

**DIVERSITY AND STYLE: PRODUCTION OF MULTI-SECTIONAL DECORATIVE
CERAMIC POTS USING GEOMETRICAL FORMS**

By

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CERTIFICATION

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

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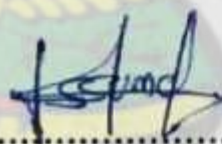
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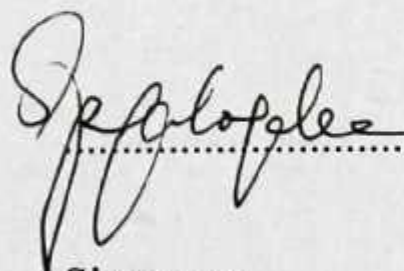
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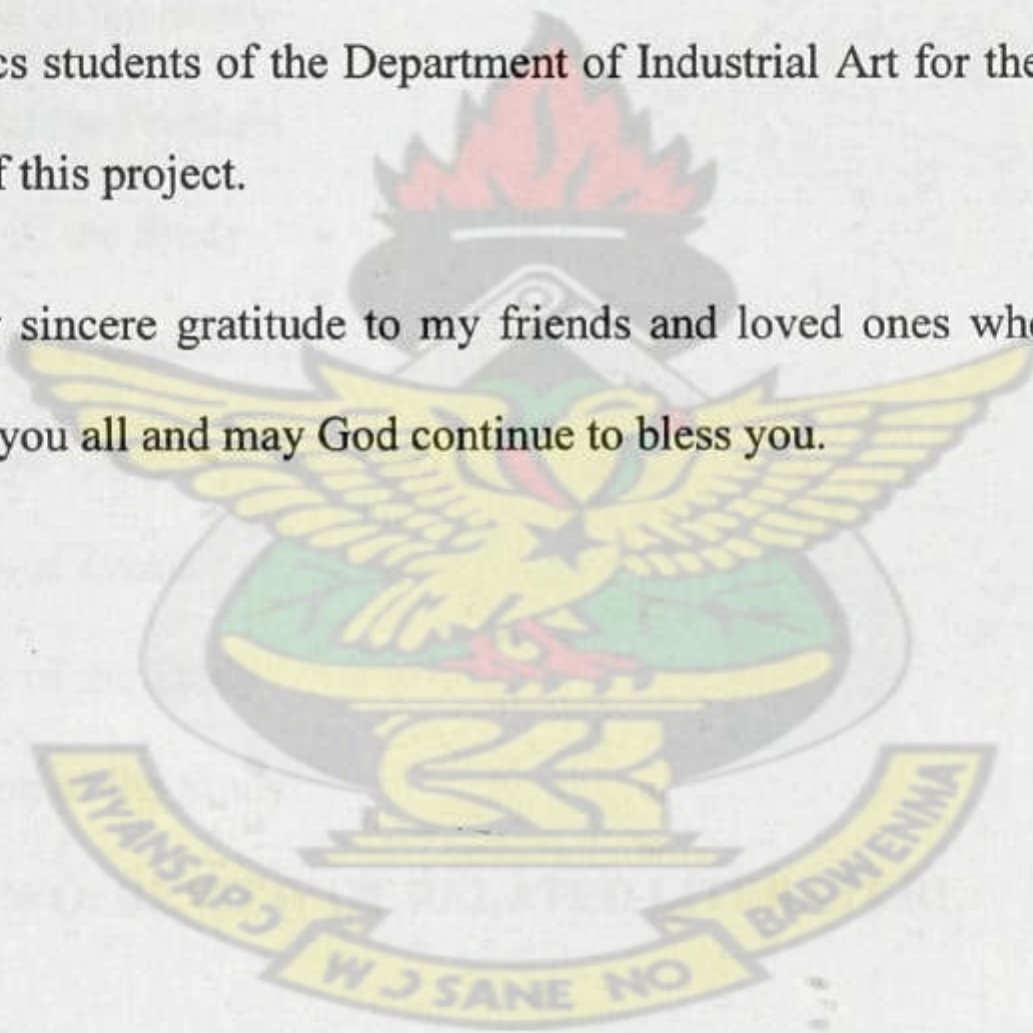


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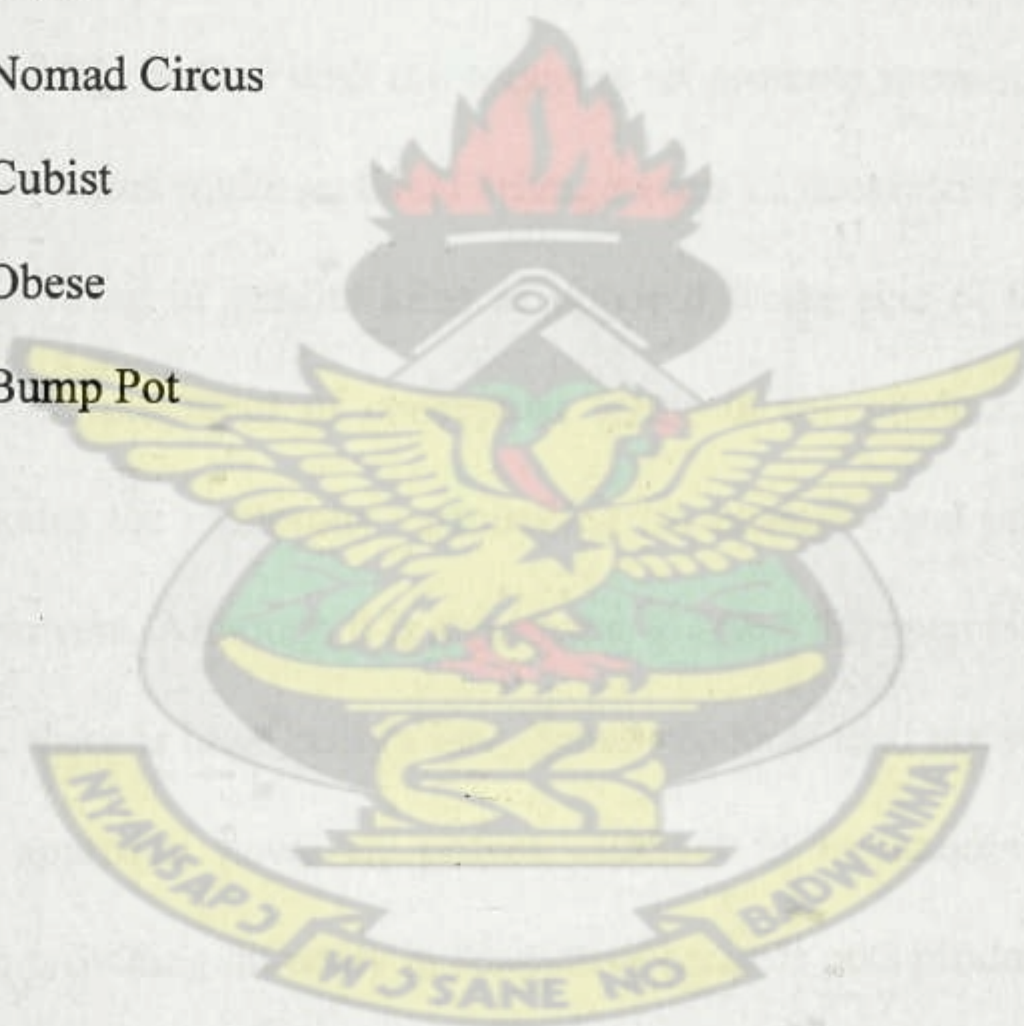


