

## CHAPTER ONE (SYNOPSIS)

### INTRODUCTION

Art plays so many important roles for humanity. In our daily lives we encounter art in numerous ways and forms, either in a tangible or in an intangible state. Whichever way or form the artwork finds itself, it should be honoured the appropriate attention and respect. Also it should be accepted or observed as a different entity even when it's intended to represent something else so that its purposes could be fully realized.

This particular research aims at portraying a portrait of the Ghanaian woman from the researcher's perceptions. His representations of the subject have been 'strictly' categorized as Two-dimensional, Three-dimensional and Multimedia. The purpose of this labeling is strictly done so that his works in this book would not be autonomously perceived or adorned as certain specific art forms but rather should be looked as in a broader spectrum as works of art or art.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Ghanaian woman plays very vital roles in the Ghanaian domestic and socio economic settings. This is believed to be one of the reasons why she has remained as a subject matter for so many artists in Ghana. Over the years her image has been projected in different art forms, for example in photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, poetry, music and drama only to mention a few.

Potentially, all art forms have their limits and unique character, strength and weaknesses. Meaning, the experiences and sensations gained or produced by these art forms vary distinctively even when perceived on the same scale if possible. It would therefore be 'absurd' for any artist to assume and attempt that an ideal image or a portrait of a sophisticated subject such as the Ghanaian woman would be efficiently portrayed or projected with just one art form.

The researcher humbly stands to be corrected or challenged based on the aforesaid claim. However he is of the assumption that, a synthesis of various art forms if adapted rather has a greater potential of creating an ideal portrait of the Ghanaian woman or in other words the synthesis has a possibility of helping his viewers to unravel the reality shrouding his subject.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To render the Ghanaian woman in Two-dimensional, Three-dimensional forms and also in multimedia.

2. To create a portrait of the Ghanaian woman.

## **JUSTIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES**

1. To reveal the viability and the unique characteristics inherent in the three different forms stated. Each of the three categories indicated above is assumed to owe a bit of information which when brought together can present a thought provoking perception about the subject in discussion. Also the synthesis will help to evoke a clearer picture of the researcher's perceptions of the Ghanaian woman.
2. To celebrate the Ghanaian womanhood.

## **SCOPE OF RESEARCH**

Artworks in this project will be classified into three groups namely: Phase one, Phase two and Phase three. Each of these groups has a theme which is experimented with in various media to reveal the portrait of the subject.

Apart from the various media adopted, variety of artistic styles, techniques and forms such as two-dimensional, three-dimensional and multimedia are employed to express variations or present other possible forms the subject could assume.

## **IMPORTANCE OF STUDY**

This project can help artists not to see the individual art forms only as ends in themselves but also as art tools and parts belonging to the body of art just as so many parts come together to form the human body. If the aforementioned is realized, then unity among artists could be promoted as they lay down their autonomous ideologies and decide to work together as one body to make art.

This could possibly produce stronger statements hence the strength which is said to be in 'unity' would be obviously disclosed.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The project will make use of experimental, descriptive and analytical research methods. The researcher will paint an imagery of the Ghanaian woman by disclosing some of her presumed physical and metaphysical features, expressions and characteristics which he believes are embedded in her everyday activities

Some forms of art such as drawing, painting, sculpture, installation art, narration, music, video art only to mention a few will be adopted as tools to create an imagery of the Ghanaian woman.

A report will be written on the project as a documentation to explain the artist intentions.



## **POSTULATIONS**

The researcher assumes that:

1. The modern Ghanaian woman has peculiar features and characteristics which when assembled are believed to simulate her portrait.
2. The synthesis of two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and multimedia forms together with traditional and unconventional styles, techniques can effectively give a fair representation of the Ghanaian woman.
3. The characteristics which make up the Ghanaian woman could be identified in her physique, activities and expressions.
4. The impact produced by different art forms even when expressing the same idea is perceived in so many ways.

## **FACILITIES AVAILABLE**

Art studio available

Traditional art tools and media available

Recording studio available

Libraries and Internet available

## LIST OF TERMS

### THE GHANAIAI WOMAN

The following are some features and characteristics which the researcher assumes pertain to the Ghanaian woman.

The following will be defined;

**Appreciation;** Perceiving the value or the admiring the merit inherent in an object.

**Anger;** Fierce displeasure or passion excited by a sense of wrong.

**Desolation;** state of loneliness or bitter grief.

**Endurance;** the state of bearing sufferings with patience and fortitude.

**Hatred;** exceeding dislike.

**Joy;** the emotion produced by gratified desire.

**Love;** a feeling of deep regard

**Perseverance;** persistence in undertaking a sedulous endeavour.

**Physical features;** pertaining to the skin and cognizable by the senses.

**Psychological features;** emotional traits affecting the mind.

**Pretence;** a claim of a true or false identity.

**Strength;** the quality of being strong.

**Struggle;** to exhibit great effort or make violent movements.

**Truthfulness;** conformity to fact or reality.

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## **CHAPTER TWO (RELATED LITERATURE)**

### **PHASE ONE**

#### **PRIVACY AND TRUTH**

Phase one deal with all physical activities the Ghanaian woman experiences when she is alone. It embraces all the physical and psychological activities the Ghanaian woman goes through when she is alone. These activities are believed to occur especially when the woman wakes up from bed in the morning. Some of the main activities which would be looked at this point include; bathing, shaving and self admiration.

The researcher believes that this is a very important phase in the life of most Ghanaian women. This phase is also believed to be accompanied by the state of naturalness. “Natural”, as stated refers to the state of the Ghanaian woman being physically unadulterated and acting instinctively in conformity to nature.

This is a time the rawness of the African woman is perceived. That is as she performs the activities stated earlier or enters the spaces where some of the activities are encountered such as the wash-room, then; her exhibition of the natural begins. At this instance she begins to showcase her trait of truthfulness, sincerity, anger, appreciation, hatred and her state of desolation.

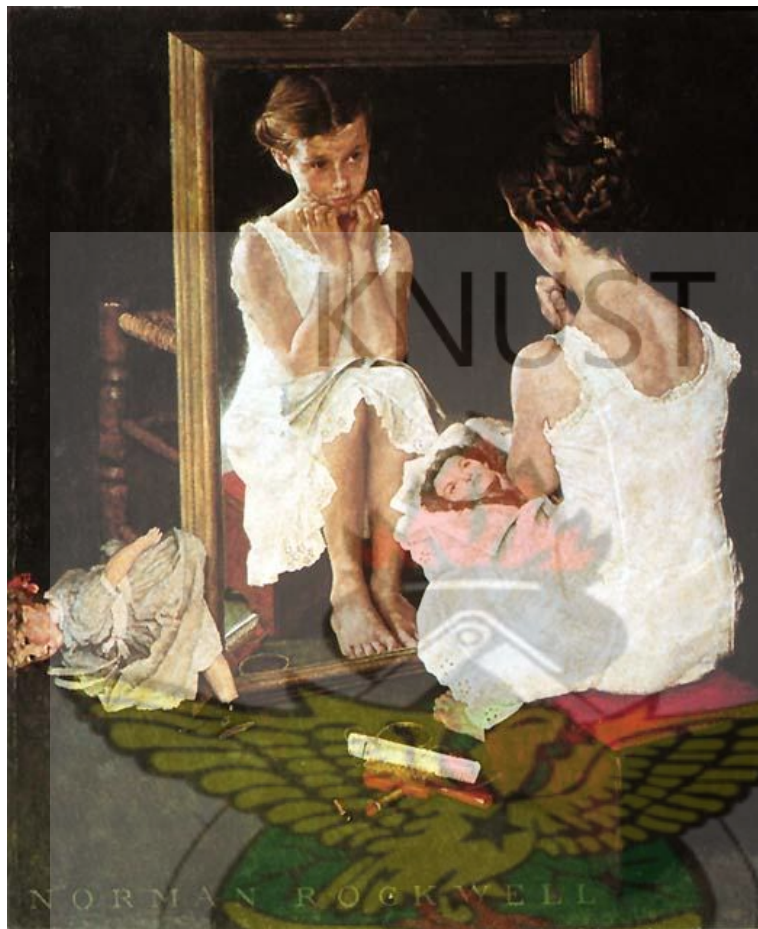
This is not to say that these characteristics which the researcher believes to pertain to the Ghanaian woman cannot be experienced in other instances or phases.

However based on the researchers own study on the Ghanaian woman, he feels that her traits in discussion are often felt or exhibited in phase one with much intense.

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**Fig 1**



**Artist;** Norman Rockwell

**Title;** "Girl at the Mirror"

**Medium;** Oil on canvas

**Size;** 31 1/2 "x 29 1/2 "



Rockwell's painting (Fig 1) exemplifies and gives a revelation of the truth being exhibited in privacy. The facial expression of the image in the mirror appears shocked. She is wondering when she will be woman. Rockwell supports this claim by placing a fashion magazine which has an image of a pin-up woman on the girl's lap. For the doubting Thomas, he further places make-up accessories very close to the left foot of the girl to buttress the claim. Though this painting is not depicting a Ghanaian woman, to an extent it justifies the researcher's perception and contradictions on perceived self and actual self.

The painting also suggests that some of the characteristics being outlined by the researcher as pertaining to the Ghanaian woman questioning her image cut across cultures.

Further, the truth about the Ghanaian woman could also be found in her diary if she keeps one. This statement is an example of a cultural construct. The question is, at what time, where and when does she really inscribe the "Truth"? Here a personal construct is revealed.

## PHASE TWO

### THE BEAUTY SALON AND THE MODIFICATION OF THE NATURAL

“Women go to beauty parlors for the unmussed look men hate.” Mignon McLaughlin, (the Neurotic's Notebook, 1960)

#### **Why do women visit the beauty palour?**

Women visit the beauty salon for so many reasons. The most common reason is to take care of their hair. Below is a sample of answers given by some female students on questioning their reasons for visiting the beauty salon;

“I visit there for a change of appearance, with hair, nails, etc”

“I visit to keep, maintain and look good, for it is said that a ladies pride is her hair.”

“To enhance my beauty”

“To keep my hair, finger nails and toe nails clean and neat.”

“I visit the salon to have my hair done”

“Personally, visiting the salon is something I do not very often, but once in a while I do only to take care of my hair. “

### **Is beauty found at the beauty salon?**

This question was further asked to be sure if the unsatisfactory and incomplete feeling women have towards the actual self emanate because they feel beauty is synonymous to the beauty salon.

Below is a sample of their views to the question:

“Yes, outward beauty.”

“When you visit the salon you add beauty to what you already have. For this reason I will say beauty is found at the salon.”

“No. I think anyone beautiful is born with it so no matter the number of times you visit the salon, the artificial things you add to yourself will wear off with time and you will return to your old self. Beauty is a part of you and can't be bought.”

“I think it depends on the hairstyle made for a particular person. It could either add some beauty or make one ugly.”

“I say yes because just mere washing of the hair gives an attractive look to one's self. Not to talk of fixing a weave-on, wearing pony or even braiding the hair of which enhances a person's look or beauty.”

From the comments above, one can partly conclude that some women feel incomplete and unsatisfied with their natural state because they feel they are not beautiful. However upon a critical analysis based on the comments, the researcher

has identified that some women visit the salon neither because they feel incomplete nor unsatisfied with their natural appearance, but rather, they feel beauty is found in the inside. Genuinely they also feel visiting the salon only alter their physical look.

### **Are women Beautiful without make-up?**

This question is surrounded by so many controversies. It is contrastingly interesting to note that none of the respondents perceived themselves as not beautiful without make-up, not even those who agreed that beauty is found at the salon.

This assumption is based on the views sampled for the question preceding this discussion. The inconsistencies and contradictions in their responses inject a pretentious aura to the woman and the subject of the “Beauty Salon”.

Below is a sample of some views on the question; Are you beautiful without make up?

“Yes. I think being without make-up brings the real beauty in me.”

“A big yes because I don’t wear make-up but I do look naturally beautiful.”

“Yes I look beautiful without make-up and even when I have not taken a bath in the morning.”

“Yes. Being natural is the best. As the saying goes, a decorated monkey is still a monkey.”

“Yes. For me I feel beautiful without make up because that’s the true me and am satisfied with that. Make-up is not permanent, it is just to deceive and in no time it’s off. Learning to accept the true image of you is the best.”

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## RESEARCHER'S PERCEPTION ON THE BEAUTY SALON

The Beauty Salon is like a shrine to the Ghanaian woman. She visits it so regularly not with the aim of knowing her destiny but with a request to attain beauty. This idea of seeking for beauty in the salon raises salient questions which need to be probed. The question is “if beauty is attained at the salon, does it imply that the natural is ugly?”

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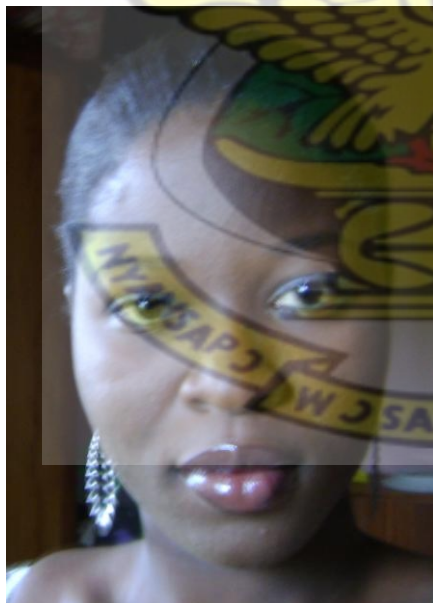


**Fig 2**



Photograph of a model taken in the morning just after bed without make-up.

**Fig 3**



Photograph of the same model after taken a bath and wearing make-up.

### **Which of the two images appear beautiful? (Fig 2 and Fig 3)**

This is not to answer the question. To the researcher, what is attained at the beauty salon is not beauty but rather a different personality. This personality is further interpreted as a mask. It does not imply that beauty cannot be associated to the new image gained after modifying ones physical natural appearance either at the beauty parlour or elsewhere.

The use of the word “mask” sounds very appropriate because to the researcher these modifications given to the “natural” only alters the physical appearance of the wearer’s image.

In one of the discussion essays submitted by (nabia211 on April 9, 2008) on girl before a mirror (Fig 4), the writer made an assertion which quiet conforms to the researcher’s connection of the word “mask” to the modification of the natural. In his essay he says, “When she takes off the mask of makeup, and is more vulnerable as a young lady.”(<http://www.opppapers.com/essays/Picasso-Girl-Before-Mirror/140361>) This comment establishes one important reason why women put on make-up or alter their natural appearance.

**Fig 4**



**Artist;** Pablo Picasso

**Title;** “Girl before a Mirror”

**Medium;** Oil on canvas

Characteristic of the Artificial is pretence. Most of the activities which go on at the beauty salon stimulate pretence. Although the opposite of the artificial is the natural, the connotation of the natural in phase one as truthfulness, sincerity, anger and so on will not oppose entirely to phase two. Rather, the researcher perceives most of the activities which goes on at the beauty salon as painful, yet because of the endurance power of the Ghanaian woman, she still visits the salon regularly may be because she would find one or two friends to gossip with.



## PHASE THREE

### SOCIO ECONOMIC ROLE OF THE GHANAIAIAN WOMAN

“Ghanaian women are pacesetters in the economic emancipation of the country, always engaged in contributing to the economy of the country and yet still finding time to cook, take care of the home and family” Amon Kotei (Living Legends Series)

From Amon Kotei’s statement, it can be established clearly that the social role of today’s modern Ghanaian woman has been expanded from the caretaker of the home to performing fatherly roles, that’s the bread winner as stated by the Holy Bible. (Genesis 3:19)

A characteristic which pertains to these duties is her struggle (Fig 5). It is one of the traits of the Ghanaian woman which is believed to have received the most attention from artists. One of the themes believed to have been explored the most in this category is the “market woman”. A message which was often projected in these works was that, the Ghanaian woman is very hard-working. Also woman’s suffrage was often the message.

Portraying the Ghanaian woman as hard-working is worthy of note and in this vain, the researcher’s perception concurs to most of those representations. However it is the message of plight which is associated to her services, though valid would be addressed in a contrastingly different way.



Her struggle to serve mankind, to the researcher reveals, the most dominant feature of herself being “strength”. This proves to some extent that, the woman is not the “weaker sex.” In Fig 5, the strength of the Ghanaian woman is being showcased through the vigorous depiction in her stirring.

Indeed she is very hard-working. Also performing her social duties is a time to exhibit most of her valuable God giving asserts, such as; love, hospitality, patience, empathy and perseverance.

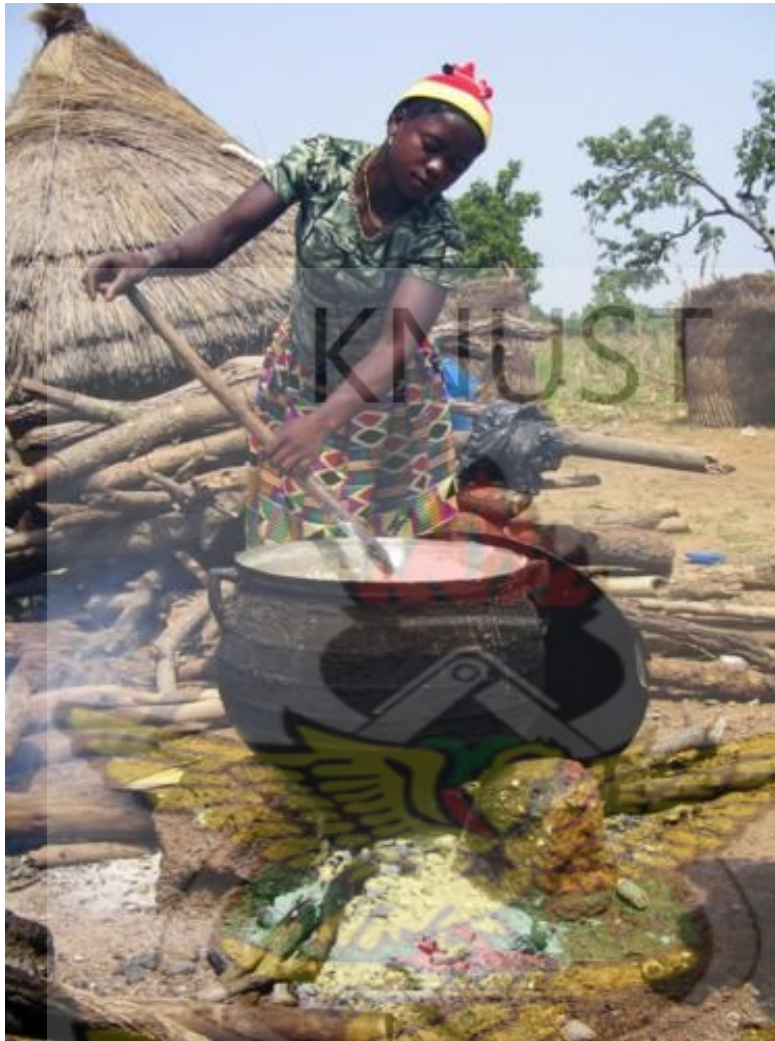
In making these characteristics of the Ghanaian woman sound more concrete, the researcher at this point would like the reader to invoke these statements as mental pictures. If the woman wakes up as early as 3;00am at dawn to put things in place in the house before leaving for work, isn't this out of love? What about when she is bathing her little baby in the big silver basin?

Most Ghanaians feel proud when the world sees the people in our country as hospitable. Lastly, picture that woman who wakes up very early and goes to sell her things at the market as early as 5; 00am.

From that time on all she does is to persuade passers-by to purchase some of her products. At around 2; 30 pm when the sun is scorching at the highest degree of temperature she continues to persuade passers-by to buy some of her products even though it could be that none of them has even shown interest in any of her goods. Doesn't this woman have the spirit of perseverance and patience? This is just to mention a few.



**Fig 5**



A photograph of a woman stirring “TZ”, a local dish from northern Ghana.

Picture taken from Bunbonayili, Ghana (about.com)

## PORTRAITURE IN ART

The term portraiture in art collectively stands for all representations which aim at portraying the likeness of a particular object. Portrait in art go beyond depicting objective realities and situations. It also includes depicting conceptual realities shrouding the individual group or object.

The subject of a portrait is often not depicted in isolation, normally backgrounds or in the case of a literary work an atmosphere and a setting is created. In the process of making portraits, Artists may deliberately alter the look of their subjects by embellishing or refining their images to emphasize or minimize particular physical, psychological or sometimes social qualities which may pertain to the subject.

Apart from human beings, animals, pets and even inorganic objects can be chosen as the subject matter for a portrait. Portraits can be made in conventional media such as pigment, marble, bronze, ivory, wood, clay, only to mention a few.

Portraiture has been explored in so many art forms from the pre historic age to this postmodern era. Among some of the art forms which have been used extensively include sculpture, photography, painting, literature, etching, lithography, and digital.

Portraits from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries often depicted external realities. Works from these periods also paid attention to detail (Fig 6). Portrait repertoire was expanded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century including new directions (Fig 8). Henri Matisse a

Fauvist artist produced powerful portraits using non-naturalistic, even loud, colors for skin tones (Fig 7).

In this era of the post modernist's, portraiture is viewed so differently. It has shifted from depicting surface reality. Steiner, (1987, p 173) perceives the postmodernist portrait as a fusion of icon, index, and symbol of the centripetal and centrifugal reference.

An example of a postmodernist work in literature is the book titled “Death of a Dictator” (The Story of Saddam Hussein). In this book, Podder “paints” Saddam Hussein neither in “black” or “white”. She “paints” his image rather in “gray” leaving the rest for the reader to interpret and discover which shade is prominent



**Fig 6**



**Artist;** Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres

**Title;** “Portrait of Napoleon on his Imperial Throne”,

Musée de l'Armée, Paris

**Medium;** Oil on Canvas

**Size;** 102" x 63 3/4"

**Fig 7**



**Artist;** Henri Matisse

**Title;** “The Green Line, Portrait of Madame Matisse”

**Medium;** Oil on canvas

**Size;** 16" x 12 3/4"



**Fig 8**



**Artist;** Francis Picabia

**Medium;** Gouache and watercolor on cardboard,

**Size;** 104 x 74 cm,

Private collection, 1929

## **TWO-DIMENSIONAL ART**

Two-dimensional art is a term which is used to categorize all art forms whose supports can be measured by its length and height but also lacking depth. Some example of two-dimensional art forms includes photography, drawing, graphics, some textile products, and painting only to mention a few.

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## **THREE-DIMENSIONAL ART**

This term engulfs all art forms which have depth. Some of the art forms under this group include sculpture, some ceramics products, pottery, weaving, and some metal products only to mention a few.

## **MULTIMEDIA ART**

The term multimedia art collectively stands for a media that bring together different art forms. Multimedia can embrace a blend of text, still images, animation, audio, video and interactivity content forms. Usually, multimedia is often recorded and played, displayed or accessed by content processing devices, such as the computer and other electronic devices. Secondly it can also be part of a live performance.



## **BREAKING THE AUTONOMY**

Art is broad and has so many subdivisions. These divisions have their own distinct characteristics and values for which proves the viability of their existence. Each is inclined with strength and weaknesses of various degrees. The decision to put one art form at the apex is dependent on so many factors, one which perhaps has to do with easy accessibility others include the monetary cost involved, and the time to finish only to mention a few. Though all these possibilities exist, their viability has to be weighed.

After considering all the possible permutations, the artist now has enough grounds to make a choice of which art form will be most effective. However in making the choice, the impact and the message to be carried forth should be placed at the front line. The statement to be projected should be the fulcrum on which the message should revolve. The statement determines which art tool or form to settle on whether visual, audio, or a combination of both.

Jackson stresses on the need to break autonomous beliefs in art and rather embraces uniting various art forms into one composite experience. In his dialogue, he postulated that if not for administrative purposes there wouldn't be the need to break most of the disciplines in art into singular units. (2006, p.7)

## THE ESSENCE OF ART

Do I have to paint pictures because I have so much painting materials stacked in a store room? Do I have to make statues because I have the mastery over modeling and casting? Or do I have to sing because my audience likes my voice? A “yes” respond can simply answer all the above questions without having to go through the problems associated with brainstorming. However by putting the concept first, the message to be carried could be very strong. Another is to understand the essence of the art.

Art has been defined in so many ways by scholars and non scholars. Also the question of what is good and bad art has been debated on so many times and yet the world has not come to a consensus. An anonymous writer in his essay “The Essence of Art” postulates that the ultimate question of art does not only probe what art is but also its purpose, function and importance in life. (www.exampleessays.com)

One of the important roles art plays is that, it provides clues of the present, clues on how the past was and clues for the future. Apart from this; an art work is the object itself with the reason being that even though it provides clues on behalf of its subject, at the same time that work is a self contained work of art even when its subject cannot be identified.

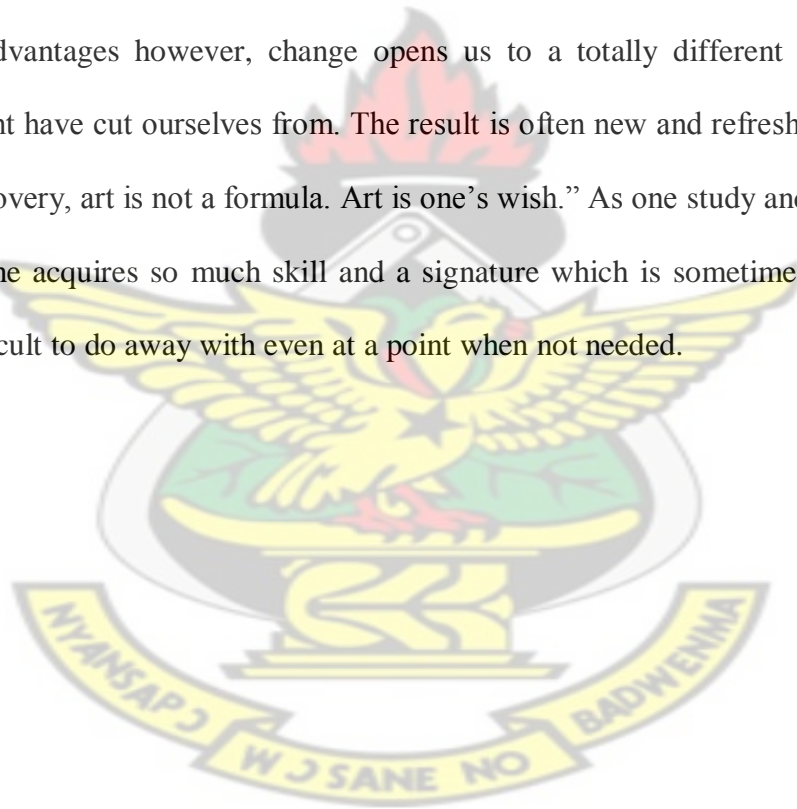
This is what so many people find very difficult to understand. Doyle in her essay titled “what is art about” recollects an interesting scenario on the need to see an art object as itself or that particular object. She said, “And I remember when a viewer

asked an artist friend what her yellow abstracted sculptural form was; she replied, "It's yellow." (whatisartabout.htm)

### **WHY CHANGE?**

"Things do not change; we change."  
Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862), *Walden* (1970)

Change is a very important phenomenon to artist. Though it may have its disadvantages however, change opens us to a totally different world which we might have cut ourselves from. The result is often new and refreshing. "Art is not a discovery, art is not a formula. Art is one's wish." As one study and practices art, he or she acquires so much skill and a signature which is sometimes invariably very difficult to do away with even at a point when not needed.



