhibits *Se atekye ka wo nantiri a, na aka wo to*. (One's problem is a problem for the community and all should be concerned). The next which has similar measurement like the upper compartment has the title “ *se antie ne ɔnwam atikɔ pɔ*.” (It is incumbent on each member of society to heed to advice).

The other panel measures 122 x 94cm. The top section portrays *Botire nyera wɔ nkwan mu*; (a significant asset could not be overlooked). The lower measures 122 x 122cm. On it is *ɛnye nkyene bɔtɔ na ebetere Firaw mu*. (A problem of enormous dimension should be treated with



**The Upper Part**



**Figure 119. The ɔyokoɔ Section**

**The Lower Part**

utmost seriousness). The back view, like the frontal part, has similar appearances *Ketebɔ ne*



*ɔkotere se edin dee nanso wɔnse honam.* When this project is evaluated it would not be any more different from most kiosks but for the paintings some sort of aberration is created.

#### **The left side view: (Section 4) Asakyiri**

The left side view has three segments. The first panel is the shortest and measures 216cm on the left side. The extreme right side (slightly ascends) and measures 218cm high. The upper part of this panel measures 94cm on the left and 96 cm on the right, and has the length of 122cm. It exhibits a painting titled *Se kɔkɔsakyi kasa kyere bonukyerefo a, ɔte no abebuo mu.*

(There is enough wisdom hidden in proverbs). The lower part measures 122 x 122cm. It displays *Anomaa kɔdeɛ Bresiam, aboa bi se ɔsen no a , na eye ntakra hunu.* He is the first in strength among all fowls. Asakyiri is alleged to be the first clan to be created. (Kantanka, n. d. p.62).

The second panel, like the first, possesses a measurement that steadily ascends on the right side. On the left it measures 218 cm high and on the extreme right 240cm. The upper part measures 96 cm on the left and 118 cm on the right side and has 122cm as the length. *Anomaa kɔdeɛ Bresiam, otu a, ne nan mu mmogya bum,* is the picture it portrays. The strength and power to achieve one's wishes. With determination or strong will power anything could be achieved.

The lower part measures 122cm x 122cm and have the picture of *Asamankwan, ebi re korɔ, na ebi re ba.* (Reincarnation is an existing phenomenon). Death is therefore imminent to all, no matter one's strength or wisdom. We should therefore accord each and everyone the due love and respect.



The major part of the third panel is taken by the door which measures 200cm x 80cm. The door has two stories to tell (1) *Adee nsaae a, nkwanta nyera*. (Information could be found so long as the aged are not dead and gone); and below it is (2) *enyɛ kwaɛ mu na ɔdenkyem didie*; (there is time and /or place for everything). Above the door is a painting which also has something to tell about *Kɔkɔsakyi nana a, ɔnom kudo mu nsuo*. (With proper scheming, seemingly impossible feats could be achieved).

On the right side of the door are two rectangular compartments. The upper measures 42cm long x 122cm high and is adorned with *Esie mu da kwan a aboa biara wura mu bi*. (No matter the level of your intelligence, even the fool would reproach you when you commit an act of folly); therefore consider before taking any action. The lower part measures 122cm high and 42cm long. On the surface of which is a painting with the title of *Yesoma onyansani na yensoma anamɔntenten*. (A square peg should not be put in a round hole). Everything should be done speculatively and accordingly.

### **The Inner Parts**

Unlike the outer parts of the panels the inner ones which are exact replicas in reverse, are not bordered with batons which could obstruct the easy foldability of the panels. Like the outer, any compartment has a different story to tell with themes derived from the folklores of the Asantes.

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**Figure 120. The Asakyiri Section**

## Section 5: The Aseneɛ Clan

When one enters through the main entrance which is at the left side view, the eyes are seduced to variegated colours. Care should thus be taken to view the paintings sequentially.

Turning 180 degrees towards the left brings into view the inner part of the left side view.

Before the viewer is the door which is swung inwards on the right side view of the structure. On the left of the doorway is a vertical panel measuring 244cm high and 42cm long. It is compartmentalized into two parts. The upper measures 122cm high on the extreme left and 120cm on the right side with the breadth as 42cm.

It proudly presents the bat as one of the totems of the clan. The lower compartment which has a similar dimension comfortably cradles the second totem of the clan-the Robin.

On top of the doorway is a rectangular frame with a picture and measures 80cm as the length and 44cm high on the left and 40cm on the extreme right. It has this title *Dua kontokyi na ema ye hu odwumfoɔ*. One's level of sagacity is determinant by his actions or inactions in times of dire crisis.

The door measures 200cm high and 80cm as the breadth and has two paintings. The upper one, 80 x 44cm, concerns itself with *Kweɛ a agye wo no yemfre no kwaɛɛ wa*. The Asantes are noted for their appreciative gestures no matter how trivial the service may seem. Then follows the usual gratitude; *me da wo ase paa, Onyame nhyira wo*. Thank you; may God bless you. The lower picture measures 122 x 80cm and shows *Se akwadaa hu ne nsa hohoro a, ɔne mpanin na edidi*. (The young should be humble always). Inculcation of humility.



On the upper section of the middle panel which measures 240 cm high on the left and on the extreme right 218cm high, has the caption of *Sɛ ɛkraman nim sɛ ne ba bewu a, anka ɛtɔn no gyee dompe*. (Had I known is the symptom of irreversibility). The painting below it is 122 x122cm and is titled *Adammɔ firi fie*. (The 'home' is the cradle of sagacity).