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ABSTRACT

This project adapted basic studio forming techniques in producing large ceramic decorative pots using slabs and hollow coils. The project demonstrated how to make a multi-walled vase using slabs and described how effective physical water in clay can affect alteration. It is evident in this work, that the environment can provide enormous inspiration into developing stupendous concepts as decorative pots. It encompasses the use of geometry in coming up with forms to alternate the existence of nature in abstraction. Three works were produced titled 16th Chapter Pot, Scribbled Branch pot and Cave Ants Container. The researcher's reflections show that the aesthetic appeals of the pots produced coupled with the concepts all promote meaningful responses to them. It also showcases multi-sectional arrangements of decorative pots using simple mechanisms and firing in smaller kilns as opposed to the size of the art work. The diversity in the development of conceptual forms in the production of decorative ceramic pots eludes the monotony surrounding its existence and provides enormous interests from viewers. Although it is significant to adapt the open air firing technique for larger items, there is huge energy loss, hence products tend not well vitrified. The multi-sectional approach however, proves efficient in maintaining higher quality standards and in providing diversity in decorative ceramic pots production.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Clay is an extremely ironical material which is soft and slippery during its plastic phase, and can be shaped into almost anything. It cannot be reversed into its plastic state after it has been subjected to heat treatment. It has been presumed that the first pottery was made accidentally because of the basket-like texture it possessed. Humphrey (2006) explains that, the technique of firing the pots hard had probably been discovered accidentally, either from the firing of clay-covered hearths, or from baskets lined with clay that were dropped in a hot fire. The Neolithic hunter gathered most of his domestic stuffs in baskets and used clay to seal the holes within the woven spaces. Hitherto the introduction of pottery, the clay was used to seal the baskets on the outside, preventing powdery items from dripping through the eyes of the canes. Chronologically, the art of pottery began to flourish before the introduction of fabric and paper. This art started as a family occupation and has transcended to an all-inclusive occupation only if one desired to participate. Hopper (2000) explains that, throughout the last 8,000 years or so pots have been used for storing things and their functions have been enormously appreciated. Pots have been used for varied purposes including domestic chores, for ritual and contemplation and decoration. Their functions have been recorded from the prehistoric man to date.

However, the nomadic hunter made miniature sculpture pieces with clay and fired them for permanence. It has been said by Hardy (2000) that these sculptures were often in the form of small ritual figures related to fertility or hunting. Indigenous pottery in Ghana is solely women's occupation but with the introduction of western

art education, trade and awareness of concurrent practices, men are now involved. Decorative pots as containers purposely beautify the surrounding in which they are found. The difference between them and ceramic sculpture lies in the pot's ability to hold other elements such as bamboo or flowers (both natural and artificial) while the sculpture remains as a decorative piece. Consequently, this additional function separates the two. During the Etruscan, Egyptian, Greek and Roman period of pottery, pots were invariably done in spherical forms. According to some pottery writers, circular formation of pots was learnt from natural forms such as water melon and orange (and other circular objects).

In Ghana, the idea of pots being spherical-like and cylindrical is an intuitive proposition which defines why potters until today, make wonderful decorations in the round. It is believed that they do not want to subvert or break away from their tradition, since the art started as family craft.

Contemporary ceramic sculpture is widely diverse in approach and style leaving ceramic pot to its primitive forms and approach of production. Although the craft has come a long way since its existence in our world, it is still characterized with monotonous shapes.

The study is therefore on the trail of diversity and style and explores contemporary approaches and methods of creating larger unit – multi-sectional ceramic pots, by joining smaller units together while maintaining the concept of pot formation. It also employs the use of geometrical forms to construct decorative pots with inspiration from the environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although clay, the chief material for producing pottery abounds, the design and construction of large or spatial unit pots remains a challenge to ceramic artists in Ghana. In our domestic settings, pots have served various purposes including beautification of homes, hospitals, hotels, parks and other lounges of magnificent buildings. However, observation of the aforementioned places reveals that most of the pots used are spherical in form, characterised by monotonous shapes. These ceramic pots do not inhabit their environment, appearing insignificant in the large spaces they occupy. The art of producing large ceramic pots worthy of the space available remains a challenge. This challenge therefore creates a fertile ground to design and construct larger space-worthy geometric decorative ceramic pots through multi-sectional approach. The multi-sectional ceramic pots therefore serve purposes such as decoration, ability to join units together to form larger ones and the tendency to inhabit spatial environment.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To develop design concepts from natural and artificial scenes.
2. To explore alternate means of producing large decorative pots through assemblage.
3. To construct space-worthy geometric concepts through multi-sectional approach.