## RESEARCHER'S PHILOSOPHY

### EVERYTHING IS

Why do we think something is not?

It is because something is.

Why do some keep on saying that some colours are more colourful?

What is not colourful?

Does colour mean red, yellow or blue?

Human beings are not the same and for that reason, they cannot perceive things the same way. We might all have eyes but it is possible that we will also see things differently. Since the structural appearance of each person's eye is different, the researcher believes this can have an influence on how we see things. You will see a colour as red and will expect the other to perceive it as such, forgetting that you are two different people with different eye structures.

What happens when one puts on a dark spectacles or one with red lenses? What happens when that person removes the spectacles? Will the person's perception of sight be the same when the spectacles are removed? The experience will definitely not be the same. This is how the researcher believes humans perceive things.

Is this the reason why some brand certain objects beautiful and others also brand these same objects as ugly? If this cannot be the reason it might also be a contributing factor. It might also be the reason why the world accommodates

“Relativity.” Our planet gives us so many examples on relativity and also provides us with enough reasons why it is needed. For instance, there have always been the sky and the ground, heaven and earth, the good and the evil, the tall and the short and so on.

### **What is Beautiful?**

Nothing is beautiful, yet everything is beautiful. John Cage once said, “The first question I ask myself when something doesn’t seem to be beautiful is why do I think it’s not beautiful. And very shortly you discover that there is no reason.”

The concept of relativity denotes that no independent fixed value exists. It further explains that rather every moral assessment or fact that one accept as true, is factual only from their frame of reference and particular time. (ParrishCo.htm)

Relativity is a very important phenomenon. It provides us with the grounds to make judgments. Without relativity nothing is something. On the discussion, “On Truth and Reality,” Leibniz asserted that reality can be found in one single course. That single course is by interconnecting all things with one another.

By comparing things, everything is. Now something can be seen as beautiful if you compare it with something you think is ugly. That thing will not possess that same beauty if it is compared with another which shares similar characteristics with the previous. This comparison can be extended further to include all possibilities. In the end it will be noticed that nothing retains the same value.



Everything can be beautiful and ugly. Yet nothing can remain beautiful or ugly all the time. This has been the researcher's philosophy. It is being propelled by the concept of relativity. Heraclitus said, "As a single, unified thing there exists in us both life and death, waking and sleeping, youth and old age because the former things having changed are now the later, and when those later things change they become the former." This statement alludes to the fact that nothing will remain constant. However, it contradicts things which require subjective perception.

Relativity have been experimented in so many ways especially by scientist. Discussing this theory without mentioning Albert Einstein would be vague since he enunciated it. He postulated that motion is relative and further developed the Newtonian conception of space, time, motion and gravitation.

It has been used several ways in literature and in the performing arts such as music and drama. Artist's have also experimented the concept of relativity in diverse and from very interesting angles. Pablo Picasso is branded as the archetype of relativity in art. (ParrishCo.htm)

Relativity in Picasso works are connected to visual perceptions and the connotation of objects are deeper than just their physical makeup. For example in Fig 9, "Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)" (1907), Picasso depicts five prostitutes, one seated and four standing. The seated woman has her face turned towards the viewer's while the rest of her body is showing her back view. Both women on the right are wearing African-style masks. This indicates how Picasso makes reference to the left and the right planes also the fact that prostitutes are wearing tribal spiritual masks

unquestionably communicates more of who the women are rather than just what they look like.

In this painting, both the figures and the spaces in-between them which is presumed to be the background are treated with similar values and intensities. At certain areas the spaces in-between the women seems to advance more than the figures and this breaks the rule of atmospheric perspective. Another thing is that Picasso has given the working surface equal attention making it difficult for one to draw parallels between the foreground, the picture plane, and the background. This explains further the importance of relativity that nothing can be on its own unless it is supported by others or vice versa.

Also though the women in this picture are supposed to be prostitutes, they are depicted in masculine hard edged flat shapes rather than having depth and communicating an erotic and sensuous character. Moreover in this painting, Picasso merged by painting the various multiple views of his objects into one single image. This clearly shows the relativity of each perspective. (ParrishCo.htm)

**Fig 9**



**Artist;** Pablo Picasso

**Title;** “Les Demoiselles d’Avignon” (1907)

**Medium;** Oil on canvas

### **CHAPTER THREE**

The success of this project if really there is has been influenced and shaped by so many factors, some of which can be easily identified and others which I believe will take some time before surfacing.

In making writing much easier every meditation, silence (in between actions) and all psychological processes and challenges which contributed in this work will be overlooked. A summary each will be written on the three categories of work to describe the basic procedures.

#### **SOME EXPERIMENTAL WORKS EXECUTED BEFORE THE MAIN PROJECT**

Numbering from Fig 10 to 27 are some preliminary experimental drawings and paintings which were executed in the early beginning of the MFA program. They reveal some of the struggles the researcher went through as he continued to contemplate on what about the woman needed to be revealed. Some of the works are executed in graphite and coloured pencils on paper, whiles the rest are made with acrylics and oils on canvas.

Though their stylistic approaches differ a bit from the main project works, they still share similar affinities and revelations.



**Fig 10**



**Fig 11**



**Fig 12**



**Fig 13**





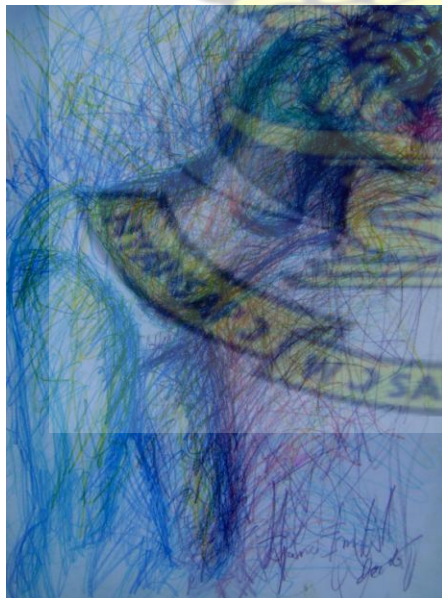
**Fig 14**



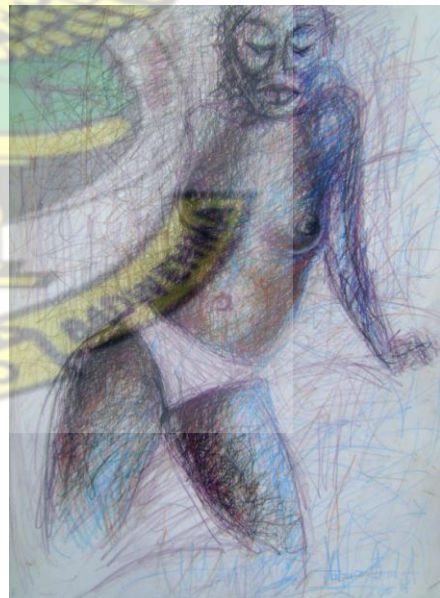
**Fig 15**



**Fig 16**



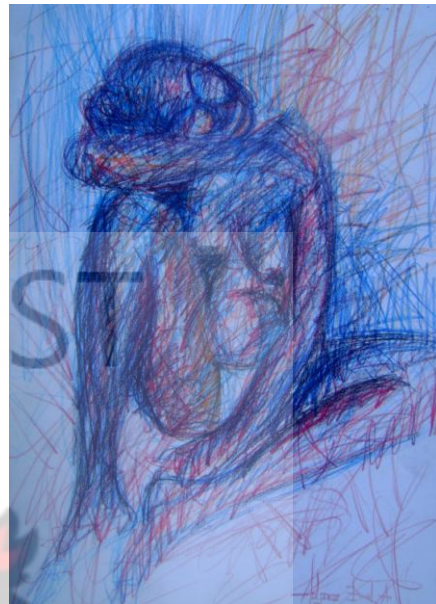
**Fig 17**



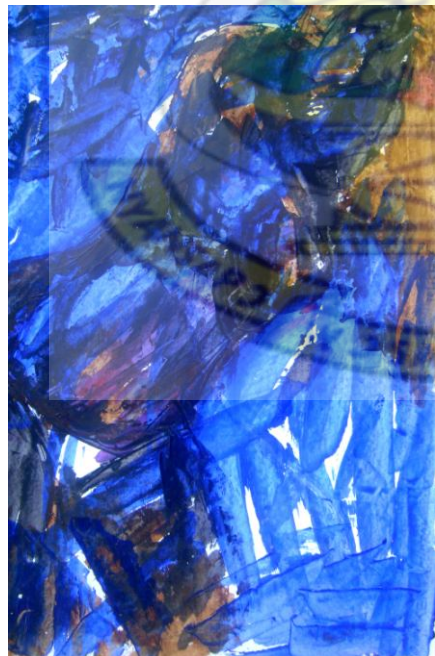
**Fig 18**



**Fig 19**



**Fig 20**



**Fig 21**





**Fig 22**



**Fig 23**



**Fig 24**

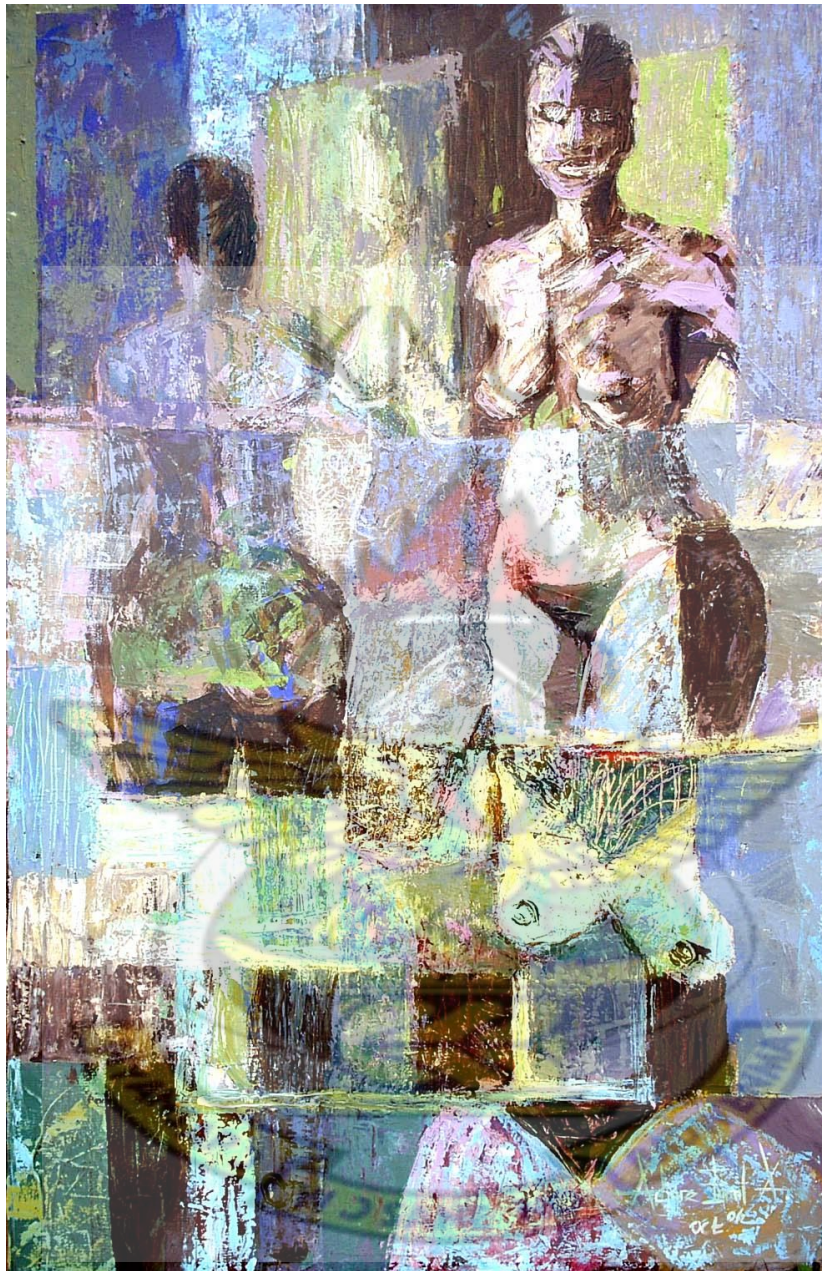


**Fig 25**





**Fig 26**





**Fig 27**



## BASIC PROCEDURE FOR THE TWO-DIMENSIONAL WORKS

A number of works under this category began with preliminary drawings which were made on plain loose sheets with both graphite or charcoal sticks and acrylic paint. Figure 28 to 43 illustrate a number of preliminary works which were made prior to achieve some of the main works.

Images of women were developed from photographs taken from live studio model poses while others made from memory. Some of characters from the preliminary works were then selected and then joined with others to achieve a new composition.

Figure 44 is a composition derived from such process. Fig 44 is also the new composition gained after joining and transferring the composition onto the canvas. The next procedure was transferring the new composition onto the prepared canvas surface. This was executed through the “eye and hand” approach. That is by a careful observation with the eye and trying to photocopy a close replica from the new developed composition onto the canvas.

New forms were created resulting from the transformation process. Those ones which appeared to be relatively interesting were not tempered with in the new composition.

However, while some of the works were developed from preliminary drawings, others in this category began with initial charcoal drawings which were either executed directly on the white surface of the primed canvases or other coloured ground painted with acrylics. Fig 45 exemplifies the statement.

Fig 45 shows a charcoal drawing executed directly on a coloured ground with acrylic paint without any preliminary work such as sketches. Paint was then applied to the desired areas with a painting knife as much as possible leaving most of the areas with charcoal (Fig 46). It was often a habit to go over some of the charcoal marks or creating new ones after the painted areas were dried.

The last ‘ritual’ which ended the working procedure for the two-dimensional works was the application of a fixative over the entire work to fix charcoal areas. This was achieved by using professional aerosol fixatives. A matte or a glossy finish fixative was either chosen depending on the sensation which was desired to be produced.

#### **DEVELOPING THE CHARACTERS**

Character development is a major procedure which formed part of the working process in coming out with the two-dimensional works. Fig 47 depicts a photograph of a model whose relatively big eye balls inspired and influenced the formation of some of the characters from the beauty salon. Fig 48 shows a profile of the same model. The head shape in the profile view influenced in the creation of the head shape of the character in Fig 49. Figure 49 gives a typical example a character that had its features such as head shape and eye developed from Fig 47 and Fig 48 respectively.

Features such as the eyes, mouth, nose, and limbs of the figures especially were exaggerated to create emphasis.



**Fig 28**



**Fig 29**



**Fig 30**



**Fig 31**





**Fig 32**



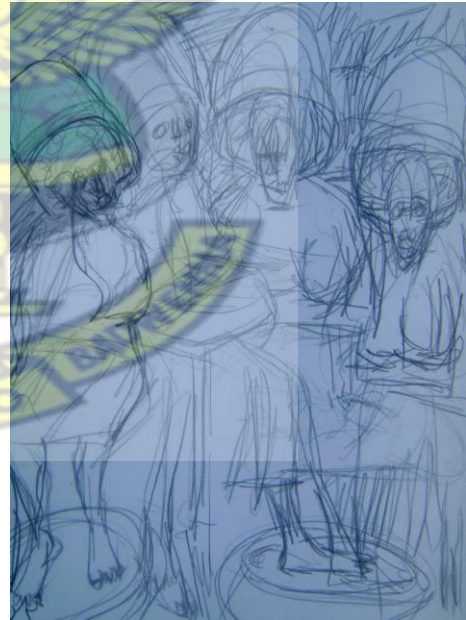
**Fig 33**



**Fig 34**



**Fig 35**

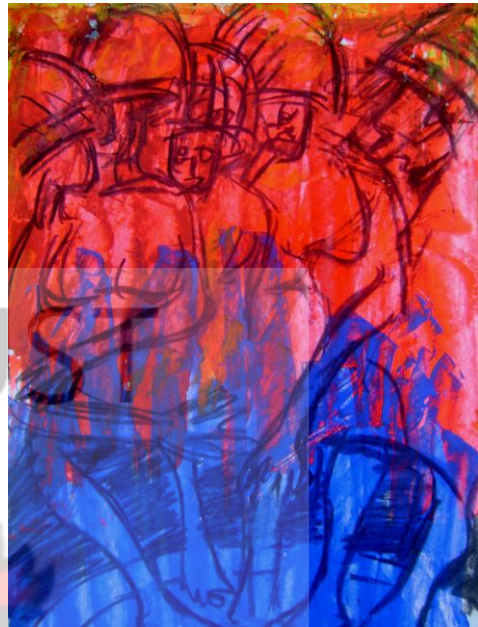




**Fig 36**



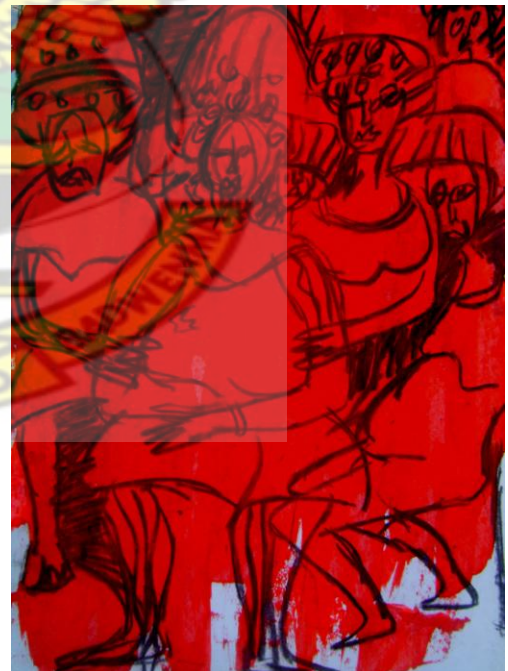
**Fig 37**



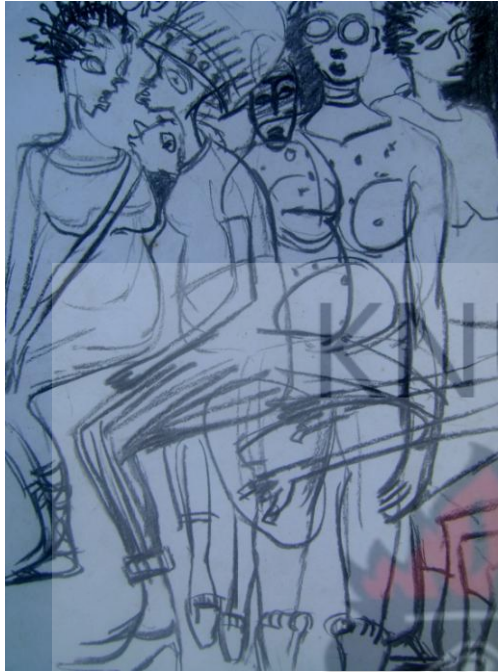
**Fig 38**



**Fig 39**



**Fig 40**



**Fig 41**



**Fig 42**





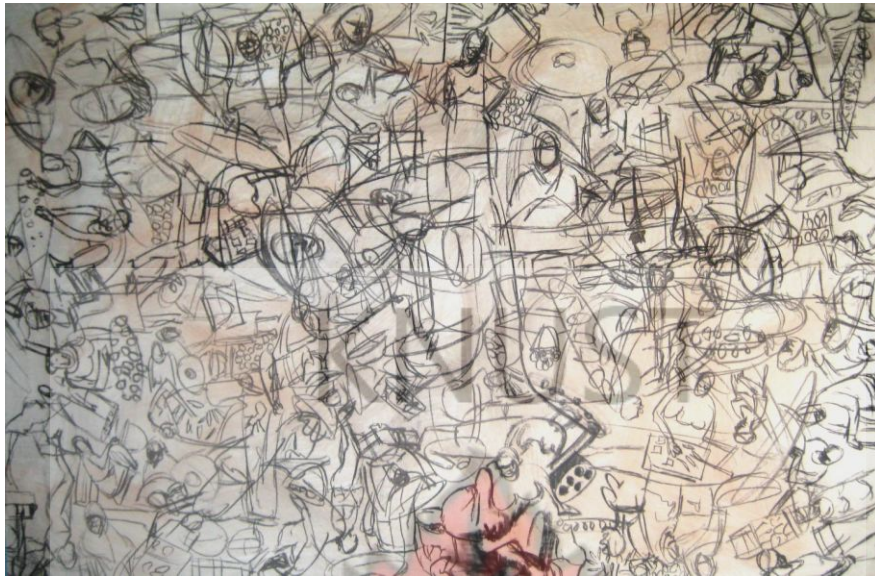
**Fig 43**



**Fig 44**



**Fig 45**

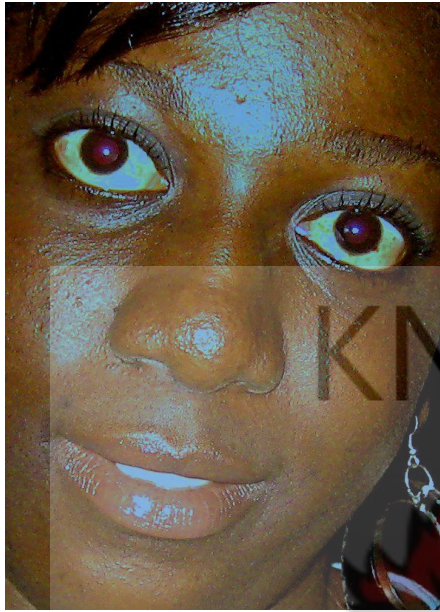


**Fig 46**





**Fig 47**



**Fig 48**



**Fig 49**





## **BASIC PROCEDURE FOR THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORKS**

### **DEVELOPING THE CHARACTERS FOR THE TERRA-COTTA**

Before modeling began, the facial appearances of the characters to be modeled in clay were first thought off. The facial expressions to be projected were mainly considered.

Since these works had the aim of being used as mask to stand in for women who visit the beauty salon to change their appearances, some animalistic features together with some characters in the two-dimensional works were borrowed and synthesized forming new features since they were already projecting a message of deception.

For example in the formation of the character in Fig 50, the artist had in mind of synthesizing some features of a fish together with Fig 49 to achieve a three-dimensional character. Fig 50 shows an uncompleted terra-cotta head. The mouth is depicted as the mandible of a big fish drinking water. Its head shape and hair style together were developed from Fig 49 and Fig 48 respectively.

Fig 51 shows the head in profile, a character whose head shape and eye had an influence in the making of the terra-cotta head in Fig 50. The “pony tail” hairstyle of Fig 52 was also borrowed and appropriated in coming out with the finished terra-cotta head, that is Plate 46.

**Fig 50**



**Fig 51**



**Fig 52**



The character development process was not separated from the modeling process. It was embedded in all the major processes these terra-cotta works went through till they were completed. In the modeling process, the conventional additive and subtractive method of clay modeling was adopted. Other processes which followed include scooping, joining, detailing, drying, firing and lastly painting.

# KNUST

## TREATING THE LOGS

The logs were cleaned very gently by brushing. Brushing was carefully done to remove soil particles which had settled on them. It was approached carefully and gently as much as possible protecting its brittle relief bark from losing its tactile projections.

Fig 53 shows the raw state of the wooden logs before work proceeded. Some of the protruding smaller branches on them were also trimmed to prevent further bruising.

Finally the logs were raised from the ground by nailing a number of iron rods into them which measured about one foot high. The iron rods also serve as stands.



**Fig 53** (Raw state of logs)



## BASIC PROCEDURE FOR THE MULTIMEDIA WORKS

All the works in this category began with a written story or narration. A voice-over was made for each of the three narrations and recorded with the computer.

Its musical interpretation was also played and recorded separately or played over the voice-over whiles recording. The verbal orientation and its musical orientation were then synthesized.

The video rendition was produced by merging on a time-line video shots, still photographs and the final audio product recorded on the computer with a program called Cubase. A computer software program called Edius was used to create and edit the video. In editing, processes such as cutting, pasting and joining of frames were adopted.

Transitional and animation effects were also applied to the frames. In covering the video, either a natural or artificial lighting system was utilized depending on the weather condition and the atmospheric mood which was desired.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### APPRECIATION OF TWO-DIMENSIONAL WORKS

The concept and theme enshrined in the following works to be appreciated is primarily centered on presenting or portraying the portrait of the Ghanaian woman through her everyday activities. The focus of these works seeks to present or address a living reality embedded in the peculiar features and characteristics associated with the daily activities of the Ghanaian woman.

Some activities which are in focus are picked from the woman's private life, some activities from the beauty salon and thirdly some activities in the home and at the market.

A general impression the work relays to its audience at an initial glance is an activity and a strong imagery. Though the activities in these works are not easily identifiable unless you are given the clue, the high strength accomplished in the imagery is based on so many factors some of which includes the large sizes of canvases used, and the compositional style adopted which almost populates the whole working surfaces with a mass of images.

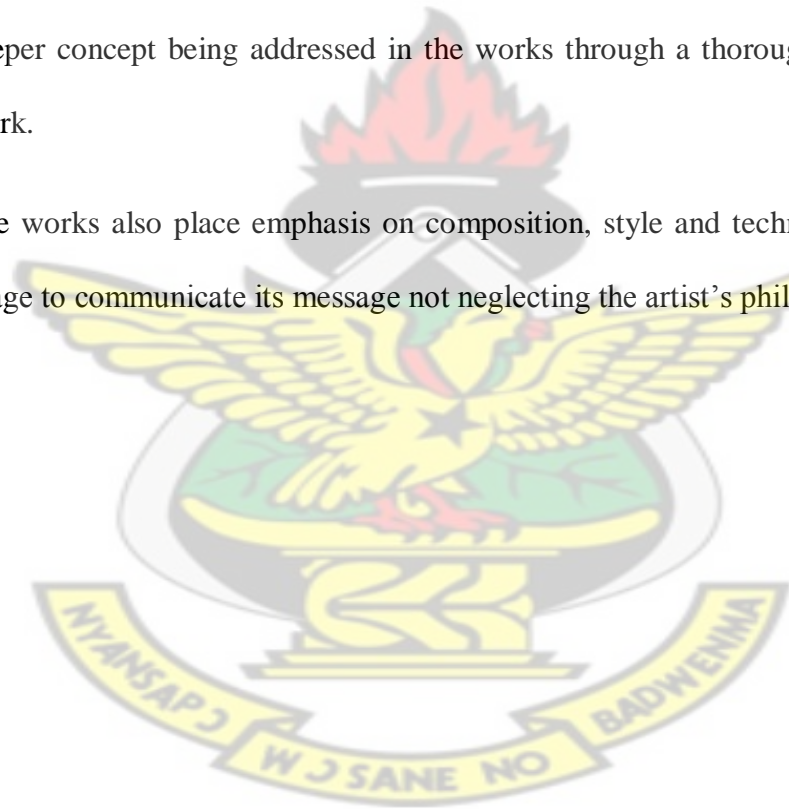
A characteristic which greatly contributes to the strong imagery being created in the works and in discussion is largely achieved by the adaptation of more or less caricatured figures which runs through almost all the works. Also the playful, overlapping, loosely and at times rigidly rendition of the lines which outlines the

figures in almost all the works immensely contributes to the strong imagery being created.

