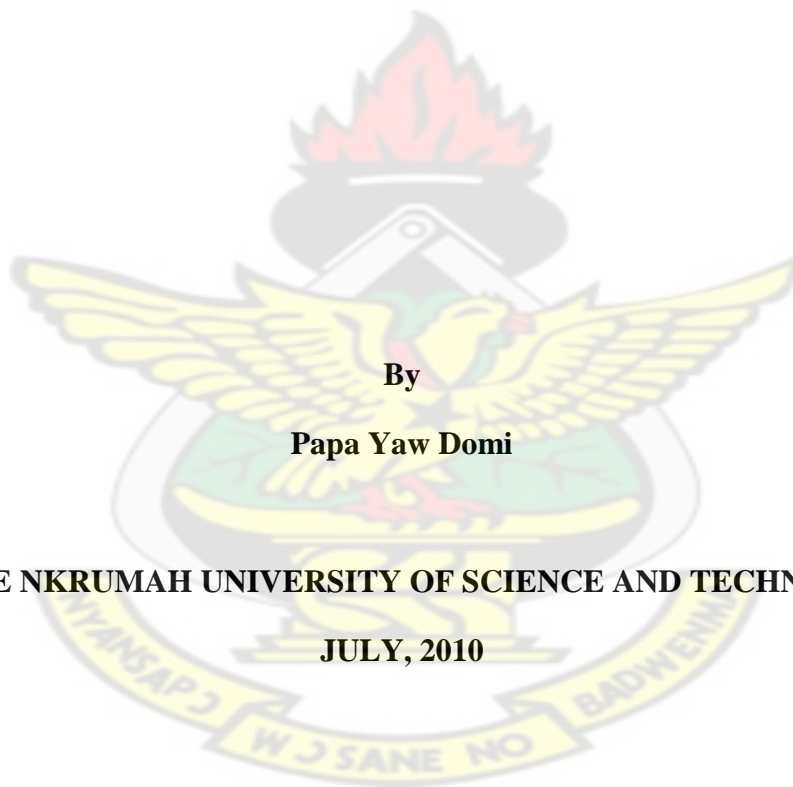


**The Physical Conformation of the
Contemporary Plump
Ghanaian Woman in Digital Painting**

KNUST



By

Papa Yaw Domi

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

JULY, 2010

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**The Physical Conformation of the Contemporary Plump Ghanaian Woman in
Digital Painting**

by

Papa Yaw Domi (Hons)

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree
of**

MASTER OF FINE ART

Faculty of Art, College of Art and Social Sciences

Department of Painting and Sculpture

July, 2008

DECLARATION

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

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Student Name & ID

Signature

Date

Certified by:

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Supervisor(s) Name

Signature

Date

Certified by:

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Head of Dept. Name

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

This Thesis/Project is dedicated to all budding African art students who struggle daily to find meaning and relevance in their creative art works.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, Papa Yaw Domi, wish to acknowledge the immense support of Professor Ato Delaquis – a refreshing fountain of artistic knowledge and experience.

The brave Ghanaian models that made this research study possible are also duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The basis for this project is the artistic expression of the physical conformation of the contemporary Ghanaian woman. The spotlight however is on the physically plump type of Ghanaian beauty. The reason for this is that I believe that there is a need to revive some traditional Ghanaian concepts of the “beautiful” female figure vis-à-vis contemporary thoughts on the ideal feminine figure.

Traditionally in Ghana, fatness or plumpness of the human figure (in both male and female) has been associated with affluence, good living, happiness and even beauty. It is common knowledge that the full-figured Ghanaian woman with ringed- neck, firm breasts, heavy hips, prominent posterior and rounded calf muscles have always been admired on the streets not only by men but by women themselves. I should not be misinterpreted as an “Uncle Tom” who wishes to perpetuate derogatory stereotypes of “Aunt Jemima”. The models depicted in my paintings are not “Aunt Jemimas”, neither are they borrowed images from the internet of clichéd black female erotica. I am an African who believes that the plump Ghanaian female figure still has an aesthetic role to play in Ghanaian culture; and that glimpses of beauty are objectified in many of such body types. The models depicted in my finished paintings are fellow Ghanaians and I cannot degrade them through art.

I have always wondered why plump women are always relegated to the background when beauty is under scrutiny in various beauty pageants. There might be clashes in ideology about physical beauty, but I deem it important to, at least, try to bring to the fore the beauty of healthy, plump female figure so

that it is at par with the slim figure that the media has sought to promote. The figure of the plump Ghanaian woman is too powerful an image for me to ignore personally as a figurative painter. This should not be confused with voyeurism.

Obviously, a choice or preference of a particular body type may imply rejection of the other types. Nevertheless when that preference has been consistent and institutionalized over many years (as in the case of slim, lanky models always winning beauty pageants) then that preference assumes importance. It needs to be scrutinized and critiqued for us to know whether that preference is sympathetic to Ghanaian public consumption.

I selected and depicted female models through digital art at their own free will. Some of the models appear in the nude because they chose to be. They share with my thoughts that nakedness is part of our existence and it is nothing to be ashamed of. This Thesis/Project does not purport to convince people to side with me on the issues of a particular physical conformation as beautiful or even to accept beauty as a concept. However, I seek to provoke our thoughts and sensibilities on the depiction and exhibition of a very powerful image – The Ghanaian woman.

The plump figures reminiscent of Peter Paul Rubens and the sometimes blunt depiction of nakedness, mass of flesh and sexuality call to memory some of the paintings of Lucian Freud. However the peculiarity of my line of inquiry is the persistent and consistent depiction of certain physical attributes of the plump Ghanaian woman (such as big buttocks, voluptuous breasts, heavy hips etc.) through digital manipulations and printing. The content of the paintings

are not divorced from the Ghanaian culture. Traditionally such physical attributes had meaning and sexual connotations. But in recent years modern thoughts on the body image have rejected the plump female physique and highlighted the ‘supermodel’ type of feminine figure as ideal.

Although this project is focused on one particular body type and is limited in scope, it may generate unlimited intellectual discourse on issues concerning the human body; issues such as beauty, morality of nakedness/nudity, gender bias and sexuality are but a few.

This Thesis topic “The physical conformation of the contemporary plump Ghanaian woman in digital painting” assumes importance in an age of the supermodel, body image, plastic surgery, body cloning, availability of various images through social networking and image censorship powered by the mass media and unnecessary Western influences.

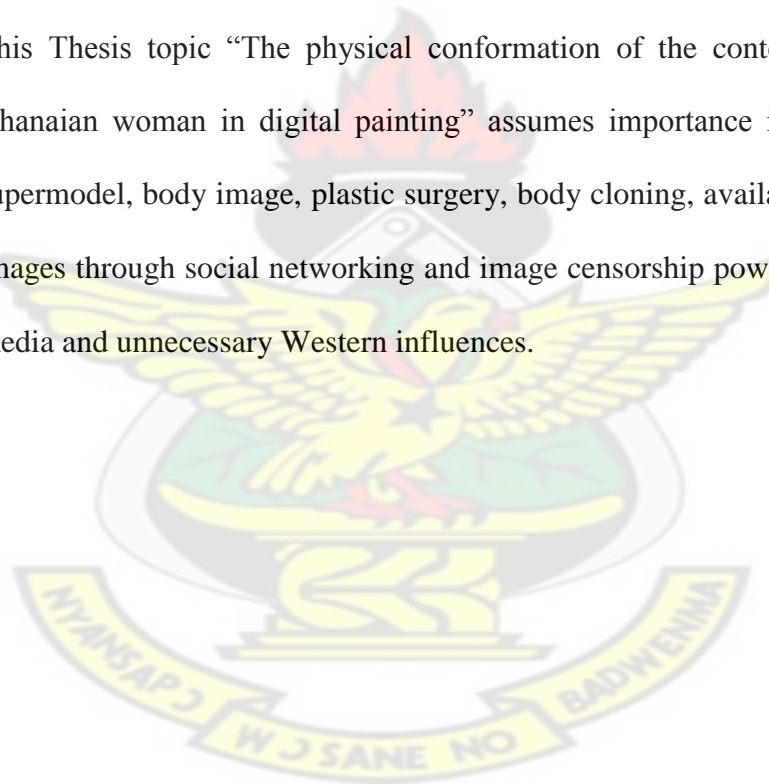


TABLE OF CONTENT

PAGE

TITLE PAGE	iii
DECLARATION	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
- ix	
TABLE OF CONTENT	x
- xi	
LIST OF FIGURES AS ILLUSTRATIONS (A & B)	xii – xiv
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Objectives of the Thesis	2
Justification of objectives	3
Scope of research	3
Importance of study	3
Research methodology	4

Assumptions.....	4 - 5
------------------	-------

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

A touch of aesthetics – the beauty problem.....	6 – 9
---	-------

Beauty as an integral part of Ghanaian aesthetic culture.....	10 - 14
---	---------

Nakedness shrouded in secrecy.....	15 - 20
------------------------------------	---------

CHAPTER THREE – MATERIALS & METHODS

Technicalities (materials and methods).....	21- 23
---	--------

Photography and painting.....	23 - 24
-------------------------------	---------

Mode of executing art works/printing.....	24 – 25
---	---------

Problems encountered.....	25
---------------------------	----

Possible modes of exhibiting my art works.....	25 – 30
--	---------

CHAPTER FOUR – THE CREATIVE STUDIO OUTPUT

The artist’s affiliation to the models.....	31 – 37
---	---------

Illustrations of major art works 1 (clothed/semi-nude figures).....	37 – 79
---	---------

Descriptive evaluation of major creative output 1 (clothed/seminude figures).....	80 – 95
---	---------

Illustrations of major art works 2 (nude figures).....	96 - 128
Descriptive evaluation of major art works 2 (nude figures).....	129 - 138
Minor works.....	139 - 142
CONCLUSION.....	143 – 145
References.....	146

A. List of figures of illustrations in Thesis/Project

FIGURE	CAPTION	PAGE
A	Kofi Antubam's illustrations	10
B	"Nudity in dressing"	14
C	"	15
D	"	15
E	Semi nudity in dressing	16
F	Computers	19
G	Printer	20
H	Digital camera	20
I	Stylus tablet	21
J	Possible indoor display of art	24
K	"	25
L	Right billboard, Bantama, Kumasi	26
M	Monochrome painting, Kumasi market	26
N	Central image of ladies and butterfly	27
O	Image in clouds	28

B. List of figures of my major Art works in Thesis/ Project

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>TITLE OF WORK</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1	Mirrored image of Owusuwa	36
2	Madam Butterfly Ama C.	37
3	Linda in Military Cap	38
4	Heavy loaded with dish	39
5	Owusuwa as PC screen saver	40
6	The flying woman	41
7	View from behind	42
8	Barbara in akimbo	43
9	Striding at Kejetia commercial area	44
10	Reclining pose	45
11	Model with wide hips	46
12	Black silk stockings	47
13	Modern girl with raised arms	48
14	Olivia as peasant lady in western dress	49
15	Owusuwa in studio	50
16	Abigail of sensual lips 1	51
17	Silk stockings and the virtual painting frame	52
18	Silk stockings	53
19	Catwalk of outdoor wear	54
20	Reclining nude 2	55
21	Pop semi nude	56
22	Abigail with pop art background	57
23	Puppet woman in crimson	58
24	Translucent dress	59
25	Abigail of sensuous lips2	60
26	Owusuwa in orange shorts	61
27	Portrait of Olivia	62
28	I'm aware	63
29	Bikini and tropical landscape postcard	64
30	G- string semi nude	65
31	Head of G-string semi nude	66
32	Heavy breasted	67
33	Olivia: robust dark model	68
34	Squatting nude in bikini	69
35	Hefty woman in nude	70
36	The Egyptian	71
37	Ideal semi nude	72
38	Saucy nada	73

39	Woman putting on a bra	74
40	Lipstick babe Barbara	75
41	Erotic shark	76
42	Downpour	77
43	Dark nude	94
44	'S' shape nude	95
45	Beads on hips	96
46	The croucher	97
47	Fat maame wata	98
48	Under the flag	99
49	Paradise	100
50	Back view in water colour	101
51	Seated nude	102
52	Heavy loaded	103
53	Back view in chalk pastel	104
54	Side view of Barbara	105
55	Linda with long braids	106
56	Stretching nude	107
57	Nude in three quarter back view	108
58	Crouching nude	109
59	Stretching back view	110
60	Traditional nude	111
61	Abigail in pensive pose	112
62	Multi colored nude	113
63	Nudes in landscape	114
64	Nude in the haze	115
65	Nebuchadnezzar woman	116
66	Traditional nude	117
67	Stormy woman	118
68	Hefty nude in sofa	119
69	Nude in string of beads	120
70	Squatting nude	121
71	Chocolate nude	122
72	Brown nude	123
73	Heavy mass nude	124
74	Nude with narrow hips	125
75	Charcoal nude	126
76	Montage of minor art works	137
77	"	138
78	"	139
79	"	140

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The conformation of some particular black female physical types can be powerful and overwhelming aesthetically. The inspiration of a beautiful Ghanaian feminine body through the synthesis of artistic media and the projection of these images on large digital printing format may also exude an aesthetic feeling of the sublime.

I am not oblivious of the strong opposition from the feminist front that the depiction and exhibition of such provocative images may bring. Indeed such opposition is important for discourse and argument. When alternative views arise, the elasticity of this project is being tested to see whether it stretches enough to cover many prevalent issues of contemporary Ghana without ripping contemporary culture apart. Issues such as nakedness, nudity, pornography, image censorship, identity, fashion and globalisation are but a few.

However, the crust of this project is focused on the plump, heavy-hipped black woman who was admired in Ghanaian traditional societies as the epitome of feminine beauty. This admiration went on decline due to Western influence during the post-independence era to the present. The plump feminine figure is somehow being re-introduced into a modern context through local beauty contest and fashion shows. As an artist, I am personally drawn to this form of beauty and therefore apply my artistic researches in drawing and painting to unravel the beauty inherent in big women via digital means. It is expected that the aesthetics of plumpness in women, which also hails back to Europe with old masters like Rubens, would also be revived in Ghana by means of photo-rendering fused with traditional methods of artistic expression.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Fatness, bigness, plumpness, call it whatever word one wishes (which was always acknowledged as the epitome of beauty in traditional Ghanaian society) is now being frowned upon in contemporary African and Ghanaian societies as unappealing, distasteful and even ugly. The adoption of slim Western conformation as the standard of beauty in women by the media and the elite of Ghana is prevalent. The physical, emotional and psychological stress that some plump Ghanaian women put themselves through to gain slimness deserves our attention.

I, as the artistic researcher, consider plumpness or fatness equally beautiful as other body types as long as the body is healthy. I have therefore depicted fatness and plumpness as the basis of my creative work. Since Art is supposed to reflect society and influence it, it is hoped that through such representations our aesthetic sensibilities towards beauty would accept fatness and plumpness and such women should not be relegated to the background.

OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

- My objective is to review the physical attributes of plump contemporary Ghanaian women through digital painting.
- To find possible ways of redeploying images of plump, black female figures in an artistic manner worthy of a fine art exhibition.
- To write a thesis report of the research with particular emphasis on plump or fat women in the contemporary Ghanaian scenery to buttress the main M.F.A. programme of creative output of paintings.

JUSTIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES:

The focus on thinness as the epitome of feminine beauty is questionable and must be re-examined. I intend to re-emphasise the revival of plumpness as an acceptable form of beauty within the Ghanaian context.

SCOPE OF RESEARCH:

Models were selected from the K.N.U.S.T. campus and some suburbs of Kumasi. Their ages range between 20-30 years. Their complexion range from light skinned to dark. Their physical conformation was a wide range- from heavy-boned and fat to thin and short to tall. However, since this project seeks to highlight fatness, the majority of depicted models were plump. I used computers, digital cameras and various drawing and image editing software as the main creative media buttressed with manual traditional painting and drawing techniques (such as pastels, graphite, watercolour etc.) to create a synthesis of expression.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

This document will serve as body of knowledge, a source of reference and an inspiration to other artists to delve into other provocative issues. The nakedness of the human body is not a subject to be shunned by artists; it is part of our existence. Most importantly, it would revive the traditional concept of female beauty into a contemporary context for acceptance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Digital art in studio painting is the basis of my research. This studio output was transcribed into a written research of my intentions. Various types of black women with different types of physical conformation were used as models and as basis for creative expression. Emphasis, however, was placed on plump female models to echo that type of conformation as aesthetically justified.

ASSUMPTIONS:

It is assumed by the researcher that:

1. Voluptuousness should be acceptable in the contemporary Ghanaian woman.
2. Cultural exchanges, Globalisation, greater awareness on diet, exercise and fashion have contributed to the formation of a new Ghanaian woman that is less plump but nevertheless not pencil-slim as in women of the Western world.
3. The physical conformation of the Ghanaian woman has a broad spectrum in regard to physical structure.
4. There is a need for a paradigm shift in international requirements of beauty pageants to include larger models.
5. The natural physique of the Ghanaian woman and the black woman in general has been copied by the West through artificial means (enlargement of lips, liposuction, prominent buttocks, etc.).
6. “Traditional” or “Traditional Society” as stated numerously in the thesis imply a loose period covering an indefinite remote past of Ghana to the period prior to the 1st World War when Western influences were not so strong on Ghanaian Societies. In northern Ghana the period can be stretched to the 1950’s or just before Independence in 1957.

7. Currently a pure traditionally Ghanaian society does not exist because even the remotest hamlets show strong evidences of external influences.
8. Ghana contemporary society therefore can be considered as a fusion of traditional and external cultures thus heralding a Neo-Ghanaian culture of which many Ghanaian women are ensconced.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

A TOUCH OF AESTHETICS- THE BEAUTY PROBLEM.

Aesthetics has been defined in several dictionaries as a branch of philosophy that deals with beauty. However it would be unbalanced to talk about beauty without mentioning ugliness. Ugliness is the antithesis of beauty. These extreme opposites can be seen in various developments in taste, preference and judgement. The environment, society, religion and other factors can all contribute to our aesthetic preference.

Cultural determinants or taste of particular nations can determine to its citizens what is acceptable as beautiful. In traditional Ghana, for example, Akan chiefs must appear plump and majestic. Akan women after given birth stay on special diets for about forty days to fatten themselves. In this traditional setting, plumpness or fatness is thought to be appealing and beautiful.

Etienne Gilson, in his book “The Arts of the Beautiful” affirms that beauty exists in forms:

“Whether or not the object is material, form is always apprehended in an act of the mind. It may be merely recognized as given in nature, as the form of a tree, or created by the mind, as the form of an equation. In any case, it always presents itself as the unifying principle of a multiplicity grasped in the synthetic apperception of the intellect..... being is only what it is because of its form. In losing its form it would cease to be

anything; it would lose the very possibility of existing”. (Gilson, 2000)

Beauty exists. If it doesn't exist then it wouldn't even have a name. In this instance, it exists in the form of a particular type of physique of the Ghanaian woman. A statement such as “beauty lies in the eye of the beholder” suggests the subjective nature of beauty. It implies that everything may be beautiful and everything may be ugly. If that is the case then how does one distinguish between the two - beauty and ugliness?

As an adjective “beauty” is used as a descriptive word. Tangible, non-tangible, visible and invisible things can be described as ‘beautiful’. In cases of beauty pageants such as “Miss World” or “Miss Ghana”, beauty has been objectified in the form of the woman. The woman has become an object of beauty. There is nothing derogatory or immoral about that.

What I find lacking in these beauty pageants is the plump, full-figured woman which used to be prevalent in traditional Ghanaian society. Nowadays the non-fat figure is projected as the perfect representation of a beautiful woman. In recent years, a Television station broadcasting in Ghana (TV3) endeavoured to show another angle to Ghanaian beauty (TV3, GHANA, 2007)

(<http://www.tv3.com.gh/new/mostbeautiful/index.asp>). The problem I find with beauty pageants of today is that the organizers add other factors which they deem also contribute to the beauty of the woman. Factors such as intelligence, talent and ability to demonstrate cultural awareness are then added to pick a winner. What has intelligence got to do with physical beauty? The two are distinct. Beauty of the physique can be aesthetically fine for its own sake. Nothing more, nothing less. When individuals' intelligence quotients are sought after, is beauty of the body part of the

criteria? Certainly not! The nail must be hit on the head. It is the female body under scrutiny. Anything else is superfluous.

The second problem that Ghanaian beauty pageants must tackle is physical conformation. In other words slim, intermediate and plump figures must be compared and contrasted for a winner. It is biased to always select pencil slim models for such shows. The irony of such pageants is that the winners are so thin and yet the Ghanaian society generally frowns on thinness as associated with hunger, poverty and sickness. Perhaps when all sizes of models are highlighted then there would be a fair representation or assessment of the Ghanaian woman. Indeed there are now beauty pageants solely dedicated to fat women. Whilst this is an attempt to include the larger physique in the circle of beauty, I do think that the thin and the full-figured model should be juxtaposed on the same platform. The similarities or contrasts of such a scene can cause aesthetic ambiguities about beauty which may fuel intellectual discourse.

Another serious problem with the pageant “Ghana Most Beautiful” is the way and manner the winner is selected. Winners are selected through public voting. There are ten contestants; one representing each of the regions in Ghana. These ten models are chosen by competent judges from many other contestants who wish to be crowned as “Ghana Most Beautiful”. The problem arises when the final winner is chosen by the mass audience through the mass media via mobile phone texting. The judges are now ignored. The telecommunication services (who are the main sponsors of the programme) use the text voting system to make more money. The outcome of the beauty pageant is distorted by the fact that the more money one has the more one can vote.

The relationship between Art and the mass media is the subject of a book written by John A. Walker- “Art in the age of Mass Media”. The following quotation from Walker helps to buttress the point:

“However, the mass media are designed to reach the largest possible audiences – ‘success’ is often measured in quantitative rather than qualitative terms. Consequently their cultural content is predominantly low-to-medium in character.”

“High culture (including the fine arts) is normally thought of as the antithesis of mass culture, as a form of culture appealing to an educated, privileged elite or minority, hence the alternative term ‘minority culture’. (Walker, 2001)

I believe that matters concerning beauty should not be trivialized. No matter how educated a population is about the law of the land, there is still a need for lawyers and judges. In the same vein, when matters of the critique of beauty are concerned, premium should be placed on competent judges schooled in aesthetics. In such instances artists such as painters, sculptors as well as fashion photographers and designers of all sorts can make better judges. Beauty may only be skin deep but when the subject is scrutinized it provokes our sensibilities and brings about intellectual discourse.