1.4 Studio Practice Questions

1. In what way(s) can design concepts be developed from natural and artificial scenes?
2. What are the possibilities of creating larger decorative geometric pots worthy of any Ghanaian aesthetic and spatial considerations through multi-sectional approach?

1.5 Delimitation (Scope of the Study)

The study was limited to the exploration of spatially considered geometrical pots using slab and hollow coil building in ceramic multi-sectional methodologies for aesthetic foundation.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

The following terms have been defined to facilitate the understanding of the study.

Engobe:	The application of coloured slip around a pot to cover its entire surface.
Siphon:	It is a sieve-like plate used in levelling the surface of ceramic sculptures and pots and they enhance the surface with texture.
Marquette:	These are three dimensional drawings.
Kneading:	To fold, press and stretch soft clay, working it into a smooth uniform mass whilst releasing trapped air.
Leather-hard:	This is the stage in pot production whereby the hardness of the clay as a material is subjected to incision and surface texturing. At this stage, the clay allows itself to be shaped into desired form and maintain its alteration.

Kidney:	A shaped plastic, wood or metal where it attains a curve at either single or double ends. The curve could be mild or sharp.
Vitrification:	The progressive reduction and elimination of porosity of ceramic composition with the formation of a glass phase as a result of heat treatment.
Multi-sectional pot:	Various segments put together to form a single coherent container.
Ageing:	The period of allowing clay to achieve fine plastic property as a result of keeping it moist over a long period of time. It reduces cracks in ware.
Bisque:	This is the first firing process which converts ware from dissolving when it comes into contact with water. There is a change in the chemical phase of silica as it melts and bonds with alumina.

1.7 Importance of the Study

The following describes the significance of the study:

1. The study will emphasise on the effective understanding of pots and its function as a decorative element. This will be seen in the design and production of varied pieces suitable as pots with diversity in their forms.
2. This ~~will appropriately elude~~ the conventional method of producing ceramic pots and provide several sources to inspire their forms.
3. It will broaden observers' knowledge about pots shapes in contemporary practices.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The rest of the study has four chapters. Chapter Two discusses review of related literature which includes both empirical and theoretical reviews. Chapter Three also looks at the methodology, while Chapter Four gives a detailed account of the results and discussion. Summary, conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter Five.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews pertinent literature on the designing and construction of ceramic pots; the various method and techniques explored by previous artists; and synthesizes various concepts raised by studio practice artists and writers on the research problem.

In this light, the following topics were reviewed:

- Art and Creativity
- Conceptual Framework
- Pottery in Ghana
- Contemporary Pottery
- Ceramic Pots and their Functions
- Production Techniques
- Decorative pots and Aesthetics
- Multi-sectional Approaches and Assemblage of units

2.2 Art and Creativity

Although there is no definite meaning of art, one can define the term by analyzing the various forms in art and relating them to aesthetics. Art is an expression of one's intuitive feeling through an appropriate medium. Art is the presentation and apprehension of truth by means of sensuous images, that is, images of sight and sound and touch (Graham, 2005). The ability of one being able to express himself freely provides a genre of style which is understood by the artist, professional art critics and philosophers. Eldridge (2003) opines that the universal need for art is a man's rational

need to lift the inner and outer world into his spiritual consciousness as an object in which he recognizes his own self.

Art, unlike design is subjective, and does not necessarily explain itself to the viewer and it is evident when Danto et al (1998) attribute art free from determination. The inference could be drawn from the writers that art is subjective. Ross (1982) confirms that subjectivity can be given a very broad purview, encompassing taste and pleasure, imagination, possibility, fiction, and the individual artist. Although there are continuous arguments on the expressive nature of art, the concept is highly in meaning only in contrast with objectivity, and it is the pair which has significance for art: from the submission of the various writers, art may sometimes explain its content and it is one avenue that defines democracy because of the freedom to express oneself.

Art has a source - the creative element that makes it whole, and this allows any individual to contribute to the subject. Creativity is said to be the only possible source of divergence and specialisation of art styles which is derived from a common origin, lies in innovations by individual artists (Biebuyck, 1969). The creative potential of the mind is not limited to one but the ability to perceive and explore bring into light the undefined ability of one's artistic capabilities. Numerous researchers have focused their efforts on attempting to describe the common attributes of creative individuals. These attributes generally fall into three categories: background experiences, personal traits, and cognitive abilities (Griffin, 2009).

Creativity in art is affected by several factors which include emotions and perception. Malchiodi (2007) added that the sensory qualities of art often provide a way for us to tap into our emotions and perceptions more easily than one would with words alone. Emotional stress may influence creativity and this could be factored by the level of

pain, sorrow, grief, anger, love and happiness that the artist has experienced over certain periods of time. Creativity is also affected by interest and Thompson (1994) cites an example in painting that, the ability to select the point of interest in a given scene is difficult to the untrained eye, but is improved with observation and selective sketching.

The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, and the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods and interpretations, explains the prime concept of creativity. It is of great interest to the researcher that art could be seen as a subjective expression rather than having connotative arguments that require that the subject of expressions should be interpretative in a more defined and scientific means.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Inspiration and concept result philosophy, an idea put together for meaning. Concepts define the meaning of one's artistic expression by justifying the theme with relevant information towards the expression. Flynt stated in the book *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (1996) that concepts art is a kind of art of which the material is language. Concepts in art distinguish the artist from the non-artist, in that, there is meaning to the expressions the artist brings forth. The solemn craftwork in the artists' concepts lies in creativity. This explains the language in the material and distinguishes a 'raw art' from one that has concept. Concepts lead to genius inventions and it is emphasised when Ross (1994) cites thus what the concept of genius achieves is only to place the products of art aesthetically on the same level as natural beauty.