The third panel like any other, consists of two parts and displays paintings on both parts. The one on top measures 98cm high on the left side and 94cm at the right end with the length if 122cm. It tells the story of *Ahemfo kyiniɛ, ebi didi ebi akyi*. (There are hierarchical processes in every institution). The lower part measures 122cm x 122cm and tells a story about *Sɛ adeɛ tɔ ntetea bɔn mu a, wɔn ara na eyie*. (Family disputes are supposed to be settled internally).

Soiled clothes are not publicly displayed.

### **Section 6: The Agona Clan**

Turning to the right hand side, the immediate two pictures on the extreme left end of the panels are proverbs concerning the totem of the Agona clan. The upper part which measures 94x122cm bears the caption of *Nkwankyɛn borɔdeɛ, nwaawae ho na amma anyɛ yie*. (Any effect has a causal agent). The lower measuring 122 x122cm, has *Nea wawu nnim kata wo ho*. (Death is the sealer of the senses).

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Figure 121. Part of the Asenee Section

The next picture which is above the window has the dimension of 18 x122cm and the title of *Se antie ne ɔnwam atikɔ pɔ*. (Disobedience bears the fruit of catastrophe). On the window is *Nyansa kotokuo nse ɔbaakofoɔ*. (No one can claim to be all-knowing). At the bottom of the central panel which is 122 x122cm and directly under the window is the picture of the *Ako*, parrot, which is the totem of the Agona clan. The saying goes that *Mmoa nyinaa ara di abɛ, ako nko ara na ne din atene*. (Many creatures enjoy the palm nut yet the parrot is singled out). Whatever you intend doing, perform it with all your might so that you will be recognized and remembered with it.

Then follows the last panel on the extreme right of the Agona section which has on the upper part a picture measuring 122 x 62cm and the heading of *Adwaman kotokuo, ɔbaakofoɔ nse*. (The act of selective judgement should be abhorred). Below it is a picture with similar dimension. *ɔkotere nkɔwe mmako mma aponkyerene nhuhu n'ano*. (One cannot suffer for another's misdeeds nor enjoy the fruit of another's labour).

### **Section 7: The Aduana Clan**

Next, in the clockwise direction, is the *Aduana* portion. It is the back of the right side view of the kiosk. The upper compartment of the first panel on the immediate left measures 122 x42cm and displays a story concerning the totems of the clan, - dog, displaying between its fangs,



the allegedly first brand of fire. Below it and with similar measurement, and on the same panel is what is headed as *Anomaa mfa dua abufu*. (The source of one's sustenance should not, through anger, be destroyed).

Next after it is the section on top of the door. It has the dimension of 21cm high on the left and 32cm high on the right with the length of 80cm. The painting has the caption of *Nsatea korɔ mfa boba*. (It requires the collective effort of all to propel the community ahead). Below it comes *Aketekyiwa se onni animuonyam a, anka ɔne mpaninfoɔ mmɔ dwa*. As said earlier each one has his/her role in society and should be accorded the due recognition. This picture adorns the upper part of the back of the door on the ride side view and measures 80 x44cm. Below it is the dimension of 122x80cm and displays *Sɛ ɔbosom beku wo a, ɔmmɔ wo boɔ*. (Action speaks louder than words). They are interpreted without actual words.

On the upper compartment of the panel next after the door is a picture with the title *Aponkyerene se onim n'anomeɛ nti, sɛ ɔrekɔ asou a, na okita ne korowa*. (We should always be prepared for eventualities). On the left it measures 96cm high and on the extreme right 118cm. Below it is *Sɛ yɛ ɔɔwo wo to sie so a, wonkyɛ tenten yɛ*. (Not all men are endowed with equal opportunities). It has the measurement of 122 x122cm.

Then *Onyame mmfa ne boɔ ntem na wa to*. God is ever patient and loving. It measures 240 cm high on the left end and 244 on the right with the length of 122cm, and the last which measures 122 x122cm portrays *ɔbaa tɔn nyaadewa na ɔntɔn atuduro*. (One could afford to purchase expensive clothes but what would be the essence if they couldn't be worn)?. No matter

the height of ambition, a goal might be set but within confines. We should tread with caution to avoid 'going beyond bounds.'



**Figure 122. The Agona Section**



Is it always true that “birds of the same feather flock together?” I have seen a white married to an African, a royal marrying a slave and one from the academia marrying an illiterate. A dog has no much commonalities with the frog but how come they are symbols of unison to a particular clan? Is it not taking a swipe at segregation?

### Section 8: the *Ekona* Clan

From the *Aduana* wing of the house the next on the right is the *ekona* which occupies the reverse of the front view. Facing the wall, the first on the extreme left measures 122 x 61cm and proudly presents *Hu m'aniso ma me nti na atwe mmienu nam*. (One should assist another in time of trouble or hardship). Below it is *Korowa a, eda nsuo ani nsuro awɔ*. (We should be conditioned for eventualities). It is similar in dimension with the upper one.

Above the next panel which plays host to the window is *Hwerema na etwetwe dwom* Every effect has a cause. It has the dimension of 46 x 122cm. Below it is the window which measures 76 x 122cm. It exhibits *Kotokuo te a, na abatire ahome*. (Nothing is entirely a mishap). It is the picture of the clan's totem, the buffalo which adorns the surface measuring 122 x 122cm. It is obtrusively placed at a conspicuous position. Because of its size, it could not be possibly lost to sight. The Buffalo could not be killed without dire consequences; as goes the saying *Sɛ wo bekum aboa ɔtorɔmo (anaa ekɔɔ) adware sasaduro deɛ, gyae no ma ɔnkɔ*. (One requires spiritual



fortification against the haunting of the soul of the buffalo, Therefore buffalo should be left alone if one is not prepared for spiritual protection for killing it).