In most of the works, the juxtaposition and sometimes the superimposition of gray colours of various intensities and tonal values over vivid and brilliant hues also with various degrees of intensity and value add to the imagery being created.

These works communicates deeper than just what the eyes and the other senses perceive. It is based on this premise that this appraisal seeks to invite its readers to a deeper concept being addressed in the works through a thorough analysis of each work.

The works also place emphasis on composition, style and technique, and medium usage to communicate its message not neglecting the artist's philosophy.



## TRUTH AND PRIVACY

The words “truth” and “Privacy” is the main theme upon which these set of works are analyzed. The adaptation of these two words and its application to the context of the works yet to be analyzed are parallel. Truth and privacy has a wide range and meaning, understanding and impact on the lives of people. Similarly there are many inferences that are assumed to such words in relation to the everyday activity of each distinct individual.

There are also numerous connotations that people allude to its usage depending on the situation one finds himself or herself or in other instances, the context in which it is used. The words or subject is always part and parcel of the life and works of artist worldwide. They are synonymous to themes such as creativity, originality, imagination and independence of concept and ideas which are used by artists to express or expand on their own sense of truthfulness and privacy exhibited in their work.

Truth is defined by the Oxford Dictionary of Current English as a state of true being or being true. However in the contest of the works yet to be analyzed, truth is employed or being used to refer to the recognition and appreciation of the actual self or the beauty embedded in naturalness that underlies every act or activity undertaken.

“Truth and Privacy” aims at revealing a number of external and inherent traits which is revealed by following ones natural instincts in privacy associated to the

actual self. “Privacy” in the above statement is interpreted as when the persona in context perceives that no foreign eyes assails or witnesses its movements.

The works under this category reveals some physical and psychological characteristics or truth which shrouds privacy. Some of these traits include; a sense of appreciation, truthfulness, sincerity, anger, hatred, a state of desolation, form and colour of the Ghanaian woman. In the works, the aforementioned characteristics are made evident by engaging the figures in an activity of shaving the pubic hairs under their armpits.





**PLATE 1**



**TITLE;** “Peak of Shaving”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*72"

Plate 1 executed in brilliant hues with earth colours dominating is rhythmically charged with movement. Composed in a landscape format, figures are arranged on one picture plane. They are placed on the same picture plane but because the heads of some of the figures are depicted smaller in size, automatically they are pushed a little further away even though their colour intensities is as strong as the ones with larger heads.

A common feature which appears strongly in this work is ambiguity. It is quite difficult for someone to identify the activity going on in this work at first glance. Figures have one hand raised and the other hand holding a shaving stick or blade which is not clearly defined or outlined.

The character of ambiguity increases their serious involvement or attention attached to this activity done in privacy. The atmosphere created is highly and sentimentally charged. This atmospheric effect was produced by dominating the work with a palette of brilliant hues.

Further the technique of applying paint in layers which was achieved by dragging lean or transparent paint over opaque ones with a painting knife on the canvas also create vertical, horizontal and other spontaneous lines and effects that set the figures charged and the activity ongoing.

The spontaneous quality and transparency effect which quite dominates the composition is characteristic of acrylic paint. The rich intended hues contrasted with a few shades of grays and dark outlines infuse an alluring atmosphere in the

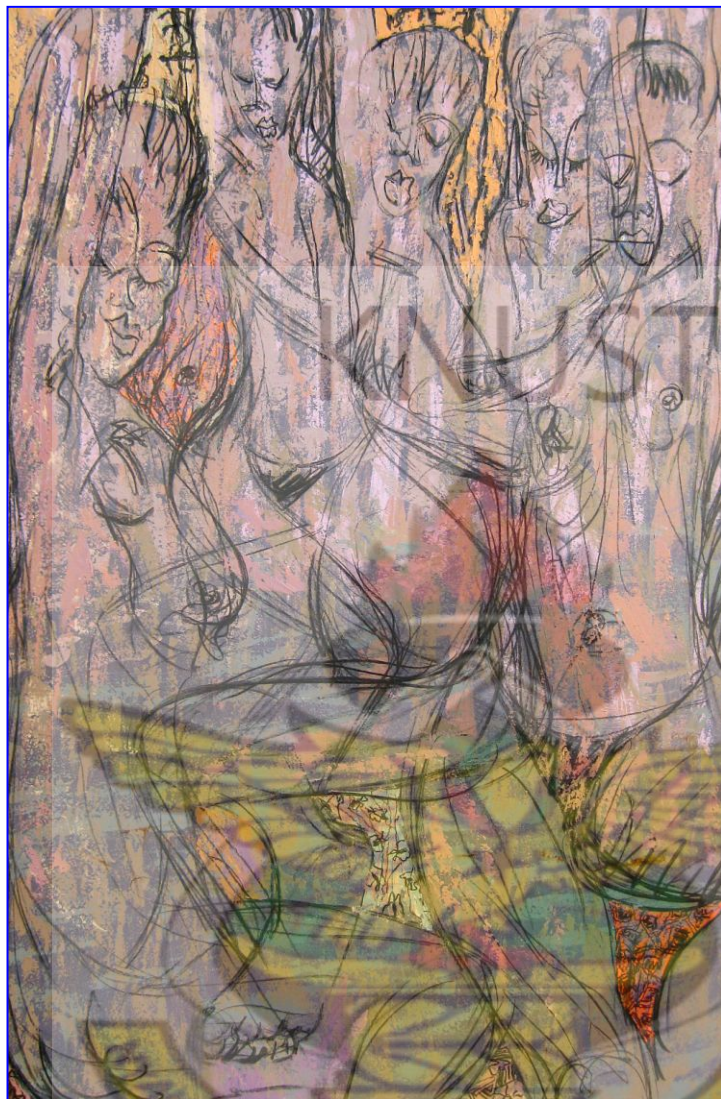
work which is symbolic of the varied appealing shades of colour the Ghanaian woman possesses. Also the use of brilliant colours interprets a high sense of appreciation women find in themselves when mirrored.

Interestingly, all the figures in the composition have their eyes downcast. None of the figures faces or looks into the eyes of the other. Though the figures are many, they seem to be losing their numbers and rather gaining a high realm of spiritual concentration. This is one of the truths associated to privacy.





**PLATE 2**



**TITLE;** "Shaving in the Morning"

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 60"\*40"



Among the two-dimensional works, plate 2 is the only executed on a portrait format. It is also the only work which employs a low key and a very closely related limited range of palette. Though the choice of the portrait format was intentionally not meant to add special connotations to the interpretation of this work, however its usage helps in giving the work a waterfall effect.

The charcoal outlines in this work compared to Plate 1 appears very soft, calm and spontaneous. These characteristics in discussion are together achieved by the loosely applied charcoal lines and the use of a dominating grayish and greenish purple shade.

In this work, the artist seems to be making opposing comparatives such as between vertical and horizontal planes, presumed mistaken marks and assumed correct marks. The strength and weaknesses in these marks is left for the viewer to judge. The repeated or the double lines in this work stands for the presumed mistaken marks while the single and spontaneous fine looking marks represent the assumed correct lines.

The use of these opposing elements in this work presents an undisputable truth about nature and man that is always possessing contrasting values such as the weak and strong, good and evil only to mention just a few.

Unlike the intense hues and highly distinct contrasting values present in Plate 1, Plate 2 employs a very subtle dominating hue which is symbolic of a morning atmosphere. Also unlike the vivid character being displayed in Plate 1 through the

activity, the use of very bold lines and vibrant colours, figures in Plate 2 are projected seated gracefully and very comfortable whiles they shave the hair under their armpit drawing attention to a general character of women as being perceived as soft and fragile. On the other hand, the vividness projected in Plate 1 interprets the level or the peak at which the activity has reached.

Lastly this work creates transparencies by overlapping figures with the use of lines that is contrary to Plate 1 which shows transparencies through the application of lean application or glazes of light colours over dark ones or vice-versa. The transparencies been discussed explains a visual perception that makes it possible to reveal things which are behind others and are not supposed to be seen visible.

Plate 3 reveals a foot which overlaps a part of another figures thigh. The part of the feet which overlaps the thigh shows an area indicating transparency. The light flowery top right corner depicts part of a bed sheet on which figures are placed. Also in this detailed view are some of the lines which represent the “presumed mistaken marks” discussed previously.

Evident in Plate 4 are two faces depicted looking downward. The gestures and their facial expressions project the figures as very serious and concentrated on the activity of shaving. Also showing are some of the few fine and spontaneous lines which are assumed to be correct lines.

**PLATE 3** (Detail 3a)



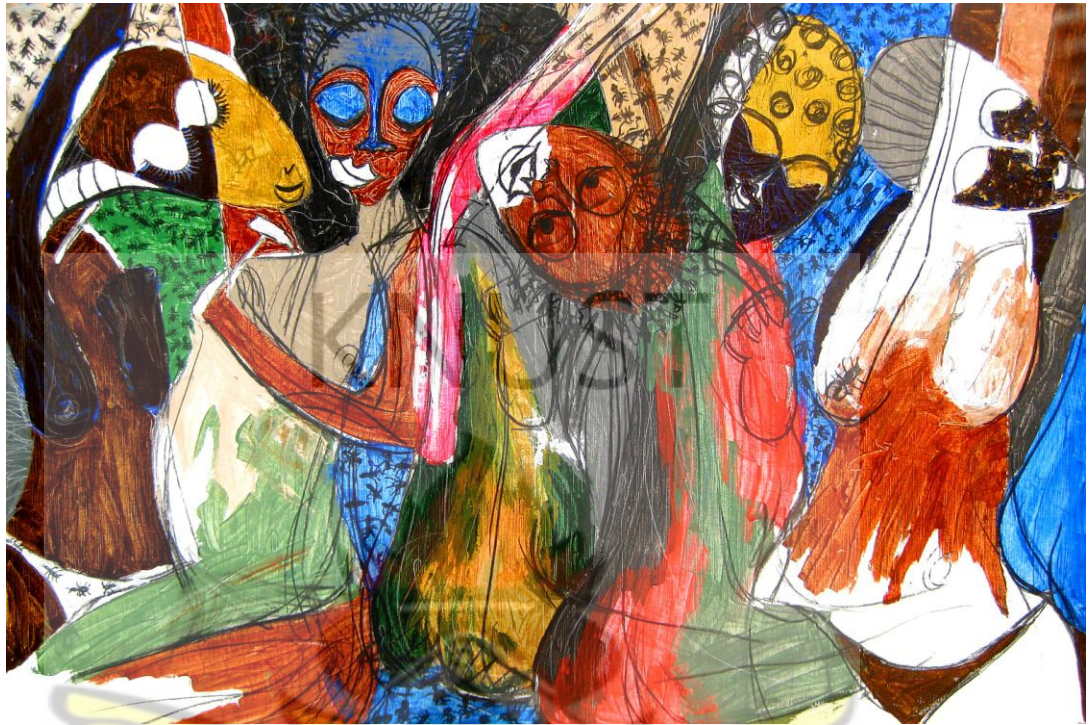


PLATE 4 (Detail 3b)





**PLATE 5**



**TITLE;** "Untitled"

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic, Charcoal and Coloured Pencil on Canvas

**SIZE;** 40"\*60"

Plate 5 possesses an ornamental appeal which clearly distinct it from the two preceding works which has been discussed previously under this category. Some of the intentional efforts made in achieving its ornamental look include stylizing some of the figures to look like the Ashanti Akuaba doll. Applying contrasting polychrome and thirdly texturing some areas on the canvas which initially were blank with ants contributes immensely to the decorative appeal.

The ants in this work which appears to be doing their own thing in a scattered manner symbolically stands for all the visible and invisible elements in our environment which directly or indirectly have influences in our way of doing things.

The presence of the ants in the work questions the secretive connotation associated to privacy in the dictionary. Can one ever be alone?

Figures are closely positioned sometimes overlapping each other as a common feature which occurs in the previously discussed works yet, they seem to be very concentrated on themselves. Meaning, the individual state of each figure is much felt than the previously discussed. This is due to fact that these figures have background spaces around them which also makes it very easy to outline and identify the shape of every individual figure in this work.

Lastly, the faces of figures in this work are depicted in two or more colours also revealing some rough textures. These textures and the facial colour representations symbolize the uneven nature of the human skin in terms of colour and texture.

Plate 6 captures some of the very interesting features and parts of the work. For example it shows two interesting faces. The face on the left has a feature of a long ringed neck which was borrowed from the Ashanti Akuaba doll. To the Ashanti's, the ringed neck is a symbol of beauty.

The face on the right side depicts a gesture of a twisted mouth which is very difficult to avoid when shaving your armpit in the real sense. On the lower left hand side of this view is a green field of colour depicting ants. The inclusion of the ants in this work was inspired by the army of ants which were roaming to and fro on the walls and floor of the artist's studio on the day of executing this work.

Plate 7, another detailed view of Plate 5 depicts one of the very concentrated and serious looking faces. Its gesture could be described as very vigorous. The vivid vibrant and dazzling character of the hues together with the groovy bold looking charcoal marks and the blue incisions running through the face of this figure contributes or reflects its energetic nature.

On the lower right hand side depicted in burnt sienna with black marks illustrate a head of another figure which has found its way in the armpit of the serious looking figure.

Plate 8, a third detailed view of Plate 5 illustrates a hand holding a white shaving stick and a green field of colour with ants running up and down. The white marks running through the hand holding the shaving stick, shows some of the coloured pencil marks.

An interesting observation in this particular work is that though the ants are black in colour, they appear as camouflaging imitating the field of colour they find themselves. At some areas they appear as dark blue ants, at other areas they appear as dark brown or dark green ants.

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PLATE 6 (Detail 5a)

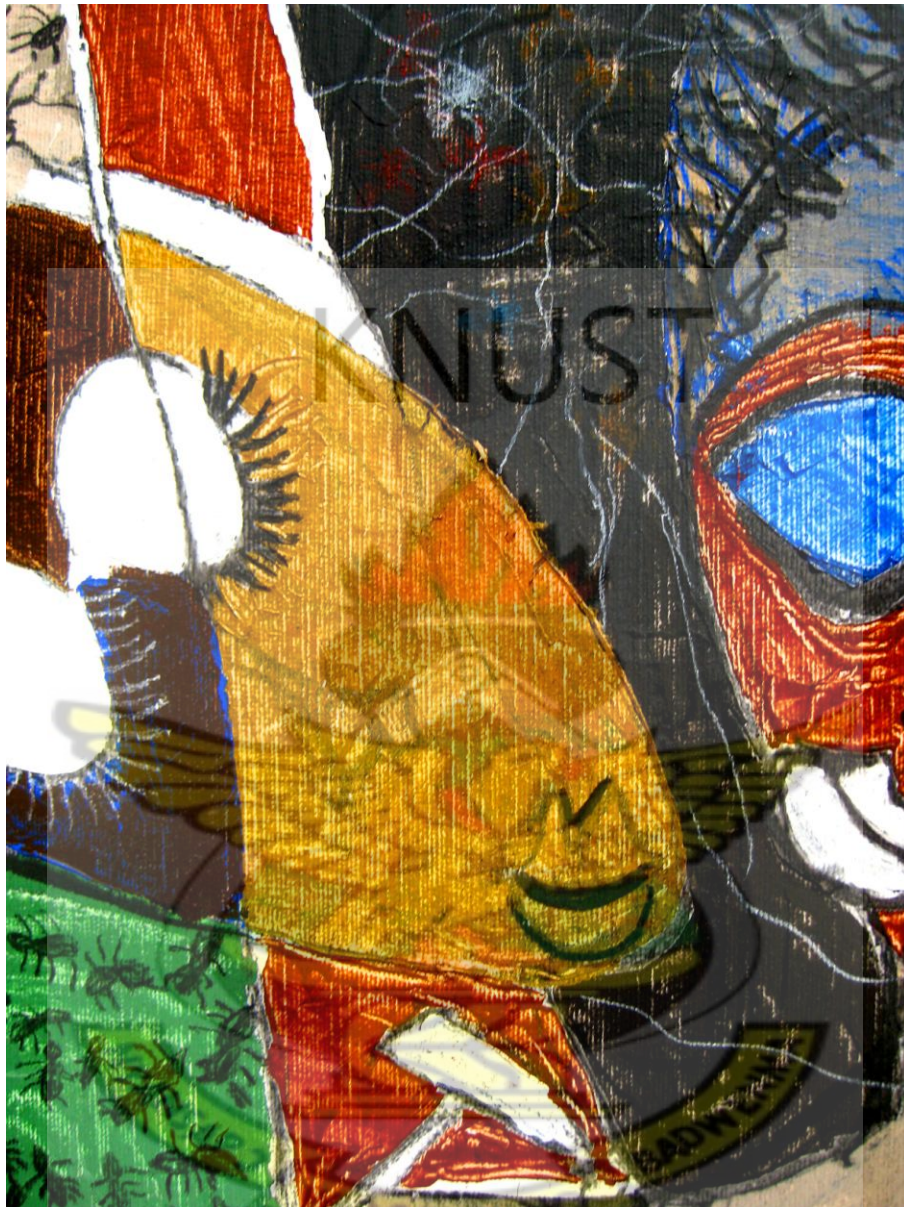


PLATE 7 (Detail 5b)

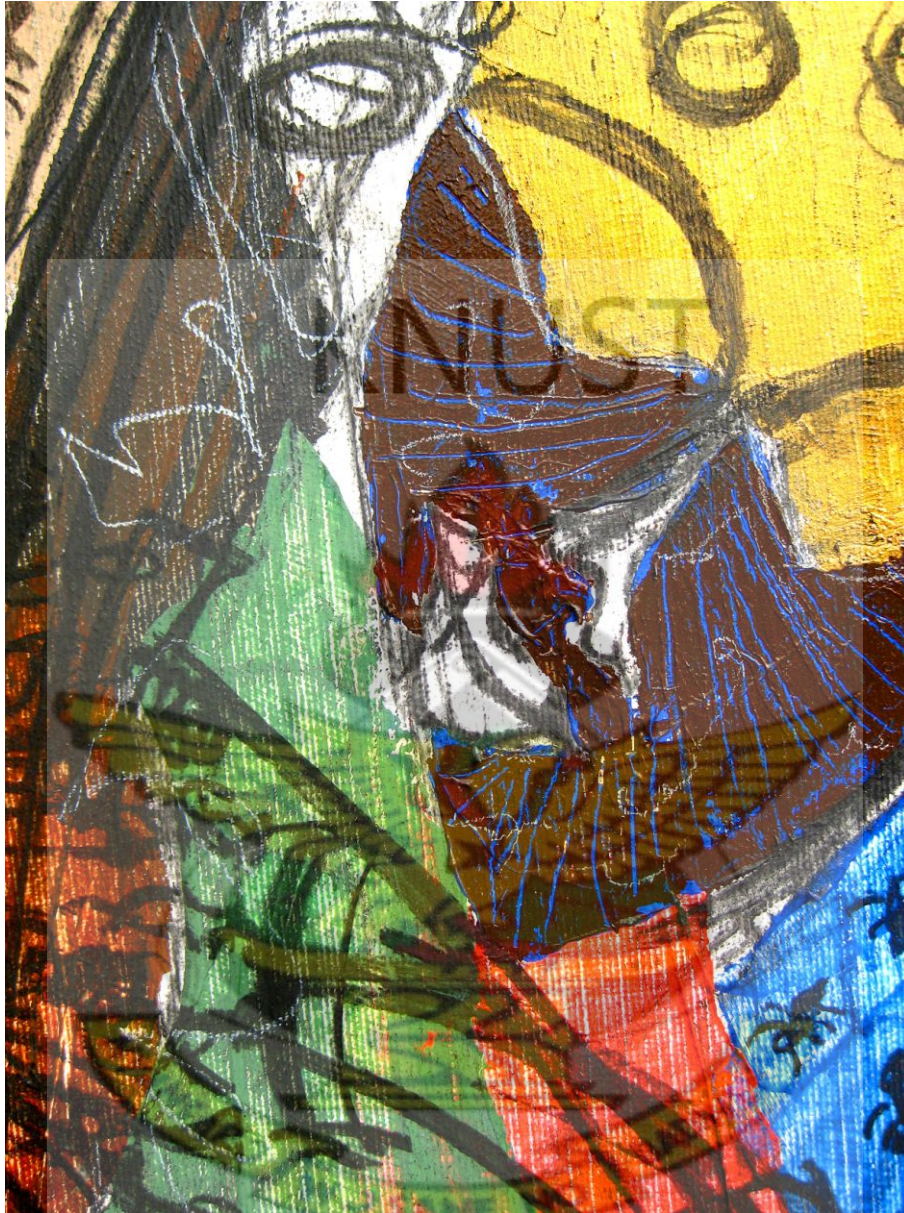
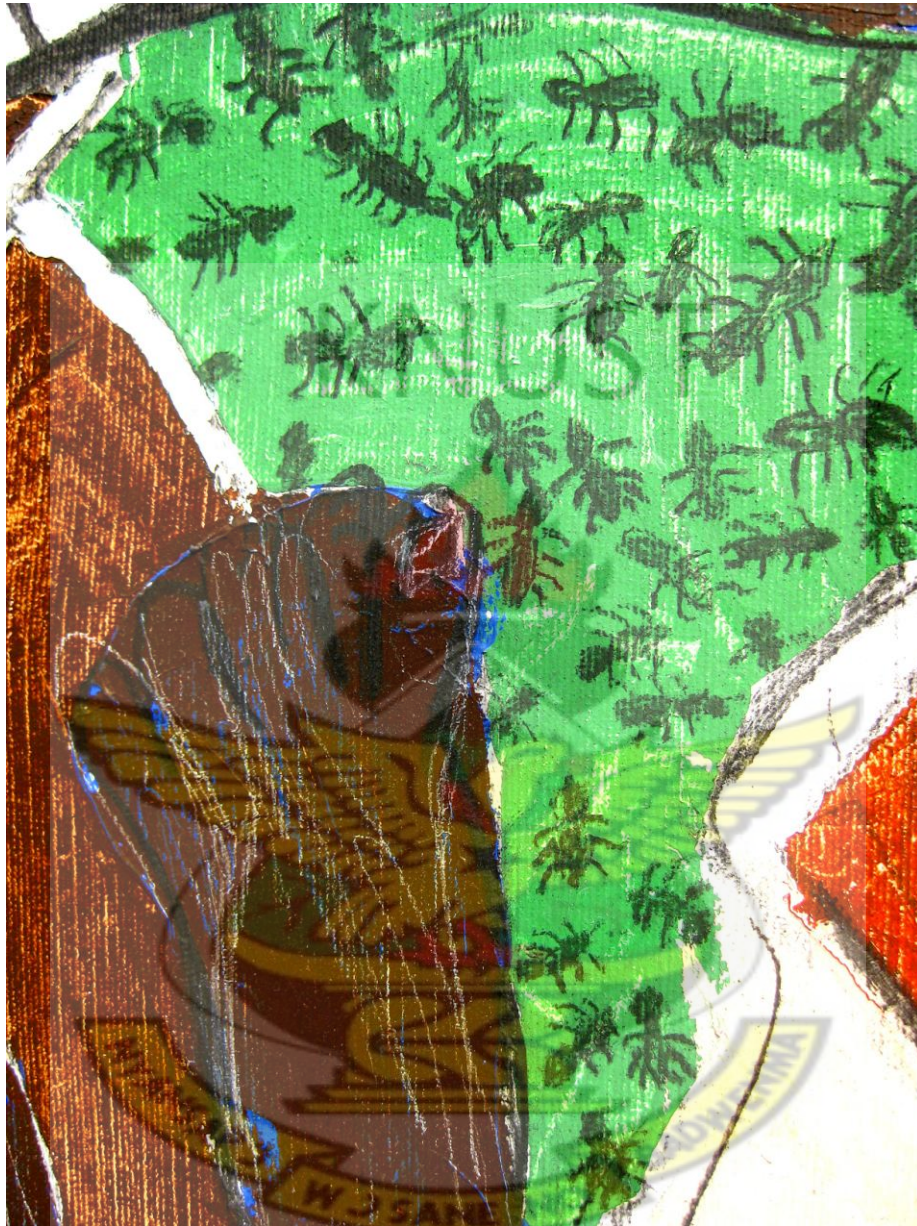




PLATE 8 (Detail 5c)



**PLATE 9**



**TITLE;** “Untitled”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*72"



Plate 9, very expressionistic in character projects a very sentimental, gloomy and sedating atmosphere. Paint has been applied very boldly with large transparent strokes following a direction of its own just like fishes swim along in the deep blue sea.

The strength in the direction of the strokes makes them appear as though they are circulating in a never ending manner. Figures have been outlined with dark charcoal lines. This time round there is no indication of a special attention in bringing out the details or showing clearly the activity ongoing on the canvas.

A dominating character which is most evident in the work is an icy look and a cold ultramarine blue which runs throughout the working surface with marks of burnt sienna glazing over the ultramarine areas creating darker values. A very critical observation at the lighter valued areas reveals some sensitive marks which drip and appear to imitate melting ice or even tear drops.

These marks together with the colour of the composition create a melancholic mood. The artist in this work also reveals some of his assumptions engulfing privacy. He believes that when someone is alone there is the tendency for that person to feel desolate, not cared for, or sometimes even less important.

This he also considers as a general character pertaining to “man” especially of the Ghanaian woman who is the subject of this research. These perceptions about the Ghanaian woman sometimes felt as negative grow and generate into anger and

hatred. In the composition, this is what the diminishing figures and the moody atmosphere created projects.

Plate 10 shows a detailed view of Plate 9. Evident is the cold icy nature described to be created by the lighter valued marks. There is also a strong display of transparencies which helps to create a feeling of a water body with the darker charcoal lines appearing as fishes swimming along the gushing current of this water body.