BEAUTY AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF GHANAIAAN AESTHETIC

CULTURE

Culture is the way and manner a certain group of people performs their daily activities at a particular time. Tradition is a practice left behind as a legacy to be followed by posterity; it is sacrosanct. People create their environment which define their culture. A culture of our parents which we keep certain parts of becomes a tradition. Thus culture is how we live today and traditions are parts of culture handed down from the past. The materialist philosophy which suggests that beauty emanates from the perceived object is the hallmark of traditional Ghanaian aesthetics. It is evident from research that certain traditional groups in Ghana perceive a person to be beautiful if he/she fits their concept of beauty. In Ghana, oral tradition or word of mouth has painted in the imagination of its indigenes and kept alive for generations the physical beauty of the woman. The Akans have sayings which compare physical beauty to things or objects that they perceive to be beautiful. The following are just two examples:

“Wo tirinwii te sɛ serekye ahoma” which means that “your hair looks like silk”

“W’ahofɛ te sɛ nhwiren” which means that “you are as beautiful as a flower”

Kofi Antubam in his book *Ghana’s Heritage and Culture* (1963, pp90-93) illustrates to us the beauty of the human form as conceived by Akans:

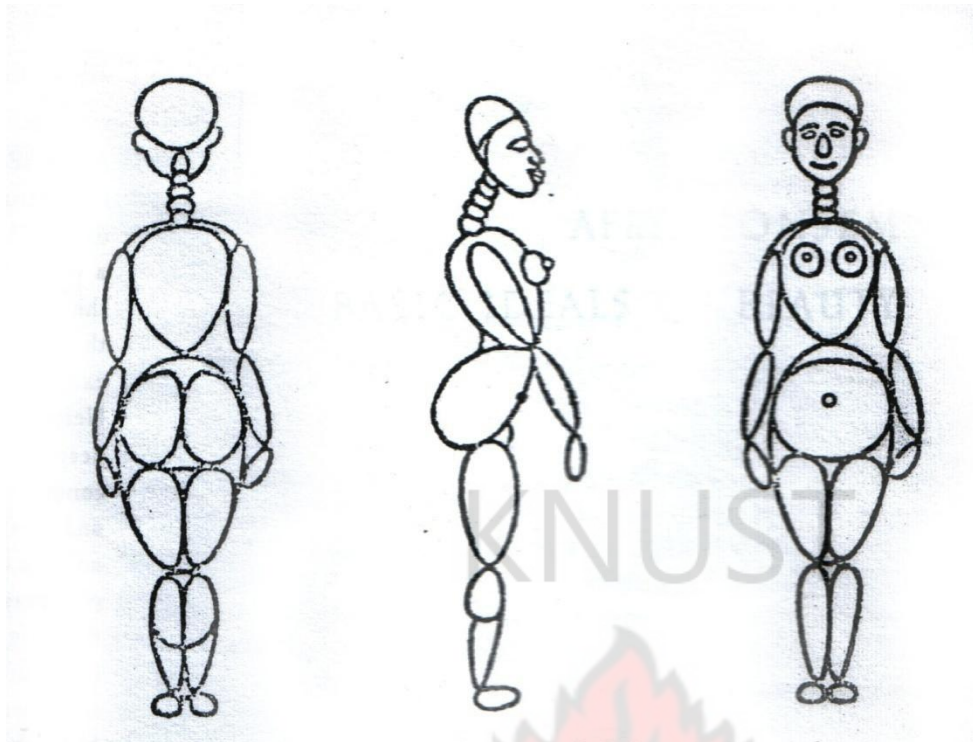


Fig. A. Conception of a beautiful female figure, as analyzed by Kofi Antubam based on traditional form or sense of beauty. (Antubam, 1963, p.91)

“Beauty of the human figure is thought of and expressed in terms of certain definite symbols. Every part of the body is described in terms of either a circle or an oval. Looking at the body from the side or front, the shape of the head and of the neck from the top of the head to the end of the chin must appear like an egg with the wider portion uppermost.” (Antubam, 1963, p90, 91)

“The neck which should have wrinkles or rings on it must fall into an elongated oval shape with the smallest part of it tapering towards the head. The wrinkles or rings here must be an odd number when counted to be a perfect beauty. The torso, starting from the shoulder line or collar bone to the waist line, must appear an oval with the larger part towards the neck. The thigh from the waist line to the bottom of the knee cap must look like an egg with the wider proportion towards the waist. This requirement

of beauty is probably what makes Ghanaian men especially like substantial thighs and buttocks.”(Antubam,1965)

“From infancy a mother ties beads at the major joints of her child at the base of the neck, the waist, elbows, the wrist, under the knees, and under the ankles. She is very particular about this, especially when the child in question is a girl. For then it is absolutely essential that she should grow up to be a beautiful form in fulfilment of the Ghanaian basic principle that the female should be beautiful, while the male need not necessarily be so.” (Antubam, 1965)

Antobam’s thoughts may still be relevant today. However concepts of beauty and the role of the woman have evolved over the years. In an era where a ‘Kayayo’ (young female street porter) can use the same brand of a mobile phone as the Queen of England, one begins to feel the presence of Globalisation. As an African, I see my continent as still emerging from the grips of Colonialism. Africa is rebuilding itself. Ghana, for example, is just beyond fifty years of independence from British rule. In my opinion Colonialism halted the progress of the African continent and the Ghanaian woman was not exempted. During slavery, her body belonged to the slave master; raped and defiled. Whenever depicted she was seen as a labourer, usually domestic. Her low social status was part of her visual identity. Nevertheless, the strength and beauty of the black woman have never been in doubt. Today the Ghanaian woman is a commanding figure. Her identity is heterogeneous and complex. As such, there are particular instances, especially in the entertainment industries, where Ghanaian women participate in or are in control of their images being rendered. She sometimes combines the role of bread winner and mother without losing her sexuality. The contemporary Ghanaian woman can be described as having foreign influences such as the availability of the internet, passports with dual citizenship, etc... The Ghanaian

Woman is continually changing and adapting to her environment. The key word here is 'adapt' not 'fit'.

Feminist art historians began to ask why men and women are represented differently. In his book 'Ways of Seeing' John Berger gives some reasons which are still applicable today - even in an African context. He writes:

“According to the usage and conventions which are at last being questioned but have by no means been overcome, the social presence of a woman is different in kind from that of a man. A man's presence is dependent upon the promise of power which he embodies. If the promise is large and credible his presence is striking. If it is small or incredible, he is found to have little presence. The promised power may be moral, physical, temperamental, economic, social, sexual- but its object is always exterior to the man. A man's presence suggests what he is capable of doing to you or for you. His presence may be fabricated, in the sense that he pretends to be capable of what he is not. But the pretence is always towards a power which he exercises on others”.

“By contrast, a woman's presence expresses her own attitude to herself, and defines what can and cannot be done to her. Her presence is manifest in her gestures, voice, opinions, expressions, clothes, chosen surroundings; taste- indeed there is nothing she can do which does not contribute to her presence. Presence for a woman is so intrinsic to her person that men tend to think of it as an almost physical emanation, a kind of heat or smell or aura. To be born a woman has been to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men. The social presence of women has developed as a result of their ingenuity in living under such tutelage within such a limited space. But

this has been at the cost of a woman's self being split into two. A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she comes to consider the *surveyor* and the *surveyed* within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman. She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life". (Berger, 1977)

Although this observation by John Berger may have its merits, it is important to note that the Ghanaian woman of the twenty first century is very much aware of her circumstance. How she handles her sexuality is her prerogative. From a purely artistic viewpoint, the physical conformation of the contemporary Ghanaian woman offers a great challenge to the Ghanaian painter of today. The problem may not lie in the craft of painting her figure but may lie in the manner in which she is represented.

NAKEDNESS SHROUDED IN SECRECY

The debate on the morality of depicting the naked body in painting, photography and video is ongoing currently in Ghana. The discomfort and displeasure that some feel towards nakedness and nudity is evident in our society. However, the naked body is part of our existence and cannot be ignored especially for artists as myself who have an interest in the representation of the human figure. Before colonization, Ghanaians wore little in terms of clothing. It was accepted then but now it is almost a taboo for some in Ghana for a woman to wear clothing that reveal some of their flesh. The following four photographs (figures B, C, D, and E) help to buttress this point within the context of Africa at large and of Ghana in particular:

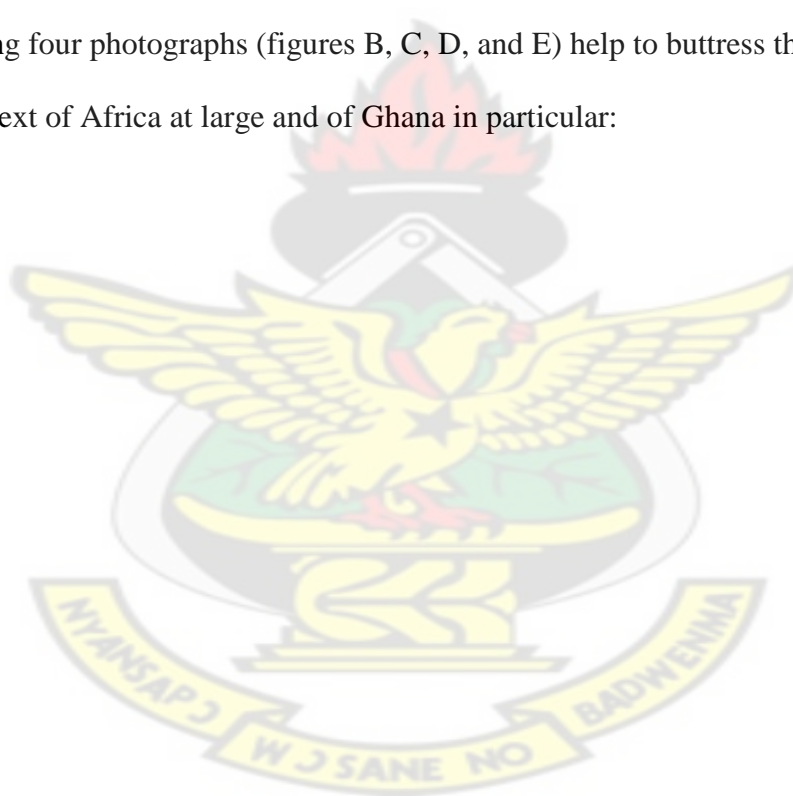




Fig. B.

Photograph: Herbert Lang, 1910 (Africa Museum, Tervuren). *A group of women applying body paint to Matubani, one of the wives of the Mangbetu chief Okondo, Zaire. Notice the nudity of dressing.* (Bocola, 1995)



Fig. C. Photograph: Thevez, 1899 (African Museum, Tervuren). *Men and a woman in Turumbu (Olombo) Zaire. Notice the almost full nudity of woman in background.* (Bocola, 1995)



Fig. D. Photographs: P.A. McCANN.

Various stages in Coiffure-making in Kwahu, the Gold Coast era (Ghana). Notice the semi nudity of dressing. Circa 1900.



Fig. E.

Autochrome Photograph: circa. 1912. *A young Ga Lady of Ghana dressed in Traditional fashion. Notice the semi-nudity of dressing. (Collection of Prof. A. Delaquis)*

However nowadays, there are also those who are comfortable to wear whatever they want outdoors in the streets as well as on the beaches and swimming pools.

On the 9th of April, 2010, a Ghanaian Radio station Joy F.M, gave a 6.00pm news report which interviewed vendors of various newspapers. The reporter wanted to know the kinds of newspapers that sold out the fastest. According to the vendors interviewed, newspapers that had images of seemingly semi - nude women always sell fastest. The report also said that even out of date editions are always sold because of the images. The news report did not indicate whether the majority of the buyers were male or female. Some opinion from the public, especially the Muslim and fundamental Christians, showed disgust for such images. Nevertheless, public disgust does not change the fact that semi - nude images (especially of the female figure) is a powerful tool for some businesses and advertisers. Moreover many modern ladies feel more comfortable in such wears in a hot climate.

Another news report from Ghana Television (G.T.V.) at 2.30pm on 14th April 2010 presented video images of some Ghanaian women in their readiness to show a lot of their flesh. According to the report, the exposure of the flesh is done to gain attention. The report did not say from whom they sought attention - male or female. The G.T.V. report questioned the moral standards in Ghana today and whether the Akan word “akataasia” (which means a young well clad lady) has any meaning today.

The relevance of the aforementioned media reports to this thesis is that my nude paintings are put within the context of my society. It is predictable that divergent views will arise as a result of the public exhibition of nude paintings.

Indeed according to Professor Ato Delaquis, there were strong protests and disruptions during an exhibition of semi- nude paintings at Nkawkaw (a town in Ghana) in the late 1960's. The protests came from some market women and town folk who showed their distaste of the exhibition of nudes. The police had to intervene. Today, decades after that exhibition in Ghana, some people still frown upon the depiction and exhibition of the nude. They may hold on to the opinion that nakedness should be shrouded in secrecy. Yet when you relate the 1900 photograph of the Kwahu lady (showing her breast fully in public) it is ironic in modern Ghana of the 1960's the same people of Nkawkaw would frown upon nudity. This begs the question what is the secret about nudity? It is ironic that whilst some hold religiously to the words "fearfully and wonderfully made" Psalms 139:14, "created in the image of God" Genesis 1:26, they detest and abhor these same images depicted in painting, photography or video



CHAPTER THREE

TECHNICALITIES (MATERIALS AND METHODS)

The following images show the types of tools I used to produce art works for this research/project:

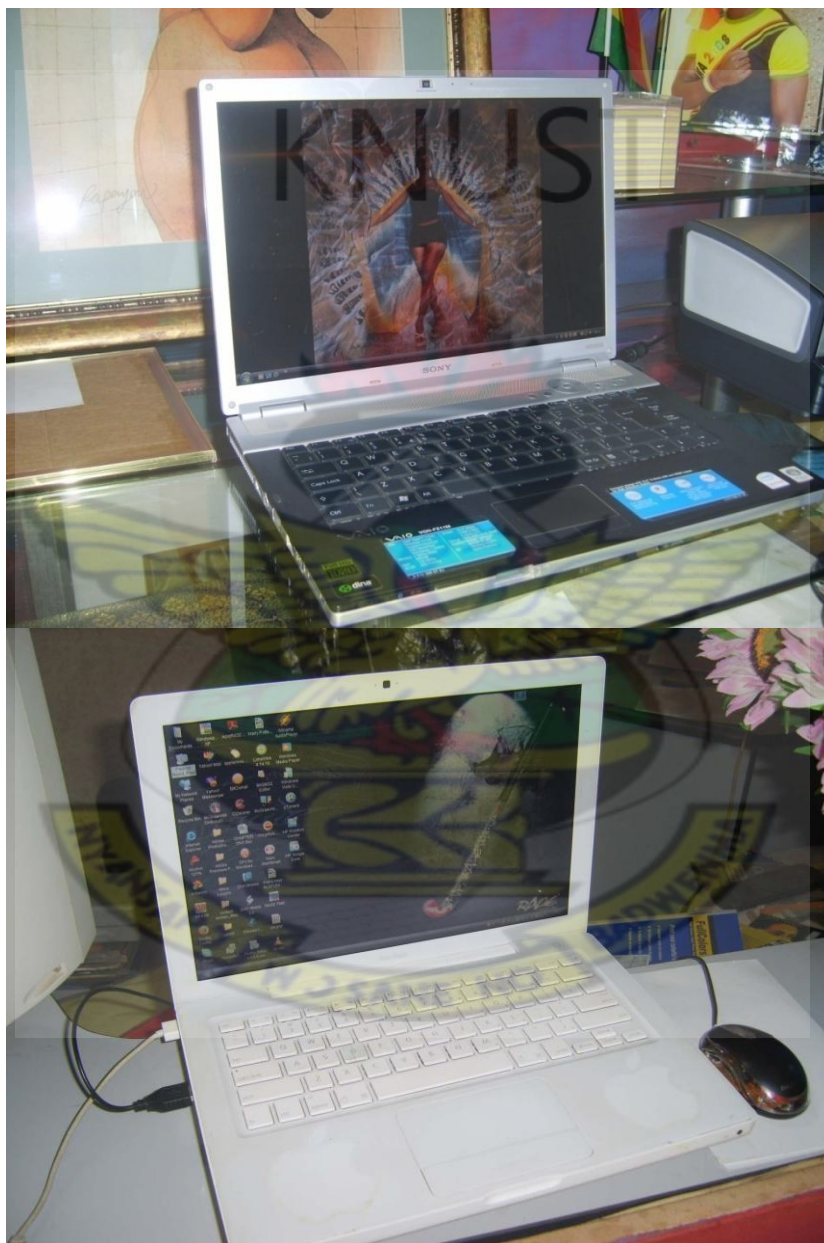


Fig. F: Some of the computers used to produce my paintings



Fig. G:
This is an image of the printer used to test print my works before they are sent to a plotter for large format printing.



Fig. H: An image of a digital camera that I used to photograph the models for this project



Fig. I: WACOM TABLET / STYLUS. This instrument was used to draw and paint on the computer.

I also used various papers and surfaces such as water colour paper, canvas, flexi etc. for printing my works. Alongside the digital manipulations, I used inks and washes, pastels, pencils, charcoal etc. as traditional media. The major software used in drawing and painting were different versions of CorelDraw, Photoshop and Corel painter.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND PAINTING

The painter David Hockney collected evidence to prove his thesis that the nature of painting changed when optics and the projected image as a way of tracing were adopted. This, according to Hockney, started at the beginning of the Renaissance.

There are similarities and differences between Photography and painting. Photography is defined as drawing with light.

Photographs offer instant, matter of fact images that scientifically proves the exact copy of something. This is the reason why passport photographs are used to determine the identity of a person. Paintings and photographs are about compositions. Both depend on and manipulate light for a desired effect. The painter with intuition and good craftsmanship is able to complement the job that the camera does to produce remarkable results. Painting and photography have always had a relationship. For this project thesis, difficult poses were captured with the digital camera. Images that required movement were also captured with the digital camera. The images were then transformed into digital paintings afterwards.

MODE OF EXECUTING ART WORKS

Predominantly, I used three ways of rendering the art works. They are as follows:

1. Painting and Drawing with the computer
2. Digital Photography
3. Collaboration of traditional media i.e. pencils, watercolour, pastel with computer painting programmes.

The prime factor in this research project is that every single artwork is completed with a digital print.

PRINTING

Printing was a very important aspect of this research. When works were going to be printed, I had to take the size of the print into consideration before commencing. If this was not done the final print might pixellate if the work is large. The works were

printed on various surfaces and in different sizes. However most of the digital paintings were designed with high resolution. This means that if the works were printed as large as a billboard, the quality of the print would be high. Water colour papers, photo papers, canvas, flexi (material used for billboard advertisement) and stickers were all experimented with for this project.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

The choice of models to be depicted in this project caused a lot of problems for me as an artist. Obviously not every Ghanaian woman can be included in this research. Nudity and nakedness still pose a problem in terms of morality for some folk in Ghana. I was more than conscious of this issue which served as a guide to my creative output. In terms of facilities and equipments such as a plotter needed for quality execution of art works, I was sometimes handicapped. When art works were taken to different companies for print, I never quite got the desired colour scheme of my preference. If the final print was printed by me, I could have set the printer or plotter to my preferred choice for excellent print quality. However the soft copies of art works provide a life line in future if the need arises for reprinting.

POSSIBLE MODES OF EXHIBITING MY ART WORKS

The two major ways of exhibiting my works are indoor and outdoor exhibitions. Conservatively, I prefer an indoor Art Gallery type of exhibitions where the viewer can have the leisure of pausing or stopping to reflect upon my work. As a Ghanaian I feel that we spend too much time to fight for our daily bread and spend far little time to reflect on our existence as reflected in art. Art galleries, exhibitions and Museums offer environments for reflection. Contemplation is important to me since I would like my work to be pondered over so that I may not be misunderstood. A copy of this

Thesis may not be available to all who see my paintings. However, outdoor exhibitions such as the billboard type can also be envisaged due to the digital mode of my printing. In that vein, the possibility of my works being confused with advertisement is very high and I would also be steering my art towards kitsch. Although kitsch art is accepted nowadays in the art world, I see myself as an artist who is an old fashioned conservative with libertarian instincts. Again, the feeling of disgust from religious fundamentals who strongly oppose the exhibition of semi-nudity and nudity may hinder the progress of an outdoor exhibition in Ghana.

My works can also be projected into the open sky if one has the equipment. The diverse ways of exhibiting these works show the varied possibilities of digital art. The following images show the different modes of exhibiting my works:



Fig. J: A possible indoor display of my Art work. (*Digital image editing by Papa Yaw Domi*)



Fig. K: A possible indoor exhibition of my work. *(Digital image editing by Papa Yaw Domi)*



Fig L.: (Right Billboard, *Bantama, Kumasi*). If the laws of Ghana could permit the outdoor display of semi-nude and nude artworks, this could be one of the possible ways of displaying my art. The suitability of such display of art is also debatable. (Photo and image editing by Papa Yaw Domi)



Fig. M.: A possible outdoor exhibition of my work (brown monochrome painting in middle) at Kumasi market. Image edit by Papa Yaw Domi.



Fig. N: (central image of ladies and butterfly). This is showing another possible outdoor billboard-like exhibition of my work at the centre of town in Kumasi. Again, the semi-nude display can be a bone of contention. (*Photograph and image editing by Papa Yaw Domi*).

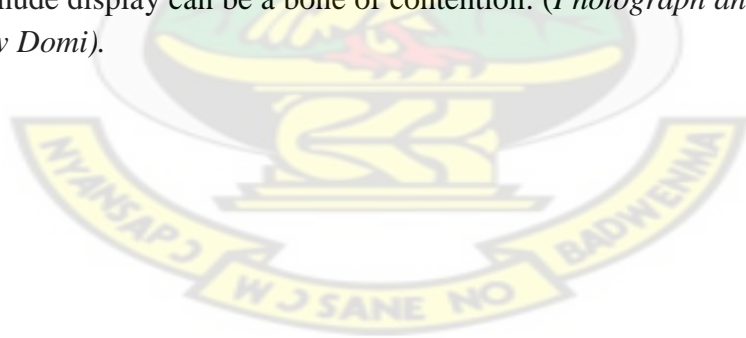




Fig O.: The image in the clouds shows the possible projection into the sky of one of my paintings. Perhaps a night scene of this image would be interesting when darkness provides a backdrop for digital light projections. (*Photograph and image editing by Papa Yaw Domi*).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CREATIVE STUDIO OUTPUT

THE ARTIST'S AFFILIATION TO THE MODELS.