**Figure 123. The Aduana Section**

Measuring 122 x122cm, the next after it which occupies the top of the extreme right position is titled *Yennsan kokurobotie ho mmə pɔ*. (Nothing could be achieved in life without divine intervention). The next at the bottom with the dimension of 122 x122cm, and obviously the last picture in the exhibition is *Kontonkuronwi da amansan nyinaa kən mu*. (Death seals the end of physical life). Due to eventuality of death, life should be schemed so as to bequeath a reasonable legacy to society or at least the family.

On this part of the kiosk is the window. In the opposite direction is the back view which also provides the other window built ostensibly for ventilation. Why are the windows not placed on the bigger sides which could accommodate the door and a window each but positioned on the smaller sides? Providence is a fair distributor of resources. Each one is endowed with certain qualities and has a role to play in the family, the community and nation building.

Gazing through the window after minutes of eye-feasting, one is attracted to another scene elsewhere which adds to the beauty of the exhibition when observed.

### **The ceiling**

The ceiling was comprised of joined pieces of plywood cut in accordance with the measurements of the metal rafts of the ceiling which run in parallel lines towards the rear of the upper part of the tarpaulin which forms the roof of the structure. It has 366 x 305 cm as its dimension excluding the outer parts. The actual dimension including the outer parts is 426 cm x 365cm.



On the surface of the ceiling are five paintings depicting the religion of the Asantes. Contrary to the paintings on the plywood of the outer wall, those on the ceiling, like the internal paintings, are not bordered. They fuse together as one large painting but with different scenes and activities epitomizing the thematic compositions of all the eight clans which involve religion - activities for survival, reverence to the creator and the fear of death.

One of the most ethically significant uncertainties of life is death. Death is the ultimate end of man by which the future which generates uncertainty and anxiety could be projected. The future which is full of uncertainties, anxieties and inevitable death has cowed man to be conscious and cautious of supernatural forces that exist and capable of affecting his life. The knowledge of a supreme force which is the ultimate forms the basis of belief on which is centred religion.

The Asantes, as well as any human out of anxiety as to what lays ahead (the future) (Magill, 1961, p.629), strives to connect to the supernatural force through lesser deities. This has led to going any lengths to appease or to please the supreme deity.

To achieve this certain rites and ceremonies are to be performed to the power that be, a supreme force. Consequently, various means- religion, which evolves out of this belief has led to diverse religions based on particular beliefs.

Turning the back to the main entrance, in the central position of the ceiling is the representation of the supreme Deity who is thought of as covering the whole firmament and the earth with his glory Psalms 57:5, some of which are his attributes which are depicted with circular forms. These round forms are just his attributes and qualities, for I perceive the Supreme



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**Figure 124. The Ekoon Section**

Deity as having no specific figure with which he could be represented. The rest are the means-religion (through which he communes with his creatures).

The immediate picture on the right above is the traditional religion. The next after it, (the picture in the right side corner) is the Christian religion. Turning ninety degrees anti – clockwise, the symbol of Islamic religion is observed at the left corner. The next is that of the “non-denominational.” They have their religion and communicate with their creator personally without any particular means. I term theirs as “Private religion.”

*Se anomaa antu a, obuada.* Mindful of the Devine Providence-(the Supreme Creator), man has to carefully but diligently strive for his daily bread, clothing, shelter, a name in society and above all a good future after death.

These are paintings which depict religion around which evolves the beliefs, values, mores and norms which constitute the core of folklore. It is titled survival. Humans are conscious of a supreme force which could be appealed to in times of crisis. This force is frequently prayed to, offered gifts in diverse forms and given thanks in multiplicities of ways in accordance with each particular religion.

As they strife for recognition and blessings from their creator, so does the viewer who cranes the neck. As mankind struggles to survive so is the viewer who intends to feast his eyes. S/he is also before the creator seeking his blessings as well observing his attributes.

These paintings could be well observed only by an upward thrust of the chin whilst strenuously taking in what directly confront the pupils of the eyes, threatening to push back the up-thrust face which eventually gives in after a seemingly courageous but futile attempt to repel the wavelengths emitted, probably from the representation of the Supreme Deity. In spite of the





**Figure 125. Painting the Ceiling**



**Figure 126. The Painted ceiling**

‘fete’ of the eyes, one afterwards freely breaths with relief after the ordeal meted on the neck.

A message of *gye se wo bre*, nothing is freely gained, is thus sent. Sweet results from sweat, and gain from pain.



## The Floor

The floor is made up of three types of woollen carpet. It spans beyond the inner perimeters of the kiosk to form the veranda. The outer caters for the veranda and then a fraction of the inner part. The inner one, the largest in size, supports the outer and the central one. The last is the one which covers the central part of the floor and is supported by the inner one.

The floor is the personification of *Asaase Yaa* who is the wife of the supreme Being, (Arthur, 2004 p.21). Her appellations is *Asaase Yaa Amponyinamoa a ne so wɔ akwan dodoɔ, binibiara firine mu na ɛsan kɔ ne mu*. The Great *Asaase Yaa* on whose surfaces are abundance of paths; from her emerges everything and to her returns everything (Arthur, 2004 p.21), and Ecclesiastics: 3:20. Even Man. Gen. 3:19/Ecclesiastes 12:7. *Ade nyinaa firi Asaase mu*.

On her surface are the representations of the various categories of deities. Turning ninety degrees on the right hand side, with the back facing the exit doorway, the immediate painting on the right is the symbol of the river gods/goddesses. At the centre is *Maame Wata*, -one of the deities who, as children of God, act as intermediaries for men, (Arthur, 2004, p.21)). Even though they were all created by God, whether these gods mediate between man and God is another question.