**PLATE 10** (Detail 9a)





#### **AT THE BEAUTY SALON (“MAMA THESS BEAUTY PALOUR”)**

The ideology behind these works is inspired by the concept of beauty and its relation with activities leading to its attainment both in physical and psychological forms. It addresses peculiar features and characteristics associated with beauty; one of such activities is a visit to a beauty salon and its operations.

A beauty salon is basically a place where both sexes visit to receive beauty related treatment such as hair, skin, and nails treatment. The works in this project strictly limits it to activities of women at the beauty salon. These places are usually visited with a lot of enthusiasm and excitement with the anticipation that upon return from such places, beauty needs will be met.

All the works focuses on synchronizing both the physical and psychological features that pertains to the environment and atmosphere upon which these activities are performed.

Analysis of these works is based on the ideology that beauty is relative.

**PLATE 11**



**TITLE;** Mama Thess Series “Obi Nngye Me” (somebody should save me)

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic, Charcoal, Enamel and Oil on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*96"

Plate 11 is composed in a landscape format and the elements easily identifiable in the work are caricatured female figures and hair dryers suggesting a scene from a beauty salon. The composition is divided into two halves that is the upper and the lower areas.

The compositional style adopted in the work which lines up the figures in rows is typical of a real beauty salon which takes care of the hair. Hair dryers are normally arranged in rows in real salons and this is what is being imitated in the work. Spaces which are assumed to be the background in the work are also filled with heads which gives a feeling that the figures extend towards the edge of the upper part of the canvas.

Interestingly even though some figures are placed behind others in the composition, because they are linked by overlapping and by their placement which is very close to each other, they appear as a whole block of figures placed on the same picture plane.

Also the placement of figures in the work adds an up and down rhythmic movement to the composition which injects a sense of rhythm in this particular work which could have been perceived as boring because figures find themselves in rows and in one picture plane. This breaks the boredom and makes the work more enjoyable.

Figures in the work are presented in frontal, profile and three-quarter views also compositionally they vary in sizes, form and colour. This addresses in real natural



situation a physical quality pertaining to the Ghanaian woman as varying in size, shape, form and colour.

Though the figure in full frontal view seem to divide the composition into two equal halves because of its placement which appears to be in the center of the work, it also serves a harmonious link between both halves of the composition. The feet, hands and fingers of the figures are pointing to either frontal, left or right hand sides of the canvas.

This sets the viewer's eyes to circulate drawing attention to the fact that every part of the work is interesting and also has a story to tell. Most of the figures are almost looking straight into the eyes of observers making them appear in very serious mood and also ready to endeavour pain of any degree.

The number of figures in the work is symbolic to the number of women who go through these struggles to mask themselves. The artist is of the view that women go to the salon usually to obtain a new identity, which does not reflect on their true identity. Therefore such beauty if any is just a cover-up and relative.

Figures especially on the left side of the canvas are clustered and they look terrified. However figures on the opposite thus the right, seem to be very inquisitive and appear to be interested in knowing what's happening on the left side of the canvas. An atmosphere of fright and pain is clearly captured in this painting by a number of factors.

First and foremost this is attributed to the use of colour which will be analyzed later in the course of the discourse. Also the claw-like character giving to the hands and feet of the women add to the mood in discussion.

The facial expression of the woman in the center of the canvas appears to be in great pain as a result of the temperature being produced by the hair dryer, but she is being hooked by the claw-like fingers of the women sandwiching her. A revelation of the quality of the Ghanaian woman perceived by the artist' as having a strong will to withstand and endure pain has clearly being proven.

The medium employed in the work is a combination of acrylic paint, enamel, oils, and charcoal. In the work enamel covers a wider area especially most of the red areas. Enamel was chosen because of its vivid character. Another reason of choosing enamel stems the fact that it possesses an irritant which makes one feel uncomfortable when working compared with acrylics. This is a personal experience.

This irritating and uncomfortable feeling the user experiences when working with enamel stands synonymous to most of the painful activities women go through at the beauty salon. These qualities enamel posses make it effortless for the mood of pain which was intended by the artist to be visibly established.

Unlike enamel, acrylic paint is friendlier and also the fact that its vehicle is water automatically set it as a good choice of a coolant. In the work, all the blue areas at the lower part of the canvas are in acrylic. The rest of the small blue parts above

and all the yellows are in oil. Oil was chosen for its impasto effect. The charcoal marks in all the works give them an illustrative and a drawing quality that makes it arguable and difficult if one wants to classify them as drawings or paintings.

In terms of technique, the broad painting knife approach which was adopted to create large coloured fields in the work minimizes the crowded and chaotic environment which would have been felt due to the high intensities of the colours and also the number of figures present in the composition.

The choice of colour in the work is synonymous to the varied facial expressions and gestures of the figures. The warm areas cover about two-thirds and the cool areas also covers about a third of the composition. A warm area and cool areas in the work simulates symbolic connotations.

Red is often used symbolically to represent danger, fire, pain, and despair only to mention a few and this is visible in the work. Also the warm hues introduced in the work relatively signify beauty of all varied moods or expressions. The blues introduced in the work split compliments the red.

This sets a clear contrast between the upper and the lower bottom area of the work. This contrast also easily distinguishes the upper from the lower putting emphasis on the two basic activities going on in the composition that is hair drying and cosmetic care of the feet.

A closer look at this work indicates that the legs and feet of the figures settles in the blue area which signify water or any other liquid substance used in pedicure.



PLATE 12 (Detail 11a)



Figures in Plate 12 a detailed view of Plate 11, are two interesting characters under a hair dryer. Their facial expressions express that of discomfort. The figure on the left appears to be leaning on the shoulders of the figure on the right hand side for support. This detail also reveals very vivid and saturated hues which emerge like a blazing fire.

Plate 13, a detailed view of Plate 11 also shows two figures in a hair dryer. The one on the right is represented in a very simple profile view. Its simplistic nature and its stiff character resulting from its pose conjures a very serious personality whose mindset is psyched and ready to endure any kind of suffering. The other figure on the other hand reveals a face showing frontal and side view together, a characteristic which appeared in cubism. Its facial representation revealing two different views gives it a character of an image in motion. It seems to be shaking its head as a sign of a figure in the peak of enduring pain.

Plate 14, another detailed view of Plate 11 illustrates three images also under a hair dryer. Their facial expressions also convey a very unpleasant and discomfort moods. The one on the extreme right shows a droopy face that appears to be very poised. Its lighter eyes calls for attention in the work communicating that it has passed its high peak of pain and now needs to be quenched.

The figure in the middle on the other hand appears to be also in its peak of suffering. It seems to be melting hence showing that it can hardly hold on to itself. This is seen in its pose which reclines on the figure on the extreme right.

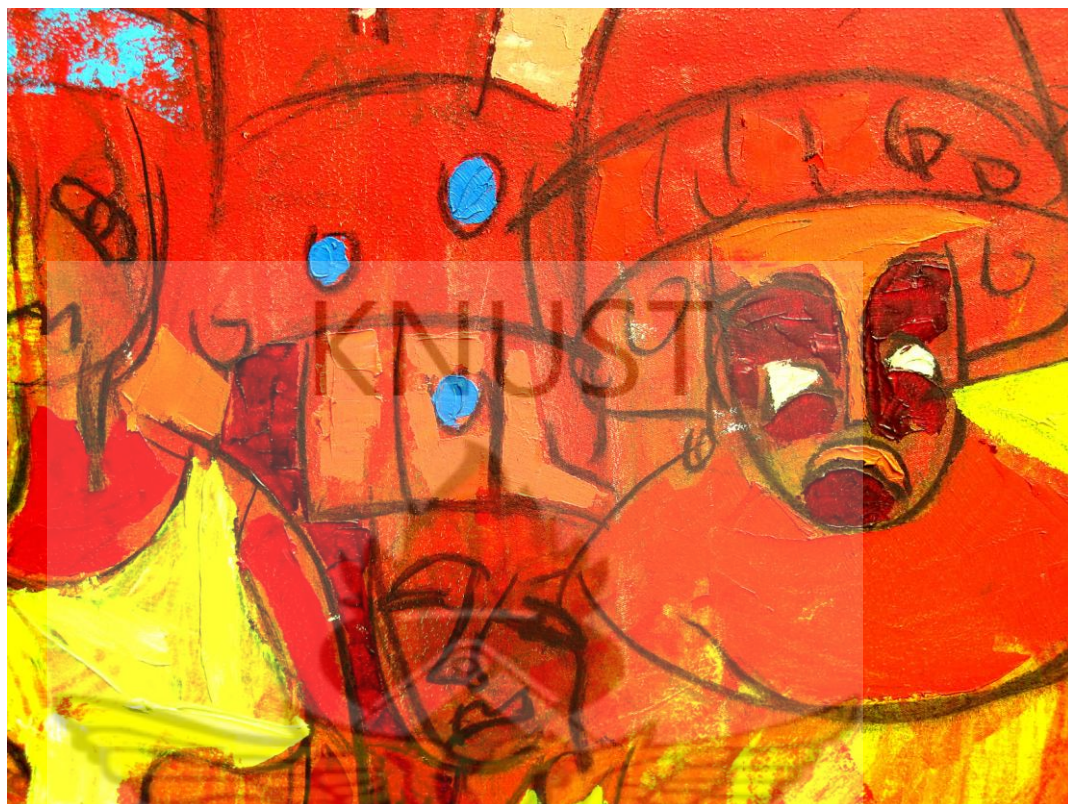


PLATE 13 (Detail 11b)





**PLATE 14** (Detail 11c)



**PLATE 15**



**TITLE;** “Sharing is Caring”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*72"



Plate 15 places emphasis on the physical characteristics and features of the images. This emphasis aims at presenting the man-made or the artificial presentation perceived by some Ghanaian women as an extension or a touch-up of the actual self or a relatively perceived natural beauty.

The major characteristics being addressed in this work is the ‘masking’ personality women are perceived to achieve after visiting the beauty salon. This personality or trait has a synonymous linkage with the characteristic of pretence. That is when one puts on a mask, its perceived physical character is altered hence making it assume a new look which is not true to the actual self.

In this work, the masking quality is achieved by intentionally intensifying and exaggerating their physical look especially their faces and making them appear like caricatures.

The hairstyle and costume of the figures also intensifies their masking character, further drawing eyes to some of today’s modern fashion Ghanaian women are entangled with as a result of the influences of foreign cultures because modern technology makes accessibility of such information very easy.

The overlapping and juxtaposed placement of the figures in this work further strengthens the masking and pretentious character being discussed. For example in this work, one can hardly connect the hands and legs to one particular image. Most of the figures seem to be sharing their limbs and even bodies with figures close by. This makes it comparatively difficult for their actual identities to be disclosed.



Plate 16 illustrates a typical example of figures whose identities have been hidden by sharing parts of their bodies with other figures close by. For instance in this detailed view, it is very difficult to tell which of the two figures, the one on the left and the one in the middle owns the dark ultramarine blue leg.

Plate 17 reveals two interesting characters under a hair dryer. The figures appear to be in the middle of a serious discourse. The long necked figure on the left shows her keen interest in the discussion by emitting a liquid fluid from its mouth just as one sometimes emits saliva from the mouth when enjoying a sumptuous meal.

Plate 18 illustrates hands being dipped into a liquid solution. Some of the fingers appeared drowned while others yet to be inserted in the liquid solution. This detail further exhibits technical revelations. For example the basin in which their hands are inserted in itself is represented as a flat plane yet because its lighter grayish blue colour symbolizing a liquid substance is glazed very thinly on some of the hands, a transparent effect is created making the basin to assume depth.

PLATE 16 (Detail 15a)

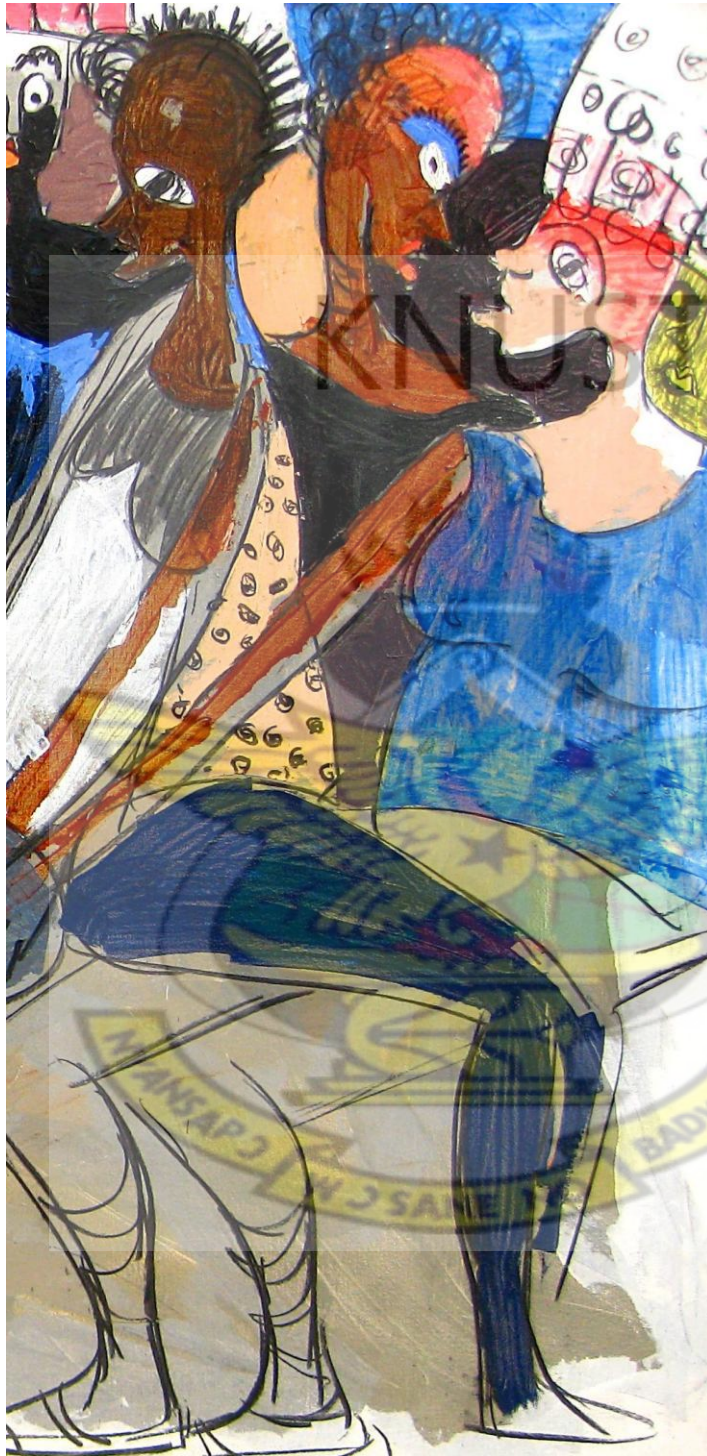




PLATE 17 (Detail 15b)

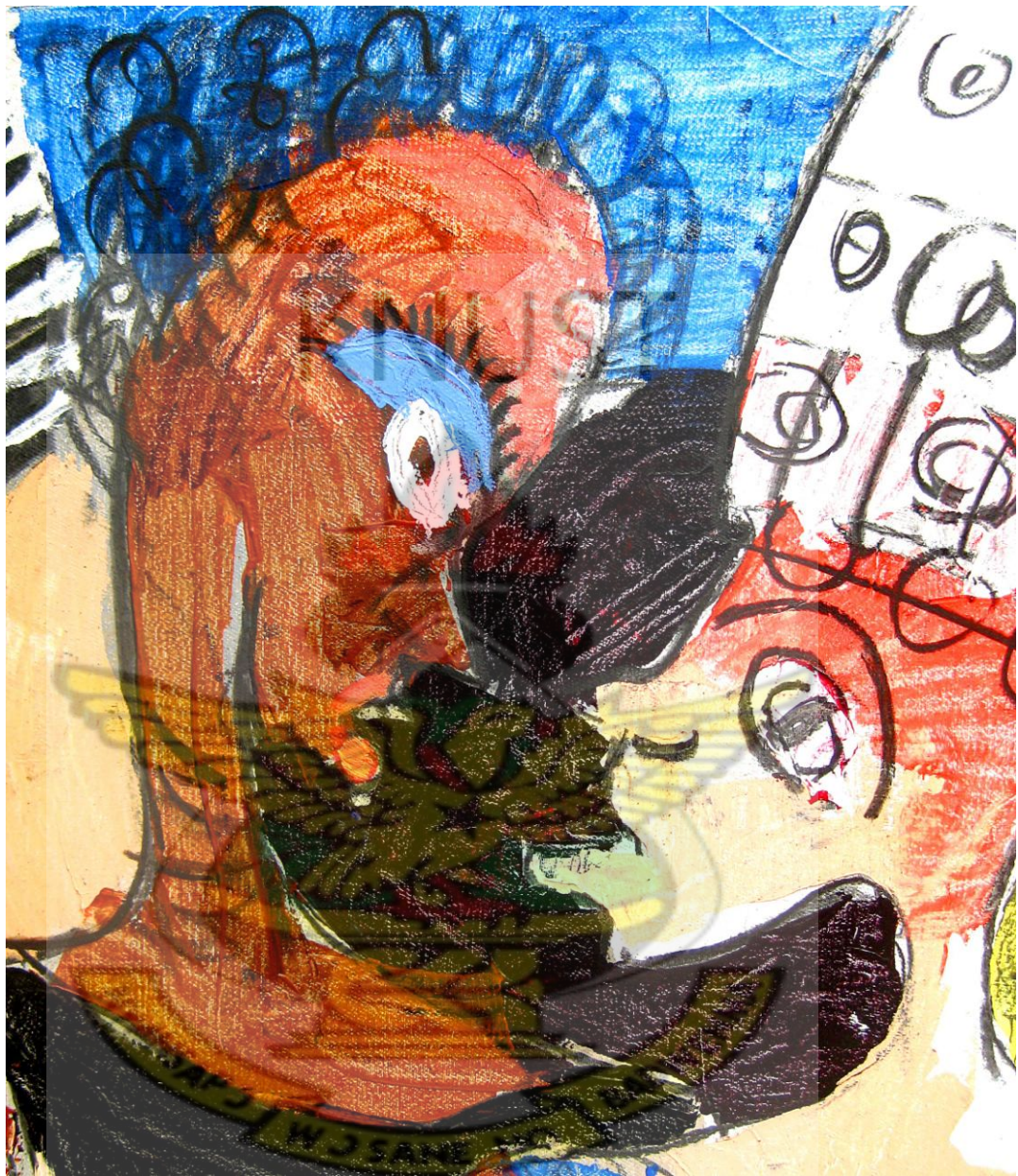




PLATE 18 (Detail 15c)



**PLATE 19**



**TITLE;** "A Woman's World 1"

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 24"\*30"



**PLATE 20**



**TITLE;** “A Woman’s World 2”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 24"\*30"



Similar to Plate 11 and 15, Plate 19 and 20 also share the same conceptual idea. The differences lies in the mood created in each work. There are a lot of diagonal lines running in these two works. Compared to 11 and 15, there seems to be a lot of interaction going on in 19 and 20. Every part of the canvas is filled with an activity. The number of women presented in these two works illustrates a kind of enthusiasm women have for visiting the salon. The beauty salon seems to be a place where they encounter their own kind.

The rendition of these two works produces effects similar to a collage. That is the manner in which the paint has been applied appears like pasted objects in a photomontage. Also the introduction of patterns and more textures in these two works reveal a textile and print effects.

Plate 21 is a detailed view of Plate 20. It reveals a very charged atmosphere showing even dusty charcoal particles.

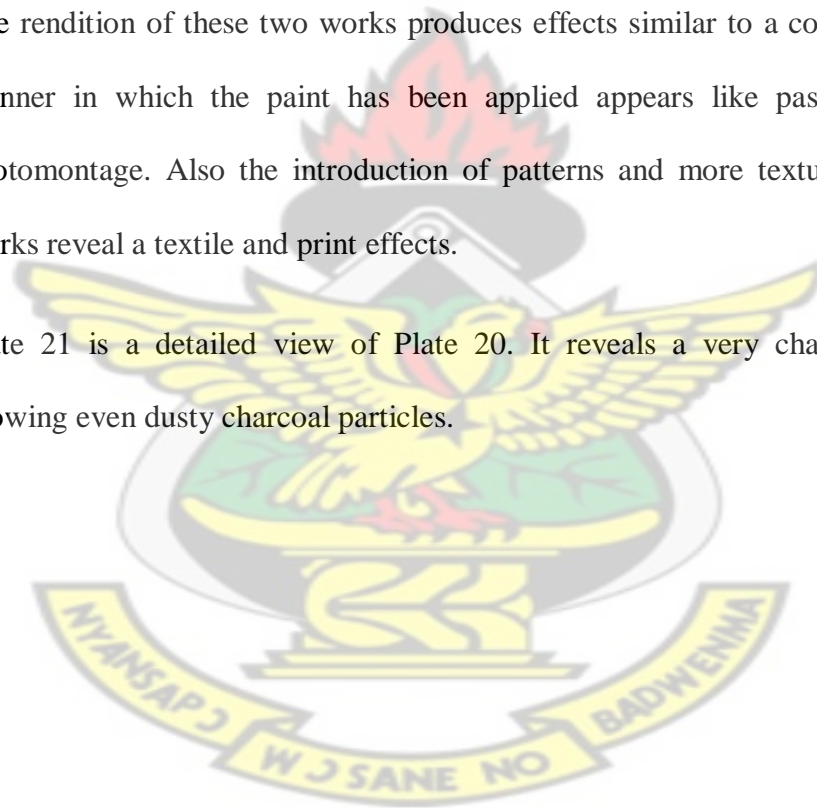


PLATE 21(Detail 20a)



## AT HOME AND AT THE MARKET

The works under this theme, aims at revealing some very fundamental features the Ghanaian woman reveals as she performs her daily chores both at home and at the market. These works are also inspired by Amon Kotei's perception that Ghanaian women are pacesetters in the economic emancipation of the country. He see's Ghanaian women as always connected in contributing to the financial system of the country, yet still finds time to cook and take care of the home and family.

Aside their roles as mothers and responsibilities of keeping the home, one may wonder how these women are able to find their individual ability, character and resilience that enables them to cope or sail through such concentrated and the energy draining atmosphere the Ghanaian open markets create.

The market in this group of works though reveals some of the characteristics associated to the daily struggles of the woman at the market, also aims at exposing some artistic issues which are often addressed among Ghanaian artist in the depiction of the market.

The market is defined in most Ghanaian market painting scenes as almost an entity that sustains life both within and outside the home. It also serves as a platform where money is raised by selling food and other basic human necessities. Most often, it is always enriched with massive human presence undertaking countless and diverse activities at the same time such that one can hardly distinguish between these activities ranging from selling, buying, hawking and vehicular objects such as

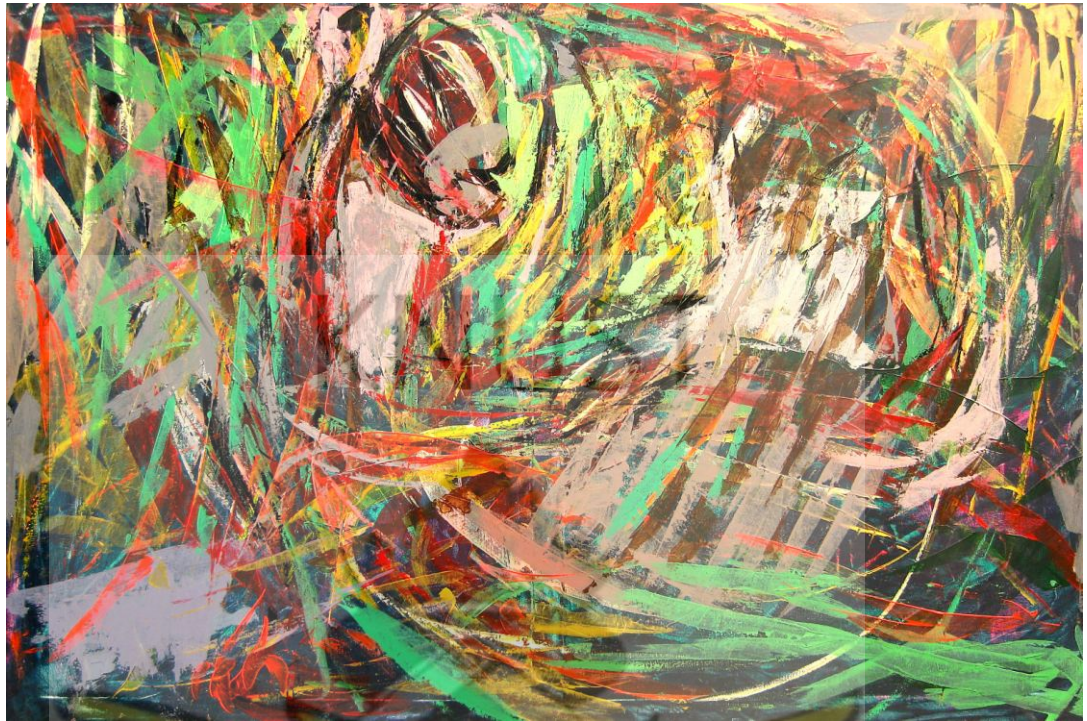


lorries, buses, motor cycles and trucks. This is not to say that there are no market paintings depicting single figures or detailed inventory.

# KNUST



**PLATE 22**



**TITLE;** “Mummy washes the cooking pots”

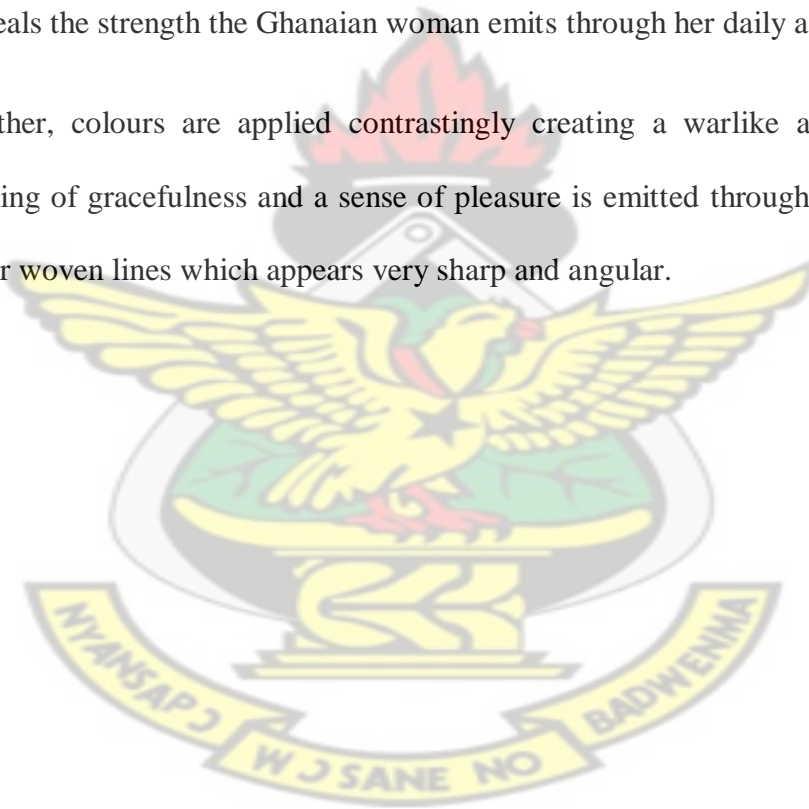
**MEDIUM;** Acrylic on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*72"

Among all the two-dimensional works, Plate 22 is the only work which makes no use of charcoal. Depicted in an expressionistic and a very expressive manner is a fat female figure whose presence is felt through the use of very dramatic and aggressive lines.