In this project, the concepts used by the artist indicate the existence of truth in nature and thus it has it all when we need to find ideas and develop for our works. Let us not

limit our scope of study to chaotic aspirations; over emphasised ideas which we lack and yet wait to meet and never shall it come to pass. Our concepts and philosophies define the prerogative of our ideas and so should we be creative enough, lies in the admiration of the beauty in nature. Concepts are not limited in one direction and they can be source from different dimensions including the genre of man's activities. The concept for the *Cave Ant's Container* holds a combination of ideas from nature (ant hill) and the genre of man's activities (randomly packed blocks).

In the quest to understand the theory of concepts in art, Buser (2006) concludes that modern psychologists have also attempted to explain art by dividing artists into personality types. They call those who tend to depict what they see before them *perpetual artists* and those who tend to depict what they have stored in their imagination *conceptual artists*. He further explains that *perpetual artist* have trained the hand to obey the mind's eye so that the hand can form the strokes to mimic what they see "out there." However, *conceptual artists* depict what is in their mind. A representation by the artist to bring forth what inspires him and that which is stored in memory explains his concept prior to his expression.

Concept arrives as an in-depth into one's thinking and sometimes, they are easily identified at a go and at other instances the artist explains the idea to the observer. This is to note that some concepts are simple and explanatory while others remain complex and indirect. The caption to an artist's concept therefore lies in the combination of manners of ideas put together by him to express a cognitive expression and thus when not easily understood by observers do not take away the art in his expression.

In this project, the researcher combines series of ideas and characterises his expressions in context for the three project pieces- The '16th Chapter', the 'Scribbled Branch' and the 'Cave Ant's Container'.

2.4 Pottery in Ghana

Throughout the ages, even before history began, pottery has been used as a medium for expression (Peterson, 2011). Pottery is the objects made from clay which have been subjected to heat to make them permanent. According to Hopper (2000), the making of pottery is a timeless occupation, and the best of pots through the ages have a quality of timelessness about them that transcends chronological and cultural boundaries. Their appeal is universal. Pottery has contributed to the development of the people of Ghana, a country that has had cultural significance with pottery production. The labour force in the making of the craft is limited to the female gender, as the occupation is known to be women's work in the country.

Ogot (1999) induced that, pottery-making in Ghana goes back to the Later Stone Age (after 3000 before the Christian era) and had been greatly developed by the early eighteenth century, particularly among the Adangbe. Dickson (1969) proclaims that, its general appearance was in the north and its bearers might have been the first to introduce the knowledge of pottery into Ghana. But with this uncertainty, it is arguable that pottery in Ghana has no ethnic origin. Pottery is practiced in all the ten regions of Ghana with high sense of use. Without the state of origin, it has been difficult to date its existence to one part of the country. Nyarko (1972) affirmed that traditional pottery in Ghana is no single ethnic's preserve for its origin and cannot be attributed to one part of the country.

2.5 Contemporary Pottery

Although there are principles in the hand production of pottery- throwing, coiling and slab building, contemporary approaches have resulted in changing the conventional results of these techniques. Throwing on the potter's wheel is done to attain circular objects but alterations are done to manipulate items while they still maintain their purposes and provide variable style. Altering forms should be a primary intention and not an afterthought and the circled object should not be maintained. An example could be found in plates 2.1 and 2.2. Hopper (2000) explains that as soon as one alters the form by any articulation or movement, one alters the basic proportions and thus the relationship between one part and another. Phethean (1993) on the other hand thinks that when you are no longer limited in your basic throwing techniques, the potter's wheel can be used to create elements of more complex, sculptural forms. It is evident among afore discussion that the potter's recently, functions as a means of producing complex forms of pots and provide an efficient means of creating sculptures



Plate 2.1: **Faith et Fame** (2009), Wheel thrown earthenware; electric fired, altered and incised, raffia, manganese and glaze finish. Piece produced by *Frederick E. Okai*.



Plate 2.2: **Afore** (2010), Wheel thrown and altered; electric fired (1150°C). Kaolin, sodium silicate and glaze finished. Piece produced by *Frederick E. Okai*.

With the introduction of accidentals, 'one- to -produce' forms have been made in these present days. Accidentals are unintentional forms achieved through faults and yet maintained for the reason of expression and aesthetics. They provide uniqueness, variety, essence and yet establish a memoir of style in hard work. Contemporary approaches however, provide a unique way of making pottery- hence the introduction of new forms as pots. It is sometimes argumentative for people to classify some modern approaches of art works as they should be- because of the diversity in their present style and yet provide a platform that they should not be stopped but rather need explanation and criticism to defend the approach.

The varied forms and practices in ceramic sculpture have helped in the production of outstanding forms using different techniques. Tourtillott (2009) reaffirms that contemporary ceramic sculpture is widely in its form and approach, and there is little the field seems incapable of embracing. These have been made possible because ceramic sculptors have been inspired by abstraction and also due to the wide compass set to capture inspiration from nature.

Though most prehistoric artefacts were made for magical and domestic purposes, the artist remained subjective and their appeals were undeniable. Lebra (1974) induce that with the birth of pottery as an art form, critics have come to play an important role in publicizing the way in which pottery ought to be made and appreciated. Criticisms on modern art however, have made it reasonable and it is of no excuse that the arts have been interpretative although most artists find it difficult to explain its real content (philosophy). Visual inspirations arouse the curiosity of a concept. It is an idea that has been given thoughts, and provides insight into your thinking. Quinn (2007) writes that developing a concept for your work is very important and useful. The concept is the guiding principle or philosophy behind the work, allowing you to base all your decisions on a single, coherent rationale.

Present art puts meaning to its artefacts. Natural organisms such as millipedes are visually among the most appealing of all natural forms, and there is little wonder an artist should find them inspiring. Many natural objects are endowed with wonderful forms and they serve the purpose of aiding the contemporary artist in pursuing his passion. Through visual inspiration, it is possible for one to develop creative, yet functional pieces as pots.