## General analysis

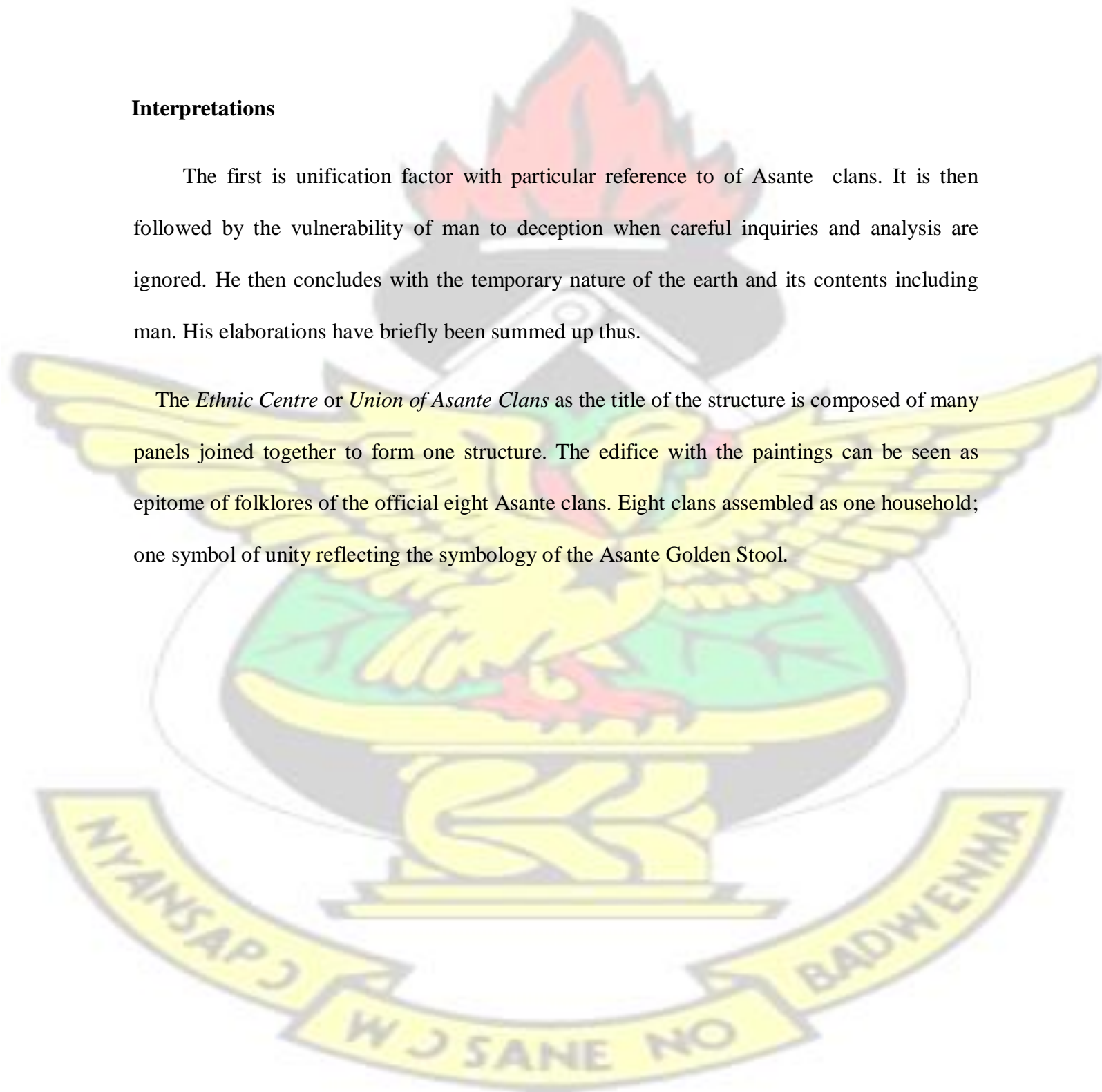
To sum up, there is the saying that *ketebɔ ne ɔketerɛ sɛ din dɛɛ, na wɔnɛ honam mu*. (The gecko and the lizard look alike but they are not the same). Two different things may look alike yet they are not the same. The structure may look like any other kiosk in the metropolis yet it appears alien owing to its nature of eclecticism and psychical expedience. It could be observed

as an epitome of multiple shapes of sections. Even though they are of different dimensions and pictures, each section has a special role to play in the mythographical statements. Each perfectly fits into its aperture or position thus creating a shapeup regarding the evaluation of the finesse of the structure and the harmonious frieze.

### **Interpretations**

The first is unification factor with particular reference to of Asante clans. It is then followed by the vulnerability of man to deception when careful inquiries and analysis are ignored. He then concludes with the temporary nature of the earth and its contents including man. His elaborations have briefly been summed up thus.

The *Ethnic Centre* or *Union of Asante Clans* as the title of the structure is composed of many panels joined together to form one structure. The edifice with the paintings can be seen as epitome of folklores of the official eight Asante clans. Eight clans assembled as one household; one symbol of unity reflecting the symbology of the Asante Golden Stool.





**Figure 127. The floor**

**(a) Unity (Globalisation)**

This symbol of unity, though in diversity, when viewed from afar, is perceived as confetti of colours emanating from a single painting, but is it the actual fact? Does it not confirm the corny Akan axiom *Abusua te se kwaee, wo wo akyiri a ebo mu koro na woben ho a na wohu se dua koro biara wo ne si bere?* Literarily, the family is akin to a forest which is seen as one compacted foliage when observed from a distance, but perceived as assemblage of separate trees



when one draws closer. In spite of spaces, the trees, plants and shrubs are predestined to a potpourri of conglomeration.