The black woman is the source of my artistic expression in this particular project. I sincerely believe that the 'art' in the study of the models in this project begins with the respect I have for them.

The project could not have been realized without the consent of these models who know me as a student of art at K.N.U.S.T. and a photographer in Kumasi. Trust is very important. The obvious sexual implications arise when 'I', a man, is looking and portraying the opposite sex in art. But this issue is shallow compared to the job of a male gynaecologist.

Throughout history the human figure perhaps has been the most utilized motif in painting, drawing and sculpture. Within that genre, the nude or semi – nude has been among the most numerous. Obviously man must have been most curious about the physical image of the opposite sex. Consequently the end-result in art of most cultures is the nude of the female.

Perhaps the female nude connotes fertility to warrant its expression in art from pre-history to present day. It may have represented pro-creation. It may have just been sex symbol. Or it may have been depicted purely on aesthetic considerations as something pleasing to look at. Whatever the case may be, it is a fact that the female figure attracts all sorts of emotions when depicted in art – from revulsion to absolute reverence. Every culture had also a natural affinity to physical types most preferred. The Greeks adored the ideal figure which is neither slim nor fat. The Indians (Hindus)

preferred curvaceous rounded women. The Africans abstracted it to the extent that the sexual organs, like the breasts or genitalia, were exaggerated to gargantuan sizes for powerful effect.

The fact still remains that particular artists were drawn to apply this subject-matter repeatedly as basis for art throughout the ages in most cultures. As stated, there must be myriad reasons for this focus on feminine forms and it would be beyond the scope of this research to unravel all. It suffices however to try and psycho- analyze myself in regard to my affiliation with these models since they are so numerous and varied.

Generally in any academic institution worldwide it is rather erroneous for an artist to write about his association with the studio model as there is no emotional attachment or association between the two. A model is employed and her duty is to pose and be paid. That is all. The student, whether undergraduate or graduate, is supposed to draw and paint her in whatever expressive or stylistic mould the art class dictates. The relationship therefore is a neutral, cold, business-like association that does not raise any eye-brow from any quarter.

First of all, none of my models is employed by the Faculty of Art of K.N.U.S.T. Two, none of the models were paid. Three, they all posed at their own convenience. There were outdoor poses for some of the semi-nude paintings. For the full nude poses, my private studio at home was used rather than the official studio of the academic institution. Some of the models also posed in their own apartments.

It is possible that since the middle ages of Western art, many artists, both painters and sculptors, may have had romantic relationships with their models. It is said that Goya, for example, might have had sexual contact with his model. Picasso also had deep emotional bond with many of his models to the extent that they were also his

mistresses. It is a known fact that Modigliani, just like the Austrian Expressionist Egon Schiele, had constant sexual relationships with his models of whom one of them also happened to be his wife. All of Toulouse-Lautrec's models were prostitutes of whom he constantly slept with in the brothel.

Considering the wide varieties of plump, large girls (who may also be undeniably attractive) that posed for me in my creative work for the M.F.A., a viewer may wonder what my affiliation is with them and what made them pose for me – some in highly suggestive poses. It is vital for me to evaluate this matter, if for no other reason than for future researchers, so that no reader of this document jumps to hasty conclusions. Such evaluation perhaps may also be vital for future researches to delve into the feelings and general emotional make-up of young ladies of the 21st Century of Ghana as well as how artists hold in check their feelings with models they have no sexual attachment to.

It is a fact that in my case I have not had, or tried to have, sexual relationship with my models. I have already hinted earlier in this Thesis of the motivating factors that propelled me to use models as basis for my creative works. In my conscious mind as far as I can evaluate myself, there is no sexual connotations on my part in applying the conformation of my models as basis for artistic expression. A layman may perhaps have difficulty in accepting this fact but it is true. However, whether there is an underlying factor that is subconscious within the psyche that is sexual in intent that governs my actions in depicting these bosomy ladies, I am not aware. I am not a psychologist to be aware of such possibilities.

I had access to images of black female models in the African diaspora via the internet. They had similar physical conformation as some of the Ghanaian models I have

highlighted in this project. This is not surprising because it is slavery that has dispersed the black race. Some of these images of black female models in the diaspora were used for comparisons and juxtapositions in connection to my project. Indeed in some of the Western countries such as the U.S.A., women of colour with voluptuous derrières such as “Buffie the Body” have found fame and fortune. She is a highly paid model who features in Hip Hop videos, men’s magazines and clothing commercials. For the majority of my final art works, I photographed, drew and painted live Ghanaian models. I believe by doing so, it gave more meaning and relevance to my work. The cultural gap and apathy that I felt these foreign photos presented me were somehow removed by the live indigenous models that knew me and vice versa.

How do I go about attracting these attractive young ladies to pose for me in a society that largely frowns upon nudity? The answer is that I simply ask them. As a matter of fact I cannot afford to pay all of these models to pose for me. I was simply their friend. All the ladies in this project who posed for me, the illiterates and semi-illiterates as well as the highly educated, were also very intelligent. They looked out for sincerity from me as an artist. Invariably they drew their own conclusions and decided to pose.

The experience has convinced me that when an artist has sincere motive to sublimate his sexual urges for the sake of his work, a model feels it. This evolves a kind of trust between the two and there is mutual respect and understanding. A kind of ambiance develops between the artist and model that transcends mundane sexuality and elevates the two high above the norm. It is almost a spiritual feeling. The result, of course, is the art. I am inclined to think that the closer the artist is to the model without seduction as the basis for the art, the more forceful and powerful is the art produced.

The boldness in the young women who posed for me is in contrast to official models employed at the Faculty of Art at K.N.U.S.T. According to Professor A. Delaquis, It was always difficult to get the new models to strip since the inception of employing models from the late 1950's to the late 1990's, when for inexplicable reasons, models posing in the nude was unofficially curtailed. The model found it difficult to pose stark naked at the beginning but as time went on she would pose easily afterwards.

This process was not in my case. Mostly in my situation the models, without prior experience, simply posed. Of course it must be noted that the official models of K.N.U.S.T. were recruited from orange and groundnut sellers and therefore were considered as “unenlightened” in regard to modern fashion and rational for posing. Many of my models were aware of modern attitudes gleaned from Western glossy magazines or fashion shows on T.V. In my experience, they always beamed at their image with pleasure and appreciation after seeing themselves in creative art.

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the Ghanaian woman of today is a commanding figure. Her awareness of circumstances and issues of today concerning her own body cannot be underestimated. The female body is seen in musical videos, billboards and on film posters. The influx of provocative attire from abroad is prevalent in Ghana. Mixed with local and traditional advances in fashion, the two forces elevate the strong sexuality of the black female. Her beauty has never been in doubt and this has been heightened through fashion and the mass media. Some of these clothing are worn by some of the models. They are

- Barbara, who was the first model that triggered this project never posed nude.

It seemed to me that she was fully aware of the uniqueness of her physique. As

an art student herself, she felt that her figure was fully enhanced through certain clothing. According to Barbara, art must reveal and conceal.

- Helena posed in the nude. She was more liberal in thinking. Perhaps due to her training as an actress, she was not shy to reveal all of her figure. To quote Helena:

“This is not a big deal”

- Olivia, a stout plump model clapped her hands and laughed after seeing her life size image exhibited in a public studio at Breman, Kumasi. She felt proud. She said that she now saw herself from a different perspective.
- Nana Yaa, a dark plump model young woman could not fathom why I could see beauty in her oversized body. There were several slim models on the K.N.U.S.T. campus she pointed me to. However she confessed and I quote:

“For the attention you have given me, I will pose for the project”

- Owusuwa is a lady in my locality. In fact she is a family friend. After seeing some of the photographs and drawings of other models, she insisted to be part of the project. It is interesting to note that some of the models themselves and other observers of my works directed me to other women of particular physical conformation that they believed would enhance this project.
- Abigail was one of the few models that I had not seen before. She had the darkest complexion. Her dark skin was uncanny. At the first instance she did not pose nude. When I asked her why she would not pose nude she said and I quote:

“But I don’t know you”

Later on during the project and after understanding what I was using the images for, she felt comfortable to pose in the nude.

I must emphasize that within the Ghanaian culture, it is unusual and sometimes dangerous to undertake such a project. Nudity in Ghana is associated with prostitution which in local parlance is called “Ashawo”. Again let me relate this to figures “D” and “E”. Why is it that in their semi-nudity state the Kwahu and the Ga women were not equated with prostitution yet in modern era semi-nudity is equated with sexual looseness or prostitution? None of these models are prostitutes. Some were my school mates, friends and professional models. They deserve to be treated with respect not disdain. For their boldness and bravery contrary to the status quo, I will forever salute them.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF MY MAJOR ART WORKS 1 (CLOTHED/SEMI-NUDE FIGURES)

The following paintings are my major art works for this particular Thesis/Project. They were painted specifically for the project between 2006 and 2008. I have divided my major art works into two groups – clothed/semi-nude figures and nude figures for clarity and easy identification. Each bunch of works is followed by descriptive evaluation of the works. The art works have been titled. However they do not have their sizes written on them. This is because the digital images can be printed at various sizes. For exhibition purposes, I would like my works to be printed or projected at 40 inches x 30 inches or larger. The images can be printed on various surfaces such as canvas, flexi, water-colour paper, etc.



FIG. 1

TITLE: MİRRORED IMAGE OF OWUSUWA

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 2

TITLE: MADAM BUTTERFLY AMA C.

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 3

TITLE: LINDA IN MILITARY CAP

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 4

TITLE: HEAVY LOADED WITH DISH

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 5

TITLE: OWUSUWA AS PC SCREENSAVER

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 6

TITLE: THE FLYING WOMAN

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 7

TITLE: VIEW FROM BEHIND

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 8

TITLE: BARBARA IN AKIMBO

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 9 *TITLE: STRIDING AT KEJETIA COMMERCIAL AREA*

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

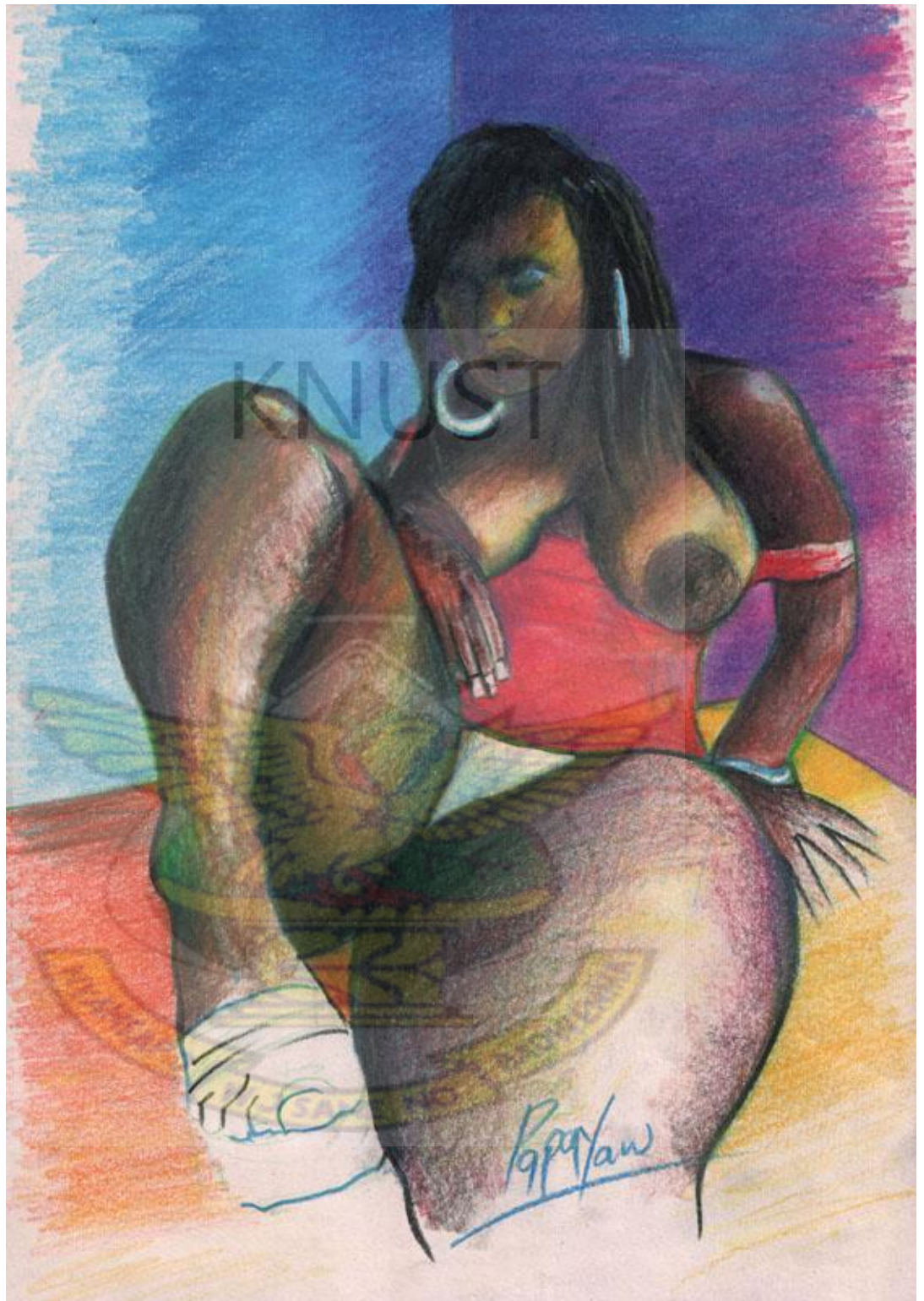


FIG. 10

TITLE: RECLINING POSE

Artist: Papa Yaw Dumi



FIG. 11

TITLE: MODEL WITH WIDE HIPS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 12

TITLE: BLACK SILK STOCKINGS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 13

TITLE: MODERN GIRL WITH RAISED ARMS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 14

TITLE: OLIVIA AS PEASANT LADY IN WESTERN DRESS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 15

TITLE: OWUSUWA IN STUDIO

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 16

TITLE: ABIGAIL OF SENSUOUS LIPS 1

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 17

TITLE: SILK STOCKINGS AND THE VIRTUAL PAINTING FRAME

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 18

TITLE: SILK STOCKINGS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

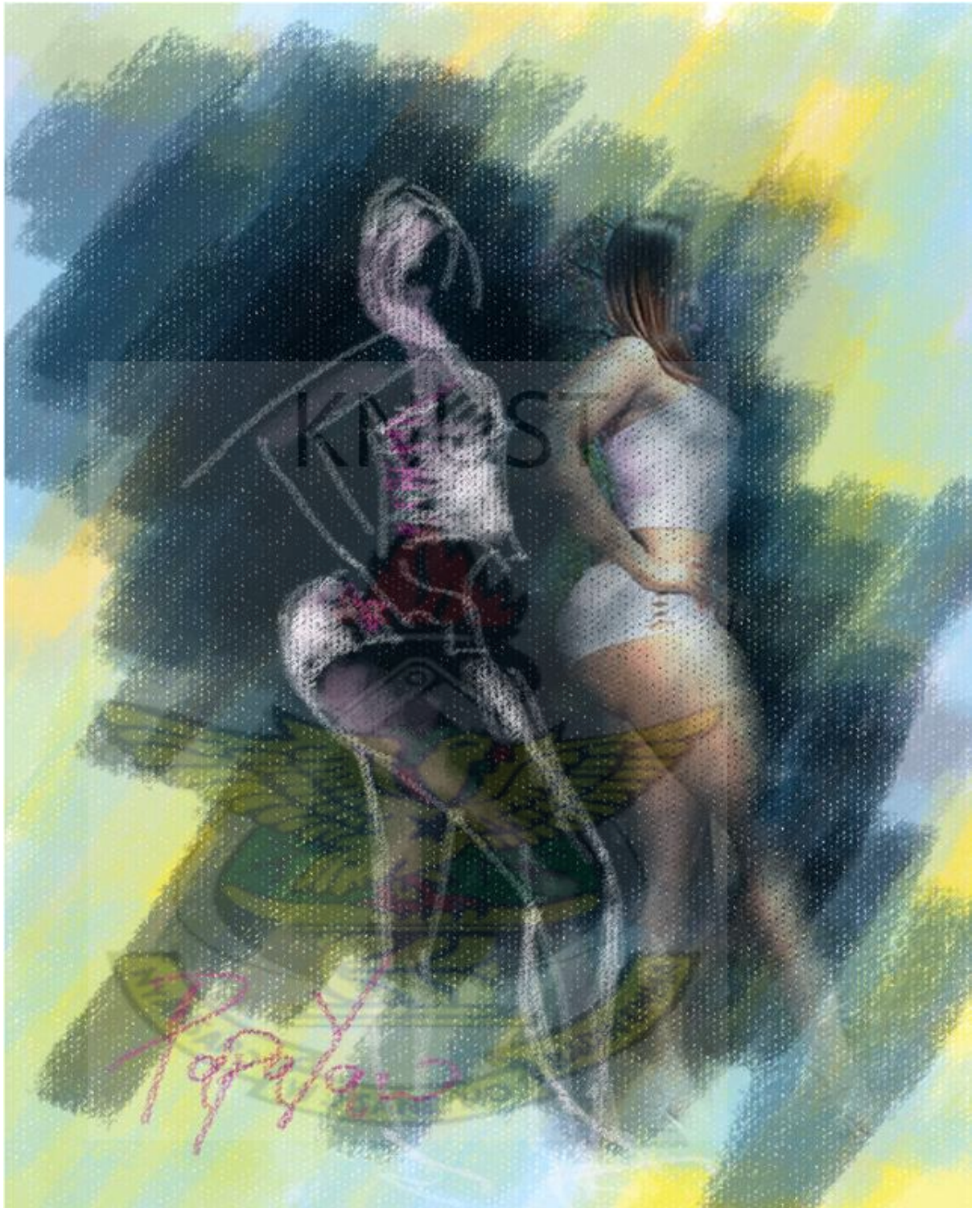


FIG. 19

TITLE: CATWALK OF OUTDOOR WEAR

Artist: Papa Yaw Dumi

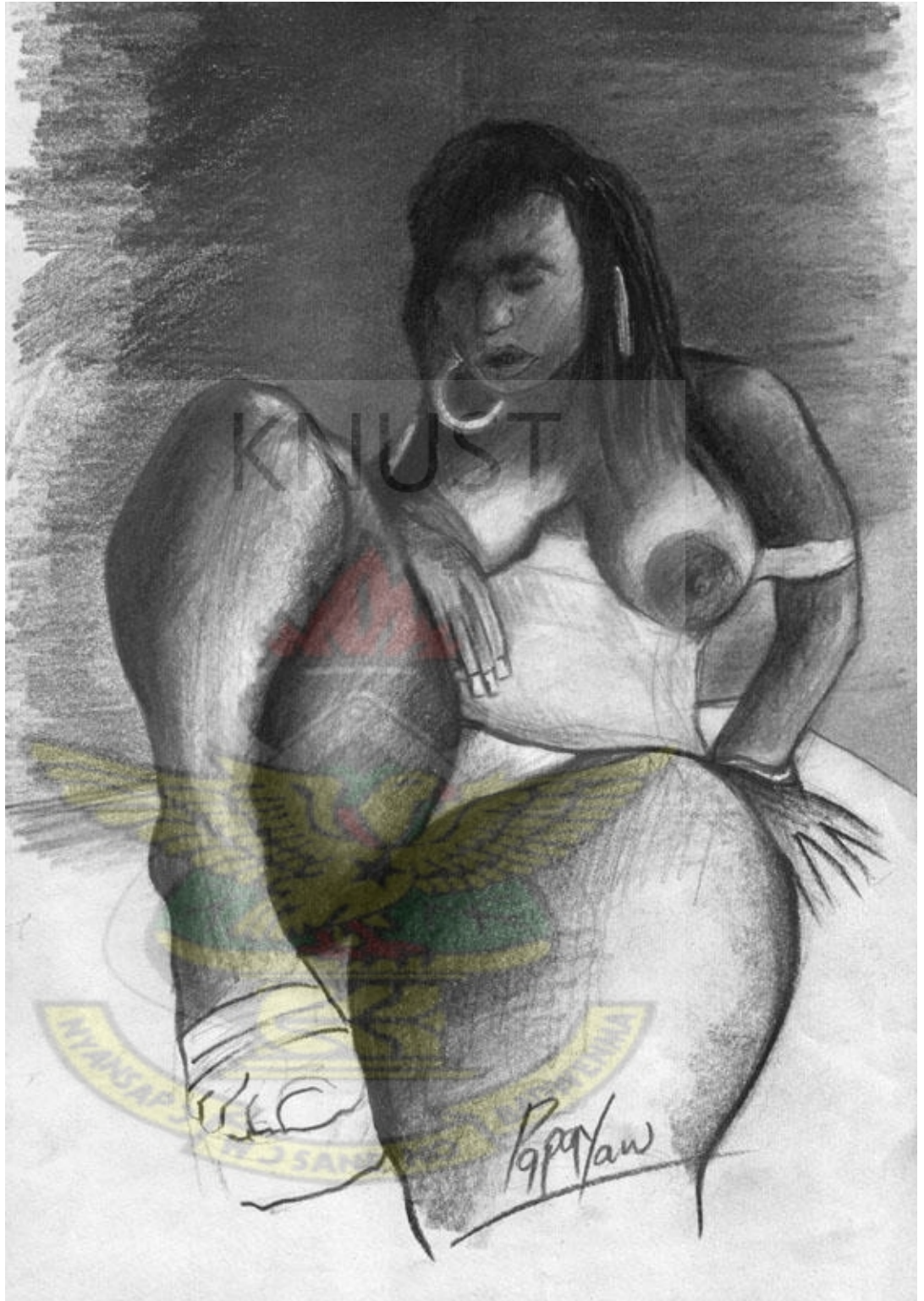


FIG. 20

TITLE: RECLINING NUDE 2

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 21

TITLE: POP SEMI-NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 22

TITLE: ABIGAIL WITH POP ART BACKGROUND

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 23

TITLE: PUPPET WOMAN IN CRIMSON

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG.24

TITLE: TRANSLUCENT DRESS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 25

TITLE: ABIGAIL OF THE SENSUOUS LIPS 2

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 26

TITLE: OWUSUWA IN ORANGE SHORTS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 28