Modern pottery products have evolved from the nomads' production techniques and finishes. Endless possibilities are still yet to be seen from all parts of the products and it is possible for ceramic artefacts such as pots, to be explored in more diversified forms. Diversity in pot shapes would take a dimension where its inspirational source can affect their forms. It will provide a quality of style; help to eliminate the boredom it has possessed because unlimited number of forms would be attained and impound the bossy position of ceramic sculpture as it comes in a more profound way.



Plate 2.3: Contemporary decorative ceramic pot, **Rites of Passage** (2010), 31 inches in height, hand built with slabs and thrown, 1100°C fired, slip and manganese finished. Piece produced by *Frederick E. Okai*.

2.6 Ceramic Pots and their Functions

A pot is an elementary product of pottery. Spilsbury (2009) noted that pots, plates, cups, tiles, plaques, figures, and vases are different kinds of decorated pottery. A pot serves as a uterus, and the body is a container for knowledge and maturation in the same ways that a ceramic vessel contains (Arnoldi, et al., 1996). In addition, a pot can simply be defined as a container which could be a slab, a hollow log, a porcelain container, an antique Chinese vessel, or a homemade cedar planter (Gustafson, 1994). Whatever medium used such as hard paper, thick rubber, metal, clay, wood, plastic among others; so far as it can hold something. Pots are basically grouped according to their use and so if it is used to store water it is known as water pot, if it holds flowers it is regarded as a flower pot, when used in cooking food it is regarded as a cooking pot, to mention a few. Specific names have been given to so many kinds of pots thereby reducing the popularity of the pottery items as pots.

Ceramic pots have provided many purposes. They are used for drinking, storage, carrying, serving, cooking, lighting, washing, planting, decorating, and death rites. In

Ghana, traditional pots serve medicinal, eating and storage purposes. Pot has been used as a scale for measuring respect in some community and thus Larrier (2000) cites that another form of women's oral expression that conveys meaning in Africa involves pots.

In Ghana, the number of pots a woman possesses indicates status or prestige. In other parts of the world, their appeal has been significant. In this limelight, Giudici and Solieri (2009) in their book *Vinegars of the World* states that traditionally, ceramic pots have been used for the sake – to- vinegar production process in China and Japan. The use of ceramic pots as elements of beautification in our homes and social places is not the least of the products function. It could be stated on authority that the uses of pots as decorative element have had significant functions on aesthetics in modern architecture.

2.7 Production Techniques

Several methods over the years have been adapted by the potter in the productions of various ceramic pots. The methods used include slip casting, pinching, coiling, extrusion, throwing, slab building, jiggering and pressing. As new technology and more techniques became available, potters took full advantage of their creative opportunities to explore them (Hopper, 2000). However, there are three basic processes used in the hand building techniques of making pots which possess slight variations. These processes have integrated pinch pots, slab pots and coil pots. Amber (2008) explains that slab construction is all about joining the shapes to make boxes and other rigid containers, predominantly geometric forms.

Creativity in altering slab forms could lead to stupendous projects of art. A shift and push of angles of slabs could help to push boundaries in specific fields of greatness in

ceramic art. The art of building with slabs have had a single dimension of construction as far as the making of decorative pots are concerned. A gradual curved angle approach has been used to produce circular and cylindrical pot forms either by slab building, coiling or throwing method of production- single wall production. While Pinching could be limited to varied forms, other techniques could be used to support construction. For example, you can use slabs or coils to modify the form and create pieces unmarked by the limitations of the basic pinch forming techniques (Zakin, 2001).

It has been known in several cultures that the earliest vessels were made either by hand-shaping or by rolling the clay into thin round cord. Gibson and Woods (1997) intimated that the potter winds the ropes of clay round to form the desired vessel shape or part thereof and then joins together by smoothing the internal and external surfaces. Both the traditional potter and the present-day studio potter have adapted to one or more of these production techniques.

In Ghana, traditionally, both pinching and coiling methods of construction are used by potters. Among the people of Afari in the Ashanti region of Ghana, a pot is made by placing a ball of clay on a polythene sheet. The potter begins by dipping the left hand into the conical mass of soft clay and pinches to create a hole, while the right hand is used to support it wherever she moves to ensure that equal wall is achieved in terms of thickness. The potter gently moves around while the pot is formed. Coils are added to the upper section as the pot increases in size and height.

Prominent studio potters such as K. K. Broni and J. K. Amoah (former lecturers of Department of Industrial Art, KNUST) have made decorative and functional pottery, using a single or a combination of the production techniques.

2.8 Decorative Pots and Aesthetics

Pottery as a decorative element is not a-day-born fashion in Ghana. Although most of the pots made by the potters in the regions had specific functions, the display of several pottery elements around the compounds compelled some sort of beautification, enhancing the surrounding which the earliest Ghanaian lived in. The display of several forms of pots either for drying or medicinal purposes aesthetically created a verge of beautification.

Contemporarily, ceramic pots are used for beautifying parks, hotels, banks, hospitals, private homes, lounges of magnificent buildings and other architectural systems. These pots are made mostly by men proving the fact that presently, pots production are not associated with the female gender, because in Africa, pottery is generally a female occupation. The size of pots and the techniques used in production have effectively called for the inclusion of men into the occupation. Commercially, throwing on the potter's wheel both manually or mechanically have also been adapted by men in producing decorative pots, and it is of no doubt that the profession has a future.

There are no restrictions to the form of a decorative pot but however, the pots produced are monotonous in shape. Functional pottery have had limited shapes since the introduction of its items from the beginning by makers. Pots of purpose with their functions have specific roles to perform and their designs have a bearing on their usage. Hopper (2000) explains further that purely decorative pots have total freedom of expression, while functional considerations impose compromise in both form and aesthetic development in pots that are made to be used. By experimenting with designs, alterations of basic shapes evolve gradually. A huge change in form could lead to dysfunction of product's objective.