Different groups coming together as one identity, -Asante. Different identities come together as one nation. Diverse nations observed as one continent, and various continents together observed as one global commune.

### **b) Deceit (Trompe l'oeil)**

The pictures constitute the symbols of the individual clans and the folklores of the Asantes. When observed at close range, the paintings depicting the various totems and myths can be identified individually, but it is a different story when seen from afar. There is here observed deception subsequent to distance, as appearance may be deceptive since Ethnic Centre could be seen as one big painting representing the various Asante clans.

### **c) Impermanence**

As scenes change with distance so are details in each painting. As one's perception changes with distance so does the mode of thinking in relation with perception. The mental acuity of a human is therefore not static. Subsequently, human is in constant flux. Distance can then be equated with time, it evokes changes. What was considered as news or wondrous yesteryears may not be similarly perceived today. This is a confirmation of what was said by Heraclitus that

“No water could be twice stepped into;” a correlation with the Akan maxim *ɛmmere dane*. (Time changes). And if times do change so does everything especially art. It behoves man, consequently, to accept and to adapt to change.

Having dealt with the analyses of the studio works with which you have just been junketed at the museum, the story draws to a close with this last chapter which deals with the summation of the entire project, the results or findings and then conclusion to finally land with very valuable recommendations.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **SUMMARY, RESULTS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary of Results**

Through field-studies of the architectural constructions of the kiosks in Kumasi metropolis, and exploration of Asante folklore, four hybrid art works were created which had iconographic, spatial, structural and aesthetic relations with painted sculpture in the round.

The hybrid art works involved installations of three painted miniatures and one life-size hybrid sculptural structure. These were composed of (a) Miniature 1, (b) Miniature 2, (c) The Prototype and (d) The Life-size artistic edifice. Each of the sculptural edifices was assembled in a knock-down fashion to facilitate dismantling and transportation from one exhibition site to another. The life-size type titled *Union of Asante clans* is considered as the major art work of the Studio based research.

Above that, the folklore of the people within the Asante Union and particularly their art forms were also critically observed to be laden with mythological themes which were usually composed of proverbs. These were utilized as catalysts for the production of mythological paintings on the said sculptural pieces. Events and ideas taken from Asante folklore formed the basis for the iconography of the paintings which visually explored mythology on the hybrid structures.

The iconography of the paintings was explored with a new technique in painting developed by the researcher which he very effectively employed. This style of painting coined “Aberphoh” translated as ‘new’ or ‘current’ and termed ‘natelo’ style of painting enabled the researcher or specifically the hero of this story who happens to be myself, to iconographise my paintings which were derived from the composite of surrealism, humour and fantasy.

With the *aberphoh* style of painting, the totemic Asante symbols were visually portrayed. Various paintings were composed from Asante proverbs and myths. The new technique in painting involves treating a background in the likeness of chaotic forms. It is perceived to be the representation of chaos, which is also part of the creation.- Art.

It implies that out of chaos (according to the Christians’ holy book), emerged the art of creation, hence the presentation of such chaotic background out of which emerges orderliness-



Art. Surrealistic images representing the theoretical idea were then created to seemingly merge with the background. Spaces were advertently left to create breaks in the form. The absence of such obvious or seemingly imperceptible clue in the art work which appear in the form of breaks to disjoint a form, creates a vacuum. (For instance, the neck and shoulders of a human body could be omitted to be continued with the hands and the torso and may ignore the waist and continue with the legs which may also be disjointed). A vacuum expected to be filled through the imagination and creativity of the viewer. In an attempt to supply the missing connection(s), s/he (the viewer), is therefore intrigued and implicated, thus drawn into the shoes of the artist. S/he imagines, mentally visualizes and substitutes the absence with a presence that might even be more appreciable. (At least to him/her) than what might have been intended by the artist.

Philosophically, what we all perceive are but “the shadows” of the very perfect things as said Paul. He is in support of Peter who claims that there are perfect places not built by hand. Definitely not by man but by God himself. These assertions reinforce the idea of the theory of forms propounded by Plato.

The creator of Aberphoh asserts that, “Creation was made, possibly, by bringing together the ‘shadows’ of these very perfect things.” The conglomeration of variegated “shadows” would definitely result in disorderliness – chaos. The Master Artist, God, had to perform his creation by re-allocating the “shadows” to their designated places. Out of the chaos or “shadows” therefore emerged everything through art. With this exquisite philosophy behind his technique, the paintings were observed to command intense awesome reverence.

## **“Union of Asante Clans” in the Exhibition Setting**

The project works which portray the eight clans of the Asantes are symbolic of the union of the Asante State. The art works personify hybridism, visually explore mythography and serve as the conglomerate of the eight clans of the Asantes. In view of the personification of the project work, it is endowed with the tendency of being exhibited as an outstanding project.. “An act derives its moral worth not from its form but from its utility.” John Stuart Mill. Ethics; in Magill. (1961, p. 654). However this project is an art of creation that derives its worth from its form as well as its utility. The utility of visually exploring hybridity and mythography. The utility of also fulfilling the aesthetic aspect of art through the appeal to the visual senses.

In spite of the elsewhere mentioned ethnographical significations, (specifically in chapter two), the aesthetic quality and the function of the project could not be gloated over without ‘wilfully causing academic losses’ if such a law were to exist.

At this current dispensation of modernism, almost anything could be possibly achieved with proper scheming. What might have been considered impossibility yesteryears is actually currently taking place and even thriving. Various types of architectural edifices could now be moved over many ‘borders’ ‘spaces’ and ‘passages’ to other locations not mentioning compounds, fields or parks.