TITLE: I'M AWARE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

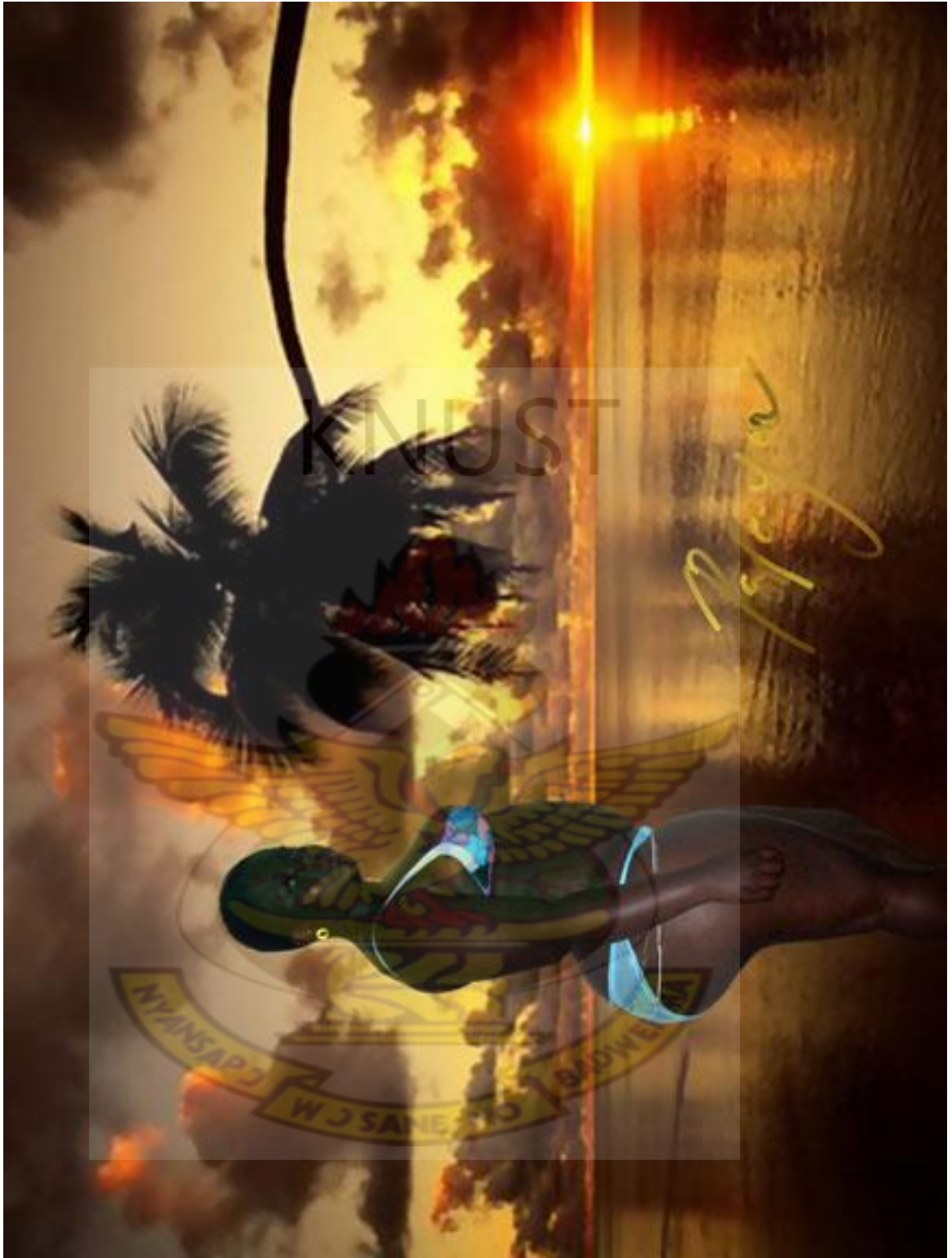


FIG. 29

TITLE: BIKINI AND TROPICAL LANDSCAPE POSTCARD

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 30

TITLE: G-STRING SEMI NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 31

TITLE: HEAD OF G-STRING SEMINUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

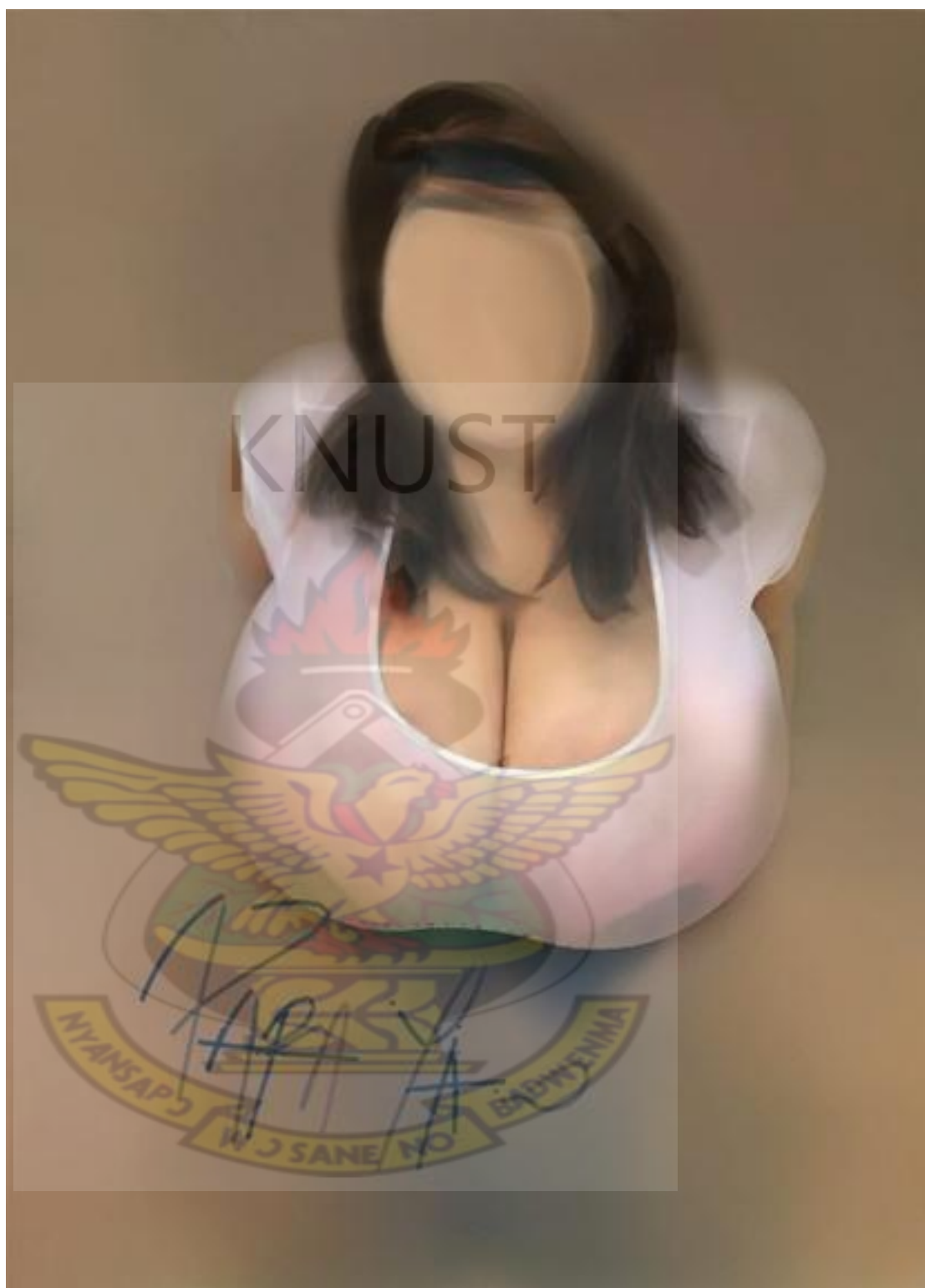


FIG. 32

TITLE: HEAVY BREASTED

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 33

TITLE: OLIVIA: ROBUST DARK MODEL

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

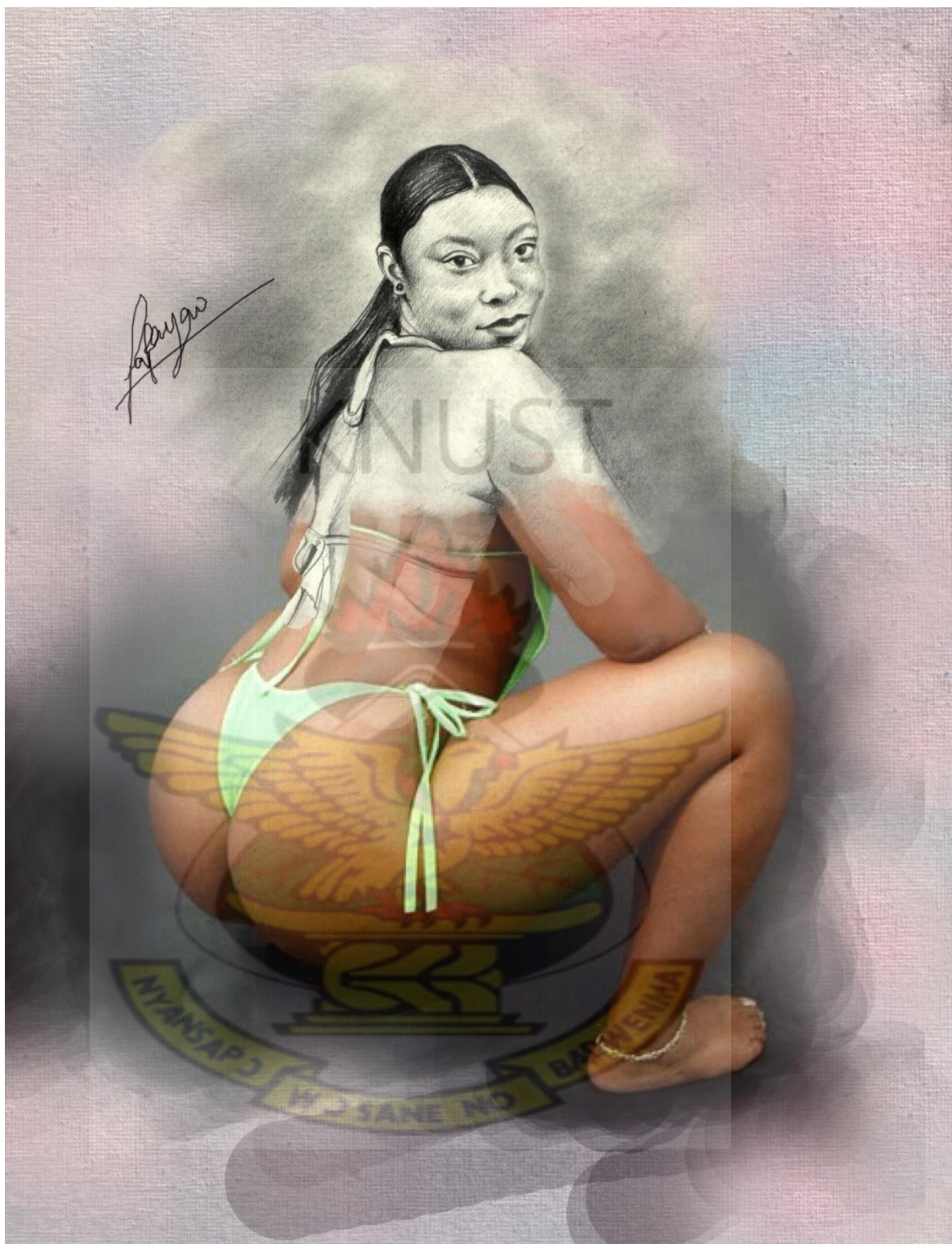


FIG. 34

TITLE: SQUATTING NUDE IN BIKINI

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 35

TITLE: HEFTY WOMAN IN RED

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

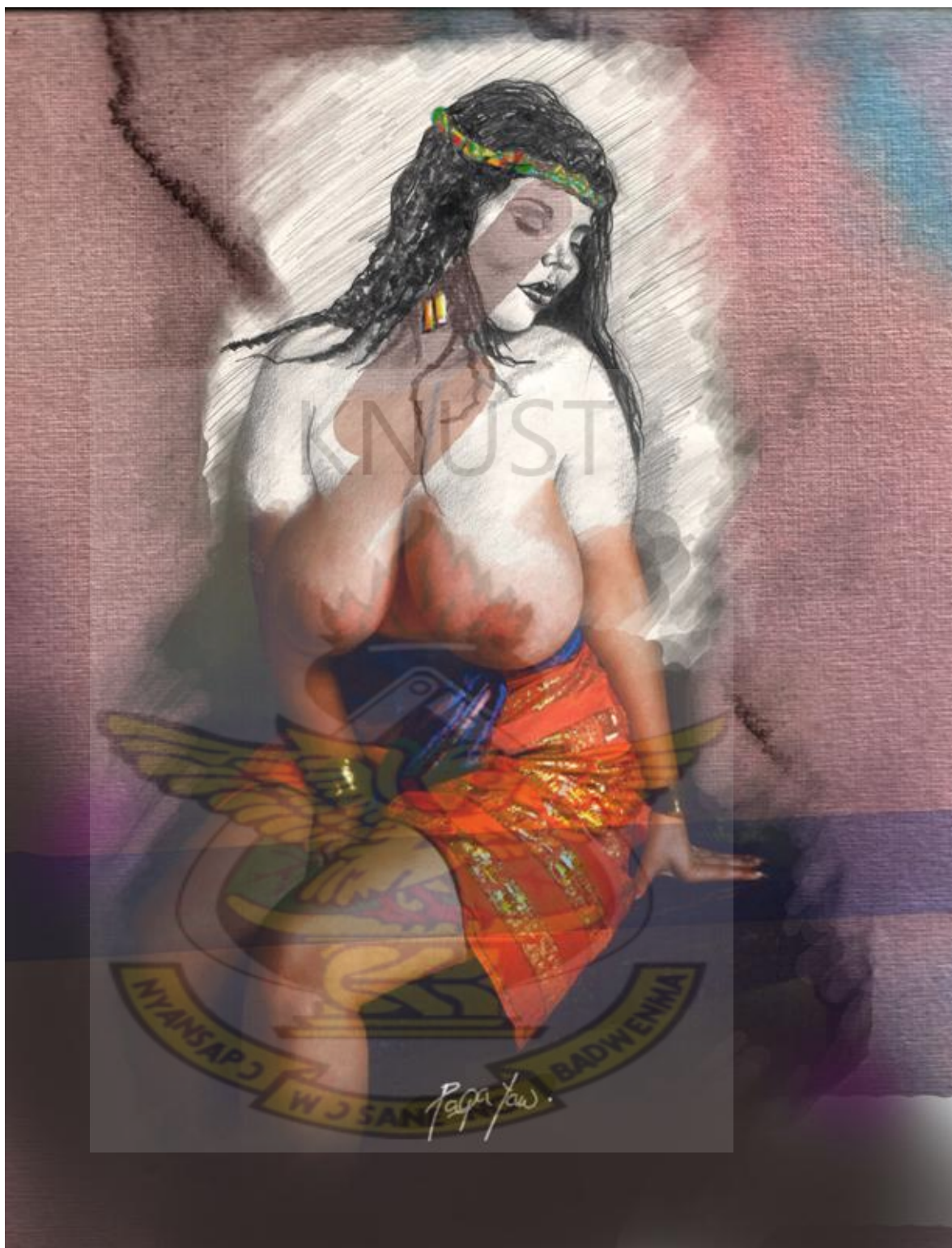


FIG. 36

TITLE: THE EGYPTIAN

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

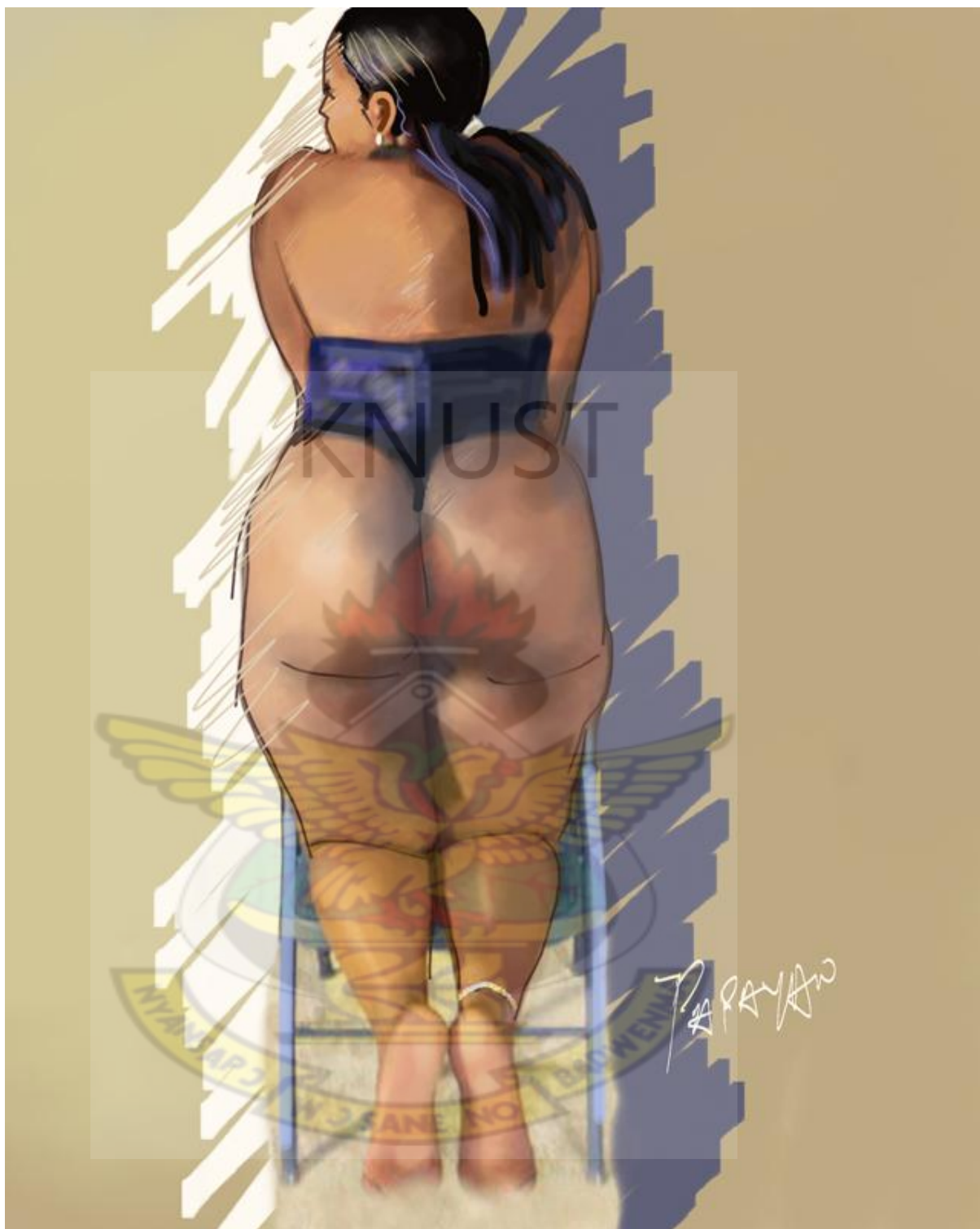


FIG. 37

TITLE: IDEAL SEMI NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 38

TITLE: SAUCY NADA

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 39

TITLE: WOMAN PUTTING ON A BRA

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 40

TITLE: LIPSTICK BABE, BARBARA

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 41

TITLE: EROTIC SHARK

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 42

TITLE: DOWNPOUR

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

DESCRIPTIVE EVALUATION OF MAJOR CREATIVE OUTPUT 1

The question of self-evaluation by the artist in regard to his own work in my opinion is equivalent to psycho analysing one self. This is nigh impossible even among highly intellectual artists like V. Kandinsky or Paul Klee who managed to put their thoughts into print. The reason obviously is that the propelling factors that galvanise a contemporary painter to paint what he paints are so much suffused in his own psyche that they are basically obscure, ephemeral and amorphous even to him. Those that try are usually wide off the mark about their own work. Some are downright nonsensical and one has to get into, for example, the writings of a great painter like S. Dali to know why. In some regards an artist writing about his work often borders on pomposity due to elevation of the ego.

The best of those who write about themselves are usually so cryptic and concise, as is the case with Delacroix (or Van Gogh in his letters,) that only little can be gleaned about the artist. Perhaps this inability of the painter to psycho-analyse himself is the reasons for the origins of the academic discipline of Art History and Art Education. The sheer theoretical content of these programmes naturally equip the student to express in writing the inner workings of types of artists in the appropriate wording for academic and critical purposes as well as for publication.

But since the M.F.A. programme requires the painting student to evaluate his own works for academic considerations, I have tried to put into words what I think are the appropriate descriptive evaluation of my own creations. I do not purport to be right in my analysis but at least it is an attempt.

From the onset a viewer may wonder why the intense focus on women- or in more academic terms, the focus on particular type of female shape. Indeed some particular critics might even consider the gross attention on women and their expression in art as the antics of a sex-addict. Some may even consider such an artist as abnormal and needs psychological help to “save” him from “imaginative lust”.

I am none of these. It must however be noted that since the dawn of man through pre-history, the shape of womanhood has been among the earliest form of artistic motif. In many ways such imagery can be considered as fertility symbols and the ample curves of woman as expressed in the earliest forms of art exemplifies that.

In my own regard in relation to my artistic output throughout the M.F.A. programme, I am inclined to think that I have always been fascinated by the human form of which I regard the female shape (as opposed to the male form,) as the epitome of beauty. Since I was a boy the female figure has always attracted me. I think this is same for any boy with no homosexual tendencies and is normal in attitude and perception. Perhaps there is sexual connotation in this fascination of the female figure. But even if it is so I consider it normal. I am inclined to think that in my case I have succeeded in sublimating natural human urge or feelings for the opposite sex into artistic outlets culminating in these numerous body of works.

But why the fascination for fat women? Perhaps this preference correlates to my own traditional culture of which fat women were considered as epitome of beauty. Perhaps I am fascinated by the voluminous curvatures or conformation of ample-shaped women as more aesthetically pleasing than slim women. Whatever the case may be it is a fact in art history that artists themselves have preferences. Botticelli preferred moderate-sized women- neither fat nor slim; Rubens preferred firm, ample bosomy

women equivalent to the types I have painted except that his is Caucasian; Modigliani preferred tall, slim types; Degas preferred girlish teenagers who have not fully reached womanhood.

I have concentrated on plump ladies with pronounced sexual attributes of heavy hips and buttocks, ample breasts and thick thighs. Perhaps these physical attributes readily make themselves easy for artistic rendering, exaggeration, distortion and freedom for artistic manipulations. Both the digital and manual freedoms of emphasis to focus on sexual areas like the buttocks and thighs all help to bring out the aesthetic attributes that extends to the procreation of the human species.