Decorative pots have immensely been made in circular- like and cylindrical forms, leaving the idea of pots been spherical a loud publicity to the extent that when one is asked what is a pot? An answer is given by drawing with our hand a round piece that has a neck. The monotony in pot shapes may be due to the expendable nature of the items in earlier times and thus potters did not sought to spend much efforts on providing intricate forms at all. Rhodes (1976) makes it clearer that moreover, in the vast majority of cases, the pot was intended to function in an immediate way, and aesthetic qualities were not consciously striven for. Trowell (1996) reaffirms this observation in our region by writing that not has the African aspired to build any great variety of shapes for his pottery, or to put it to many different uses. The writer further explains that his chief need has been for cooking pots, water pots and beer pots, all vessels which will be subjected to rough and dirty treatment, and so unlikely to develop in him a desire to expand time and labour on the carrying out of delicate design.

Pot shapes are fundamentals to family style of production thus Nyarkoh (1972) cites that there has been little or no major development in shapes and decorations, the writer continues to explain that the craft has remained conservative due to some old conventions, and supposed that the potters of today do not want to break the tradition. Generation after generation, children are taught the principles and methods of making pottery in the family and the shapes are passed on from mother to child consequently, monotonous in shape. A typical example can be found among the fourteen families of Pueblo pottery of America where Sonneborn (2007) reviewed that Margaret's mother, Sara Fina, was among the best potters in Pueblo. By watching her at work, Margaret received her first lessons in this traditional art.

Decorative pots are arts appreciated for the sake of beauty. Their shapes and decorations are subjects to the principles and elements of design. It is evident when Arnoldi et al (1996) noted that the aesthetics of pottery celebrates such a variety of forms because one does not watch a masquerade from one point of view. Beauty has several aspects. This is reflected in the variety of earthen-ware styles that satisfy the owner's taste for a greater range in beauty. It is relevant to the researcher to incorporate this quality of beauty into this project. The production of The Cave Ant's Container is an epitome of the above mentioned discussion. Pots of beauties provide an essential admiration to the viewer even when not in use and therefore serve its prime objective. They link our inner- most feeling to its surrounding and appeals the eye through communication. According to Bruno (2002) as we follow this line of inquiry, we take the moving image further into the imaginative terrain of the emotions.

Decorative pots are regarded as expressive media since the reformation of Arts and Crafts movement in the beginning of the 19th century. "Art pottery, which emphasized pottery to be valued for its own artistic sake, was born. During the 1950's, ceramic art took an even further digression from the utilitarian, as studio potters reacted to and explored the ideas presented by artists working in the abstract expressionism movement" (Peterson, <http://pottery.about.com/od/thepottersspace/a/potteryart.htm>). As artists of the 21st century, we hold it a great privilege to further the objective in a more varied form with passion.

2.9 Multi-sectional Approaches and Assemblage of units

There have been limits to the size of decorative ceramic pots production. In instances where the potter or the studio ceramist is given large space for a pot display, the artist

is challenged with the potential size of the work as fitting hence producing pieces which do not best fit the space. Although there are works of art that are site-specific and therefore utilizes the given space, some artists are confronted with the unavailability of large kilns for firing and the space to build such huge pot shapes. Certain areas also do not provide the space to site-produce these artefacts and therefore construction of multi-segmented forms will adequately best serve the purpose.

In producing multi-sectional ceramic pieces, there have been varied approaches where in some cases a single piece of pot is thrown on the wheel in several parts and they are joined as a single coherent piece. This is done due to the intricate shape of the pot and the potter's experience to the shape being produced. Glenn et al (2002) remarks that if a smaller pot consists of different angular shapes, such as a teapot, it too can be thrown in multiple sections. Another approach also deals with the production of single units where parts are put together to form a single volume at chosen times. They are mostly large pieces which are movable and their ability to uninstall at preferred seasons make them unique and comfortable.

Assemblage, in the visual arts is any work of art composed of a variety of objects, particularly found objects. The term was first used in the 1950s by French avant-garde painter Jean Dubuffet to describe his collages and figures created from bits of wood, sponge, paper, and glue. The term junk art refers to three-dimensional assemblages constructed solely of waste and discarded materials (Assemblage, 2009). In effect, although traditional techniques are still employed in the production and decoration of large unit ceramic wares, the 21st-century ceramists should employ this concept – assemblage, to produce large unit of wares capable of occupying spatial phenomenon.

This would not only help to produce large unit wares but also impact on the aesthetic and functional values of these products.

Much of the 20th-century sculpture was created by construction and assemblage. These methods have their origin in collage, a painting technique devised by Pablo Picasso and the French artist Georges Braque in 1912, in which paper and foreign materials are pasted to a picture surface. Picasso also made three-dimensional objects such as musical instruments out of paper and scraps of diverse materials, which were termed constructions. The term assemblage, which is now sometimes used interchangeably with construction, was coined by the French painter Jean Dubuffet to refer to his own work, which grew out of collage (Vishny, 2009). However, assemblage is a collection or gathering of things and this invariably typifies the idea of multi-section thereby dividing a whole unit into sections before constructing the smaller units. This concept provides the insight into the segmentation of the 16th Chapter, *Scribbled Branch* and *the Cave Ant's Container*