The project could be considered as synthesis of the said buildings (that have structural walls) and tents (that could be easily folded and transported). The project maintains the traits of the permanent edifice as well as the foldability of the temporary shelter of the tent. Murals are usually meant to be on walls and permanently stationary as the walls and paintings are perpetually immobile. The project is a syncretism of the architecture and the mural that could



be easily transported where and when desired. It therefore possesses the quality of disseminating the unified value of the Asante State through its “Portable Exhibitions.”

Dualism in the use of space was achieved by the disjointable nature of “Union of Asante clans.” Exhibitions are normally created indoors as well as outdoors. The project has the qualities of being exhibited as an art piece indoor as well as outdoor. It therefore embodies the utilitarianism of both spaces of exhibition. As an art piece, it could be exhibited indoor as well as outdoor. (Figures 128-132).

It could be dismantled to serve the purpose of “wall” and “floor” indoor art pieces. The project work could be collapsed and exhibited as separate art works or paintings hung on the walls of an exhibition centre. The same art works could be exhibited as embodiment of painting and sculpture when folded in ‘A’ shapes on the floor of an exhibition centre. (Figures 131-132)

As out-door exhibition, it could be dismantled as different art pieces and exhibited in the open. The upper ends of two separate pieces could be put together as they open wide at the base like the shape of letter ‘A,’ (Figure 132).





**Figure 128. As In-door Art Work**



**Figure 129. As Out-door Art Work**



**Figure 130. Hanging on wall as separate pieces**

**Figure 131. As separate pieces indoors**



**Figure 132. As separate entities outdoors**

With synthesis as the underpinning motive, the project slightly, if not much, differs from those reviewed earlier above, while seeking to have certain gray areas explored and exploited.

Other hybrid artists who, though aim at synthesis, work in different strata other than that of this project. That is not all. The mythological messages derived from the folklores of the Asantes have well been portrayed as a major part of hybridity. From the mythological messages, one does not need to be tutored as regards the effect of art on mythology and vice versa, while the full effect of hybridity and mythography is cocooned in few sentences in the conclusion.

## Conclusion

Let us briefly enjoy one or two more *mmoguo* as we draw near the rim of the story.

*Asante Kɔtɔkɔ wɔyaa! wɔyaa ee,*

*yenim ko oo! yennim adwane oo,*

*wɔyaa!! D/C*

*Asante Kɔtɔkɔ osee yee,*

*Yee, yee-ee!*

*Asante Kɔtɔkɔ oo, yee!*

*Asante Kɔtɔkɔ oo, yee !! D/C\**

\*A patriotic and war song portraying the bravery and strength of Asantes whose slogan is “Asante Kɔtɔkɔ.”

The project’s capability of seamlessly interfacing one artistic idiom with another as the means of artistic production was manifested in the said idioms of painting, sculpture and architecture through the construction and painting on the inner and outer sections of the three miniatures and one life-size structure to conceptually personify hybridity and mythography.

Myths are usually beyond the physical realm; themes for the project were derived from mythologies and proverbs. Words like *Asamando ye sum*, the ancestral world is dark, *ɛwiase ye mmienu*, (there are two different worlds); *Asamankwan obiara befa so bi*, (the road to the



underworld is open to all), etc, portray the belief in the existence of the spiritual realm which plays a major role in Asantes myths. Songs like *Se obi reba a, mane yen, asamankwan ware yen*, and many others attest to this fact of metaphysical realm where lives the godly, (Abaawa Mary, 2008, p.3).

Through the research, the course of Hybrid Art was sufficiently championed by successfully manipulating Space, Form and Time by observation of the Kumasi kiosk which resulted in the creation of four hybrid structures to effect hybridity.

Through the research, *Aberphoh* a philosophical concept or theory I have developed came to light especially, its technique in painting which considers the passages between surrealism, abstraction, fantasy and process art. This technique was utilized to execute mythography which resulted from studying Asante folklore.

The artistic edifice effectively explored the in-betweens of the blocks and compartments of Asante folklore while aesthically the boundaries of painting, architecture and sculpture were effectively negotiated. Through the aesthetics, the conceptual and physical aspects of hybridity were demonstrated while from the folklore, thematic theorization was employed.

Three major philosophical concepts derived were -

- (1) Unity- the power inherent in unification.
- (2) Deception- how appearance could be deceptive and the need for critical appraisal of every situation
- (3) Impermanence and transience. All nature keeps changing towards one destination -death. Every thing is in a flux. The idea developed into a research which also developed into a report and finally transformed into a book.



## Recommendations

I have begun a transcription of this manuscript. It is intended to be mass-produced and disseminated as an extension to the installation project.

The multipurpose hybrid structure is also recommended for mass production as mobile exhibition centres. The transcribed book and the multipurpose art piece, like anything in the universe, will gradually wear, tear and eventually deteriorate and be no more.