Ambiguously, the only parts of the woman that can be felt in the composition include the hands and bust. Though not too clear, the power being exhibited by the lines which looks interwoven and moving in different directions symbolically reveals the strength the Ghanaian woman emits through her daily activities.

Further, colours are applied contrastingly creating a warlike atmosphere yet a feeling of gracefulness and a sense of pleasure is emitted through the rhythmically interwoven lines which appears very sharp and angular.





**PLATE 23**



**TITLE;** “Observers are Watching Upside Down”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*72"

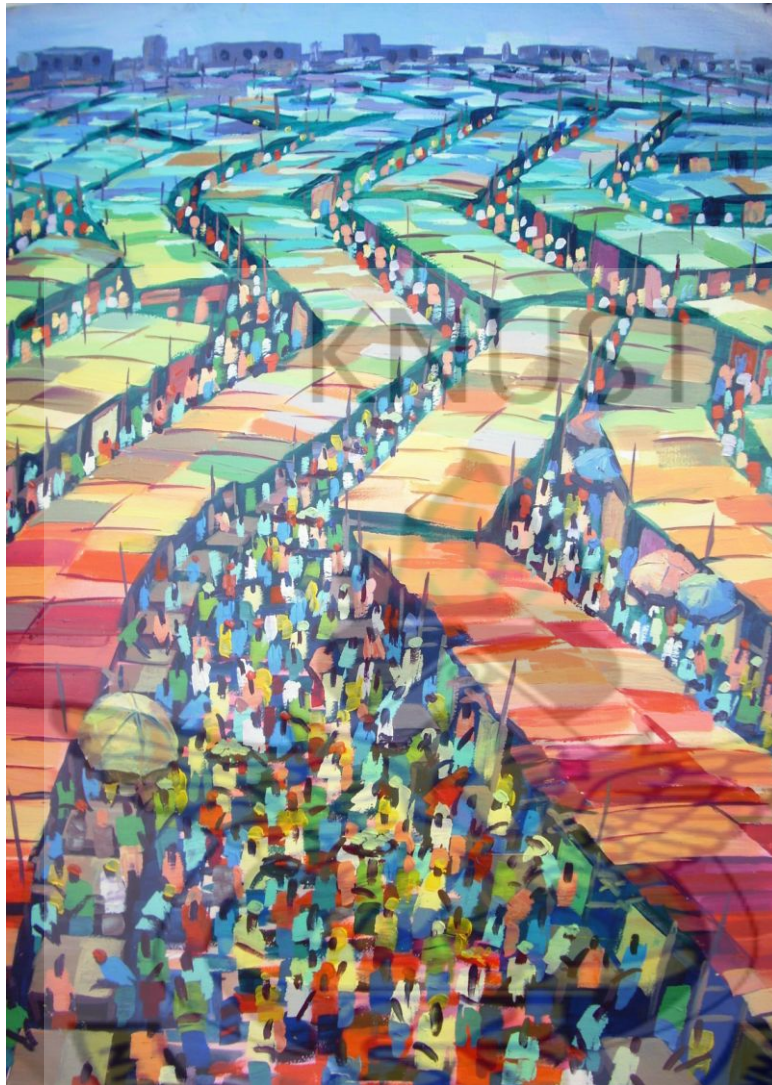
Plate 23 has been inspired by a number of open market scenes by great Ghanaian art masters as Ablade Glover, Bon, and Osei Agyekumhene. A number of their works with the open market theme explored formal principles and doctrines based on linear and atmospheric perspective. In such works, perspective appears to have been followed almost to the letter.

Fig 54 is a painting by Isaac Osei Agyekumhene who is also the researcher's former art tutor at senior high school. This painting is a typical example of such open market scenes which inspired the researcher in his market depictions. It addresses perspective in a formal manner.

For instance in perspective an object to be represented in front in terms of size is depicted bigger. When that same object moves further away from its original position, it's assumed to lose its original size and hence depicted smaller than the previous one.

Also in terms of colour and tonal value, that same object in front is depicted in a very brilliant and with a more intense hue. Its value is also darker. As the same object moves into the distance, its brilliancy, intensities and value are reduced to create a feeling of recession. Fig 54, 55 and 56 demonstrate the aforesaid on perspective.

**Fig 54**



**ARTIST;** Isaac Osei Agyekumhene

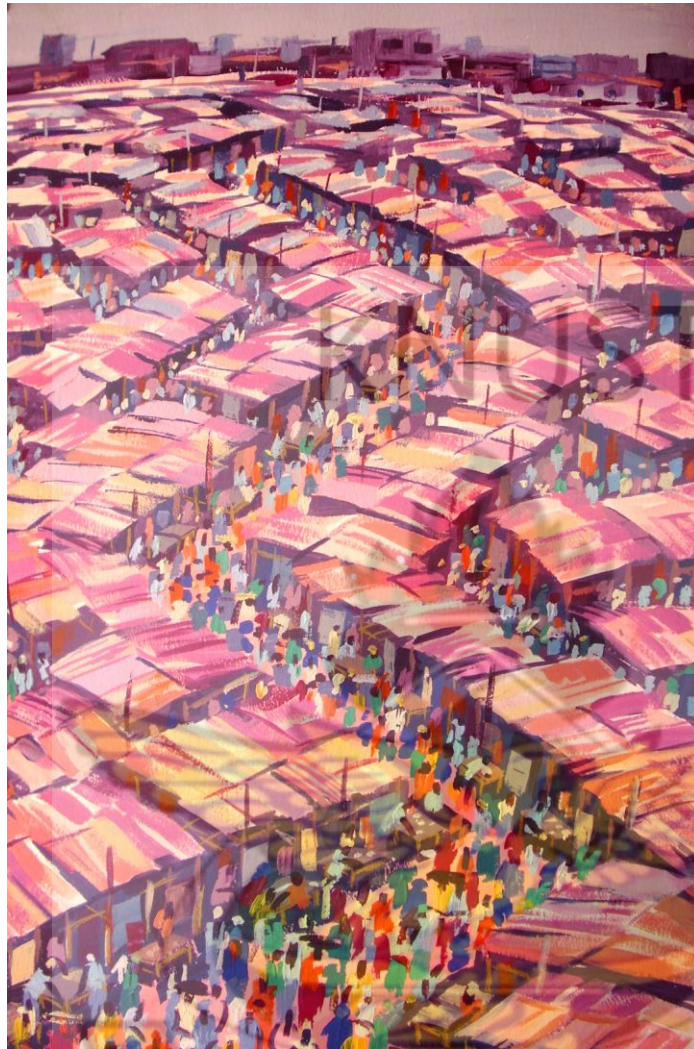
**TITLE;** “Untitled”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic on Card

**SIZE;** 22"\*30"



**Fig 55**



**ARTIST;** Isaac Osei Agyekumhene

**TITLE;** “Untitled”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic on Card

**SIZE;** 15"\*22

**Fig 56**



**ARTIST;** Benjamin Offei Nyarko (Bon)

**TITLE;** “Kejetia 5”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*36"



**Fig 57**



**ARTIST;** Benjamin Offei Nyarko (Bon)

**TITLE;** “Market Plan5”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*36"



In making an analogy with Mr. Osei Agyekumhene's paintings, it could be said that though Bon applies the formal principles of linear and atmospheric perspective in his works, it is very obvious and evident that Bon makes very conscious efforts in achieving colour harmonies than perspective. His brush marks are often applied in a very loosely and playful manner.

A characteristic which permeates in most of Bon's works is that of simplicity and his above works are not without exception. A common characteristic of Osei Agyekumhene's works is that of elaborate compositions though his figures are represented in simple strokes of flat colours. Another observation is that Bon often retains subtle contrast in his works. This is evidently illustrated in Fig57.

From the work in discussion (Plate 23), it cannot be said that it breaks the formal rules of perspective. It is rather convenient in admitting that it looks at perspective in a manner which is apparently not the same to the formal rules which governed and informed the works of the artists earlier mentioned.

First of all from this work, the artist believes that when he stands in front of someone it is true and possible to say that that individual or person is also standing in front of him. These two people being discussed may be seen as opposing however the distant between them or their relationship as they stand opposing each other may be seen as equal philosophically and mathematically. "If I stand before you, you also stand before me."

A variety of actions and activities transpires at the same time at the market. There is no single method or approach that fully captures everything that goes on there in a particular order. Hence the ideology behind this work is simply that nothing remains constant that is; from where one person sees something being upright another may also see it differently upside down depending on the many factors that accompany the viewer's personality and position.

The artist in this work positions each figure and object in the work as being viewed or a resulting image from a different viewer or observer who is not the same as the artist who executed this piece. This way of seeing may sound obscure and only possible in the world of dreams. Yet, the artist assumes it is also true and possible in reality to depict the world through this kind of perspective because we do not know the position of the one watching us. Is he or she a baby or an adult, is he or she standing, seated, lying or in other postures with the eyes fully opened or half closed.

These are just a few possibilities to ponder on and ignite our thoughts. Since we do not know the positions of the viewer or the one through whose eyes reveal the images we see on the canvas, how do we justify if the size of the object is true to its position on the canvas? Can one easily pass a judgment that the red object represented in front should be made to appear more intense than the red object afar?

Isn't it also possible that in real nature, the red object afar appears more brilliant and intense than the red one in front? These are some of the artistic issues and problems the artist in this and other subsequent ones with the market theme contemplates and addresses.

“Observers are watching upside down” as the name implies depicts objects and female figures performing various activities in an open market without sheds. Elements or objects in the work are concentrated and characterized with different activities. The work seems not to have one focal view but rather multiplicity of views.

This claim is supported by the idea or fact that some objects, figures or elements within the composition appear to be upside down while others are upright and projects mirror images upside down depending on which angle the viewer of this work stands. Figures together with objects are scattered to fill the entire surface of canvas.

Characteristic of this work is a doodle trait which appears resulting from the many charcoal lines that outline almost every object, shape and figure. Also figures and objects overlap each other contributing greatly to the doodle character. The images in this work are represented with very simple regular and irregular geometric shapes.

Though the objects and figures in this composition may appear as turned upside down depending on the angle or position of the viewer looking at this work and further because the images depicted on the canvas are the different perceptions or revelations as visualized by other individuals who are totally different from the artist and the new consumer of this work, they do not seem to disturb or make the new consumer or audience uncomfortable.



This is partly because images are represented with forms based on very simple shapes filled with very flat colours of varied intensities and tonal values which are distributed in a formal approach. Every part of the canvas is coloured, but there are areas that retains the layer of paint which served as the ground and also areas which receives an additional or more layers of paint.

When these two areas are compared in terms of weight that is areas retaining ground colour and areas receiving an additional or more layers of paint, both give the impression of possessing an equal distribution hence making their weight emerge as balanced in a very formal way.

The central part of this work is made to appear as very compact as a result of it not showing more areas of ground layer or colour. The middle part also serves as a pivot or a magnetic force which emerges to be pulling to the center the other parts or the rest of the images on the canvas. This really aids or makes it possible to turn the work in various positions such as landscape format upside down and portrait formats upside down without appearing as imbalanced.

The technique of leaving outlines to show through out in the work by applying colour carefully with the painting knife along the edges of the lines form groove-like effects which make the work at times appear as a coloured low relief sculpture piece and at other times a collage.

In their scribble manner, the lines in addition produce a puzzle-like character for the women in the composition to encounter difficulty in moving through this market easily. This creates the sense of strength and struggle associated to this phase.

# KNUST



**PLATE 24** (Plate 23a)



The image above depicts Plate 23 rotated ninety degrees anti-clockwise.



**PLATE 25** (Plate 23b)



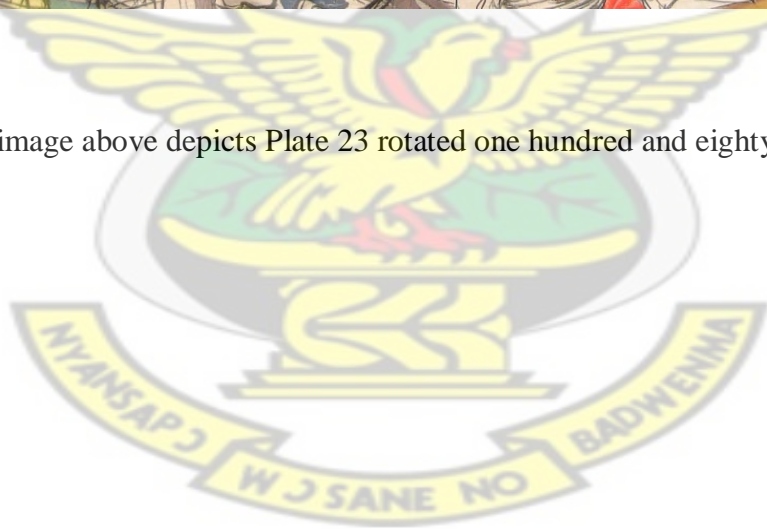
The image above depicts Plate 23 rotated ninety degrees clockwise.



**PLATE 26** (Plate 23c)



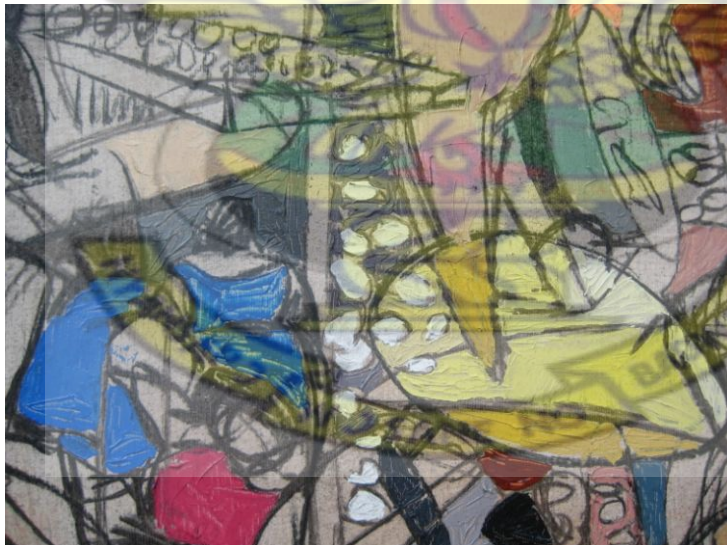
The image above depicts Plate 23 rotated one hundred and eighty degrees.



**PLATE 27** (Detail 24a)



**PLATE 28** (Detail 24b)



Above are detailed views of Plate 24 exhibiting figures and wares of the market women. Also emphasized is its scribbling nature.



**PLATE 29**



**TITLE;** "Observers are controlling us"

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*72"

“Observers are controlling us”, also from the perspective of the real observers visualizing these images different from the artist, the consumer or the new observer of this work, as discussed in the preceding work is executed in a slightly similar yet different approach.

While the “real observers” in the previously discussed work seemed to be many and uncountable; two to three groups of observers can be identified in this work.

The first group of observers can be identified from the outlines of images which start from the bottom of the canvas and moves across the center of the canvas in a slightly oblique manner to the top.

The second or the second and third groups of observers can be identified on the left and right planes of the canvas dominated by a blue coloured scheme. Separating these groups of observers are the stream-like characters which appears like an estuary of a river body depicted in red and white specks.

The middle part of the canvas is separated on the left and the right by the stream-like characters which represent a path or a walkway being flooded by women hawkers or traders and customers which is a common feature of most of the busy open markets or commercial areas in Ghana. Elements in the middle of the composition appear smaller than elements on the left and right hand sides of the composition creating an impression of a deep valley between two mountains.

The red and white specks represent tomatoes in basin-like receptacles. They are like gutters along the sides of a road. Technically, they help to break the composition

into two or three parts depending on how the new viewer or consumer classifies the groupings. They also add interest to the composition resulting from its contrasting nature in terms of its tactile textural appeal, its saturated intensity and lighter value of colour when compared to the left, middle and right parts of the canvas.

Without the white specks, the red specks alone though highly saturated would not have successfully served as a breaker because the darker colours around it would have absorbed its vibrancy. Interestingly, because there are also similar saturated hues of red and white distributed almost in an even manner on the left, middle and right parts of the canvas, the composition appears to be harmonized with the red and white specks serving as bridges.

Overall, the composition emerges as formally balanced in two different ways. The first way results from the almost equal size and weight of the two or the three distinguished areas identified on the canvas. That is the middle versus the sides or the middle versus the left and right planes.

The second way helping in yielding a formal balanced system can also be interpreted as resulting from the distributing of very saturated brilliant hues almost equally on the entire canvas surface to oppose unsaturated gray hues also covering almost an equal stretch of space.

Though this work seems to be emphasizing formal properties, its aim of also revealing some traits pertaining to the Ghanaian woman are nonetheless not lost in the composition. A strong sense of passion to duty and work which the Ghanaian



woman exhibits as she wakes up very early at dawn and goes to prepare her wares in the market to wait for customers is demonstrated through the gestures of the figures and also through the cool atmosphere suggesting dawn and early morning.

The actions of the figures and its vibrant looking charcoal lines help establishes the hardworking nature and the strength the Ghanaian woman is assumed to possess.

# KNUST



**PLATE 30** (Detail 29a)



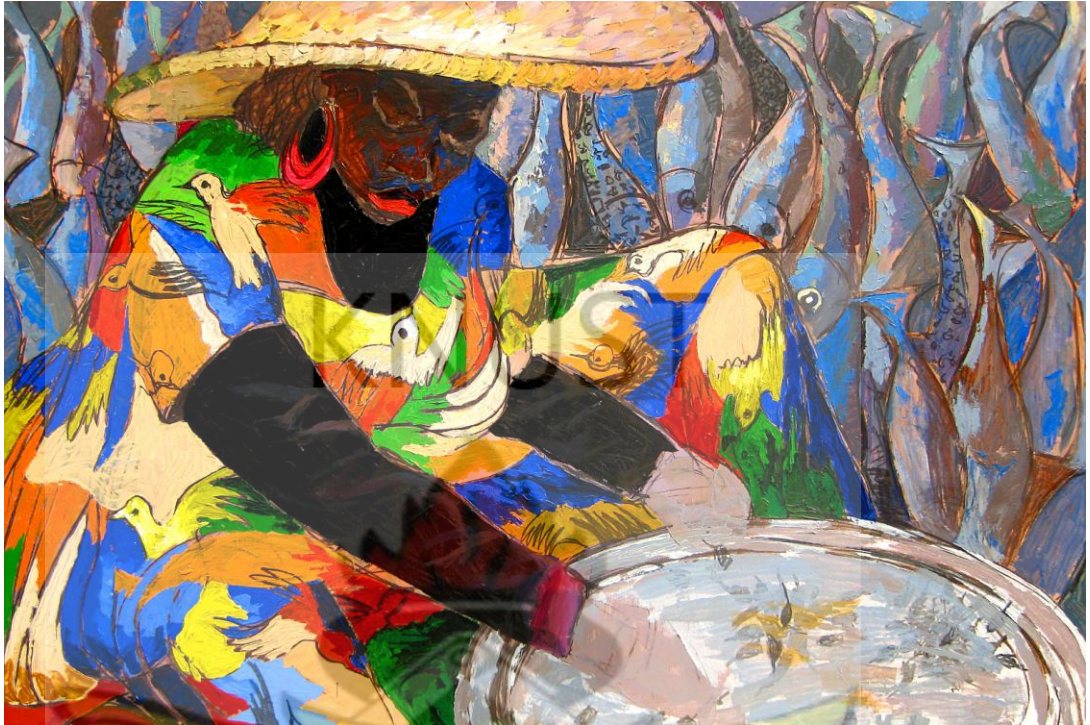


PLATE 31 (Detail 29b)





**PLATE 32**



**TITLE;** “Pepper Seller”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic and Charcoal on Canvas

**SIZE;** 48"\*72"

Plate 32 depicts a market woman who appears to be arranging her wares. The figure in the composition was developed from one of the images from Plate 23. Her dressing is typical of market women in Ghana. Market women in Ghana who sell in the open often wear big hats in sunny afternoons. Most often they also wear a pile of two or three clothes at the same time which in most cases includes a sweater.

The main difference between this work and the other two open market scenes discussed previously is that while the “two” looks at a panoramic view of the market women and its surroundings displaying various objects and activities, this composition zooms in concentrating on a figure and its immediate surroundings.

Market women are very persuasive. They use flowery and flattery words which are sometimes pitched melodiously to woo passers-by and customers to even purchase commodities they do not budget for.

The woman in the composition is selling pepper. The supposed pepper is illustrated in a wishy-washy manner. Pepper in reality is supposed to be either depicted in green or red, but in this work it is depicted in pale shades of grey. Further, it seems to be sinking or diminishing on the tray it finds itself at the lower right corner of the work.

This pale looking pepper contrasts the decorative outfit of the woman which displays different hues of saturated intensities, shapes and motifs of birds in flight. Its rendition makes the woman possess an appealing trait together with a flattery and

a wooing tongue that enables her to attract passers-by even when they do not need what she sells.

The bird motifs in the woman's cloth together with the shoal of fish behind the woman draw attention to parallels between the land and the sky. Though this work clearly does not define a sky, the motifs of the birds in flight indirectly make inferences to the sky. A detail exhibiting motifs of flying birds is shown in Plate 33.

Also Plate 34 and 35 make revelations of some of the common techniques the artist implemented to achieve almost all the two-dimensional works. Some of the techniques include glazing which revealed transparent layers of colour. Others include the impasto technique which produced a lot of opacities, tactile effects and patterns. The combination of charcoal and painterly effects distinguishes a signature for the artist in these works.

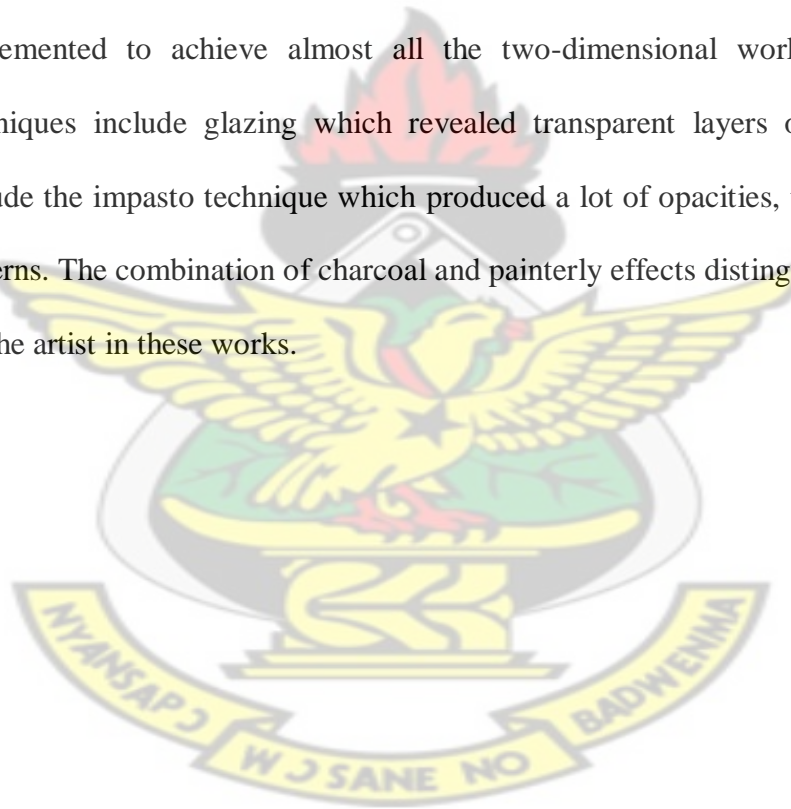
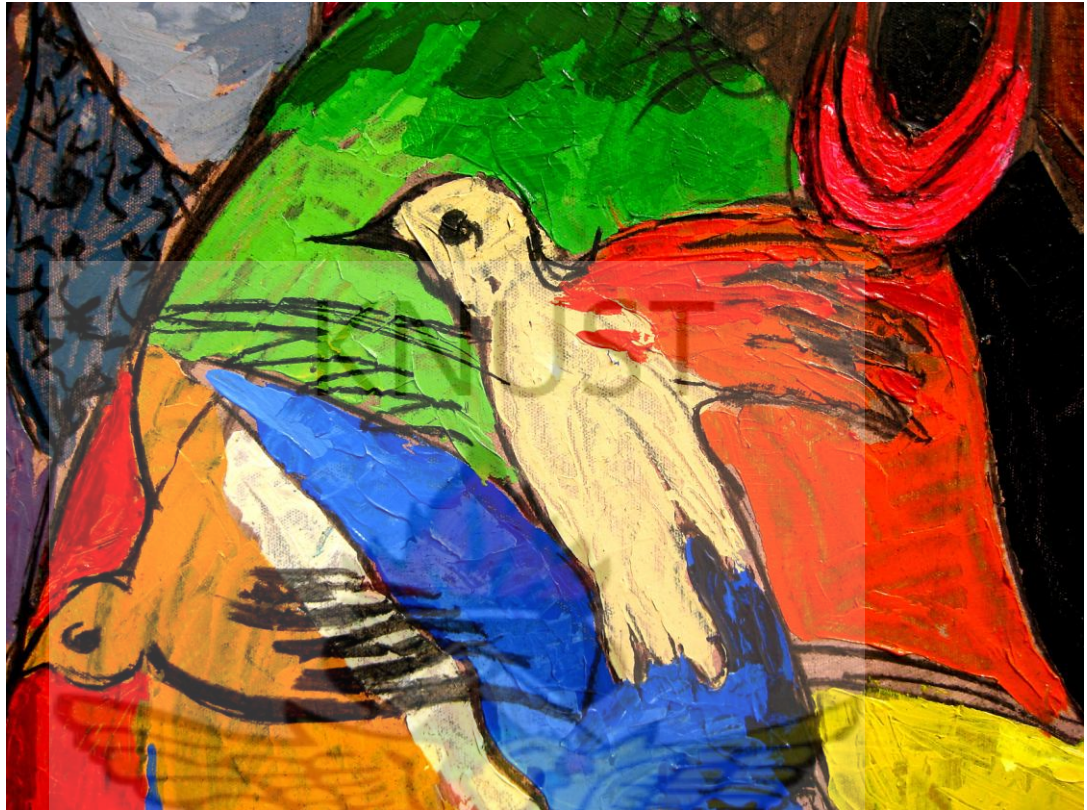
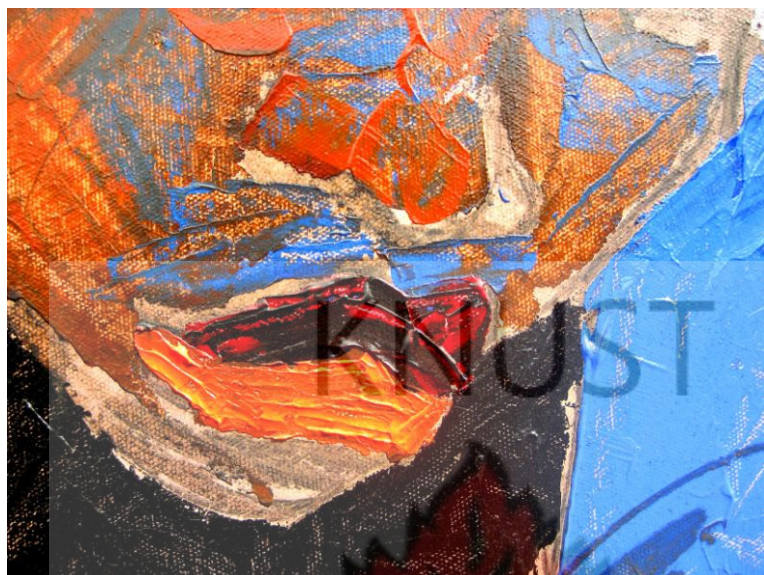




PLATE 33 (Detail 32a)



**PLATE 34** (Detail 32b)



**PLATE 35** (Detail 32c)





## APPRECIATION OF THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORKS

The making and inclusion of the three-dimensional objects as part of the researcher's project mainly aims at expanding and igniting the minds of the reader not to agree totally or perceive the representations on the concept of "The Natural and the Artificial" outlined in Phase one and Phase two of this project as the only ultimate possibility.