In all my freedom of expression in these sensitive themes, I have tried to steer away from any hint of pornography. I think I have succeeded in these regard. Anyone who would equate this delicate freedom of artistic expression with pornography or sin, in my opinion, is simply reflecting his or her own low mentality against innocent artistic verisimilitude.

MY MAJOR ART WORKS 1 (CLOTHED AND SEMI-NUDE FIGURES)

1. **MIRRORED IMAGE OF OWUSUWA** : Sheer contrast of opposing artistic technique which has been widely employed throughout these visual artistic researches. On the left is manual, dexterous skill of the hand as against photographic/digital representation with distorted focus on the protruding or pronounced buttocks. There is a sense of Pop Art nuance to this symmetrical composition. Although the right figure is a black woman, I resorted not to render the actual tonal values. The paleness of that figure is simply to sympathize with the white knickers of the lady on the right to achieve compositional cohesion.

2. **MADAM BUTTERFLY AMA C.** – The pop-art effect of this composition emphasis the misconception that fatness in women is synonymous with crumpled skin. It may be true that a lot of plump, large women have rumpled skin, especially around the thighs, arms and buttocks that may not be pleasant to the eye. Perhaps that is the reason why fat women put off the judges of beauty pageants and of men generally in modern times. Yet despite this seeming disadvantage in fat women, many African young women, despite the fatness, have firm skin hard on the flesh. There are no signs of folds or varicose vein meandering underneath. When women are of this firmness despite the fat, it is aesthetically pleasing. In this painting this pleasantness is composed into a synthesis that compositionally seems satisfying. The intense sexuality of the two images (of the same model) at the left and right of the composition are joined together by the butterfly that symbolizes the fluttering personality of women. Within the butterfly is the direct strong gaze of sex that is also echoed within the same eyes of the two figures. I consider this painting as enigmatic that does not need much technical analysis as such mechanical means to “understand” the painting would be futile.
3. **LINDA IN MILITARY CAP:** A simple composition in greenish cast representing an ample, modern girl in repose with arms folded. The face gloats sex. This is accentuated by the hiding of one eye that adds impish feel to her femininity. This painting seems saved from blandness due to the glitter of jewellery on wrists and fingers. The dark vertical shape behind her right side adds some depth to the painting. The zigzagging brush strokes traversing across her from top to bottom adds a sense of movement to the stillness of the imagery.

4. **HEAVY LOADED WITH DISH:** This composition is a wider scope of figure 52. It carries less power as it is more illustrative. It however reflects the notion that the greater percentage of fat women achieves their weight due to gluttony and nothing else. Affluence is closely associated with voluptuous flesh via rich food. The heavy volume of steaming food in a reflective silver container equates with the gargantuan breasts. The grinning face does not do justice to the aesthetic aspect of the composition as it brings banality of storytelling of how to become fat to the fore.
5. **OWUSUWA AS P.C. SCREENSAVER:** Accentuated posterior through digital means adds a traditional form of beauty to an ultra modern room setting. The contrast may seem odd to Western eyes who may question why Africans attach so much importance to protruding buttocks as a form of beauty when they consider it as unnecessary and even peculiar if not exactly a deformation of nature. Of course from the African perspective the flat bottom of the Caucasian may seem as odd or even ugly.
6. **THE FLYING WOMAN:** Like an advanced, modern fighter plane streaking through the sky, this composition is almost transcendental in the feeling it invokes in an imaginative viewer. It can be viewed from an abstract perspective connoting a human moth or butterfly in outer space. One of the great things about the computer is its ability to transform mundane subjects into ethereal virtual- reality via digital means – something unheard of a couple of decades ago.
7. **VIEW FROM BEHIND:** A fat woman fully conscious of the power of her heavy buttocks admires her own generous proportion. Again painted in feverish strokes in the head area, the washes flatten out in the middle torso in

broad areas of tonality. The negative area on the right background is darkened to emphasize the mould of protruding posterior.

8. **BABARA IN AKIMBO**: It is not my word to say so, but Prof. Ato Delaquis considers this painting to be a masterpiece. According to him he considers the figure as exemplifying a young sophisticated West African lady of between eighteen to twenty five years old and living in an urban centre of any West African country. According to him, she has already committed three or four abortions already and she survives by her sexual prowess. Definitely, according to him, not a prostitute but she is aware of her sexual magnetism and makes the most of it in a harsh detribalized environment. In physical shape, she is the epitome of the West African physical types in both men and women, which are somewhat squat with a low centre of gravity as opposed to the physical types of the Sahel and East Africa who tend to be slimmer with less protruding buttocks. According to the professor, this lady seems street-wise as evident in the chain on the left ankle and can also run easily in high-heels. The muscular thighs and buttocks are high sexual attractions she feels comfortable to exhibit. Every brush stroke seems to accentuate all her physical attributes from head to toe. The professor likes the painting very much that he has expressed the wish to own it or at least own a digital copy since to him this figure epitomizes all my aspirations to represent the contemporary African young woman.

9. **STRIDING AT KEJETIA COMMERCIAL AREA**: A panorama of the city with one of the inhabitants, a young lady of heavy curvaceous proportions, striding through the commercial area. Fully clad in modern dress and dark shades with straightened hair, thousands of her kind traverses in the urban

centres of Africa daily in the quest for survival. This picture is symbolic in the sense that she is isolated in the midst of plenty so that the viewer is aware that she exists through no fault of hers in a completely new environment from traditional society. She now lives amidst the clash of cultures – traditional culture on one side and western influences on the other. And therefore a neo-African culture, according to Professor Ato Delaquis, is emerging out of the clash. Yet despite all that some of the physical attributes of past era like plumpness and a rounded figure, has been maintained to the present as exemplified by this tall, heavy-boned lass in high heels and mini-skirt.

10. **RECLINING POSE:** A brutal composition of a large young woman in provocative sexual pose showing heavy, inviting thighs and a glimpse of her white underwear against a black crotch. Drawn in a style of spare economy (note the sketchy platform slippers) the dynamic power of the composition is accentuated by the primary colours of red, blue and yellow binding the foreshortened composition together. According to my supervisor, the power of this work is second only to that of figure 8 but with an edge in advanced abstracted connotations.
11. **MODEL WITH WIDE HIPS:** Digital manipulation of the hips to gain guitar-shaped conformation that is naturally attractive to some people. The sweet configuration of colours of the background only enhances the ooze of sexuality. Again there is pop-art effect in the overall composition. The hip to the waist ratio is sublime. The yellow belt symbolizes the measuring tape (which is very common in Ghana) used by seamstresses and tailors to measure the proportions of the human figure.

12. **BLACK SILK STOCKINGS:** The dark mass of lower limb encased in silken sheen is so pronounced in this composition it is almost akin to a question mark. The drawn upper body is in marked contrast to the photographic part of the composition. The act of one figure drawing or painting another within the confines of the two-dimensional white space is as uncanny or eerie as any done by Rene Magritte – the famous Surrealist. The dash of crimson pink brush-stroke all adds to the power emitted by this composition which again seems to project an aura of pop-art effect.
13. **MODERN GIRL WITH RAISED ARMS:** Traditional draughtsmanship is applied in projecting contemporary fashion. It is of course the same drawing encased within the white of the previous painting. The powerful face and huge body of the model enhances the aesthetic qualities of this drawing. In no way should anyone in the art-world dare suggest that manual, traditional techniques and styles are outdated in the 21st Century. It is very interesting when occasionally an artist detects oriental cast in the face of some of the most beautiful women of the black race.
14. **OLIVIA AS PEASANT LADY IN WESTERN DRESS:** A subtle rendering of traditional manual dexterity with digital manipulation to invoke a conventional pose that had been applied from Kofi Antubam to Offei Nyarko. The hefty lady is the prototype of Akan beauty in women. In her case she is jet black in complexion but that does not deter this physical type as the most attractive to men of traditional society. The heavy thigh and thick knees betray her pastime of heavy eating. The western dress she wears in no way obstruct her native attributes.

15. **OWUSUWA IN STUDIO:** Digitally pronounced posterior that may be seen as a sex symbol for West Africans even in the modern era. The contemporary appliances, gadgetry and pictorial imagery around her only magnify the fact that she is divorced from traditional culture and the dark shade only adds extra defiance to her posture. The coppery skin increasingly manifesting itself in a lot of women is due to grooming as well as more protection from the sun.
16. **ABIGAIL OF SENSUOUS LIPS 1:** The mechanical texture of the ground or surface of this painting definitely adds extra pictorial dimension and power to the likable model in this composition. The soft African mouth emphasised with pink lip-stick, seems not to be in sharp contrast to the reddish wig. In a way the contemporary African girl in the urban centres seems to exist in an artificial or make-belief world. This form of existence has naturally manifested itself in the film world as evident in the African movies being churned out at frenetic pace in recent years. It is appropriate that painters such as Ato Delaquis were quick to notice the importance and emergence of modern Africans to warrant using this clash of cultures as basis for painterly expression as far back as the 1960s and 1970s. The Op art background of this painting only succeeds in invoking the plastic world this lady finds herself.
17. **SILK STOCKINGS AND THE VIRTUAL PAINTING FRAME:** The huge lower limbs encased in metallic silk-stockings almost looks like an atrocious entity with its own feelings and dislikes. The pink shoes only add to the incongruity of the whole-makeup. The Magritte-like device adds intense surreal element to an already ludicrous fallacy of an overweight gold-digger.
18. **SILK STOCKINGS:** Same as fig. 17 but without the oblong device, this imagery seems absurdly naked to be almost an eyesore. The likeable upper

body is in sharp contrast to the lower body and this awakens an uncomfortable response from a viewer because the brain cannot correlate a natural narrow waist with attractive face and upper torso with the elephantine mass of the lower body.

19. **CATWALK OF OUTDOOR WEAR:** Akin to fig. 1 this composition contrasts traditional manual dexterity with digital photographic means. It is hard to consider which is better. Indeed there is no need for comparison as the two mutually complement each other. The diagonal brushstrokes of the background add sensation of movement within the dark void.
20. **RECLINING NUDE 2:** Some people prefer this black and white drawing as opposed to its coloured counterpart of fig. 10 but obviously many observers would prefer the former for the sheer dynamism of colour. Professor Ato Delaquis considers this composition as second only to fig. 8 as representing the typical imagery of heavy-hipped young African women with rich lifestyles.
21. **POP SEMI-NUDE:** With a feel akin to the late cuttings by Matisse, this work exudes a pop-art aura that transcends a mere lady in swim suit. The digitally enhanced twirls only add extra visual sensations to the circular motions of forms.
22. **ABIGAIL WITH POP ART BACKGROUND:** Although this composition hints a bit to publicity or advertising imagery the effective ploy of the interesting textured ground elevates this painting to pop-art proportions. The lack of merchandised items of course saves it from generating into banal billboard imagery. Not as effective as its counterparts in fig.16, the charming face still holds our attention.

23. **PUPPET FIGURE IN CRIMSOM:** Digital means have been pushed to the extreme to achieve the jagged and disjointed imagery of this composition. The crimson red of the dress and the cast of black hair add depth to the picture. Without such deep tonalities the composition would only achieve faint pastel-like effect. The disjoints of the figure achieves mannequin effect with puppet-like grace and conformation in the way and manner the arms and back are segmented.
24. **TRANSLUCENT NUDE:** Rainbow hues interspersed by the rich brown skin of the model are the attractive features of this composition. The halo pulsating from the corpulent body holds a viewer's attention to the feminine attributes of the lady. The magentas and the lakes, not forgetting the violet and cerulean blues, are the ploys applied for this colourful effect. There is light yellow ochre at the backside of the model because without that colour the work would have greatly dimmed.
25. **ABIGAIL OF THE SENSOUS LIPS 2:** The face of this model has always held my attention as hauntingly beautiful. The generous lips are sexy with traces of the cupid- bow as the gracing factor that attracts attention – almost like traffic lights. The reddish blond wig should have been out of place in negroid beauty but strangely it works in the crazy world of contemporary lifestyles. As usual, the fascinating pattern of texture adds rather than detracts to the work and, of course, the Op art background is a plus to a very pleasant composition.
26. **OWUSUWA IN ORANGE SHORTS:** Some Western observers may consider big protruding posterior as sympathetic to raffia skirts than modern knickers. But depending on one's view point, the bright orange shorts still

works in a modern setting despite the fact that some viewers may consider gyrating heavy buttocks as outdated even in the African context.

27. **PORTRAIT OF OLIVIA:** A close-up view of fig. 14. Main point is to reveal the pleasant proportions of the face. It is interesting to acknowledge that despite whatever misgiving some of us may have regarding the virtues of hefty shapes in women, they usually have extraordinary pretty faces.
28. **I'M AWARE:** Digitally extended buttocks are the main feature of this bloated model. The reason why the traditional African man is sexually attracted to a heavy bottom in women is puzzling. Modern dress coverings have not concealed this attraction. The street jargon for this type of clothing nowadays in Ghana is "I'm aware". Standing almost on a pedestal, the white centralized drawers of the lady retains our attention, whilst the intense blue-black background with its light glow around the figure facilitates focus still on the model.
29. **BIKINI AND TROPICAL LANDSCAPE POST-CARD:** The corpulent lady in electric blue bikini is transfixed within the confines of a tropical sundown. As echo to the leaning coconut tree, perhaps she would have been ideal in raffia skirt as befitting her ancestry. Nevertheless, the situation in Africa is that some traditional shapes have been carried to the present era. The comic-tragic consequences are almost quixotic in scope. Yet perhaps these are trappings to a new African culture which would be contemporary in scope.
30. **G-STRING SEMI NUDE:** The 'V' of the panties digging deep into the cleft of her prominent buttocks would perhaps have been empty sexual body-language if the magenta, violet, purple, crimson and yellow combination have not been infused into the composition of a squatting girl.

31. **HEAD OF G-STRING SEMI NUDE:** Blow-up of the face of the previous painting. The aesthetic consideration of this head is of higher realm than the full pose. The digitally generated pointillism is crucial in achieving planetary distribution of colour interaction. Although intrinsically mechanical in scope, the effect challenges traditional manual skills in the manipulation of actual paint.
32. **HEAVY BREASTED:** This surreal upper body without facial features perhaps could equally have been executed in three dimension form into sculpture. The idea struck me after I had finished this work. Each breast bigger than the head in itself connotes how vital sexuality is to existence of mankind and its propagation. I was at first tempted to characterize the face with features. But I am now glad I did not because I would have succeeded only in adding banality to an already interesting interpretation of a heavily-breasted woman.
33. **OLIVIA – ROBUST DARK MODEL:** Colossal black semi-nude in repose. Sometimes I am inclined to think that modern dresses do not do justice to us and indeed, in many instances, are encumbrances that deter natural beauty.
34. **SQUATTING SEMI- NUDE IN BIKINI:** A graphite drawing is merged with a coloured image with the aid of the computer. The metamorphosis of monotone grey into chromatic hues does not leave a chasm in the painting. There is a gradual shift between the undertone and the mass tone in order to achieve a smooth transition. Various techniques such as chiaroscuro are applied for aesthetic effect. This digital painting can be defined as flux, fusion and symbiosis of ideas, media and of techniques. One of my most likeable work in which there is transition from digital-photo process at the bottom half

of the body into traditional academic rendering at the top. The light green panties cut deep into the cleft of the buttocks. With the inviting tilt of the head backwards the sexual connotations are obvious. Again, the faint cast of oriental characteristic in some beautiful African women is discernible in the face – especially the slant of the eyes.

35. **HEFTY WOMAN IN RED:** A composition in red tonalities that invokes the usual robust woman in pose, but this time covered in dress. The lack of definition cast a mystical spell to her attractive figure.

36. **THE EGYPTIAN:** It is amazing to note that the braided hair, elongated by artificial extender, is discernible in ancient Egyptian tombs amongst the attractive figures in some murals. There is an Egyptian feel to the head of this work that reminds us of identical imagery in Egyptian wall painting ancient Egypt.

37. **IDEAL SEMI-NUDE:** This is slick, unalloyed depiction of the ideal Ghanaian/West African beauty, despite the light complexion. The contours conform to Kofi Antubam's analysis of traditional form of beauty in women. In this back view the narrow joints of the ankle, the waist and the knees are in direct opposition to the hefty thighs, buttocks and chest. This work is one of the cleanest depictions of the ideal figure in my opinion due to the exact definition of forms and the diagonal strokes of the brush. Digital and manual manipulations have been equally balanced to produce this crisp, pictorial semi-nude. The light skin should not be confused with infusion of Caucasian blood. She is full blooded African. There are many traces of light skins among the Ewe, the Fante, the Ibo and some northern tribal groups that do not contain one drop of white blood.

38. **SAUCY NADA:** The swollen lips set against faintly aggressive and saucy face accentuates the blue jutting breasts. The aggressive brushstrokes compound the fleeting imagery of a modern Ghanaian girl in black beret.
39. **WOMAN PUTTING ON A BRA:** The heavy thighs seem too gross for the light-medium weight of the torso encase within the frame of a vertical oblong shape. Her delicate struggle to wriggle into the dark bra all add to this ultra modern conception of a contemporary Ghanaian city girl. The violet/purple entrapment of the background only adds a sense of Francis Bacon eeriness to the composition.
40. **LIPSTICK BABE, BARBARA:** The typical Ghanaian/African stance of a sexually active young lady is depicted here with panache. The buttocks are naturally jutting out as her upper body leans into the mirror in the act of painting her pouting lips. The “Pompidou” hairstyle and the heavy platform shoes with the left leg bracelet, all add contemporary touch to the traditional posture – in this case of a rather short lady who vainly tries to increase her height. My supervisor considers this work as the 4th best of my total output.
41. **EROTIC SHARK:** There is a feeling of shark-skin to this erotic figure of a wide-hipped model. The flow of texture echoes the glint of reflected ripples of water. The result is a strangely sexy imagery of the attributes of woman in virtual space. The digitally-widened interval between her crotch adds to the power of her sexuality – even though no sexual organs are depicted.
42. **DOWNPOUR:** These days “Amonse” is no more used to cover the vagina of a girl who has reached the age menstruation. Amonse is a red, black and white cloth that traditionally has been applied to cover both the anus and vagina of women. It is curled between the crotch and held both at the front and back to

beads of the waist – exactly as pictured in this image. This picture brings memories to old –timers who were born before 1955 when this small piece of cover-cloth was in common usage. The flow of cascading water perhaps symbolizes the bid for cleanliness and hygiene in humid, tropical climate.

KNUST



ILLUSTRATIONS OF MY MAJOR ART WORKS 2 (NUDE FIGURES)



FIG 43

TITLE: DARK NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

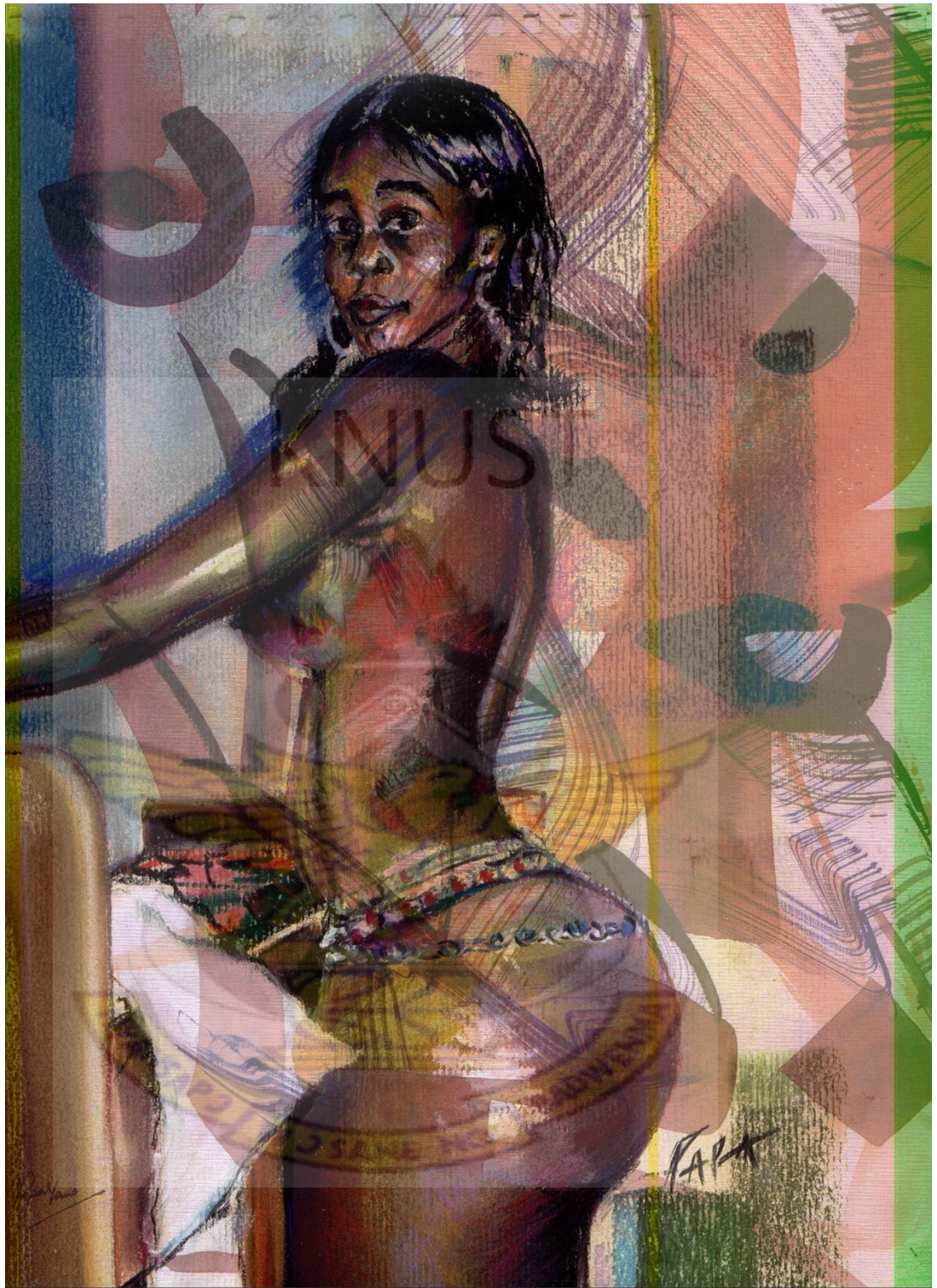


FIG. 44

TITLE: 'S' SHAPE NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 45
TITLE: BEADS ON HIPS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG.46