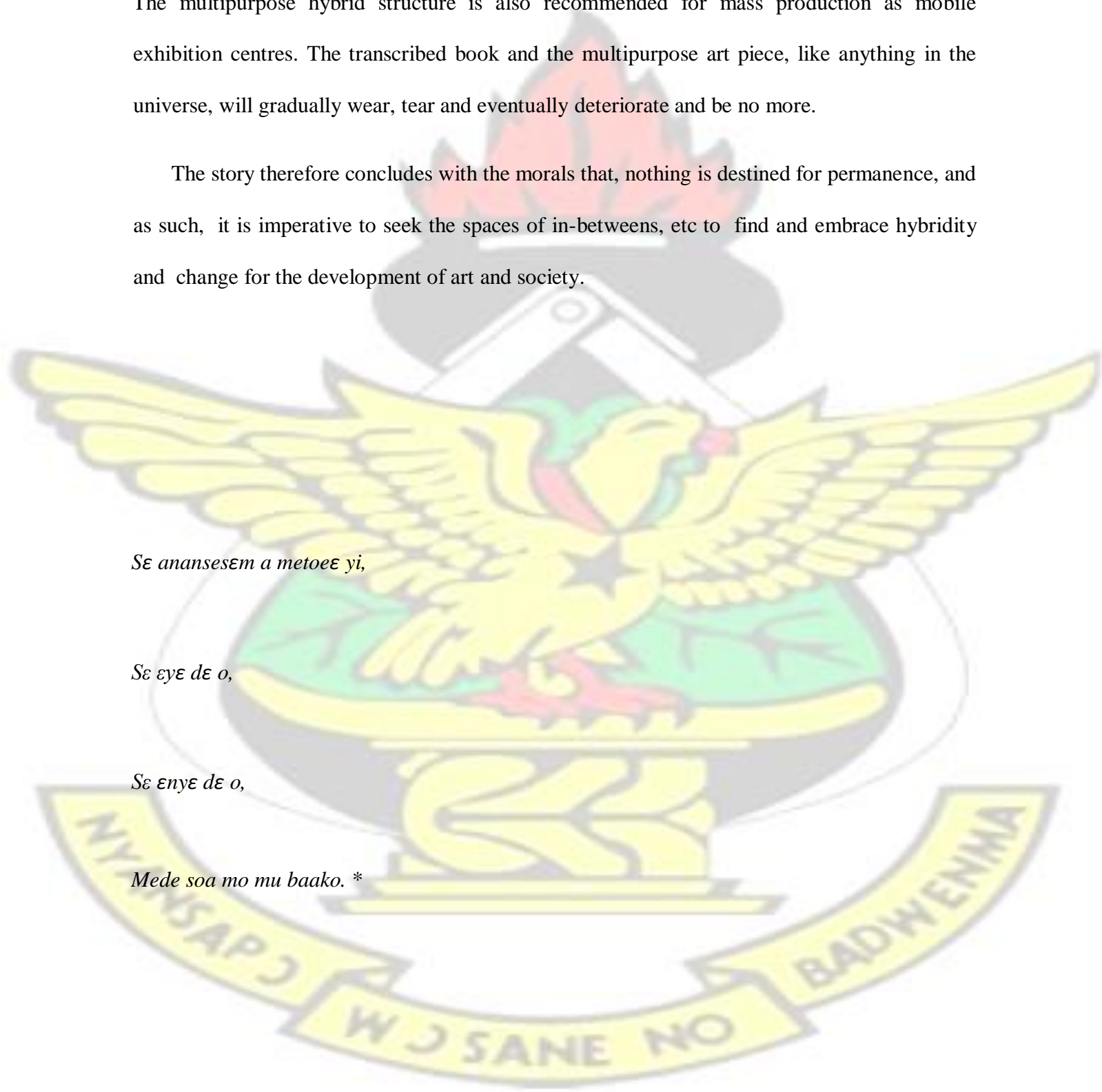
The story therefore concludes with the morals that, nothing is destined for permanence, and as such, it is imperative to seek the spaces of in-betweens, etc to find and embrace hybridity and change for the development of art and society.

*Sε anansesem a metoeε yi,*

*Sε eyε de o,*

*Sε enye de o,*

*Mede soa mo mu baako. \**



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\*Whether my story is educative or not, I subject it, my esteemed 'audience,' to your discretion and for any of you to take the baton..

## ENDNOTES

1. **Anansesem:** Folktales translated to *Twi* as *Ananse* stories.
2. **Mmoguo:** A short musical interlude sung intermittently in the process of story telling to goad on the narrator and to expel boredom while whipping enthusiasm in the audience.
3. **Aberphoh:** Derived from ' *abɛɛfo* ' which translated as new, it is a hybrid word for a hybrid style of painting.

4. **Akan:** A conglomerate of various languages under the umbrella of 'twi' which are Kwawu, Akuapem, Akwamu, Akyem, Asante, Asante- Akyem, Asaene, Bono, Dankyira and Fante and its branches which are Sehwi, Wassa, Agona, Gomoa, Bɔɔbɔɔ, Ajumako.

They trace their origin to one great ancestress.

5. **Yuon!:** It is the audience's response to the narrator who commences the folktales with abra bra o! or Anansesem ye asisiri o!
6. **Kan:** It is a Twi word translated as 'first.'
7. **Kane:** It has similar meaning which is 'first' as 'kan' above.
8. **Ghana:** The name of the old empire of Western Sudan where akans ayre believed to have stayed for a period of time before travelling downwards to their present location.
9. **Okomfo Anokye:** The traditional priest who helped Osei Tutu.
10. **Okomfo Tuda:** A traditional priest who was a contemporary of Okomfo Anokye though not as popular.
11. **ɔhene:** A chief. "The Chieftaincy Act of 1979, Act 370, part 8, section 48 defines a chief as 'an individual who has, in accordance with customary law, been nominated, elected and installed as such, and whose name, for the time being, appears as a chief in the National Register of Chiefs' ". Cited in Fosu, (2005, p.5).
12. **Ahene:** The plural form of ɔhene (the ɔhyeɛni)



13. **Ahenfo**: The plural form of ɔhene (the ɔhyeɛni) 14. **ɔsa ntifoɔ**: The original word for

Asantefoɔ or Asantes

15. **Kɔkɔkɔ**: The slogan associated with Asantes.

16. **Asantemanso**: It is a place where some sections of Asantes were alleged to have emerged from a hole in the ground.

17. **Aborɔ**: Exploitative. **Aborɔfo**: People who exploit.

18. **Mortar**: A kind of rectangular flat stone in the centre of which is a circular shallow concave in which *fufuo* was pounded.