Though ends in themselves, the two-dimensional symbolic depictions on the concept of the natural and artificial reveal a foundation on which other meaningful possibilities of representations spring or evolve. As new evolutions, the three-dimensional objects set and add new interpretational meanings and values to the concept of the natural and artificial, that is the natural representing the "Truth" and the artificial representing a "Mask".

The three-dimensional category of work in this project is in three groups. The grouping is based on their symbolic representations. The Booth is the first group depicting two temporary structures which provide housing or serve as a natural and artificial environment or confinement the subject finds herself.

Natural and artificial environment in the discussion evokes a conceptual thought. Natural environment stands for a conceived abstract atmosphere which permeates surrounds and guide one perceived to be lonely and uninterrupted by the other as explained earlier to act instinctively to natural pressures.



Artificial environment on the other hand stands for an intangible man-made ambiance which controls the woman on the need to pretend. It also describes the atmosphere surrounding man that pressures the woman to distinguish or compose herself because she has a perception that all eyes are on her.

The concept behind the booth is borrowed from the phone booth tradition. The phone booth houses the phone protecting it from unswerving sunlight and rain. It also offers its occupant an atmosphere of seclusion while making a call. Two structures representing the natural and artificial environments respectively are exhibited. (Plate 39 and 41)

“When I erect a phone booth, but when I lie a coffin” titles the two booths executed. They derived their title from the numerous questions and comments passed by inquisitive observers while they were being painted on. A common question and comment which was often passed is, “is this a coffin or a phone booth?”

Both booths have an inside and an outside which are all painted to symbolize its environment. The first booth has two sides on the outside and three sides from the inside counting its base as part. The two erected sides are joined in an angle of ninety degrees and sitting on a base of one hundred and eighty degrees. This booth was purposefully made with two sides not counting the base.

In the final exhibition one of the terra-cotta heads will be placed on one of the wooden logs and further be installed in this structure. Here the sides of the booth

will help to separate the installed head and log partly from the exhibition environment and thus making it slightly easier for viewers to concentrate and ponder on the installation.

In this instance, the impact on the two erected sides of the booth on the head and the log will not be felt as too restrictive. This reason categorizes this particular booth to be used to represent the natural environment. Compared to the other booth, this feels more airy.

From the inside, paint is applied loosely, expressively and excitedly in thick patches and diagonal strokes emerging like flowers blooming in a garden. The two sides on the outside is also painted with thick patches of paint this time without long strokes and in rather cool tints of grays and blues also emerging like a group of butterflies flying towards the direction of the sweet scented nectar of some brightly coloured petals.

The second booth representing the artificial environment (Plate 41) has three vertical sides from behind and four sides which include the base seen from the front. Its colour reveals exciting shades of orange which serve as the dominant hue and twist of lighter yellow hue. Paint is applied on both sides of the booth in angular plane fields of colour.

During the final exhibition, one of the terra-cotta heads will also be placed on one of the six logs and finally installed in this booth. This installation is an artistic metaphor which aims to ridicule the dilemmas women go through at the beauty

salon in search of cosmetic beauty. One of such interesting dilemmas is the uncomfortable and remote controlling milieu the helmet-like hair dryer bestow on its occupant.

The second group of work under the three-dimensional category is a number of small wooden logs. Because of its character standing out as not manipulated too much by man, the wooden logs in this project symbolically stands in for the physical body of the woman that has not been too much physically adulterated or contaminated with cosmetic products in the quest of attaining or modifying one's "natural beauty".

The terra-cotta heads revealed as the third group signifies the masking perception which the researcher attributes to cosmetic modification of the human body. Characteristically, each of the heads posses and exhibits a strong imagery that posses a potential of provoking artistic dialogue among observers. Further when exhibited alone, each appears like a unique alien blending very well with other inhabitants on planet earth.

Their animalistic together with their superficial traits give them their distinctive appeal. They are contrastingly balanced both formally and informally by rough and smooth textures derived by the tool marks. The tool marks gives them a quality that make them feel as if they were carved from wood.

The tool marks in the terra-cotta works is similar to tool marks created with the painting knife in the two-dimensional works. Their colour is symbolic to the dark



coloured skin or sometimes the light coloured varied skin values the black woman possesses.

Their colour also reveals how some Ghanaian women wear their make-up. In real life women wear make-up which either harmonizes or contrast in colour with either their natural skin colour or the colour of the dress they wear at that particular time to project their personality.



**PLATE 36** (Wooden log on iron rods)



The above image s one of the six wooden logs which aims at serving as the natural or raw state of the woman. In a simplistic manner it stands upright on iron rods and further reveals its delicate tactile relief bark.

**PLATE 37**



**TITLE; "Scarecrow"**

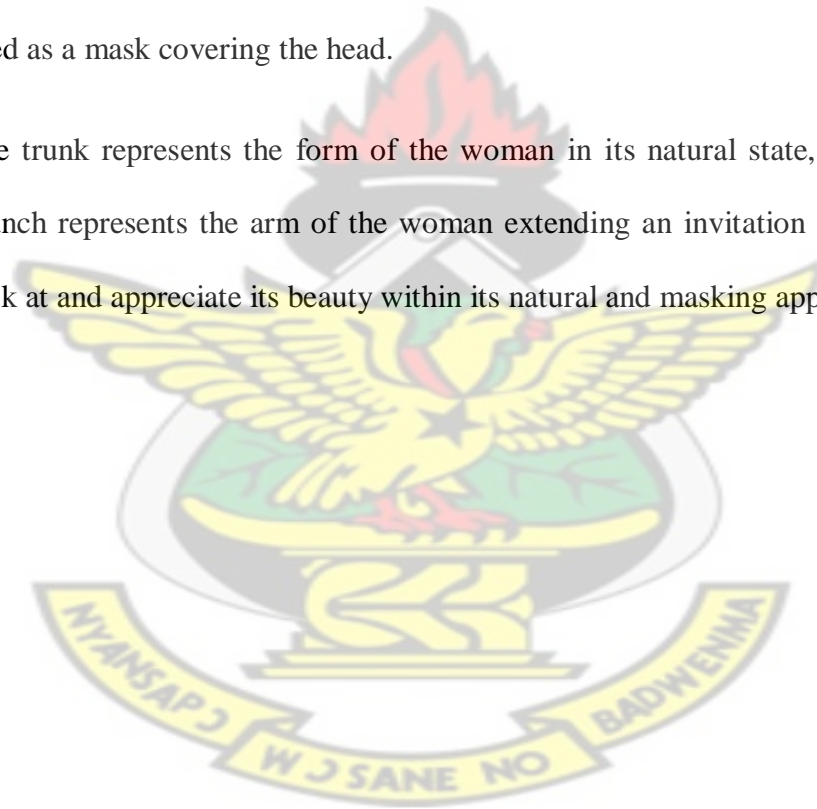


Plate 37 sends a similar message with the installation of the six wooden logs and the six terra-cotta heads which would be showcased in the final exhibition.

It basically looks like a sign board and interestingly signboards are mediums or avenues through which messages are carried or conveyed.

The work evokes in the viewer a sense of the physical presence of the woman where one can touch, smell and feels its form and features. The iron rods symbolize the feet and neck. The trunk symbolizes the human body and its hand. The canvas is used as a mask covering the head.

The trunk represents the **form of the woman** in its natural state, while the short branch represents the arm of the woman extending an invitation welcoming all to look at and appreciate its beauty within its natural and masking appearance.



**PLATE 38**



**TITLE; “Scarecrow”**

Plate 38 illustrates an opposite view of Plate 37. This view follow suit in the direction of the previous image, however there is a slight difference in the interpretation of their total appearance.

The idea of the canvas with images of two heads facing each other on one body reminds of the Adinkra symbol of unity which illustrates two lizards with one stomach struggling for who takes the biggest share of the cake.

The two heads facing each other similarly represent women joining forces in quest for self recognition and appreciation of self development and self gratification as deemed fit. Contrast is envisaged as the two heads appear to be engaged in a serious dialogue.

It looks like a debate which holds two contrasting ideologies in the sense that, the left image from the view in the work maintains its natural hair but alters the colour of the area around her eyes and her lips. The other image ironically also sits under a hair dryer as a sign of altering the natural hair yet remains her natural lips untouched.

This surely must be a conflict of ideology. Where in lies the basic and common saying that “naked we came and naked we shall go” In the artists opinion, the bottom line is that which is natural forever remains so irrespective of how many alterations or changes it goes through and that everything can be perceived beautiful at a particular time and ugly at another instance.



**PLATE 39**



**TITLE;** “When I Erect a Phone Booth, but When I lye a Coffin”

**MEDIUM;** Acrylic mixed with PVA glue and putty on plywood

Plate 39 illustrates three inside sides counting the base. It also reveals its flowery quality.

**PLATE 40**



The image above shows the back or outside view of Plate 39.

**PLATE 41**



**TITLE;** “When I Erect a Phone Booth, but When I lye a Coffin”

**MEDIUM;** Enamel on plywood



**PLATE 42**



The image above reveals one outside view of plate 41.

**PLATE 43**



The above image is a terra-cotta head displaying both humanistic features and that of a bird.

**PLATE 44**



This image showcases another view of Plate 43 taken from the back. Its elaborate hairstyle cannot be ignored.



**PLATE 45**



The above image is a terra-cotta head displaying both humanistic and some features of a fish. Its rich tool marks gives it a lively appeal while the hairstyle appears elaborate and modern.



**PLATE 46**



The above image is another view of Plate 45 taken from the back. Its pony tail hairstyle was appropriated from the hairstyle of the model in Fig 52.

**PLATE 47**



The above image is a terra-head paying particular attention to the wearing of make-up by women. The whitish light green colour on its face is a transparent layer of iridescent green supposed to imitate a layer of talcum powder women apply on their face.



**PLATE 48**



The above image is another view of Plate 47 showing a profile view. It depicts an alert figure showing some characteristic of a cobra ready to attack its victim.

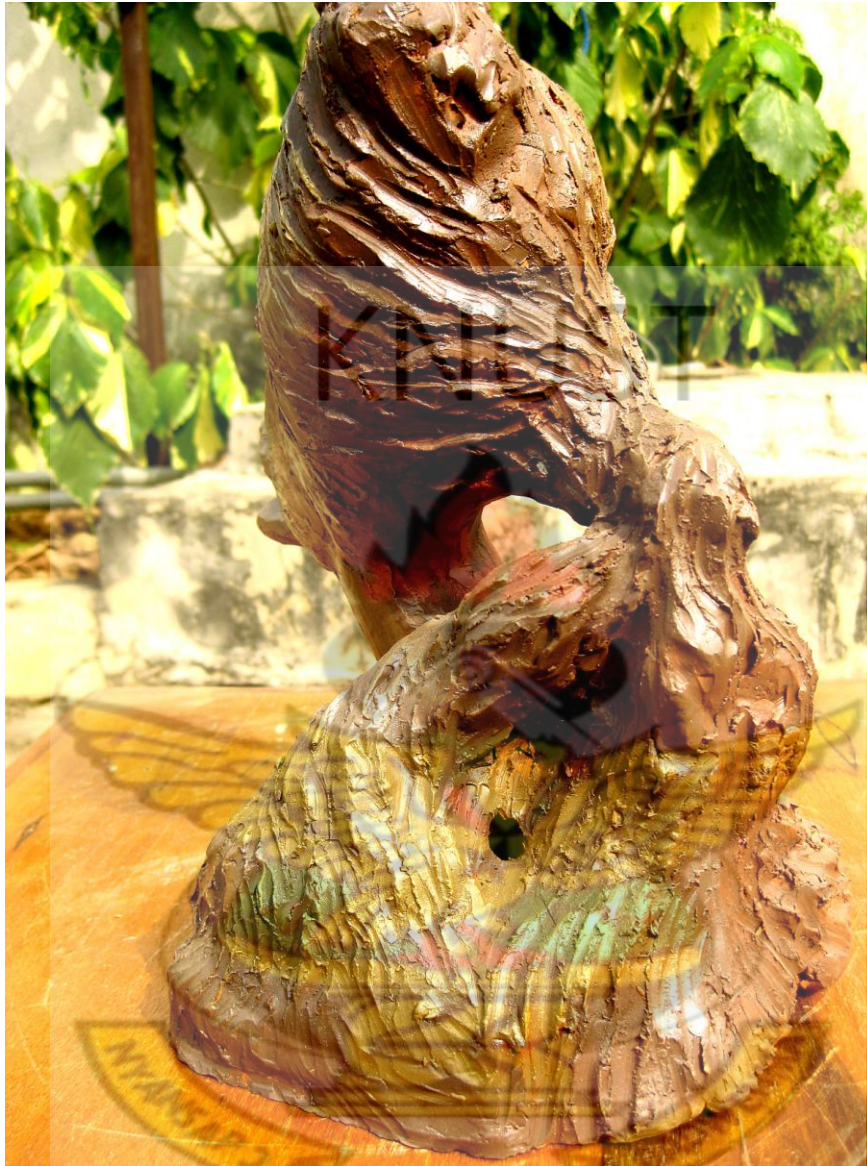
**PLATE 49**



The above image is a terra-cotta head developed from one of the figures in Plate 15.



**PLATE 50**



The above image is another view from the previous image taken from the back. Its hairstyle drapes very loosely also revealing very rich tool marks.



**PLATE 51**



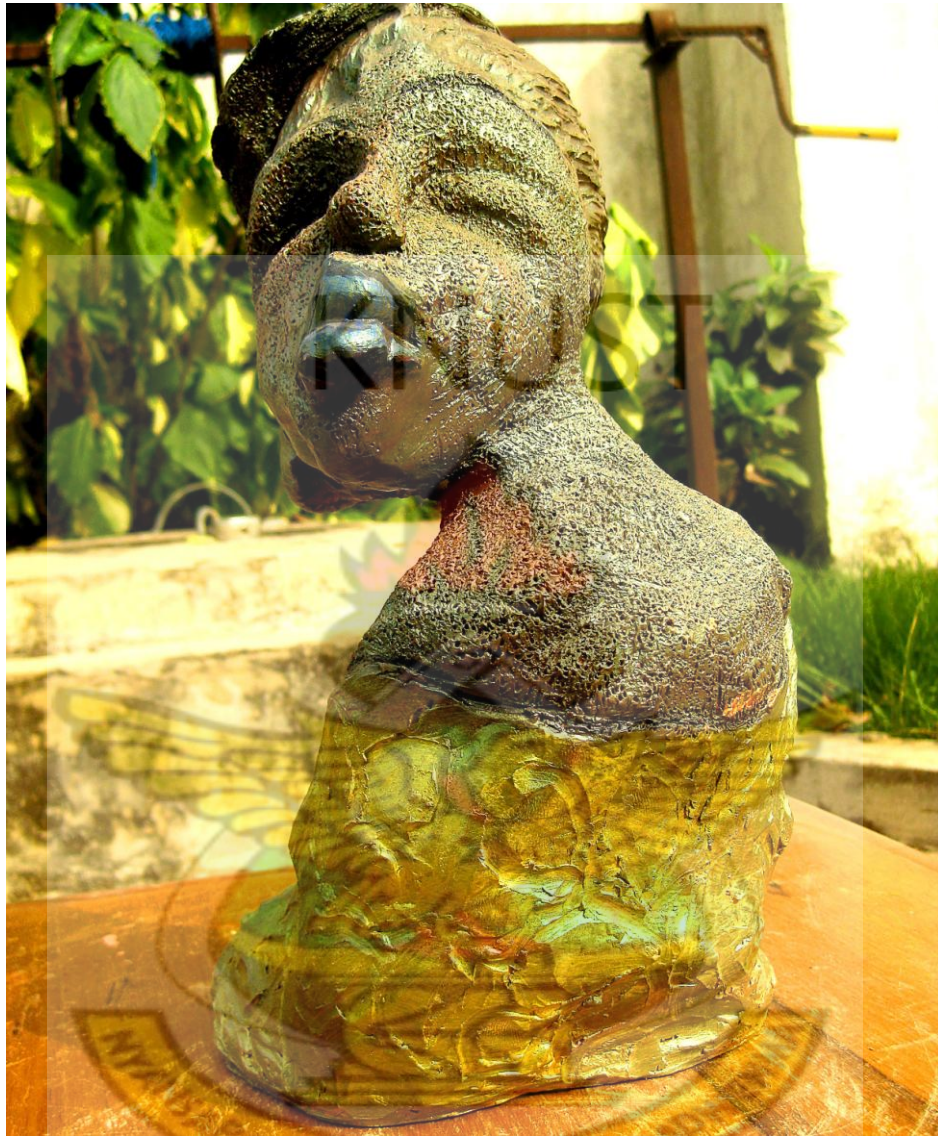
The above image is a very unique character in terms of its shape, texture, colour and its surface quality which reveals both matte and glossy finishes. In the final presentation and defense, it will be placed on the wooden log (Plate 36) and further installed in the both depicting an artificial environment (Plate 41) to carry its message.

**PLATE 52**



The above image is another view of the previous terra-cotta head. Its animalistic character was developed from the head of a goat.

**PLATE 53**



This image is the sixth terra-cotta head. It has its head turned almost to her back. It's a sign of being very inquisitive. This inquisitive character was borrowed from Plate 15.



**PLATE 54**



The above image is another view of the previous terra-cotta head taken from its side. Its inquisitive character is easily felt in this view.

**PLATE 55**



**PLATE 56**



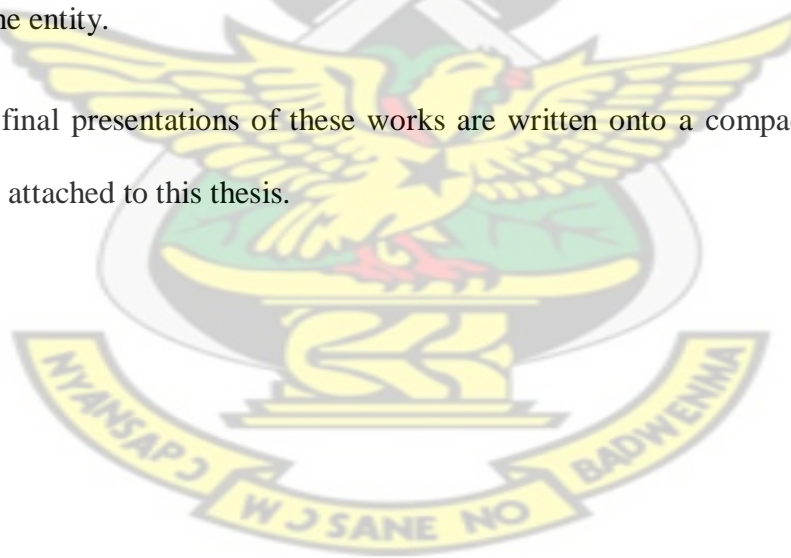
Plate 55 and 56 is a group shot of the terra-cotta heads.

## **APPRECIATION OF MULTIMEDIAWORKS**

The multimedia group of work extends the visual semiotic structure of the three main themes displayed in the two and three-dimensional works. Its audio rendition projected as the spotlight deems this particular project friendly to the visually impaired who is indirectly cut out from being a fun of the visual culture of art forms such as painting and drawing just to mention a few except by touch.

All three works under this group began with a written narration though finished products on their own, they also serve as cornerstones on which the audio and video renditions were built through to the final result. The researcher in appraising these works under this group will synthesize the written narration and the final renditions as one entity.

The final presentations of these works are written onto a compact disc which has been attached to this thesis.





## NARRATION ONE

### “THRUTH AND PRIVACY”

I heard it several times.

My friends also told me several times that, ‘If you want to see how ugly a woman is, pay a visit to her early in the morning just after she had woke up from bed.’

I didn’t want to believe it, so I went to see her three months ago.

You wouldn’t believe it.

From the window, I watched her closely without her noticing.

Then, she started singing a very popular Palm wine tune from the 60’s.

She sang beautifully and made me realized how creative our musicians were during that time.

She turned, and I saw her face.

Her lips looked bigger,

Her face, really raw and rough.

Her hair was unkempt.

She then took off her night gown.

What a pleasing sight it was.

Her skin was black and dark,

Her movement, very graceful.

I was still trying to find out if I could see what my friends told me.

So I held my eyes and opened them wider.

Still I could not perceive any of what they said.

Really, I thought I had gone there at the wrong time.

So I looked again at my watch, it was 6; 16am.

Still I could not believe it.

But then, I remembered I was present when she woke up from her bed.

Hmm!

I nearly exclaimed in the local dialect, “Awurade, Ghana mmaa ho eyefe.”

I then covered my mouth because I nearly cursed my friends.

She went closer to the mirror and started admiring herself.

She turned several times and I could feel how pleased she was.

Suddenly, she stopped singing and her face went dim.

I saw tears running down her face.

Really, it wasn’t like the kind the crocodiles shed that day.

With twitchy movements, she climbed the table on her right hand side

I was wondering what she was going through.

Then, she reached for the wardrobe and brought out a black box.

She climbed down and I noticed it had a padlock.

She stood by her bed.

I saw her going down,  
She stretched her hand and brought out a container.  
It was hidden under the bed.  
As she was opening the container, I heard her phone ringing.

She placed the container on her bed and reached for her phone.  
Immediately the phone stopped ringing and her face grew dimmer and darker.  
My neck began to pain me.  
My legs went wobbly.

Not because I had been there for longer period.  
I looked at my watch; it was 6; 22 am.  
Then I understood why it is said that, "curiosity killed the cat."  
She took the container and opened it this time.

I was very sure the key to the Black Box was hidden in it.  
To my surprise she brought it out.  
Guess what!  
Ah! I said to myself.

It was a blade stick.  
Yes, a shavings stick.  
At that moment I wanted to leave.  
Immediately I heard a voice telling me to wait.

I then re-positioned myself so I could see clearly and not miss any moment.  
Gracefully, she sat on her bed with the blade stick in her right hand.  
Then she lifted her left hand.  
Her head went into her armpit.

Then it became too clear what she was about to do.  
I wish you were there to witness what I saw.  
Anytime her right hand went down, her mouth danced to that movement.  
Now I realized how ugly her face could look.

I nearly agreed to what my friends told me.  
But I suddenly remembered how beautiful her face was a few minutes ago.  
She lifted her right hand, with the blade stick in her left hand.  
This time I couldn't see her face because she had turned

When she was done with her right hand,  
I saw her reached for a mirror.  
She placed it on the ground and bent down.  
This one wasn't so pleasant to watch.

Countless expressions came out from her face.  
When she was done,  
She walked to her bed and picked one of her pillows.  
Yes! It was the one on her left.

Then I saw her holding something in her right hand.  
It was a key.  
She advanced towards the box.  
I went down further this time so she didn't see me.

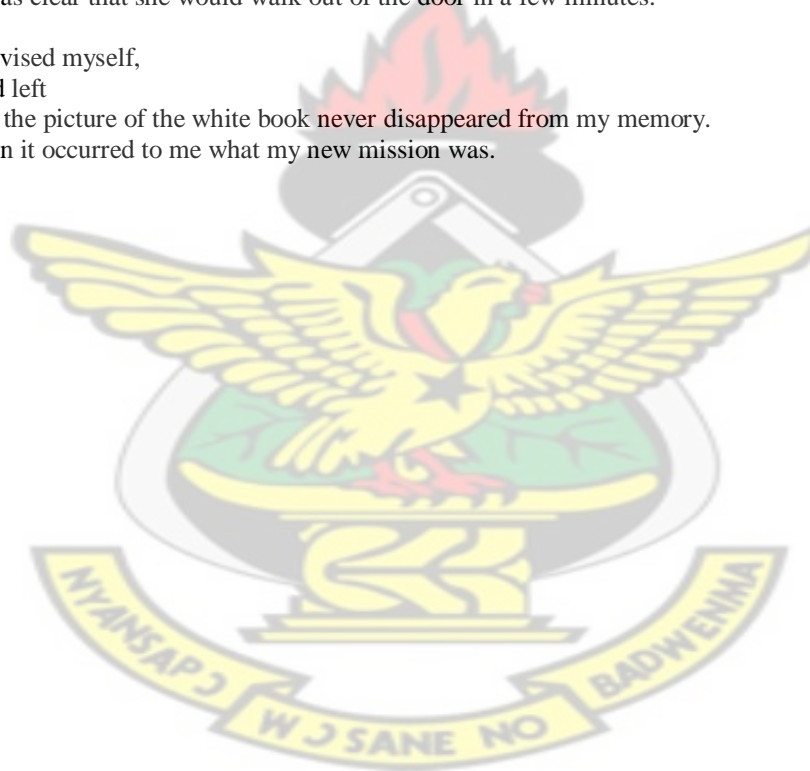
Still I could see her.  
She opened the padlock and brought something out of the box.  
It was a book.  
A white book.