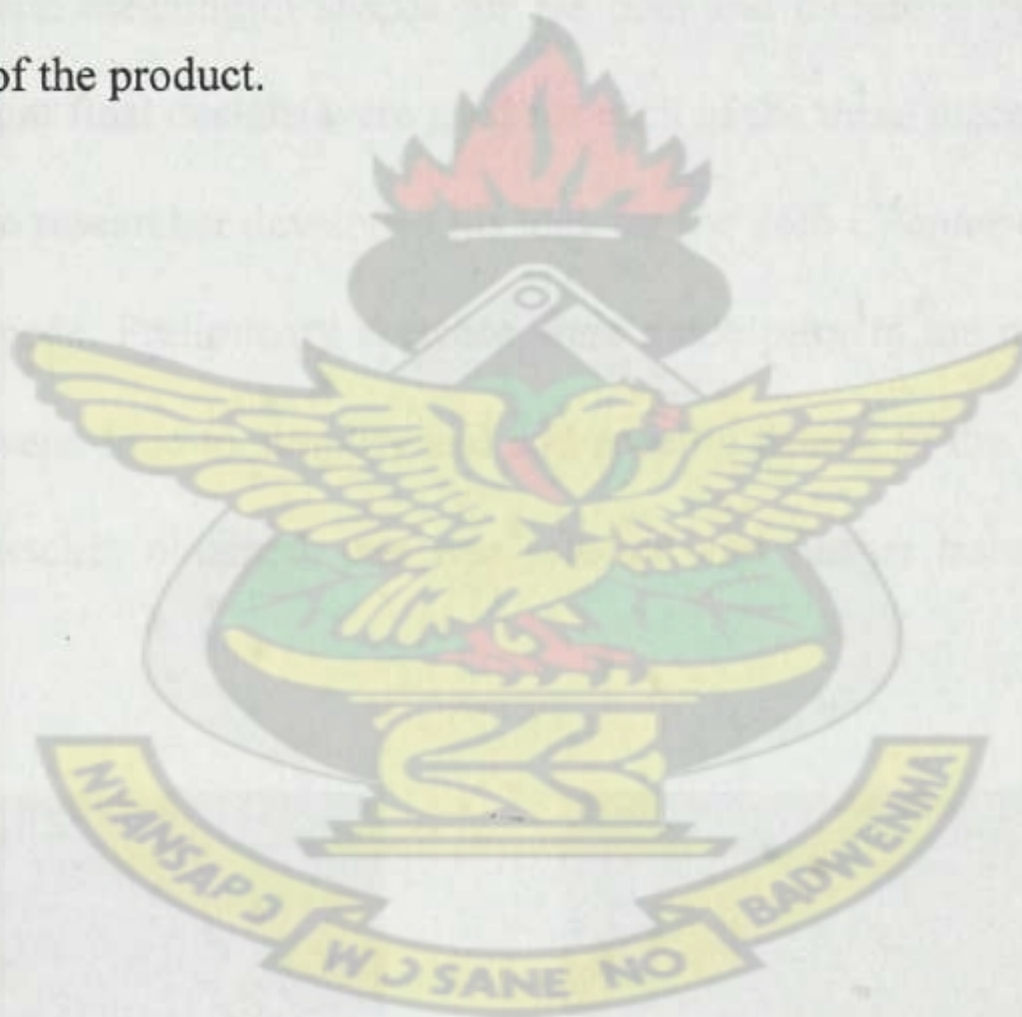
2.10 Summary of Discussion

The review exercise has enabled the present artist to understand the various concepts of previous artist in the production of pots and other artefacts. In the subject of creativity, art stands as prime with subjectivity; giving a taste of expressionism. It denounce the condemnation of other critics in specifying the actual and true meaning with scientific approach and provide a platform for individual contributions to the development of the subject. The true meaning of art lies in concepts and it defines the prerogative of an expression.

The uses of pots have had substantial purposes in man's life over 8,000 years and their production still remains man's long practiced occupation. Although, there are

methods and principles in making ceramic pots- functional pottery, there are bits of exceptions to the production of decorative ceramic pots. Their form remark beautification and thus, manipulations to forms and combinations of techniques mount firm support to the development of stupendous pieces of art. This is evident in Plates 2.1 and 2.3.

Traditional productions of pots were subjected to simple monotonous forms, intricate forms were not duly recommended since the pots were subjects to dirty treatments and their use were for immediate purposes. Decorative pots however, are appreciated for their beauty and thus intricate and diverse forms in their shapes are important to the usefulness of the product.



CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Idea Development

In the making of pots, most makers have their fundamental shapes in mind and therefore start the formation of their pot forms from their minds. Others however, prefer to draw their circular shapes with decorations on paper to enable them remember the contour of their pot forms.

Thorough idea development, the prime motif of the researcher is to be able to produce well establish and meaningful shapes for his pots and therefore various steps were undertaken before final designs were used for each of the three pieces constructed for this project. The researcher developed his idea for the *16th Chapter* ceramic pot from a moving millipede. Preliminary sketches were made prior to the natural object and modifications were done to simplify and add specific details to the design. From the sequence of sketches obtained, one was selected and further transformations were done to them.