TITLE: THE CROUCHER

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 47

TITLE: FAT MAAME WATA

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 48

TITLE: UNDER THE FLAG

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

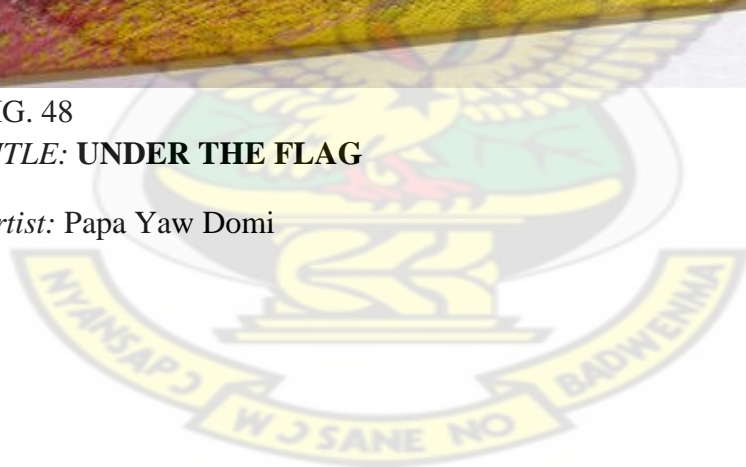




FIG. 49

TITLE: PARADISE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 50

TITLE: BACK VIEW IN WATERCOLOUR

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

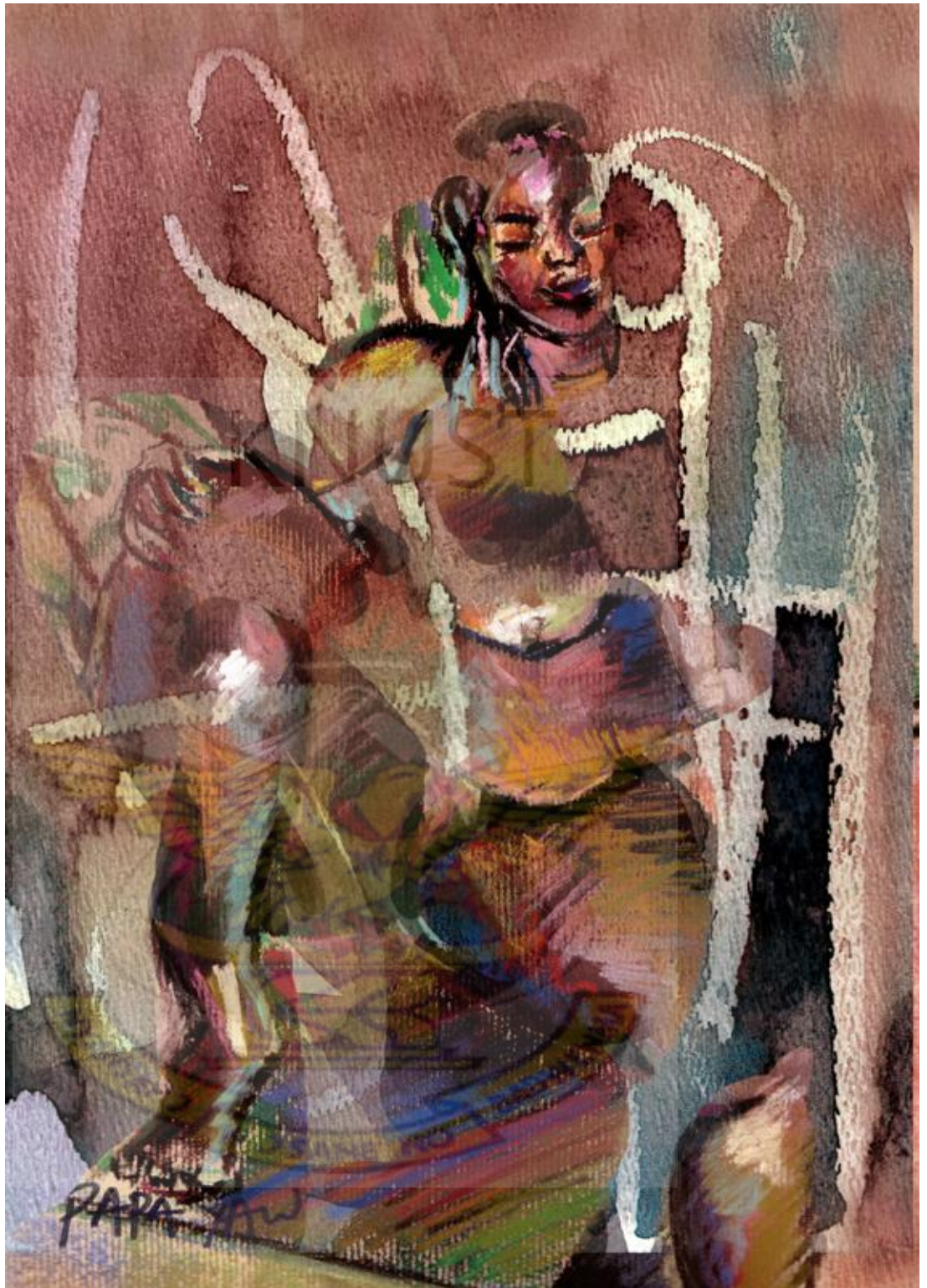


FIG. 51
TITLE: SEATED NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

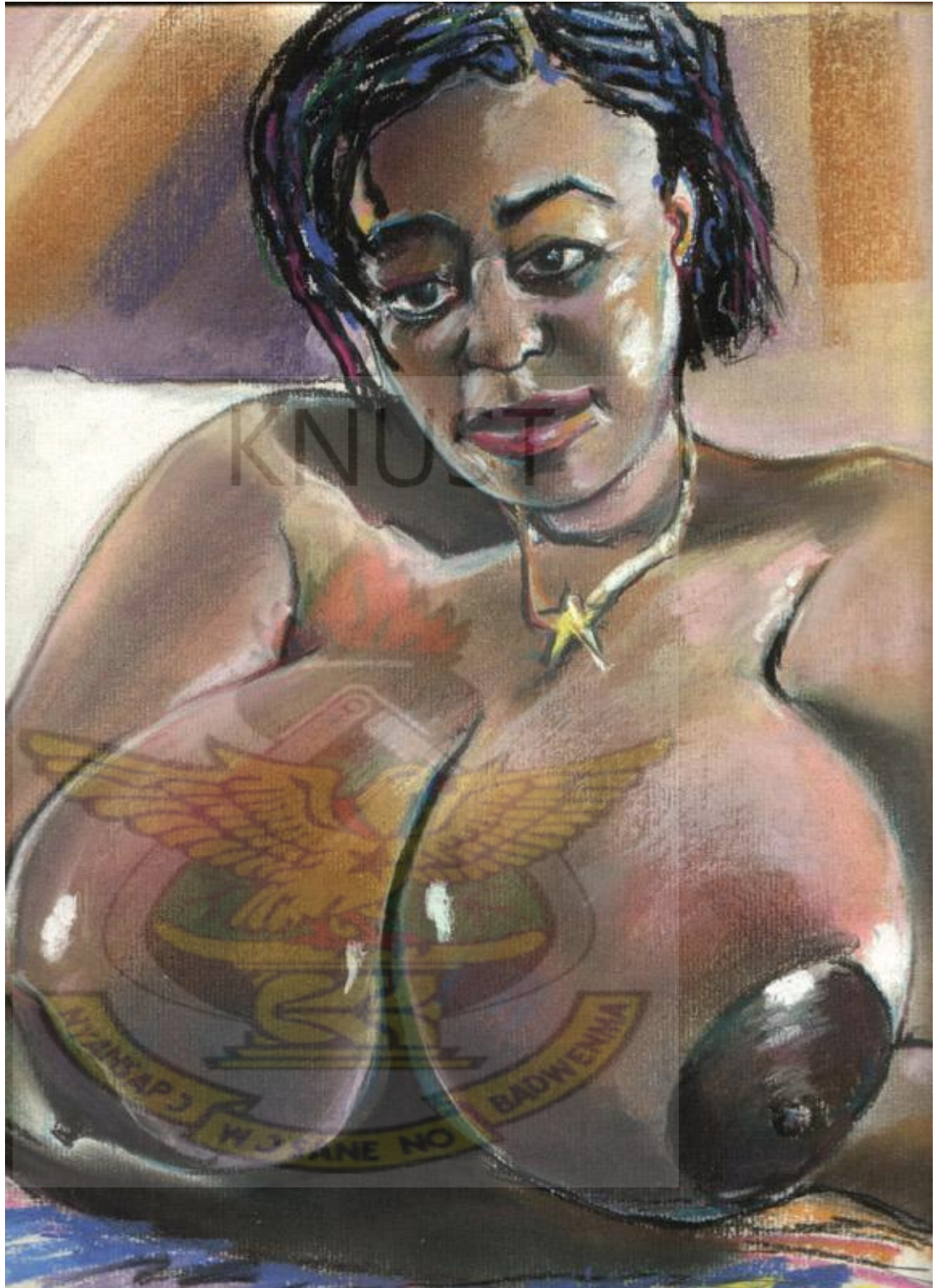


FIG. 52
TITLE: HEAVY LOADED

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

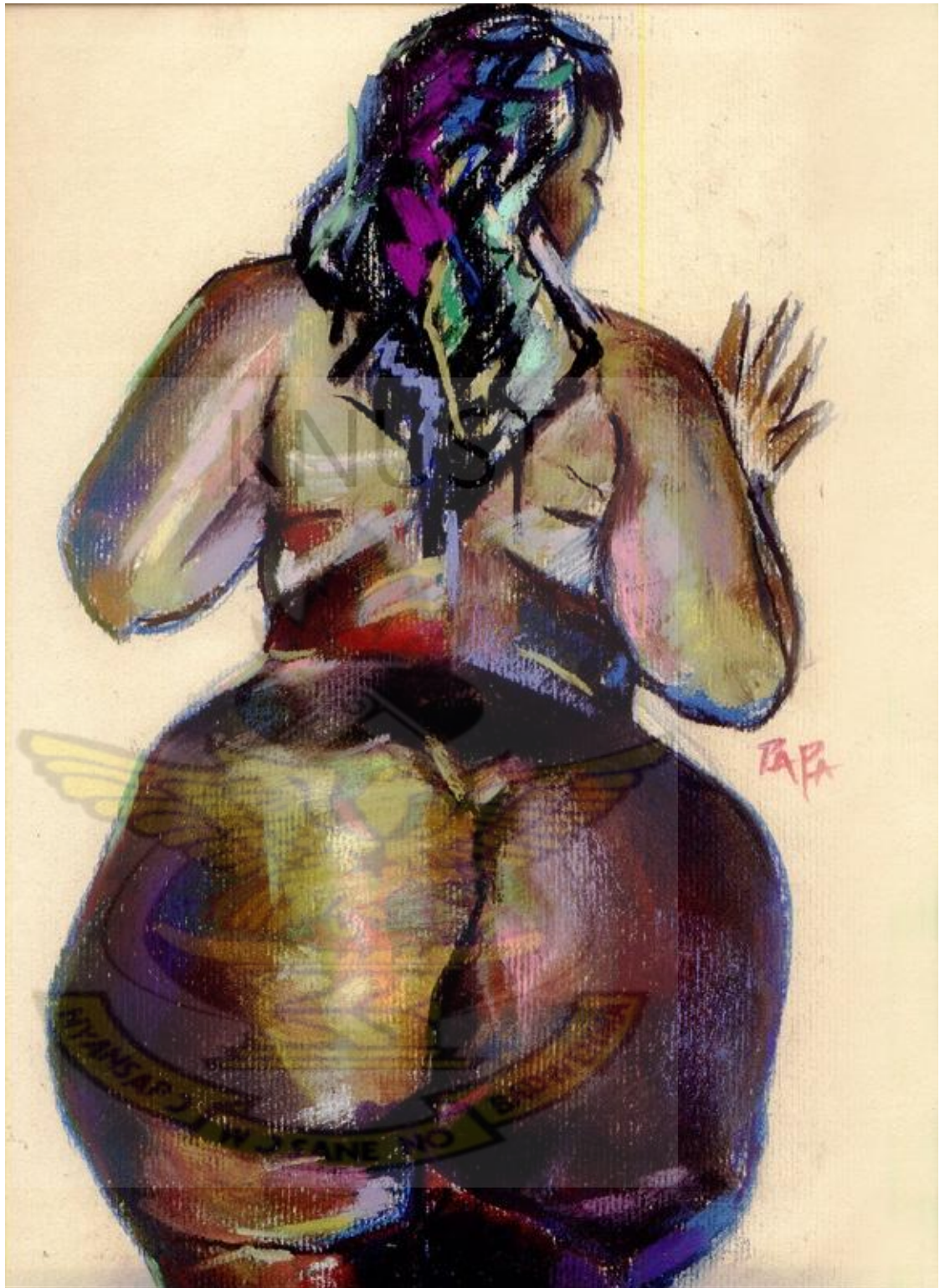


FIG. 53

TITLE: BACK VIEW IN CHALK PASTEL

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 54
TITLE: SIDE VIEW OF BARBARA

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 55

TITLE: LINDA WITH LONG BRAIDS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

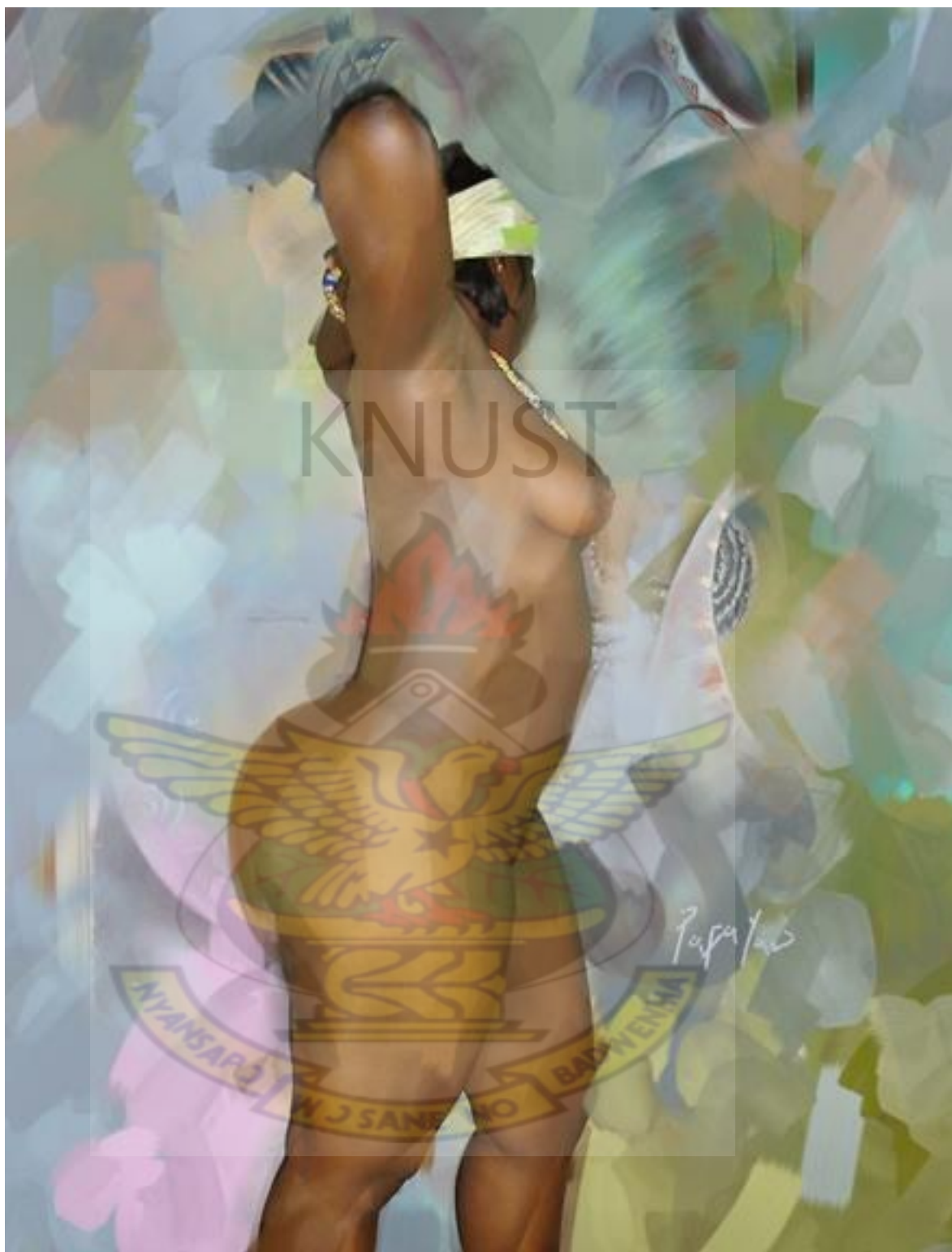


FIG. 56

TITLE: STRETCHING NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 57

TITLE: NUDE IN THREE QUARTER BACK VIEW

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

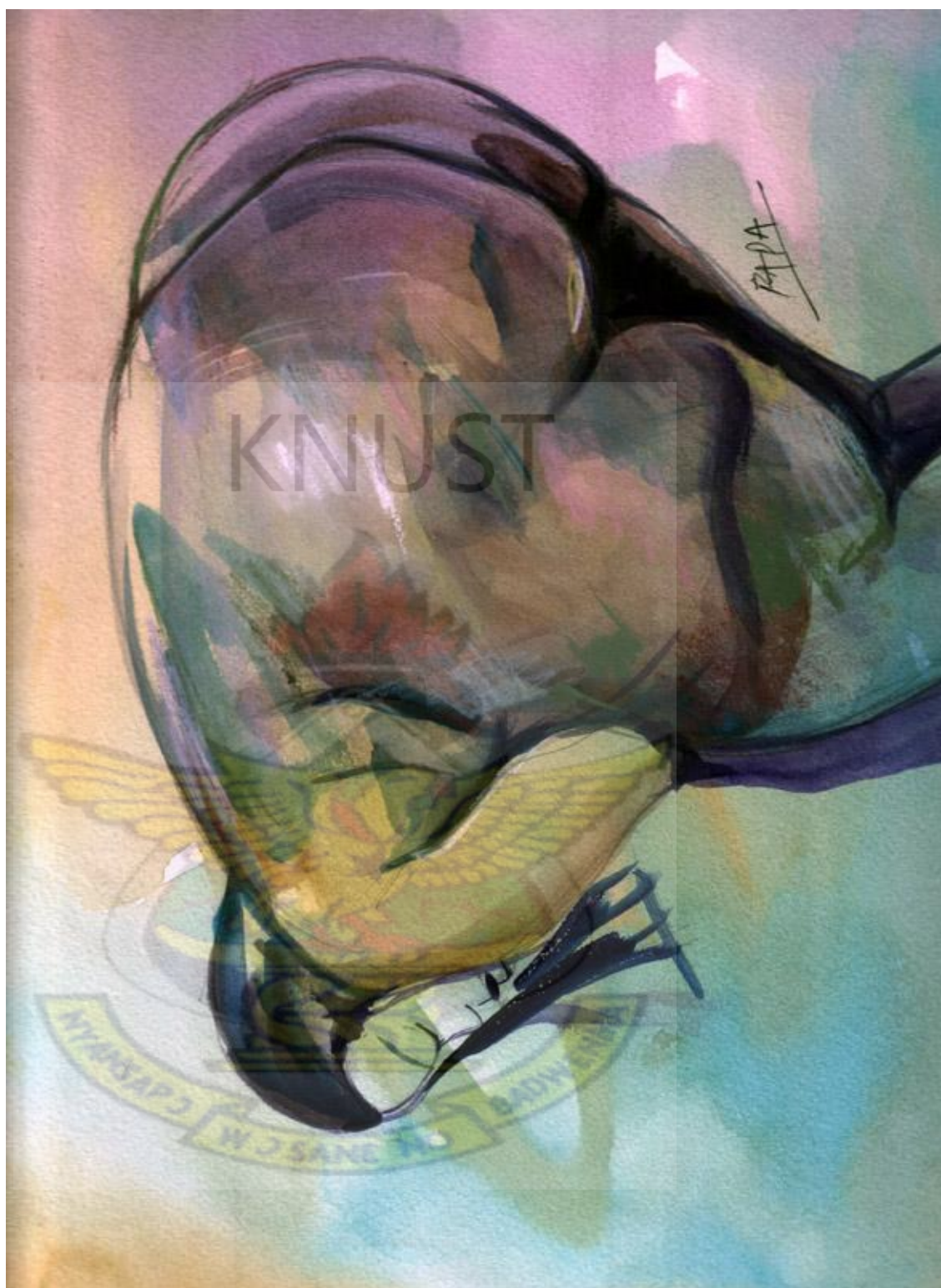


FIG. 58

TITLE: CROUCHING NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

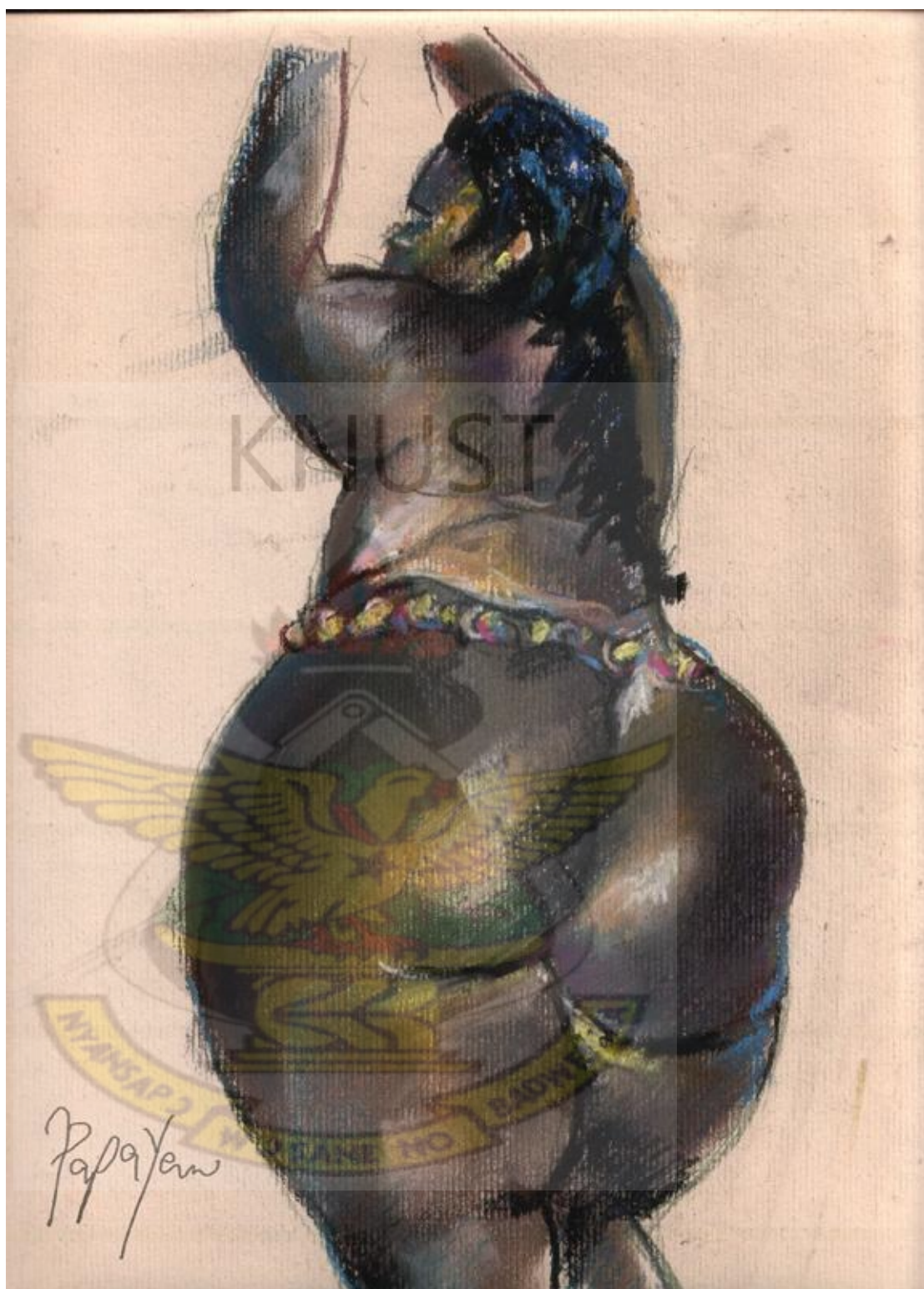


FIG. 59
TITLE: STRETCHING BACK VIEW

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 60
TITLE: TRADITIONAL NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