I could read the bold inscription on its spine.  
It wasn't so clear but it was spelt like this.  
"THE DULY ΔAIRY"  
It became clear to me that it was a dairy.

Her mobile phone started ringing again.  
This time it did not cease.  
She answered it.  
Then I heard her saying, "I will be there in 30 minutes."

She quickly put the book back into the box and locked it.  
All this while she was still nude.  
She walked to her wardrobe and brought out some clothing.  
It was clear that she would walk out of the door in a few minutes.

I advised myself,  
And left  
But the picture of the white book never disappeared from my memory.  
Then it occurred to me what my new mission was.





## APPRECIATION OF TRUTH AND PRIVACY

From the first four lines of the narration, the writer plants a flashback which permits the narrator to invade the privacy of the woman without her consent in search for the truth surrounding beauty and ugliness. Invading the woman's privacy triggers and raises lot of moral issues and concerns some of which calls for a feminist protest.

The first scene from the video brings into light the narrator who sits alone in a pub and in a very concentrated mood chants melodious choruses from his acoustic box in announcement of preceding events which challenged him to pay a visit to the woman. Plate 57 is a snapshot of the narrator playing his guitar. It was shot from the video.

After the guitar recital, the title of the video flashes with a question mark alerting and drawing viewers into a state of deep thought and muse if there exist in reality such states as "Truth" and "Privacy". Is there such thing as privacy? Finally is there some truth in privacy? These are questions the artist would like his audience to ponder on as they watch the video hence the placement of the question mark after the title. (Plate 58)

Just after the title appears, the narrator walks towards a glass door and starts narrating whiles he inquisitively gaze through the glass door. Plate 59 is a snapshot taken from the video. It depicts the narrator standing inquisitively and looking through a glass door as he narrates the story.

His audience is not shown yet, but the viewer is made to feel the presence of his audience behind him possibly because he moved from one point to the door. Interestingly, he does not open his mouth as he begins narrating yet his voice is heard. The artist intentionally created this conflict because he believes that talking exists in the mind and making it audible announces one's perceptions to the other. However the audible can be in contrast with what the mind conceives always leaving the audible with a question mark.

From the sixth line of the narration, the narrator describes how closely he gazed at the woman through a window without her noticing. The video translates this by zooming in into one eye of the narrator as a sign to viewers who now become the audience that whatever they see from this point of the video is firsthand information.

Plate 60 is a snapshot taken from the video depicting the zoomed eye of the narrator which has been infused with a transparent layer of a photograph of the environment where the woman in the video is presumed to reside.

The woman begins to reveal her patriotism and identity as a Ghanaian by singing a very old Ghanaian Palm wine song. From the video the woman singing is not shown, instead a black and white video of an old man playing the guitar is highlighted. The old man in the video is Dr Daniel Amponsah who is popularly known as Agya Koo Nimo. He is an exponent, a proponent and a living legend of the Ghanaian traditional Palm Wine music which later influenced High-life music.

Plate 61 is a snapshot taken from the video. It depicts Agya Koo Nimo playing his guitar in a pensive mood. In the video his original image is also flipped horizontally and brought back to his first image to reveal the pro he is on his guitar. Naturally a left handed, but he plays the guitar with his right hand something which is not easy to do. In the video his shot which was taken in 2008 is changed to black and white and further given an old movie effect to journey the audience through history.

Koo Nimo's presence in the video provides a platform to acknowledge his countless sacrifices and contributions toward the development of music in Ghana. The song being mimicked by Koo Nimo, also the same being sung by the woman in the narration is an introduction of the popular guitar rhythm titled Yaa Amponsah. This song bears into mind no other person than the man in discussion since he has appropriated it in so many compositions. Just after the woman in the narration stops singing, the narrator also begins to appreciate her.

He describes how some of her physical characteristics appear just after she wakes up from bed. This description of the woman by the narrator are assumed to be some presumed characteristics which the researcher believes pertains to the Ghanaian woman who has not gone through artificial body modifications. The researcher also credence that those traits being described are true paradigms of nature therefore women possessing such characteristics should not be ashamed to exhibit them as they are, for the reason that they poses in themselves a uniqueness which weighs some amount of beauty.



As the narrator continues to appreciate the physical qualities of the woman, the artist interrupt the video with a musical interlude titled “Serwaa Akoto” which also poses a palm wine rhythm and was originally composed and sung by Yamoah. From the video, Serwaa Akoto is being performed by Oppong Ampadu Eugene a young guitar virtuoso who engineered the audio works and also played almost all the guitar parts in this project.

Plate 62 is also a snap shot taken from the video. In the shot is Ampadu Eugene whose presence in this particular shot is an appropriation representing Yamoah the composer of Serwaa Akoto. On the extreme left hand side of the shot is an image of a young woman whose image is almost running out of the composition. It is to establish an assumption and a scenario on how Yamoah might have been influenced by the woman called Serwaa Akoto.

The background setting of Ampadu Eugene in the video is being decorated with a set of traditional instruments used in making Ghanaian traditional music. Serwaa Akoto’s interruption in this work is not only to provide a musical delight for the audience. However its main intension is to make reference to Yamoah who through this song appraised some natural physical qualities of a Ghanaian woman called Serwaa Akoto.

The narrator continues to appreciate the woman even after Serwaa Akoto ends. From the seventeenth to the twenty fourth line of the narration, the narrator conceives a perception which nearly contrasts the fabricated tales said about the woman in the first few lines of the narration.

The narrator disbelieving himself because he didn't attain that confirmation from his friends that the woman looks ugly in the morning just after bed in line twenty one, checks his time again to clear his doubt and yet even he reminds that he was at her place before she woke up from bed. At this point it could be said that he was infected by the syndrome that, "beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder". The writer's position that there exists in the natural both the beautiful and the ugly is not yet fully recognized.

The woman continues to let her natural instinct rule her by appreciating herself in the mirror further turning round several times to show how gratified she is with her image. In the video this part of the narration is illustrated with a number of graphite and acrylic drawings on paper which were made at a very early stage of the project as part of the experimental works.

Just as she starts exhibiting a very good sense of humour, immediately she begins to feel very depressed and troubled even to an extent of shedding tears.

This sorrowful milieu though captured in the narration by stressing on the word "suddenly", Eugene quickly runs a diminished scale on his guitar which attacks the word "suddenly" venomously as soon as it is being pronounced. This sad and frightful atmosphere is created so well also because Eugene makes sure his diminished scale ends with the pronunciation of "suddenly".

From the video, a black screen (Plate 63) appears just as the narrator makes pronouncement of the word "suddenly". The black screen though it illustrates the

depressed and sorrowful state of the woman, however its main intention in the video is to serve as a vacuum which empties all the images accumulated in the audiences mind so that they can also pay attention to the guitar music which is not only providing listening pleasure but also giving a musical interpretation to events.

The use of the black screen could be linked to a situation in real life when the lights go off in the night unexpectedly at a time one needs it most. The black screen in the video technically allows viewers to take their eyes and mind off the video and hence pay attention to the audio. It also alerts listeners and viewers that one phase of the story has come to an end. Because of the frightful atmosphere created in that part of the work, a feeling of suspense and anticipation is developed within the hearts of the audience. The use of the colour black at this instance carries both negative and positive connotations.

Line thirty two of the narration serves as a stepping stone for the audience to enter into the secretive life of the woman. The writer at this stage begins to give detailed descriptions, now giving particular attention to every movement the woman makes. He also begins to use very analytic and concise descriptions to every object the woman comes into contact with. This approach adopted in the work increases the tension and sets the audience to follow the narration attentively. It also helps to reveal the secretive nature of the woman effectively especially as every object she gets close to, is identified as a clue or very important.

From line thirty four of the narration, the woman opens a wardrobe and brings out a black box. The video interpretation of this part of the narration is very fascinating.



A wardrobe is opened (Plate 64) and then a black glittering box (Plate 65) appears after that scene. The sparkling effect giving to the box in the video makes viewers wonder its contents.

When one considers the chronological order of the woman's movements from the time she seem to be pleased with herself and shows it by turning round several times up to the black box with a padlock, one will definitely think that, indeed something very precious is hidden in that box. Because first of all she becomes so content with herself and in the next moment she appears so terrified and gloomy then begins to shed tears. In her next movement, she climbs a table in order to reach the black box which is put under lock with a padlock and kept in the wardrobe.

Line thirty seven to line forty four of the narration continues to be more intriguing carrying a very concentrated feeling of emotional uneasiness for the audience and especially the narrator who experiences the woman physically because they expect the woman to quickly open the container which was hidden under the bed but unfortunately she is been interrupted by a phone call which even seizes as soon as she picks the phone.

The interruption from the phone reduces the emotional tension raised at this part of the narration taking minds of the black box and the container. At this point, the writer takes the chance to make very interesting revelations about the narrator who becomes part of the story and starts to reveal his humanly truths towards nature. When the narrator went to gaze the woman in the beginning from the window, he never assumed that in the end his instinctive reactions toward nature and the truth

associated to his privacy would also be revealed. To the woman no eyes watches her, also to the man no eyes pursues him.

Plate 66 is an extract taken from the video. Its wavy and shaky effect is to communicate the very uncomfortable experience the narrator encountered as he gazed the woman from a window.

From line forty five to fifty six, the narrator looks at his watch again and becomes certain why it is said that curiosity killed the cat. The last time he looked at his time, it was 6; 16am. From that time to 6; 22am is a difference of six minutes. To him, it was unrealistic though natural to be suffering from pains in the neck and in the legs.

The narrator again acts to reveal his uncomfortable incident through the gaze in this video extract. (Plate 67)

The exclamation tone of “ouch” and how the narrator pronounced wobbly in the audio interprets effectively how severe and painful the narrator’s experience was. It also describes how awkward he positioned himself behind the woman’s window in order to perceive a clearer sight hence satisfying his curiosity.

The woman opens the container to kill all suspicions especially about its contents further getting its audience to feel that at long last the cat is about to be released from the bag. Surprisingly, they get disappointed with its content because what it contains analogously has no link with the black box. This surprise of a shavings stick further reduces the tension and interest in the narration for the audience and even the narrator.

The writer intentionally inserts that tension reducing element into this part of the work in order to close the second chapter of the story which aimed at revealing some of the woman's secretive ways. It also serves as an opener to a new chapter. Line sixty one opens the third chapter of the narration. In this chapter, the writer continues to disclose more natural instinctive revelations about the woman and the narrator. This part of the work focuses on the activity of shaving hair from the woman's armpit and private part.

This part of the narration inspired this particular work. The woman exhibits very unfamiliar facial expressions and moods through the activity of shaving hence making the narrator to believe that indeed she possesses both beautiful and ugly traits which does not totally or evidently provide proof to the claim made by his friends. The writer in line seventy two makes it known that he only witnessed and experienced the woman from only one angle disclosing the truth that one cannot perceive everything at the same time.

It leaves so many undiscovered truths with her further making her to dazzle and continue to keep to herself her dignity and superiority which seems impossible to take away from her. The woman gets herself involved in an unpleasant situation in the narration which is interpreted effectively in the video with a highly concentrated plain red screen together with animated images depicting different facial expressions. This part of the story ends the third chapter.



Plate 68 and 69 extracted from the video shows the unpleasant experience the narrator encountered which made him further to believe that the woman possesses in her both the beautiful and the ugly.

The final chapter brings into the lime light again the sacred black box with a padlock. The woman brings the key out finally from its hideout, opens it, and even takes its content out for the audience to be now satisfied. She gets a phone call and answers it then puts the book assumed to be a dairy back into the box, get it locked and get ready to leave the room. The narrator at this point also decides to leave his post and go home.

This way of ending the story puts the narrator and the entire audience to ponder about what happens next. By using this approach, the story never ends. The audience and the narrator continue to contemplate on what the white book contains and also why the woman keeps it secretly under lock. From the video, even after the narrator leaves the scene, the story about the woman continues to unfold.

A running shower appears without any figure or any representation of a human revealed yet the presence of a woman bathing is felt by shaking the camera to produce an unstable effect. The unstable effect symbolically replaces her movement under a shower. As soon as the shower stops running, a door opens but this is not seen. Only the sound is heard. It is followed with the sound of footsteps which appears to be from the sole of a high heel. The sound from the footsteps reduces gradually and fades into a plain white screen.

The inception of the running shower (Plate 70) into this work serves as a cover-up and a preparatory ground for the woman to usher into the masking phase. The running water is assumed to wash the woman's body of all the assumptions associated to her privacy therefore setting her image as primed and ready to take up a new identity which is pretence.

The opening and banging of the door presents a picture of the end of the transition. Her footsteps lurch the audience into her new world; while its fading sound tells how close she approaches her new world.

Finally the white screen which ends the video stands in for the world of pretence, and also as a beginning of that new phase. In general, the writer's descriptive approach adopted which makes use of the narrator to describe happenings make the work appear as an everyday true story or occurrence.

From the video, the writer utilized about four different images to represent its subject. The first image is a terra-cotta head which was used to describe the unevenness of her face (Plate 71). The second image is a log of wood with a red night gown lying beside it. This stood for the naked body of the woman. The transparent effect added to this scene in the video reflects how the woman removed her night gown. (Plate 72)

The third representation is a series of graphite and acrylic drawings which depicts her both in an objective and a subjective manner. Plate 73 up to 82 reveals the third imagery the artist used in representing the woman.

An invisible woman is exhibited to stand in for her fourth image. This is a conceptual image the artist conjures for the audience through the descriptions outlining her physique, mental thoughts and the three different groups of images illustrated.

All the mentioned symbolic representations of her image assist the artist to communicate and conceptualize the woman as not possessing a fixed physical composure. It further gives room for the audience to perceive other possible different renditions which could also represent fairly the physical and conceptual image of the woman.

In the work, colour plays an instrumental role in setting the mood and the perceived atmospheric milieu the writer conceives. For instance in the work, the colours black, white and red were often used. Black was used in two contrasting ways. Its first usage though it did not specifically mention black but rather a darker shade, associated negative connotations to the range. This is evident in line twenty nine. “Suddenly, she stopped singing and her face went dim”. Also in line forty six “immediately the phone stopped ringing and her face grew dimmer and darker”.

The next time black was mentioned, it was utilized as a mask to cover-up negative implications. But in itself, it wasn’t negative. It is rather white which carried all the evil connotations, referencing it to the white book which the writer created as having a negative aura. In real life situations, black is often projected as having evil implications and white as pure. But this part of the work makes a different



revelation. Always light exposes the dark and the evil becomes obvious for all and sundry in the light.

It is clear that the evil is in the light but rather because white uses its camouflaging superiority to hide its intentions; black is always labeled as guilty. The word “then” was repeated several times in most of the lines in the narration. This reflects a naïve and childish attitude exhibited especially by toddlers when narrating an incidence or telling a story. Though its usage makes reading boring sometimes, however it effectively helps readers to conceive the woman’s actions as continuous happenings.

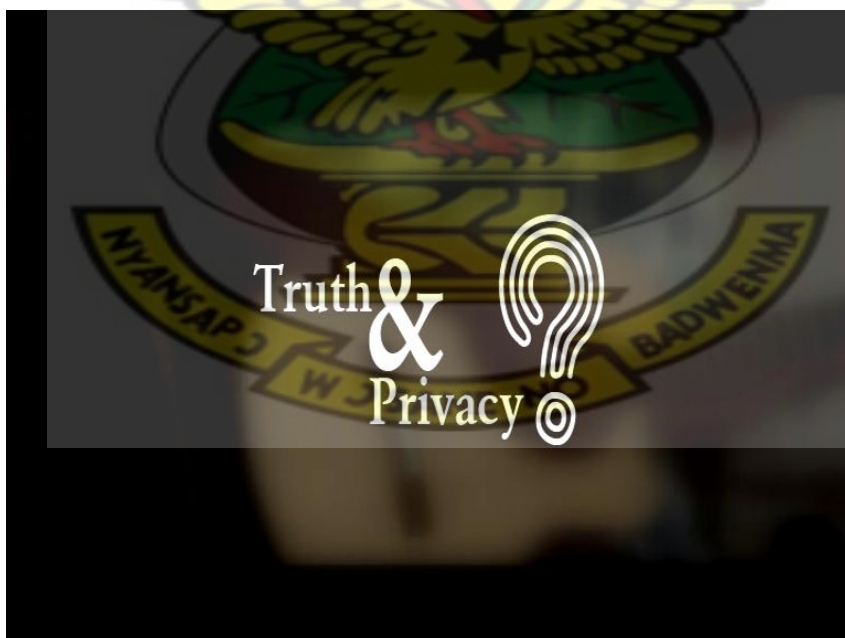
Technically the writer’s use of literary devices such as alliteration, personification and hyperbole in some of the lines evokes very clear and meaningful pictures to those incidences they stand for emanating from his intentions. For example in line forty six, “Immediately her face grew dimmer and darker” uses an alliteration that is repeating two initial consonants in a row. Also the words “dimmer and darker” in its context within that line gives an exaggeration, implying how the woman’s face changed from one mood to the other. This is an example of a hyperbole.

Another example of a hyperbole is seen in line sixty four, “Her head went into her armpit”. A personification is seen in line sixty seven when the woman’s mouth was said to have danced to the up and down movement of her hand in the process of shaving the hair under her armpit.

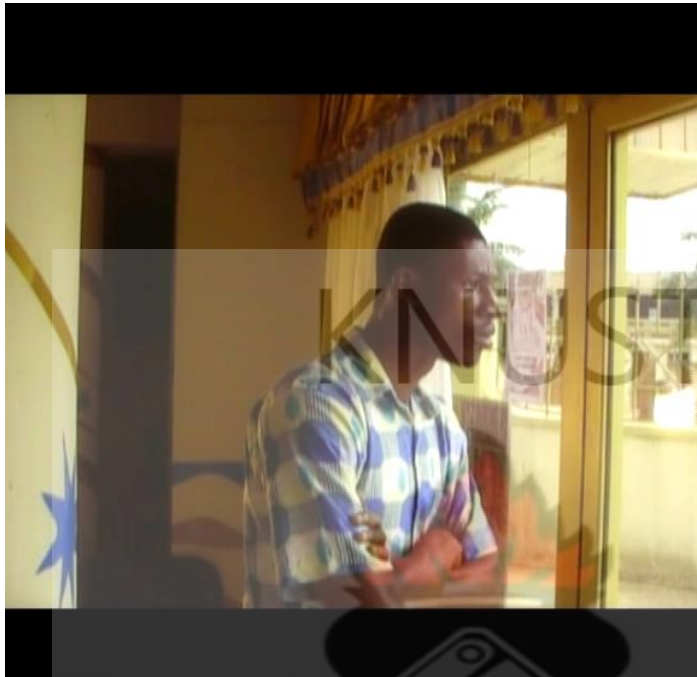
**PLATE 57** (Narrator Recites on his Guitar)



**PLATE 58** (Title of Video)



**PLATE 59** (Narrator Standing Before Glass Door)



**PLATE 60** (Narrator's Eye)





**PLATE 61** (Agya Koo Nimo)



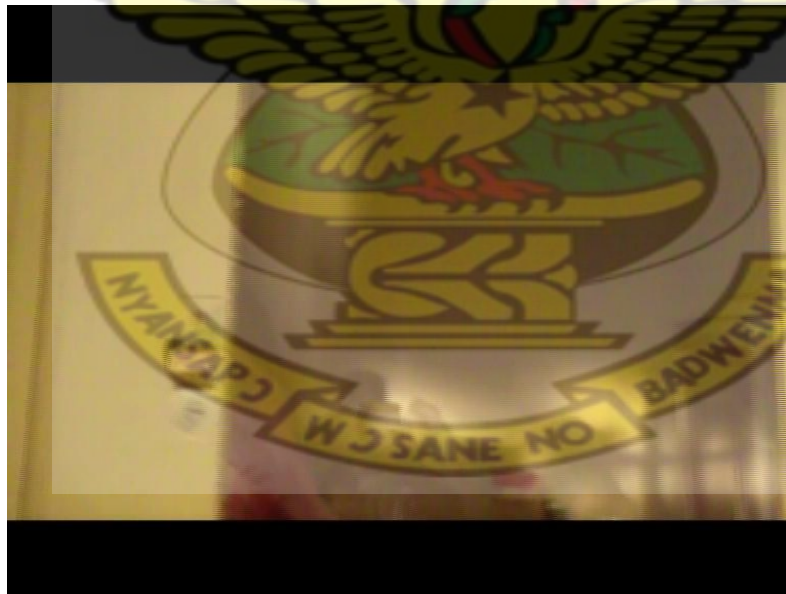
**PLATE 62** (Eugene Plays Serwaa Akoto)



**PLATE 63** (Black Screen)



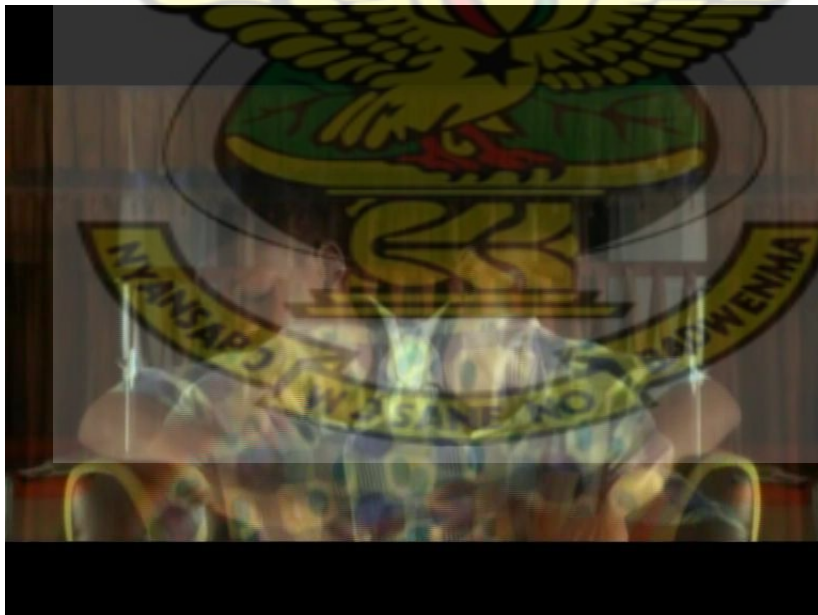
**PLATE64** (Opened Wardrobe)



**PLATE 65** (Black Glittering Box)

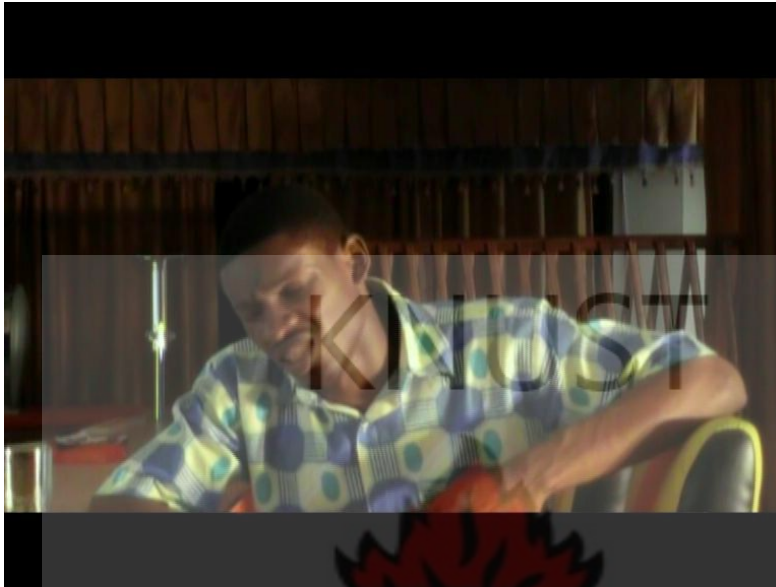


**PLATE 66** (Narrator's Uncomfortable Experience)





**PLATE 67** (Narrator Acts Again)



**PLATE 68** (Red Screen)



**PLATE 69** (Animated Image)



**PLATE 70** (Running Shower)



**PLATE 71** (First Imagery)



**PLATE 72** (Second Imagery)





**PLATE 73** (Third Imagery)



**PLATE 74** (Third Imagery)



**PLATE 75** (Third Imagery)



**PLATE 76** (Third Imagery)



**PLATE77** (Third Imagery)



**PLATE78** (Third Imagery)



**PLATE 79** (Third Imagery)

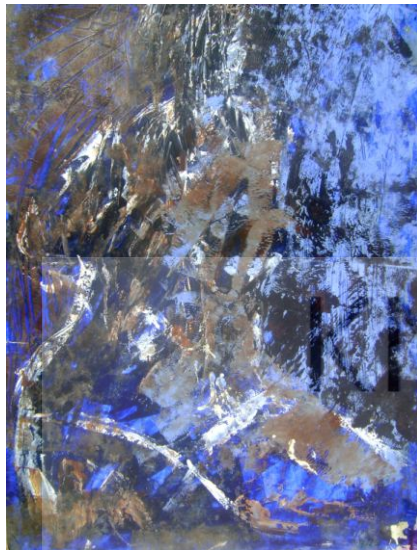


**PLATE 80** (Third Imagery)





**PLATE 81**(Third Imagery)



**PLATE 82** (Third Imagery)





## NARRATION TWO

### “MAMA THESS BEAUTY PALOUR (BENEATH THE MASK)”

When I entered the beauty salon the first day, I was amazed at what I saw. Women! A lot of them. To count their number was like counting the number of words in the Holly Bible. Let me tell you first about the place.

It is like a ware house, very big and spacious.

It has seven rooms and different things go on in these rooms.

Before I tell you what I encountered in three of the rooms, let me tell you what I saw at the entrance.

It is the billboard which caught my attention, a gigantic advertising billboard. The first to arrest my eyes on the billboard was the caption, “MAMA THESS BEAUTY PARLOUR.” It was written in blue bold uppercase with red shadows. Highlighted in red, I believe were some of their services. It went like this;

- **Hairdressing**
- **Bridal make-up**
- **Facial treatment**
- **Foot and hand treatment (Pedicure and Manicure)**
- **Nail extension**
- **Body massage**
- **Eye treatment**

I also noticed that Agyasco's signature and phone number was on the billboard indicating that he was artist. There were other things on the billboard but because I was itching to witness what went on there, I quickly entered the first room.

It was filled with women.

Black women with different complexions.

Thin, tall, fat, small, big, short, in-between, I even saw your type.

Almost all the women in this room were seated and wearing helmet-like objects on their heads. At that moment, I felt I was witnessing a motor racing competition. The funniest thing is that all the racers were motionless. The only thing which made one felt something was going on was with the expressions on their faces. It kept on changing. The expressions on their faces made me realized that the competition wasn't about motion and speed but rather suffering and endurance.