19. **Asaase Yaa**: Local parlance for Mother Earth.

20. **Culture universal**: A kind of culture that is practiced everywhere.

21. **ɔkyeame**: Translated as ‘linguist,’ the ɔkyeame is the mouth piece of the chief and with the capacity of acting as intermediary between the chief and his subjects.

22. **Akɔmfɔɔ**: The traditional priests.

23. **Onipadua** The body

24. **ɔkra**: Translated as ‘soul,’ it is the spiritual aspect of the body which is believed to exist after the death of the body.

25. **Nsamandan:** A room reserved purposely for storing stools and regalia of the ‘departed.’

26. **Nkongaafieso:** A stool house. **Nkonguadan :** A special room in which are kept the stools of deceased chiefs.

27. **Nyankonseɛ:** the former name of *Ananseɛɛ*, supposedly the preserve of “Nyankopɔn,” the Creator.

28. **Ɔhyeɛni:** corrupted to *ɔhene*. Metaphorically, the owner of the boundaries. He owns the land, the town and the culture and is thus known as the king.

29. **Nnanso:** A hamlet constructed by a hunter for temporary shelter during his expeditions for a number of days or even weeks. These at times developed into villages eventually.

30. **Adehyeɛ:** Members of the royal family

31. **Ɔbosom:** Translated as ‘god’ or local deity.

32. **Akradwareɛ:** The act of ‘purifying’ the soul.

33. **ɔsaman:** An apparition or ghost.

34. **Saman twentwen:** The ghost that could not join the ancestors in the ancestral realm but keeps roaming about.

35. **Kwaduo, *ɔtentɛ anaa satare***: Big animals supposedly possessing souls which should be propitiated or warded off through certain rites of fortification for the hunter.

36. **Kumasi**: The traditional and political seat of government of the Asantes and Ashanti Region of Ghana respectively

37. **Bankafo**: It is the alleged former name of Kumawu.

38. **Agyaase**: Some researchers claim it as the original name of Kumawu prior to the legendary 'kuma' tree episode.

39. **Kalabule**: A local parlance meaning hoarding and selling later at exorbitant price.

40. **Wɔgbɛ jɛkɛ**: (a) A "Ga" word meaning 'migration.'

41. **Trotro**: A commercial vehicle used to transport passengers to various locations in and around the metropolis.

42. **Nsuaɛ nyɛ ɔko**: Easier said than done.

43. **Kotei**: A suburb of Kumasi next after Ayeduase beyond KNUST.

44. **ɔpanin**: An elderly person.

45. **Abubu-Mmabaa**: A kind of caterpillar which builds its abode with twigs in the form of cylindrical cage.

46. **Paul Segoe Lane**: An enclosed area occupied by stores and located at Adum, obviously the heart of commercial activities in Kumasi.



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The logo of KNUST (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) is a large, faint watermark in the background. It features a yellow eagle with its wings spread, perched on a green shield. Above the eagle is a black mortar and pestle, and above that is a red flame. The entire emblem is encircled by a yellow banner with the text 'NYANAP' on the left, 'WJSANE NO' at the bottom, and 'BADWUNMA' on the right.

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**A.**

## **APPENDIX**

### **The Scheme of Research**

#### **Summary**

**Sponsorship:** June 15<sup>th</sup> to Aug10<sup>th</sup>. 2006.

**Preliminary Survey:** – 4<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> Aug.

**To take snapshots:** estimated time was 2 months with 4 days for exigencies.

**Commencement of literature review:** 4th October, 2006.

**First field trip:** from Dec. 12 2006.



**Monograph-**30<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

**Preliminary literature review:** by November,2007.

**Completion:** by July, 2008.

**Commencement of Review of Related Literature-** by 4<sup>th</sup> day of October 2006

**1<sup>st</sup> Field work survey-** December 12<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>rd</sup> December, 2006

**Library visits** –College of Art Library and University Main Library January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2007.

**Construction of first miniature kiosk:** By May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

**Submission of monograph project report:** by the end of June, 2007.

**2nd Field Trip:** To search for available literature on the market from 12<sup>th</sup> March to 20<sup>TH</sup> March, 2007

**3rd Field Trip:** To take snapshots of subjects as sampling objects: From 29<sup>th</sup> March to 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2007

**Partial Completion of literature review :** By 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 **Construction of second miniature kiosk:** By October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**By November 5<sup>th</sup>:** Completion of field work review including methodology

**Completion of Review of Related Literature-** by 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 **Construction of third miniature kiosk:** By December, 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007 **Completion of main kiosk construction:** By 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2008 **Completion of Chapter Four: Studio Work Review:** 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2008

**By 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2008 :**Completion of Chapter Five; Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

**Submission of completed Project:** by 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2008.

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**B.**

## **Tools used for the project**

Listed below are the tools used.

(1) Utility knife (2) Trowel (3) Palette knife (4) squeegee (5) Hammer (6) Chisel (7) brushes (8) Saw (9) Scraper (10) strait edge (ruler) (11) Try- Square (12) Tape measure (13) Hammering support device (14) Awl (15) Pliers (16) Pinch bar (17) Hack-saw (18) Hacksaw blade and (19) Sign writing brushes.

## **Materials**

*The following materials were used in the execution of the project.*

(1) White glue (2) Cellulose solution (3) cellulose thinner (4) Rivets (5) Oil paint (6) Acrylic paint (7) ½ inch plywood (8) chip board (9) Wood- 2 x 2 planks (10) Metal hooks (11) 2 inch hinges (12) 3 inch hinges (13) 5 inch hinges (14) Nails (1 inch and ½ inch) (15) tack nails and

(16) Masking tape.

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