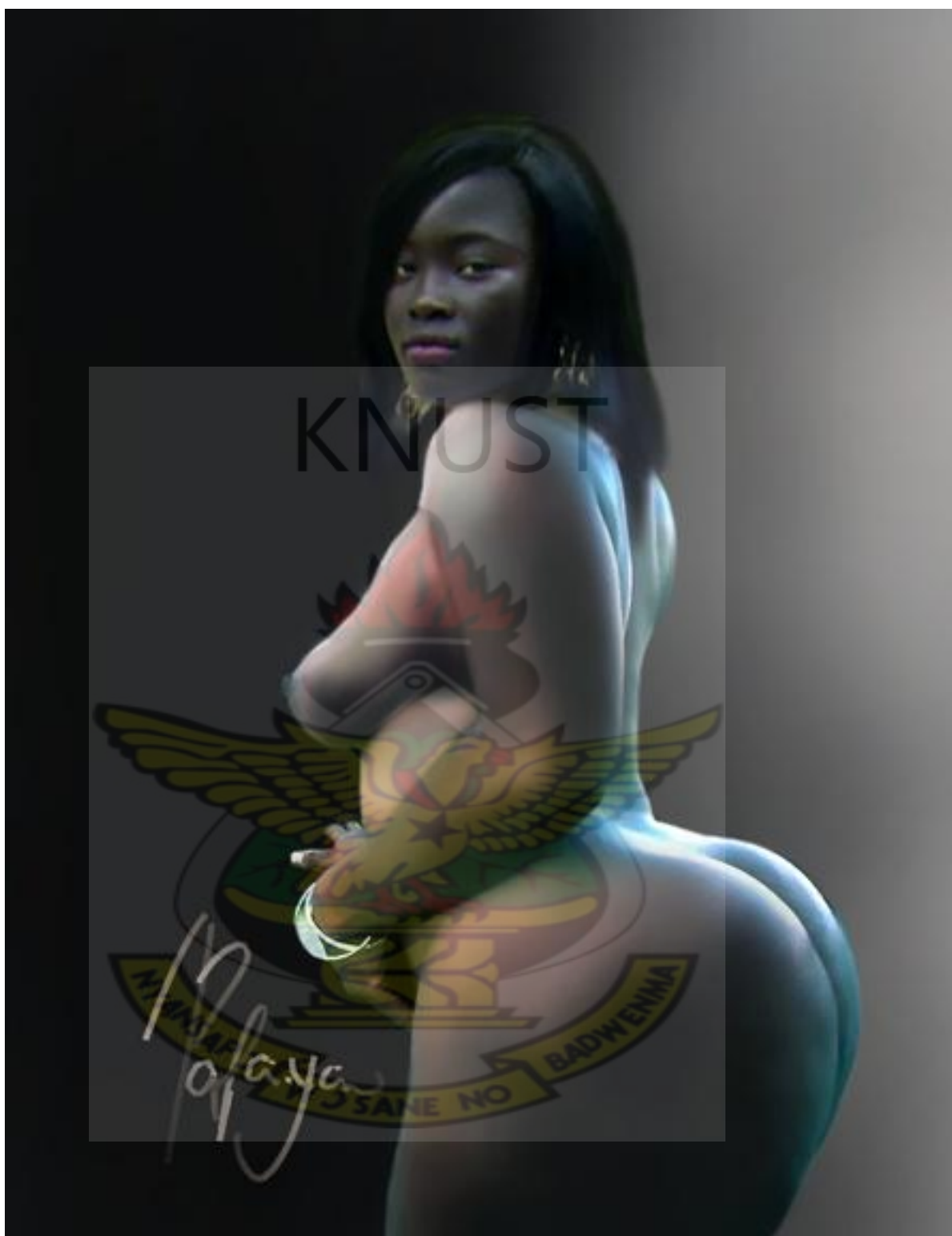


FIG. 61

TITLE: ABIGAIL IN PENSIVE POSE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

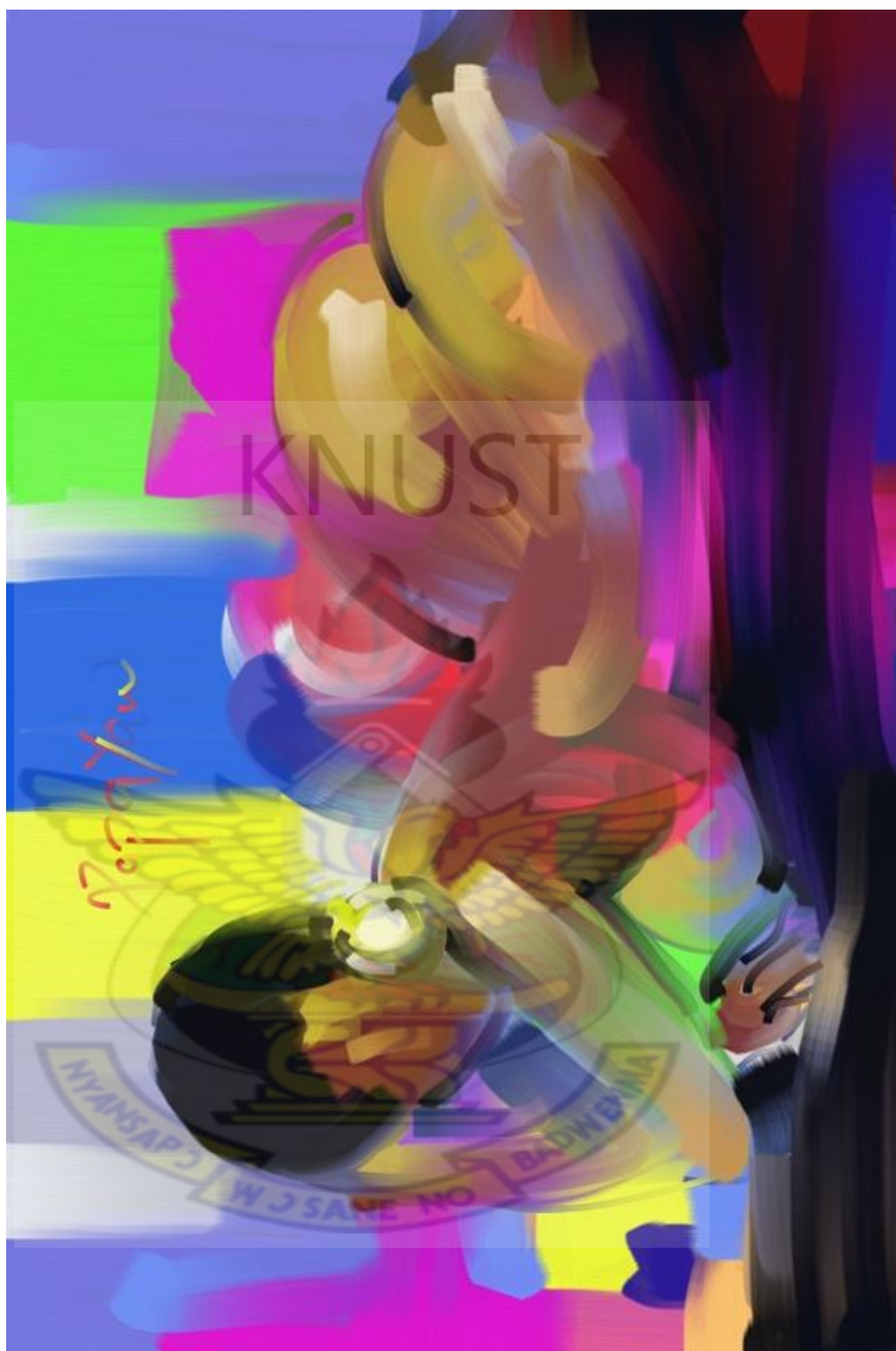


FIG. 62
TITLE: MULTI COLOURED NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 63
TITLE: NUDES IN LANDSCAPE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 64

TITLE: NUDE IN THE HAZE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 65

TITLE: NEBUCHADNEZZAR WOMAN

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 66
TITLE: TRADITIONAL NUDE 2

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

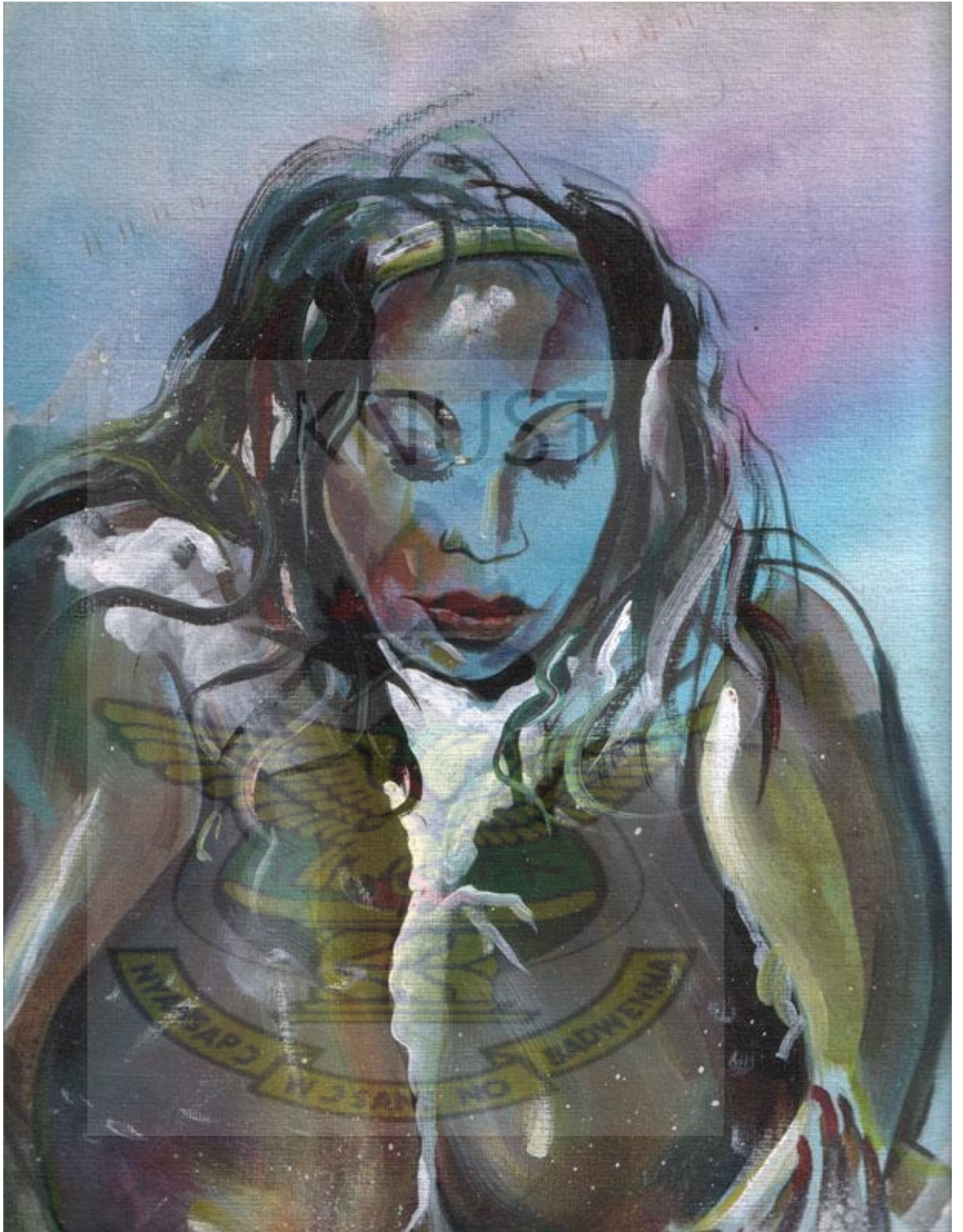


FIG. 67

TITLE: STORMY WOMAN

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

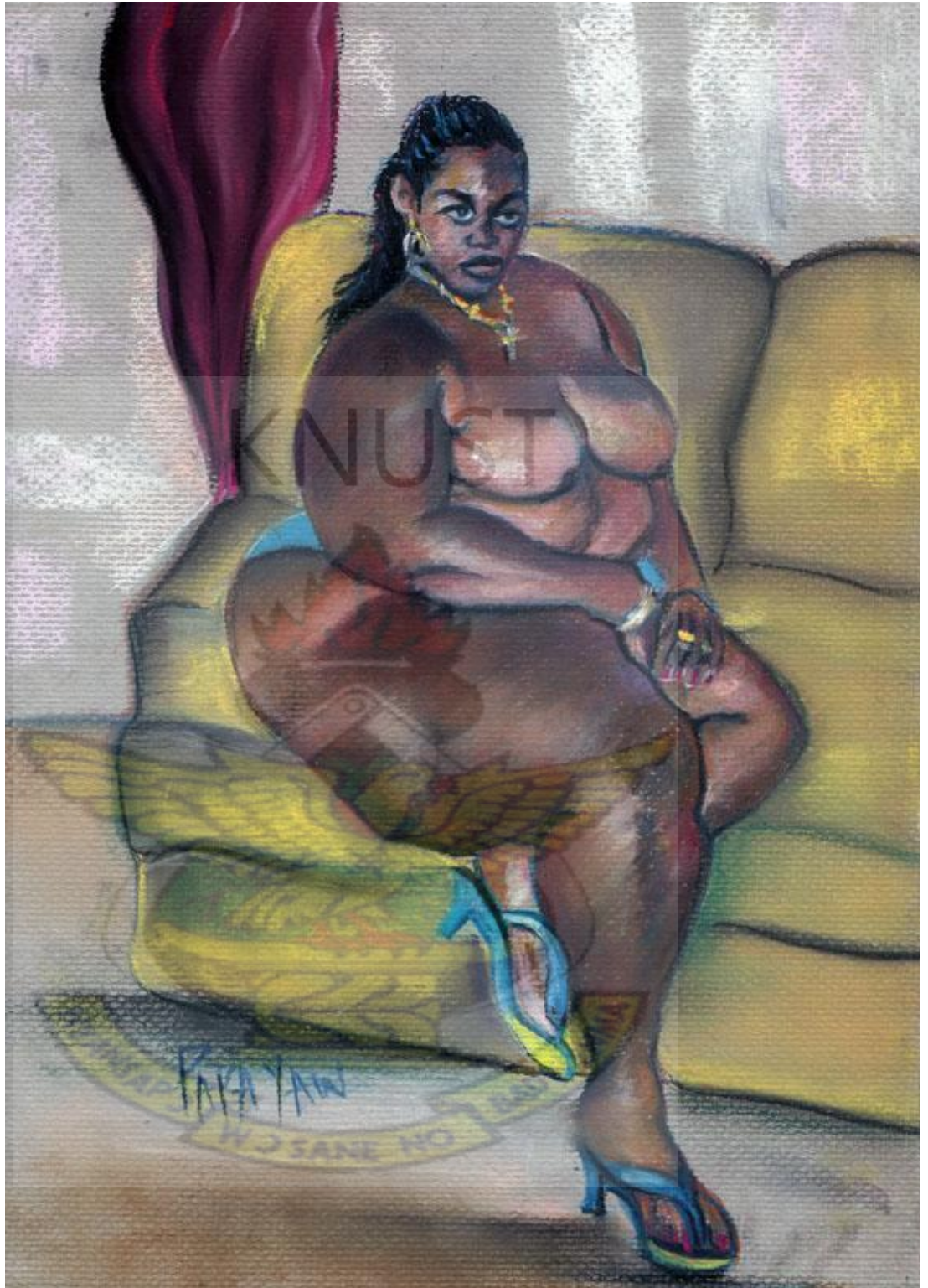


FIG. 68

TITLE: HEFTY NUDE IN THE SOFA

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 69

TITLE: NUDE IN STRING OF BEADS

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 70

TITLE: SQUATTING NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 71

TITLE: CHOCOLATE NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 72
TITLE: BROWN NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 73

TITLE: HEAVY MASS NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 74
TITLE: NUDE WITH NARROW HIP

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi



FIG. 75

TITLE: CHARCOAL NUDE

Artist: Papa Yaw Domi

DESCRIPTIVE EVALUATION OF MY MAJOR ART WORKS 2

(NUDE FIGURES)

43. **DARK NUDE:** Perhaps one of the most “perfect” figures in the whole collection of my output. Although she seems quite big, her physical attributes is in no way exaggerated. The halo of abstract shapes encasing her only adds an extra dimension to a very satisfying composition.
44. **‘S’ SHAPE NUDE:** The ‘S’ shape of a lot of African women is a form frowned upon by judges at beauty contest parades and the search for modern African models. But for artists well versed in the rich contours of traditional African shapes, the protruding posterior counter balance by firm upright breast seems the epitome of physical feminine beauty. Why western critical appraisal stick to the vertical straight figure as the highest form of beauty is a mystery. All it implies is that western judges naturally perceive the ideal female side-contour from their own idiosyncratic viewpoint. It is interesting to note a lot of Caucasian models with flat bottoms stick their butts artificially out when posing. This figure’s curved buttocks are a natural conformation.
45. **BEADS ON HIPS:** The downpour echoes a jug of water as symbolised in the brown figure with extra wide hips. The exaggerated pelvis is accentuated with a single band of beads to emphasise its width. It is a sex symbol that finds echoes in the Spanish guitar as well as certain types of earthen water pots.
46. **THE CROUCHER:** This posture has somewhat frightened a lot of viewers with tender hearts. But certainly it cannot be equated with pornography because it is not. That is what any shapely lady would look like when crouching in the same position. Perhaps that is how any cat in the animal kingdom would crouch when timing itself to pounce on a prey that is the cause

of the uncomfortable feeling among many viewers of this expressive drawing. Perhaps it is the wide, open cleft of the buttocks that terrifies delicate viewers. Whatever the case may be, it is a posture conducted unwittingly by thousands of ladies on their beds and bathrooms as they go about their daily grooming and routines. It is therefore facetious to equate this pose with pornography.

47. **FAT MAAME WATA:** The sea nymph known traditionally as Maame Water is usually pictured as having the lower limbs of a fish. In this work I have tried to create an undersea world of which she finds bliss as a sea –goddess, this time of gargantuan size without fish bottom as she poses in all her fatty glory amongst the rocky corals of the sea. Her size with the marine environ has been reduced to show the width and breadth of undersea atmosphere.
48. **UNDER THE FLAG:** The red, gold and green flag of Ghana, being the first black African country to gain independence from colonial domination, has been imitated by a lot of African and Caribbean countries in various forms. This nude finds peace and solace with the flow of the flag as she lies below it.
49. **PARADISE:** This intensely surreal imagery invokes a paradise world that we all try to aspire to via the imagination. Images of sea ripples are spread out liberally within space of which the model spreads the mantle of her covering. It is a virtual world of which its creation by digital means satisfies our utopian senses of a paradise beyond our three dimensional reality of which we are yet to imaging the bliss it would shower on us in a future unborn.
50. **BACK VIEW IN WATER COLOUR:** An example of the free-hand expressionistic technique that reflects the extreme opposite of photo/digital effects. The vigorous strokes help to accentuate the robust forms with extra emphasis to the posterior of the woman. The low key colouration helps to

emphasize the Negroid conformation of the model. The fluid water-colour technique and its loose application somehow may be considered as echoing the softness of female flesh.

51. **SEATED NUDE:** The technique of using wax to offset the flow of water-colour adds extra visual dimension to the image of an ample female form in repose. The figure has been staggered into fragments akin to cubistic tendencies. This has produced myriad, rich forms that abstract normal female shape into an aesthetically satisfying composition that is heightened by vigorous rendering.

52. **HEAVY LOADED:** This imagery could easily have been still-life of succulent fruits. But since my art hails into humanistic considerations, an observer cannot help but succumb to the intense sexual orbs of oversized female breasts of which men and women have sucked when babies. Perhaps the face of the woman is rendered too blatantly thus slightly drawing attention from the two heavy breasts. Perhaps the abstraction of the whole composition would have been better if the head had only been hazily rendered without lines and definitions so that the sheer aesthetic aspect of the composition would have come to the fore. A simple device to reveal this fact is to cover the face and the composition becomes sublimated to sheer beauty of forms for their own sake.