The muscles on their faces started twitching to and fro and the temperature of the room began to rise. Their heads were growing reddish. It started spreading to their upper torso and I noticed the temperature of the room had risen so high. I felt I was in a furnace which had been set ablaze. Really the gestures on their faces informed me that, it wasn't an enjoyable moment.

I heard someone snapping fingers. It went on for a while then finally, one of them voiced out these words. "Madam, please it's really hot." As she was being attended to, another woman entered the place. She was wearing a "Ghana at 50 attire". Her skin was ebony black and was as rough as maize grains ready to be milled. She had very thick eyebrows. Her nails looked short and jagged. Her hair was short and dry. She sat on one of the chairs on her left and immediately, a lady attended to her.

Another thing I noticed in the room is that, it was very quiet. The only sound one could hear was that which came from snapping of fingers and tapping of laps. It was interesting to note that all these sounds were brought to a halt by a vocal complain which was either in a local dialect or in English.

The local dialect went like this, “Madam, eeshi.” The English version also went like this, “Madam, please it’s really hot.”

All these while, I was seated on one of the chairs in one of the corners of the room. I felt someone would ask me what my mission there was. But in order to avoid telling the truth if I was asked, I took out my car keys and started wriggling it as if I was a chauffeur waiting for my madam.

I heard voices coming from the next room. I was listening with a cock’s ear, but all I could figure was the mention of men. Out of curiosity, I got out of my seat and entered that room. As soon as I entered, I gave myself a seat at one of the corners of the room and started wriggling my car keys again pretending I was wasn’t listening to their conversation.

One of the women in this room was reporting to two other women how her best friend cheated on her husband. Another was also confessing how her friend also deceived her boyfriend to buy her a car. Upon hearing them, I noticed I had become so attentive and had stopped wriggling my car keys. My interest in their conversation made me forget my mission there.

After listening to them, it dawned on me and I told myself never to embark on that mission of going to see what was in that woman’s dairy. I couldn’t stand their discussion any longer so I left for the third room. Before leaving my mission in room two had been accomplished.

Room two was a place where the natural nails were masked with extensions and colour. The women in that room had their feet inserted into some basins which had a liquid substance in them. Some of them also had their fingers drowned in some liquid solution.

Room three is where I nearly collapsed. Women were lying on stretchers with their faces painted white and they lay as still as corpses did at night. For a moment I thought I was at the morgue. I also noticed they had some greenish disk-like plate put on their eyes. This time I didn’t keep quiet.



I asked one of the attendants what was going on there. Then she said they were going through a facial treatment. I also asked what the green disk-like objects were. She said they were cucumbers then I concluded why vegetables have become very expensive these days.

I quickly went to see what went on in the other rooms. I didn't spend much time in those rooms because I had something to attend to in the house. The truth is that I had to go and put my house in order to receive a visitor. Do you remember the woman I talked to you about? The one who rang me three days ago, yes the one I spent the whole night talking to even though I had not met her before and also didn't have any idea of who she was. She was the reason why I left the beauty salon.

While waiting for her, I worked and worked and worked till my room sparkled that day. I also waited for her till I got fed up. Eventually, she came three hours forty seven minutes late after the time she arranged. I was even dozing off when I heard faintly someone knocking at my door. I opened the door and saw a tall woman standing before me.

She looked fair with a dry skin.

Her eyebrows were as thin as a thread and as curvy as the crescent moon.

Her lips looked very smallish and reddish with black boundaries surrounding it.

It was also sparkling like the stars which twinkled anytime the wizard of oz took out his magic wand.

Her hair was as long as the tail of a horse.

Her nails, just like the ones witches wore in Ghanaian movies.

I looked down at her feet and found why she looked so tall.

Through our discussions, I remembered she was a mate at school. A lot happened between us that night. We did all you can think off. It was like a battle through out the night amidst lights of. The

Electricity Company of Ghana didn't pardon us that night. I woke up very late that morning. When I woke up, the lights were on and the sky was so bright. I saw something strange that day.

There was some hair-like object lying on the floor, just so close to the bed. I picked it up and it was a long wig. I wondered where it came from. I immediately turned to look at her while she was still enjoying her sleep.

Her long hair had vanished.

Her face had become so dark.

Everything had changed with her.

She no longer looked like the visitor I had a few hours ago.

My white bed sheet had turned brownish.

Her dress was lying on the floor. A "Ghana at 50 attire", the style looked so familiar. I quickly woke her up and asked her this question; "Were you at Mama Thess this afternoon?" her answer was yes.

Then it dawned on me. I became speechless. All I could think of was *Okot p 'Bitèk's* poem.

So I asked myself this question;

"Can the graceful giraffe become a monkey?"

#### APPRECIATION OF MAMA THESS BEAUTY PARLOUR

“Mama Thess Beauty Palour” a continuation of “Truth and Privacy”, is written in a similar descriptive style. In this work also the writer again invades the woman’s world to witness and experience her new world. The narrator in this work uses the billboard as a premise to enter into this world of the woman. Within this world of the woman, the invader becomes lost, totally dumbfounded, losses his self-control and succumbs to the energy being emitted by the large number of women at the salon which exceedingly outweighed his.

The writer uses the story telling approach to establish his perceptions on women seeking for superficial beauty through external body modifications. Though the writer believes that the new personality women gain through external modifications is also beautiful, he centers his argument on permanence. This debate can be seen from the last seven lines of the narration. In the end, the writer relates his work to a poem by Okot p Bitek, a poet from Uganda whose work titled “The Graceful Giraffe Cannot Become a Monkey” makes similar assertions on women from Uganda. In his work he sides on the need for Ugandan women to keep their traditional and cultural values.

From the audio version of this narration, a song titled “Moto Dwom Foforo” literarily translated as I will sing a new song recites as soon as the narrator questions his audience in the last line. The song was composed on the guitar and played by the writer. Its aim is to question musically the woman’s quest for beauty within external body modification which in the song is presented as resulting from



the influence of Western culture. It also provides an answer by admitting that indeed there is truly a kind of beauty within that new personality their bodies take after physically mutilating their external body appearance yet there is the need to make very critical reconsiderations since that new look only last for a short time.

Moto Dwom Foforo, is a song composed for the guitar, taking elements from Ghanaian choral music and Classical European music. The nature of the song and the tone of the guitar creates an intricate but subtle sound that reminds of a feel between Ephraim Amu, J.H. Nketia and Enstua Mensah all of Ghana and the classical tune Romanza.

The opening theme of the song evokes the “Amu” choral music feel such as in a song like “Yaanom Abibirimma” and carries a flow and a rhythm similar to Enstua Mensah’s “Asamanadwo”.

It is highly syncopated as found in most conventional Ghanaian choral tunes and in the key of G major. The second movement is introduced via a transient modulation into the key of E major and assumes a new rhythm. The whole movement is a series of arpeggios that is close to the classical tune “Romanza”. It paints a very relaxing and nostalgia feeling yet romantic as well.

A bridge follows in free time and natural and artificial harmonics are used on the guitar to part a further quite thought. Gradually, the speed picks up and leads into the third and final movement which is a re-statement of the opening theme and finally closes the tune.

### NARRATION THREE

#### (“AT HOME AND AT THE MARKET”)

The crowing of the cockerel wakes her in the early hours of the morning  
She jumps out of bed in delightful urgency  
She says some prayers to acknowledge her maker  
And pleads favor for her husband and herself

She leaves her chamber with a song on her lips  
She shuffles to the next chamber to spy on her children  
She hurries to the kitchen to prepare breakfast  
And packs lunch for her kids and spouse

Through with the kitchen chores  
She continues to tidy up her compound  
She wakes her children and gets them ready for school  
She attends to her husband and sees him off to work

All alone, she puts her wares in order for the market  
In the market she displays her wares in an open space  
Where she becomes a trapped victim of the harsh weather  
On sunny days she sits behind her wares chanting melodious tunes  
Luring passing fellows into potential customers

When she succeed in making a customer,  
She dances about her wares while serving her customer  
Even when sales are down,  
She still chants hearty tunes

As the sun sets she gathers her wares  
At home she prepares supper and feeds her family  
Though troubled about the poor sales she keeps a lightened countenance  
At bedtime, she retires to bed with a heart of gratitude  
And appeal to her maker to make the next day brighter  
She sleeps in hope of a better morn.

(Narration written by Margaret Doe Mensah as directed by the researcher)

## APPRECIATION OF AT HOME AND AT THE MARKET

The audio rendition of this narration makes use of a narrator who tells the story of a mother, an actress and a guitarist who this time does not interpret happenings as was done in the previous narrations written by the researcher. The guitarist in this work purposefully supports or backs the actress with guitar music as she performs.

It starts with a very short introduction from the guitar which alerts the audience that another morning has come for the woman to perform another weekday cycle. The narrator then joins and starts telling the story. A characteristic of this narrator is that, he does not become part of the acting. He only tells the story for the woman to soliloquize.

The woman then begins acting by singing a song in Ewe to acknowledge her maker. She continues acting as the narrator tells what happens next and ends the acting with a short prayer in Ewe which is backed in prayerful mood by the song titled “Abide with me” a Methodist Hymn recited with the guitar.

This short piece of work is illustrated in a very naturalistic manner which makes it very easy to comprehend and relate to some of the basic daily performances of a mother who takes care of the home and also struggle to make financial gains to support her family. Amon Kotei’s perception of the Ghanaian woman has become very vivid in this particular work.

The adaptation of a monologue gives this piece of work a unique character which clearly distinct itself from the others in this category of multimedia presentation.



The presence of the woman in the work is really felt making great contributions in the home as she soliloquizes, because the writer of this narration is the same actress. She understands and really projects her acting very objectively in her mother tongue.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS

As part of the requirements for MFA candidates, an oral examination together with an exhibition of project works were conducted and held at the KNUST museum on 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2011. During the exhibition, all the works made by the researcher in this thesis were showcased that is the two-dimensional, three-dimensional and multimedia works.

The exhibition was in the form of an installation, where works explaining a particular phase in the Ghanaian woman's life as digested in the literature review or group of works were grouped and closely arranged in a linear but circular manner which showed a linkage between the other groups.

All the two-dimensional works were mounted on old adjustable wooden easels. The three-dimensional versions of the two-dimensional works were also placed within the area where the two-dimensional works were positioned with the aim of comparing and complimenting each other and yet as a synthesis, to portray the portrait of the Ghanaian woman.

The audio and video forms of the multimedia category were also presented where it's relating works in two-dimensional and three-dimensional were exhibited. The two audio versions were played with compact disc players which were both looped to play continuously with lower volumes so that they did not disturb each other.

The video was also shown on a laptop and then projected on a small area of the wall. The area where the video projection was made had preliminary sketches prior to the beginning of the main works also pasted on that area.

Interestingly after the oral examination, some of the audience joined to be part of the work by posing and taking photographs with the installation. Some of such photographs and other photographs during the exhibition have been labeled from plate 83 to 107 and added to this chapter.

The following findings were also noted.

1. The circular shape or form of the museum contributed greatly in portraying the portrait of the Ghanaian woman. That is, circular or round forms are universal symbols signifying womanhood. Also from any position one stood to perceive the works, that person was forced to move round in a circular motion in order to encounter the next work or the others. This clearly explained the daily life pattern or cycle of the Ghanaian woman as stated and explained in the previous chapters.
2. Some of the viewers testified that they were able to perceive in their minds the portrait of the Ghanaian woman being created by the researcher. This they claimed pertained to some of the characteristics and features which were disclosed through the main daily activities selected by the researcher.
3. The approach of synthesizing various art forms, styles, techniques and media into one single unit evidently unveiled a portrait of the subject in the



minds of the viewers. Some viewers testified that this unique approach also demonstrated clearly the sophisticated nature related to womanhood especially among Ghanaian women. However, some viewers also criticized the works based on some autonomous believes they share. From the researchers understanding, they rather wanted to itemize each of the individual works in relation to particular styles in modern art instead of appreciating the various works as a singular entity and for that matter a unique 'style' in itself. Arguments being raised at this point explains that art forms even expressing the same idea is indeed perceived in so many perspectives as presumed.

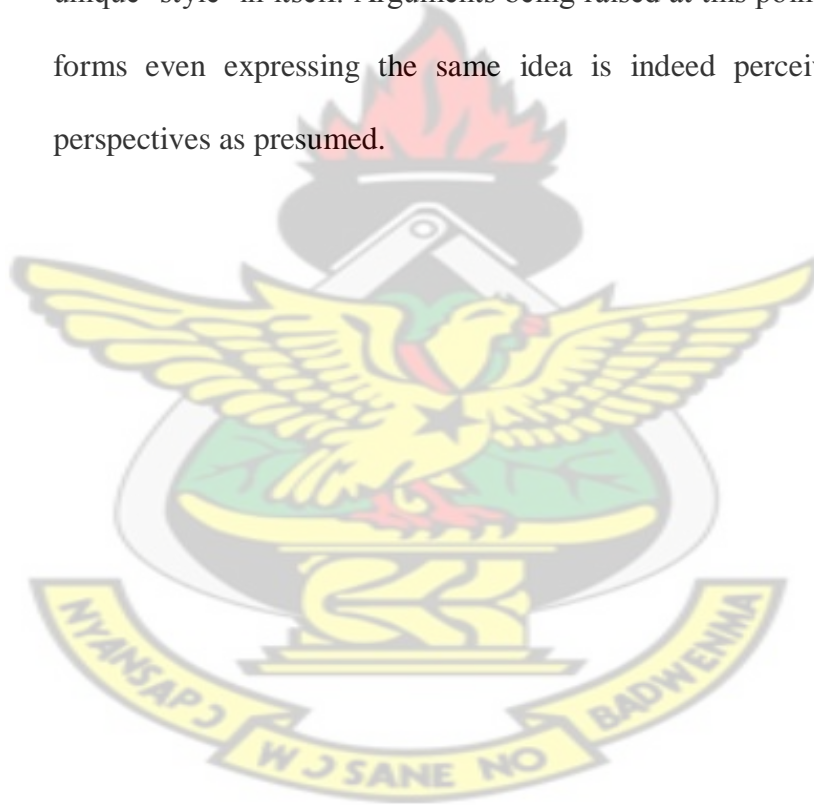


PLATE 83



PLATE 84

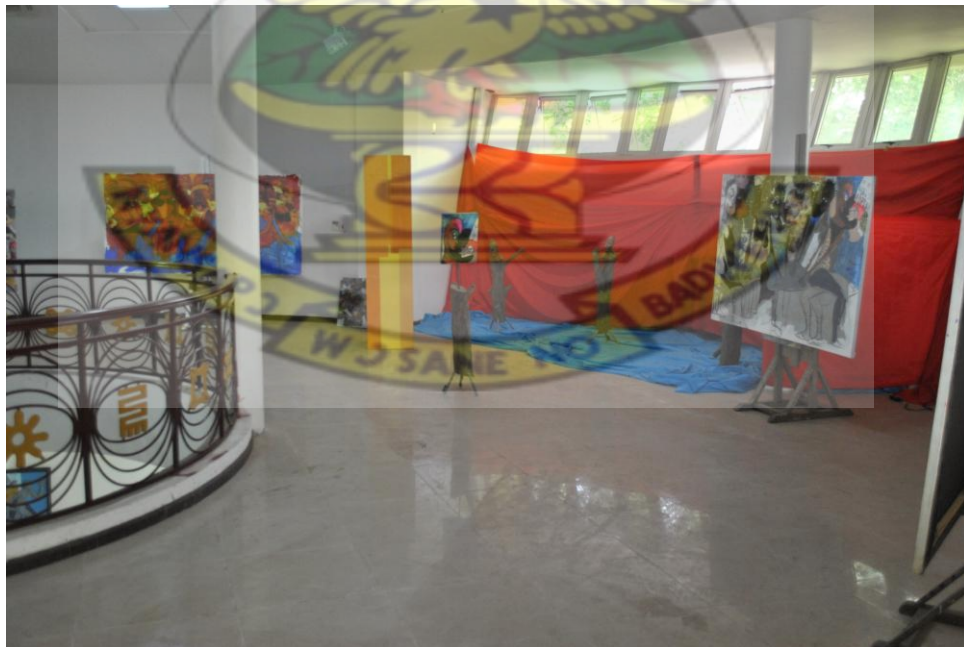


PLATE 85

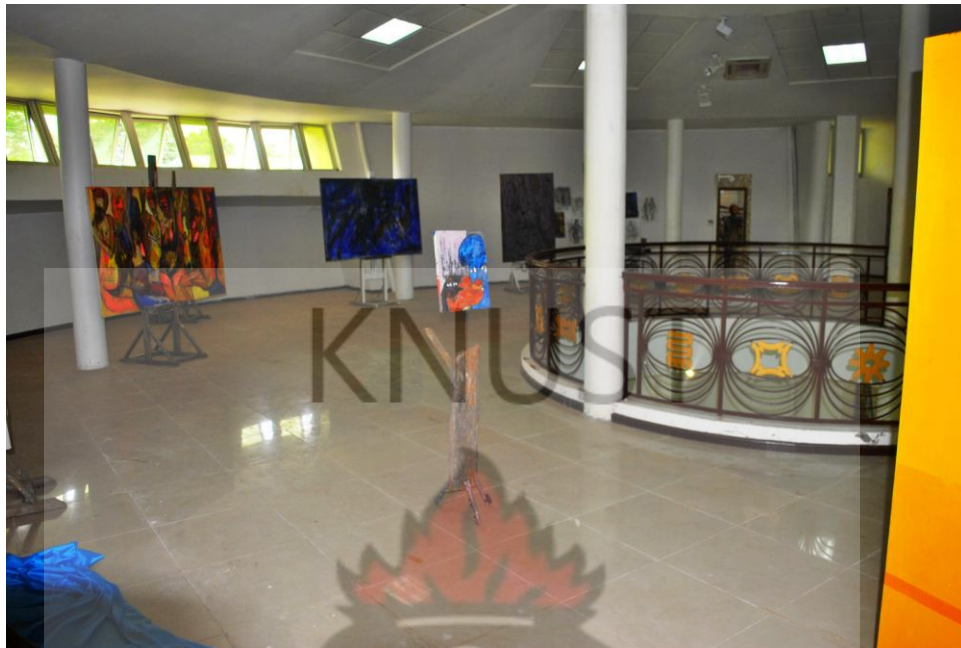


PLATE 86

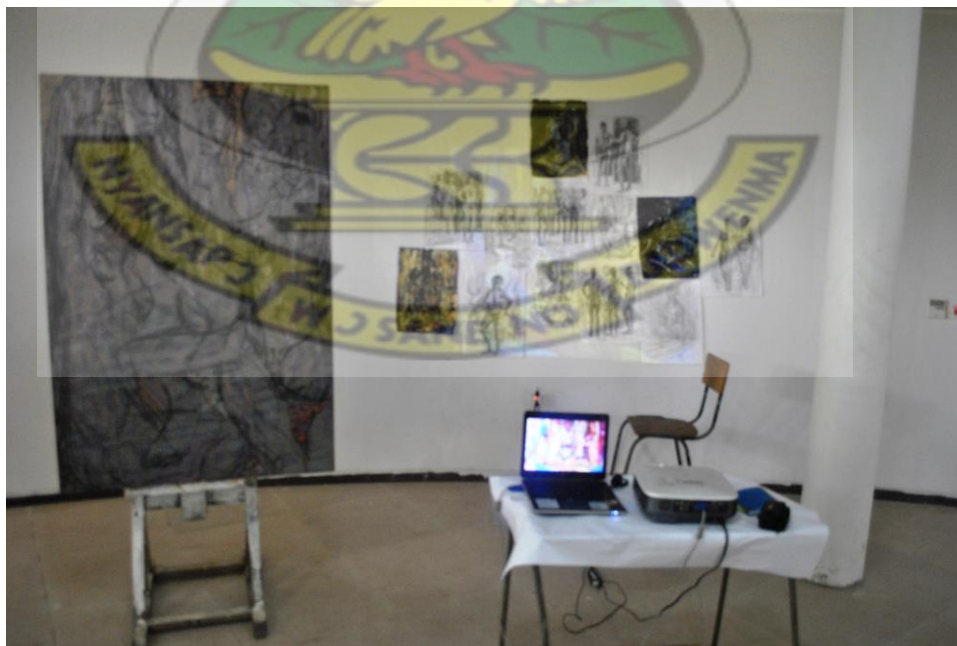




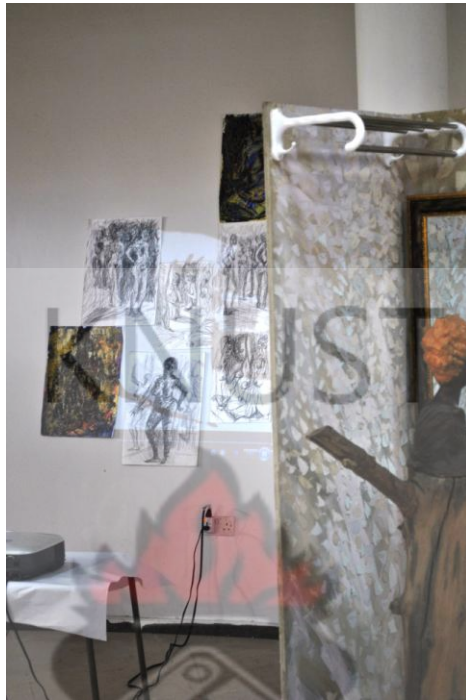
PLATE 87



PLATE 89



**PLATE 90**



**PLATE 91**



**PLATE 92**



**PLATE 93**

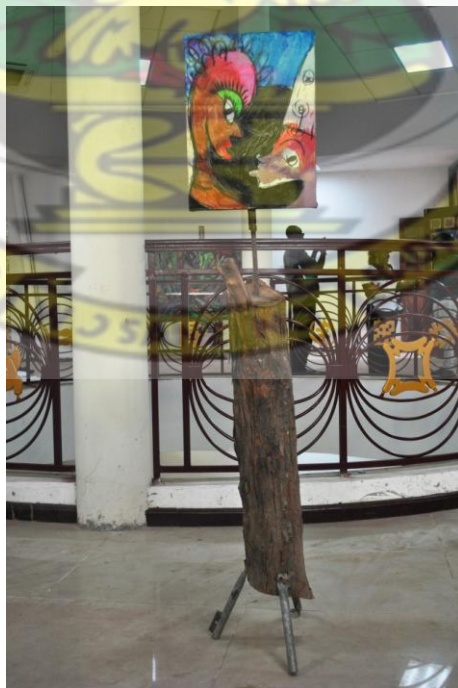




**PLATE 94**



**PLATE 95**



**PLATE 96**



**PLATE 97**



**PLATE 98**



**PLATE 99**





**PLATE 100**



**PLATE 101**



**PLATE 102**



**PLATE 103**





**PLATE104**



**PLATE 105**





**PLATE 106**



**PLATE 107**



## CONCLUSION

Art is a broad term and a great canopy shading so many art forms. These various forms can be grouped into two namely Visual and Performing Art. None of the art forms under the two groups stated can stand or be functional and effective when the most important element (a concept) is taken out. Art therefore thrives on a concept. The individual art forms only serve as a tool and a vessel in which the concept manifests itself.

The main concept of this research lies within the term “Portraiture”. It has not been to redefine portraiture but rather retains the definition which is a representation of the likeness of an object. This definition does not confine portraiture into the tentacles of either physical or conceptual likeness. Both the physical and the conceptual aspect of revealing an objects likeness have been a set of guiding principles which have controlled the image projected of the Ghanaian woman.

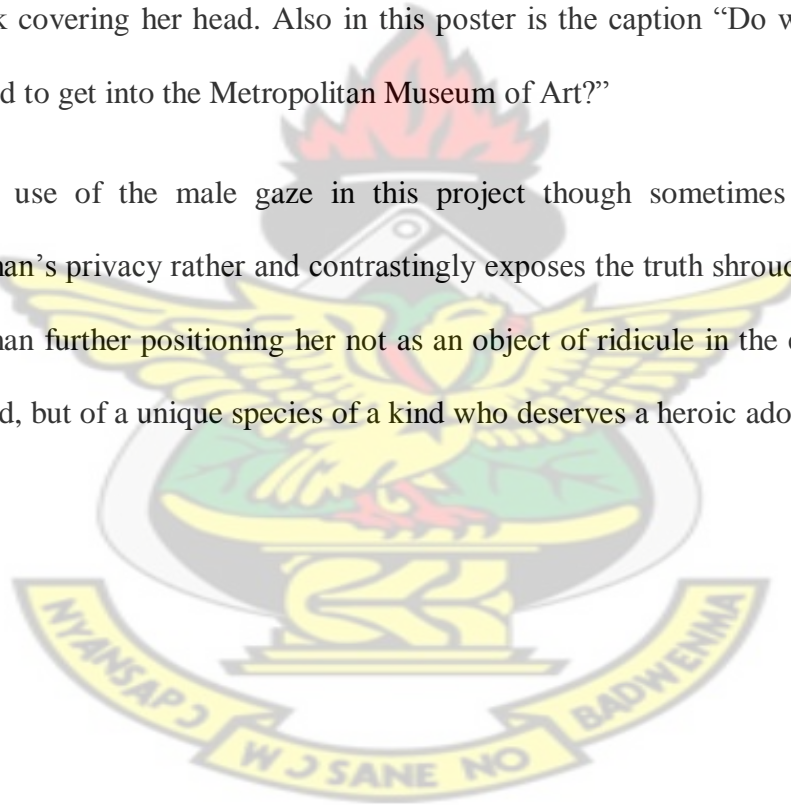
The synthesis of the various forms categorized into three groups (two dimensional, three dimensional and multimedia) have really produced a positive outcrop assisting to reveal both tangible and intangible qualities possessed by the Ghanaian woman. In the depictions, all the forms mentioned above had their strengths and weaknesses and these are left for the audience to judge.

In revealing the portrait of the Ghanaian woman, the researcher found himself entangled in the controversial issue of the “male gaze”. Some feminist groups around the world have risen very pertinent concerns about the impact the male gaze

pose on women. Some of such concerns are based on gender and racial equality. An example of such groups is the Guerilla Girls whose operations are centered in the United States of America.

The group assumes that the female human species has been so often exploited in the world of art by its male counterpart. To support this claim, reference would be made to one of Guerilla Girls campaigning poster addressing gender and racial equality. It reveals a painting of a nude woman reclining on a divan with a gorilla mask covering her head. Also in this poster is the caption “Do women have to be naked to get into the Metropolitan Museum of Art?”

The use of the male gaze in this project though sometimes tramples on the woman’s privacy rather and contrastingly exposes the truth shrouding the Ghanaian woman further positioning her not as an object of ridicule in the eyes of the whole world, but of a unique species of a kind who deserves a heroic adoration.





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## Appendix

### Questionnaire

MFA Thesis Research

Why do you visit the beauty salon?

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Is beauty found at the beauty salon?

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Are you beautiful without make-up?

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