53. **BACK VIEW IN CHALK PASTEL:** On first glance some observers may consider the heavy posterior as some kind of baggage. Indeed the whole figure can be perceived by cynical individuals as akin to a wet bag of trash. A traditional womanizer might consider the enormous buttocks as a sex object of immeasurable delight. Indeed the lower conformation can be frightening to the

non-initiate of traditional African beauty. Sometimes one may wonder why the traditional Ghanaian would consider such shape as synonymous with beauty in both men and women because due to the difficulty of day to day existence, heavy eating was synonymous with affluence. So the result of gluttony, which is the main cause of this fatness, is associated or rather confused with beauty. Many modern Ghanaian people raised in the urban centres and somewhat detribalized, however, view such heaviness as containing nothing but cloying fat, excreta and sweat. Indeed many Ghanaian intellectuals question the health hazards of such women and wonder whether there is beauty in such shapes.

54. **SIDE VIEW OF BARBARA:** Perhaps among the most charming of my output, few deft strokes render the curvaceous form of a young lady. The subtle shading brings up the health of youth in regard to the reflected sheen of coloured skin. The empty face only helps to elevate the pleasant modulation of a beautiful shape of the plump type.
55. **LINDA WITH LONG BRAIDS:** Equal parity of photography synthesizes with traditional brush-strokes represents a heavy-set girl in repose. The long dark brush mark representing the “Rasta” hairstyle adds darker tonality to a largely pastel-like colour orchestration. The touch of glitter of head-band, bangles or bracelets of beads, necklace of beads, waistband and the modern appliance of cell-phone perhaps saves this composition from insipidness.
56. **STRETCHING NUDE:** The powerful buttocks of African women are perhaps why they excel in athletic sprint when they get the opportunity to train as is the case with African-Americans of the Diaspora. The stretching woman here has extended the jutting posterior and this has been emphasized also by

digital means. The colourful background in brushstrokes into abstract forms with hints of such shading in the figure adds unity to the composition.

57. **NUDE IN THREE-QUARTER BACK VIEW:** An exaggeration of gargantuan proportions, this painting is worked in the expressionistic vein by the use of distortion to an absurd degree in order to emphasize the importance of heavy buttocks; a feature in the black female's physical configuration as sexually exciting to some Africans even in the contemporary urban centres of Africa. In some of the Ghanaian traditional dances, one would find a particular costume known as "Atofo Kese". This is basically cushion, folded cloth or pillows that are put on the buttocks of the woman and a piece of cloth is used as covering to conceal the cushion. The "Atofo Kese" exaggerates to a large proportion the hips and buttocks of the woman and these are supposed to enhance the aesthetics of the particular dance being performed. This particular model in the picture plane has been depicted as having natural "Atofo Kese". The contemporary setting of modern mattress, a curtain and a lamp shade on the top right side, all help to emphasise that traditional norms to a large extent still pervade modern African living and existence.
58. **CROUCHING NUDE:** A heavily erotic posture of a bent woman whose posterior also echoes the head of a male penis. It is a simple pose that arouses all types of sexual connotations like a man entering her from behind. Painted in the traditional mould in feverish deft strokes of the brush, the economy of simplicity of the face area is in marked contrast to the busy brush strokes of the lower torso.
59. **STRETCHING BACK VIEW:** Another powerful imagery of a heavy-hipped woman as expressed from behind. She is virtually jet-black in colouration and

this is reflected in the sensuous modulation of skin tonalities. It is a provocative posture full of sexual connotations. Drawn on Ingres paper, the canvas- like texture of the surface can be perceived within the rendering of the musculature. The dichotomy of whether she is standing and rising for the sky, or lying face down on bed is for the viewer to decipher. This vagueness of her position all adds to the likeness of this vital imagery of womanhood.

60. **TRADITIONAL NUDE:** A traditional rendering of a bosomy girl with attractive folded flesh that is rich in tonal values. Perhaps she represents the epitome of traditional womanhood without a single tinge of modern influence. Ample lips and traditional coiled hairstyle, she seems to represent the unspoilt woman-hood of Ghana as she goes about preparing her traditional house chores.
61. **ABIGAIL IN PENSIVE POSE:** A prominent posterior you can easily put a cup of water on. The traditional erect standing woman seems to be the antithesis of the straight standing Caucasian woman. The African standing woman in profile seems to be “S” shaped i.e. jutting breasts at the top and protruding buttocks at the middle in profile (similar to fig. 44). In my opinion, a figure such as that of Abigail, with her dark uncanny complexion stands in the stead of the complete Ghanaian woman physically. Hers is my ideal figure. I find beauty in her undulating curves of her figure. The arch of her back that connects to her buttocks (which I refer to as the “arch of motherhood”) represents stability that a baby can sit and sleep on comfortably. The powerful looking buttocks and heavy pair of bulky thighs are almost sublime, akin to the sight of a pair of huge mountains.

62. **MULTI COLOURED NUDE:** A fresh abstraction of brilliant hues represents this supine figure executed in bravura brush strokes. All details have been sacrificed to a colourful composition that is pleasant to the eye. It is an attractive diversion from the emphasis of black West African female physique and unalloyed sexuality of the other paintings. Of course a little of the uplifted buttocks is still evident but the overall cast of the painting transcends descriptive emphasis of blood and flesh of the beauty of the female form.
63. **NUDES IN LANDSCAPE:** A combination of nature and female forms. It is an idyllic picture of a number of 'EVES' lost within a garden of Eden. Executed in brown tonalities the female forms are not so fatty. In fact they seem to have achieved the most satisfactory form of plumpness that is refreshing and healthy. Their heads are lost in the misty haze. Although in traditional society women moved about semi-nude (see fig. D and E.), it is ironic that in contemporary African society, showing too much of the body is frowned upon.
64. **NUDE IN THE HAZE:** A hazy picture showing only a glimpse of the female torso and hands, the model seems to be carrying literally her load of heavy, succulent breast. The whole composition can be perceived as colour-field concept condensing into recognizable figuration that can also be interpreted as a sort of abstraction.
65. **NEBUCHADNEZZAR WOMAN:** This mass of colossal heaviness representing a woman seems to be dragging itself tiredly across the sheets with great difficulty. From a modern African perspective, it is perhaps difficult to wonder how anyone can find a semblance of beauty within such mass of folded flesh. This work has the semblance of a Biblical allusion. Almost

resembling a female Nebuchadnezzar turned into animal, the pictorial devices of this composition is of a higher realm. Traditional cross hatching technique is suffused with harmonious colour to invoke a haunting composition. Perhaps this is an example of story-telling having nothing to do with aesthetic conformation. The anecdote, it must be said, has only little to do with the basic elements of art. But since plump womanhood is also the propelling factor in my art, it would be naive to forgo the anecdotal. That is why I consider myself to be within the great humanistic tradition of art simply because the great continent of Africa has a story to tell, whilst the Western world has already told its story as is evident in their great galleries of the world.

66. **TRADITIONAL NUDE 2:** Due to its colouration, this academic-like drawing perhaps has an edge over its monochrome counterpart in fig.60. The cast shadow of the bottom section infuses a sense of depth and solidity to this plump nude. The vigorous slanted brush-strokes add some dynamism to a rather placid composition.
67. **STORMY WOMAN:** Almost like nymph goddess in a cascading cataract, this expressionistic interpretation of womanhood represents heavy-breasted prototype of sexually active females. This work is almost a humanized landscape of segmented waterfalls.
68. **HEFTY WOMAN IN THE SOFA:** Like a colossus heaped onto a settee, this vast shape of womanhood has been handled with traditional, academic touch of execution with traces of “German Expressionistic” type of distortion. My supervisor considers it to be the third most powerful work in my output due to the enigmatic stare of a very powerful lady. The strong lineal outlines only help to enhance the solidity of the pose. There is a sense of dignity in the

posture and the rendering of the black skin is handled, according to my supervisor, with exceptional skill. The golden green of the sofa lights up the picture and the crimson curtain adds a sense of depth to the painting. The icy, electric blue of the panties and the slippers are binding triangles holding the composition together. The mechanical texture of the support adds more tactile values to the work.

69. **NUDE IN STRING OF BEADS:** Curvaceous flesh accentuated by coils of magnesium blue encased in hazy mist faintly defines a lady in supine pose. The flow of dark stretched hair adds some depth to a hazy brown atmosphere. The lack of definition of the face and form infuse colour-field abstraction to this picture.
70. **SQUATTING NUDE:** This work has a faint echo of Duchamp's famous painting of "Woman descending Stairs" or "Mademoiselle" painted in cubistic style. The digital manipulation adds kinetic effect to a fat crouching nude. The dark background gives the skin Caucasian cast.
71. **CHOCOLATE NUDE:** With huge buttocks sticking to the heavens, this pose is blatant to sexual connotations. The folded flesh seems aesthetically pleasing because of the flow of gyrated forms. The prominent posterior again echoes the head of male penis and this similarity definitely would hold an imaginative viewer's attention. The rich chocolate brown of the model's body holds our attention also.
72. **BROWN NUDE:** The oversized hanging breasts are the saving grace of this work. The digitally manufactured brush strokes only add some dynamism to a basically static composition. The white curve of beads on the models waist

infuses light into the work. The lack of facial features forces the viewer to concentrate on the aesthetic elements of the work.

73. **HEAVY MASS NUDE:** The supervisor considers this work also among the most powerful of my output. The gloss of sagging human flesh is almost overwhelming. It is interesting to note that there is pre-historic sculpture of identical heaviness. Such works can be interpreted as fertility symbols. In this work the overweight model sprawls on the mattress with some abandon. I tried to diminish certain features like the head, the feet and the hand as a ploy to accentuate the largeness of the thighs, the stomach and the breasts. I think I succeeded hence the rumpled mass of humanity that tradition brand as beautiful.

74. **NUDE WITH NARROW HIPS:** Frankly sexual in scope, but falls short of pornographic intentions despite the view of the vagina, this work is perhaps saved from banality by the pop-art rendering of the background sheets. The model holds her nose as if there is an obnoxious smell around and that psychologically detracts from the full appreciation of her beautiful form. In this picture the band of beads obstructs the almost man-like narrow hips to the extent that this trait is not discernible.

75. **CHARCOAL NUDE:** Traditional rendering with broad sweeps of charcoal on Ingres paper. The mechanical texture is crucial because it adds extra tactile sensation to the drawing. The supervisor says there is a hint of Matisse in this work. But if that is so it is simply coincidental.

The following four pages are some of my minor works produced during my practical studio research. They are displayed in a montage style with no particular order or meaning:

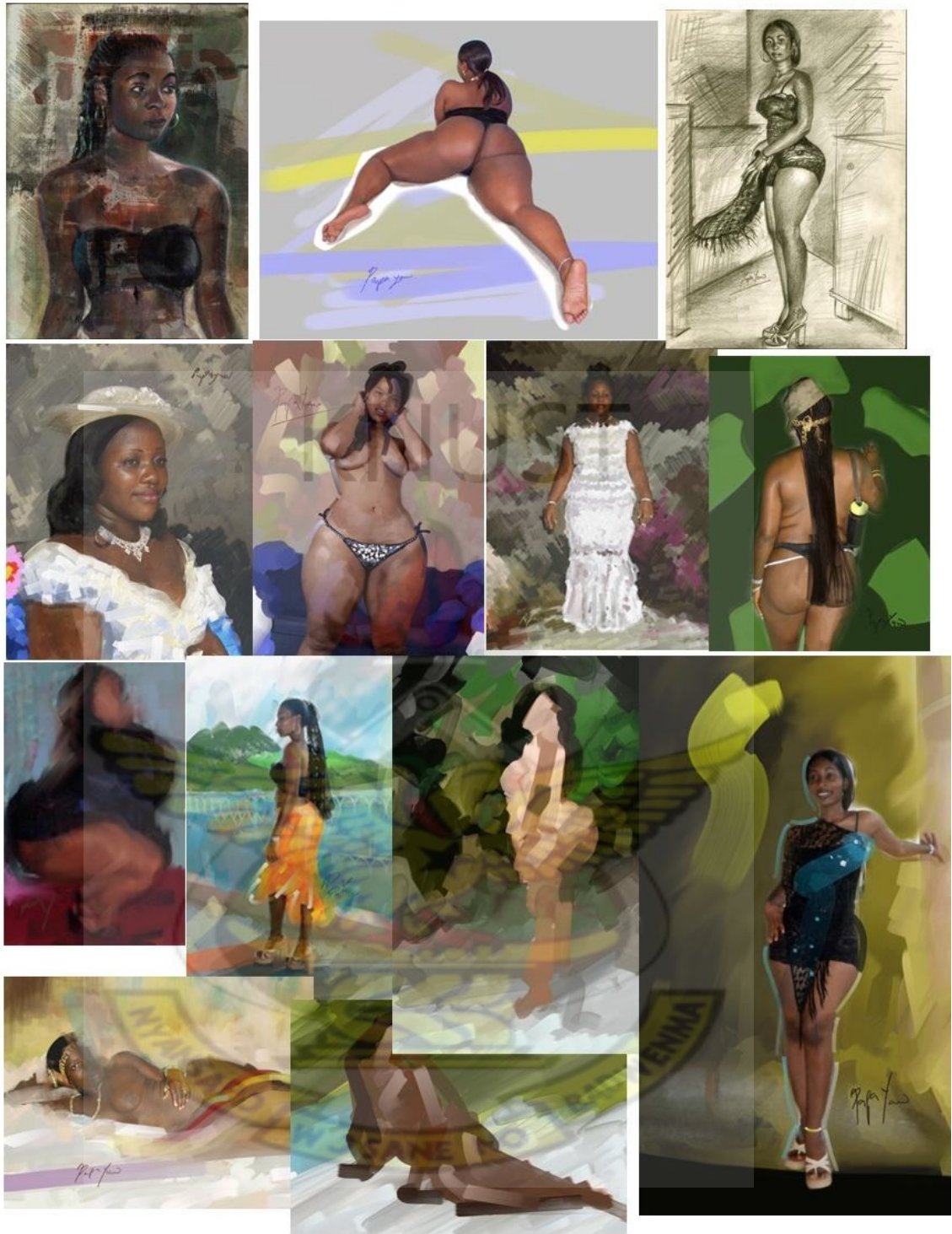


Fig. 77: Some of my minor art works for this project.

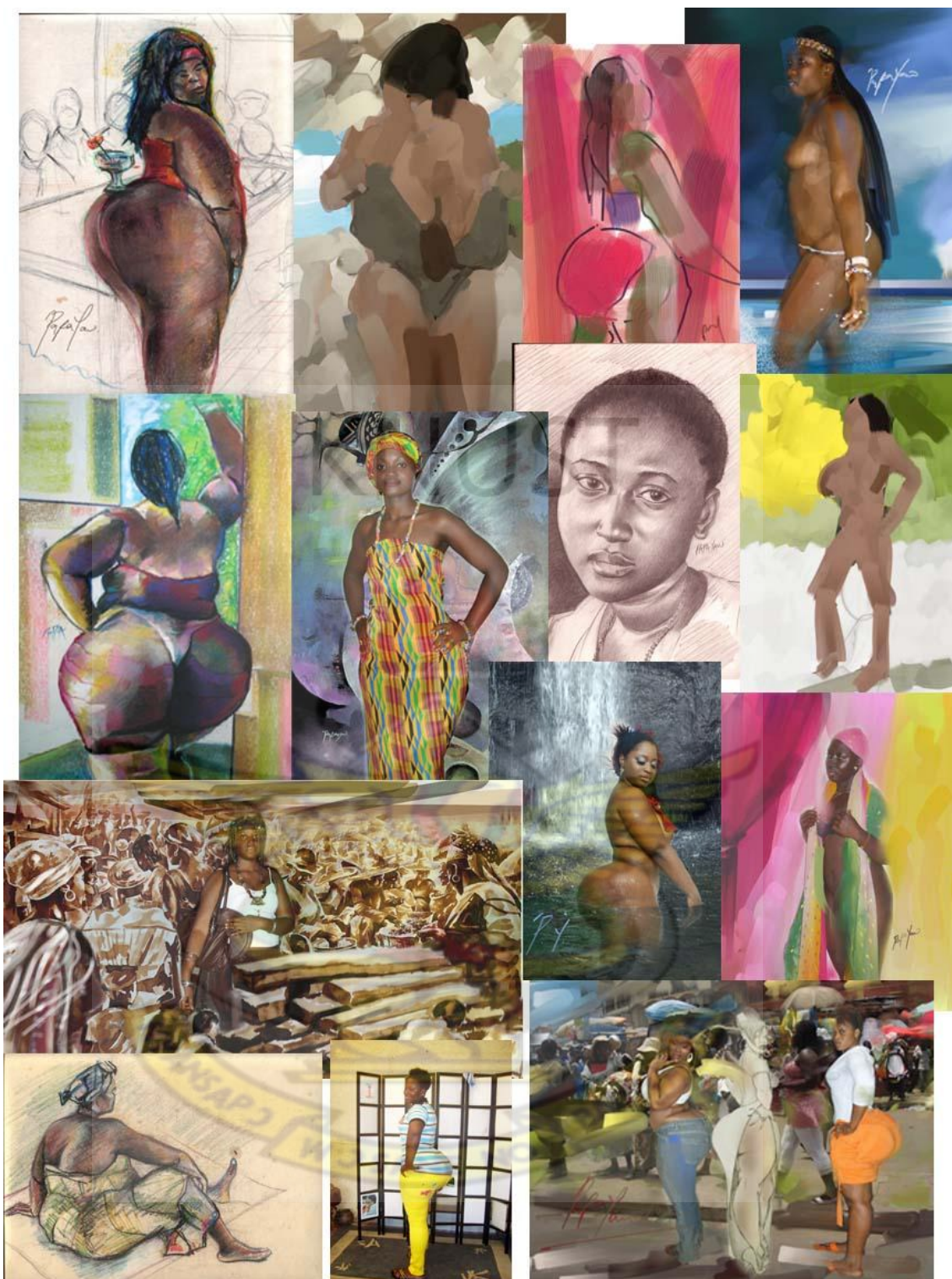


Fig. 78: Some of my minor art works for this project.



Fig. 79: Some of my minor art works for this project.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I have endeavoured to express some of the physical attributes of the contemporary plump Ghanaian woman through digital Art. In the course of the project the problem of 'beauty' raised its 'ugly' head (no pun intended). Beauty is a word that I find difficult to avoid or replace as a student artist; yet some philosophers say that it does not exist. I found glimpses of beauty in some of the Ghanaian women and I tried to show that through my art. Many do not and may never agree with my stance and the manner in which I have depicted and exhibited womanhood but that is to be expected. I do not agree with those who interpret my art works as the queer fascination of a sex addict or a voyeur. Masters such as John Constable and Joseph Mallord William Turner painted those wonderful landscapes out of love for their art. I must be seen in the same vein.

In this project, through my art, I have raised issues of traditional and cultural relevance of beauty and the depiction and exhibition of nudity as opposed to nakedness. I also touched on image censorship. I also found it ironic that very slim models were highlighted mainly by the media as the epitome of beauty when traditionally the plump female physique was seen as admirable in my Ghanaian culture. All these issues can be tackled extensively by other researchers subsequently from varied angles.

From the sheer number of works produced befitting a studio art programme for the M.F.A., I sought to highlight the powerful sexuality, huge imposing presence, the graceful undulating curves and perhaps the beauty of the plump Ghanaian woman.

Whether I succeeded or not is not for me to say but I hope that a healthy intellectual discourse will be generated by this artistic journey.

The most difficult aspect of this M.F.A. programme was to write about my art. That was and is still a daunting task. If I had my way I would never write a thesis about my art work. I was obliged to write about my work as a requirement of K.N.U.S.T. I felt imprisoned by the procedure, requirement and mode of presentation of the M.F.A. Thesis. I don't think that the same criteria in marking the thesis of say a Pharmacy or History student should be used to mark the thesis of a Fine Art painting student because of the subjective nature of art. I had to contrive my work to meet the University's requirement and thus my freedom as an artist was inhibited. I would have preferred to have written a Report, as in the case of an M.F.A. programme worldwide. At times I felt that my actual paintings and work output were relegated to the background when I had to justify every spot of colour on my canvas in writing. I cannot possibly prove or justify everything I do as an artist. I wonder whether Jackson Pollock's splash paintings or Michael Jackson's dance movements can all be justified in a thesis by these artists themselves.

Language (as in Literature) itself is an Art that has meaning and interpretation. Art (as in painting) is also a language with meaning and interpretation. The combination of these two disciplines (painting and literature) in a Thesis/Project doubles the work load of the Art student. It may also create avenues for contradictions and ambiguities because of the meaning attached to images and letters. An image of a 'dog' is not the same as the alphabetical spelling of a 'dog'.

Yes, I do want my written Thesis to be taken seriously but more importantly I wish that my Artworks will be looked at and appreciated for Art's sake because that is how all the M.F.A. programme in top art schools worldwide evaluate students.

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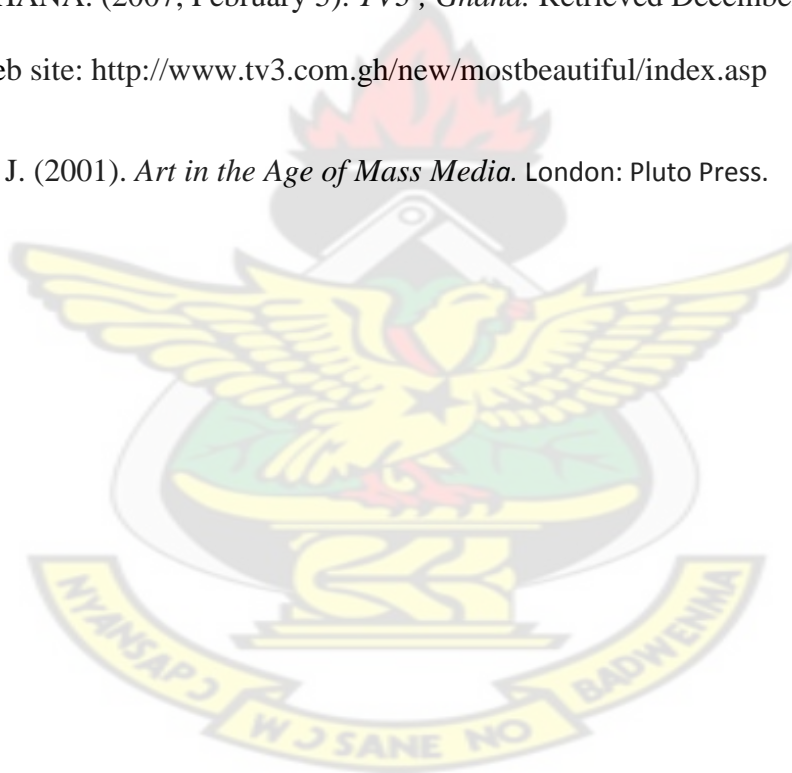
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