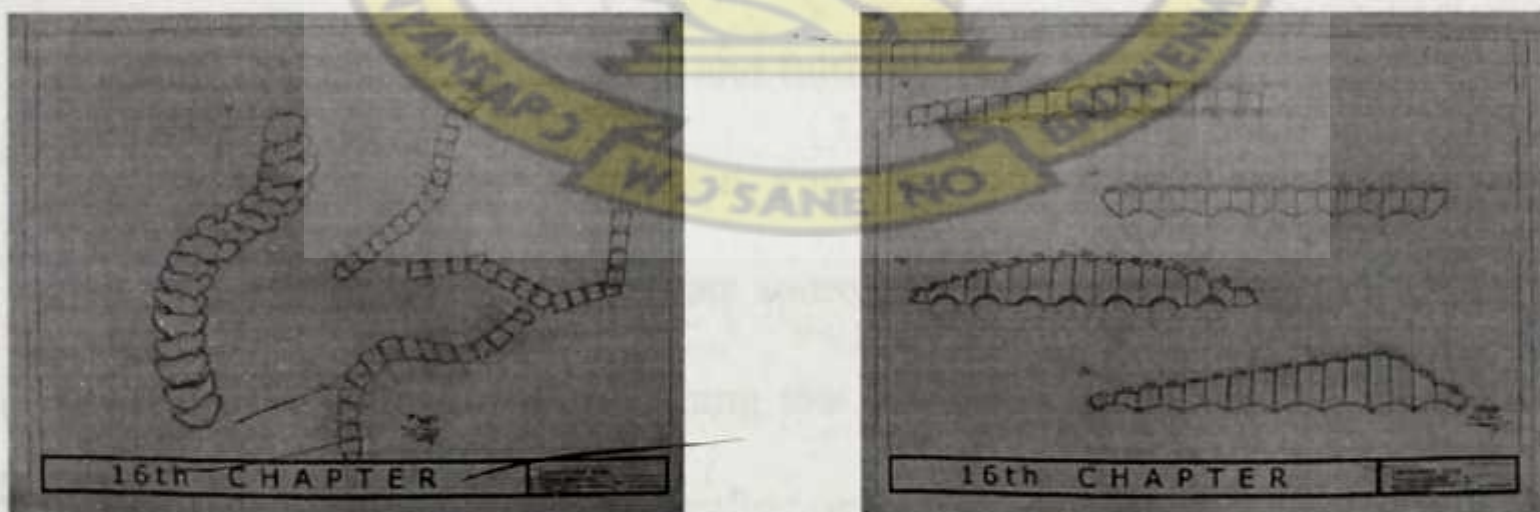


Figure 3.1: Sequential movement of sections Figure 3.2: Height distribution

It was subjected to both two and three dimensional developments to bring out details in the selected design. The piece, 'The Scribbled Branch Pot' was developed through varied assessments of tree branches, rust effects and scribbled lines as imaginary in critical studies. The idea development is one that required both subjective and objective consciousness since it required practical and aesthetic functions, both which are oppressive. Sketching out plans of ideas and thoughts provide a platform to free the mind from the bondage of expression. Developments to acquire a comprehensive philosophy for the 'Cave Ant's Container' is one that revolved around several sectional ideas since the story needed to be granulated. Combining form, symbols, functions, principles, standards, abstractions and overall aesthetics – provide essence in critical thinking hence idea development. The concept of the '*Cave Ant's Container*' was inspired by pictures of hills, mountains, pits, trees, bees, ants and packed pavement bricks. Different methods such as instrumentation, development of symbols and constructional methods were all organised by the artist before proceeding to the production of the ceramic art piece.

3.2 Inspiration

"To get the creative juices flowing, and fulfil the brief, you need inspiration, which is not necessarily straightforward. Often, you need time seeking inspiration, searching widely, and calling on many disparate sources" (Quinn, 2007). Inspiration may come in a jiffy, or as a result of something that invigorate you. Various sources can be captured to heighten our visual inspiration. This provides adequate ground which broadens the scope for a concept.

The everyday life of the millipede is carried in motion or rest. It is quite surprising to see the millipede move on the ground. The question that comes to mind is where does

it want to go? This gives much doubting answers such as, 'it might be searching for food', or could it be that it is lost? Or maybe it is escaping from a scene. Another question that also comes to mind is why does it always cover its legs when pushed by someone? Could it be that it feels unsafe every second? Or maybe its body overweighs the strength of its legs and it cannot bear additional weight? and why does it live in absolute fear while even the ant feels good when walking around? Perhaps 'it has been cursed'.



Plate 3.1: Moving millipede

It is fascinating how one piece of an arthropod has various segments within its skin and how a large piece of its body rest on tiny pieces of legs. The concept of the 16th *Chapter* ceramic vase was developed from a personal observation on a moving millipede with its tergites representing a single vase.

Inspired by branches, various plants create the illusion of strength with enmity as branches intersect one another. It is empirical to denote that the strength captured within the branches is as a result of their multitude in guiding one another as they project on their stem. The *Scribbled Branch Pot* has its concept from the branch of the creeping plant and the weakness of the aged branches in the rain forest. To create a

fascinating story with the piece, there is an illusion of strength in weakness which draws the viewer to a touch point.

Ants have colonies which is an underground lair where they dwell, eat and procreate.

An *ant-hill* can be described as a genius creation of the combination of pile of earth, clay or sand structure built by the legion ant workers which provide shelter and breeding space for colonies of ants as they are excavated. They are made of chambers connected to each other and are linked to the surface of the earth by small tunnels.

Ants from different nest reveal quality of aggression towards one another. Their eggs are laid by one or often more queens. Queens are different bodily structure and most eggs laid by them grow to become wingless sterile females called “workers”.

A colony is built and maintained by worker ants that travel around to search for bits of dirt and pebbles and carry them in their mandibles. Ants are one of the busiest creatures on earth and it is evident in their everyday movement as they gather strength to build their hills. The tenacious composure exhibited by these ants all account to the magnificent terrain they make. Human beings are therefore advised to visit the ants and learn their ways. The artist was inspired by the magnificent structures built by ants which are usually found in the bushes and forests; the marvellous integration set by these ants in building their hills. The *Cave Ant's Container* was also inspired by the genre of man's activities. The random arrangement of cement pavement bricks was also inspired towards the construction of the pot.



Plate 3.2: Ants hill

3.3 Instrumentation

This is the means through which ideas were visualised in three dimensional. Developing a design is not a simple task; it is one that requires series of procedures. According to Quinn (2007), design development describes a number of activities that help to develop the concept and ideas to their fullest potential. This can involve sketching, brainstorming, maquettes, and prototypes. It should be a rigorous and rewarding process, a thorough investigation of your ideas.



Plate 3.3: The concept board

Sketches were used for recording series of ideas which were developed through the various medium of inspirations. Drawing tools such as markers and pencils were used in transferring ideas into drawings. The drawing used were two dimensional and maquettes. This process was done in the three different pieces of this project.



Plate 3.4: Marquette

Prototypes were used to model the structure and arrangements of the cubic forms to identify potential errors and limitations within the '*Cave Ant's Container*'. Coils were also used to make compositions for the '*Scribbled Branch pot*'. They aided in the curvy nature of the branch pot and helped in identifying specific details in the outcome of the piece. Prototypes provide adequate overview to the designer. It makes available a four dimensional view of the object to be made. Prototypes help to make analysis on proportion, distribution, principles and elements of designing, texture and surface relevance, aesthetic and help to reduce contemplation. Straw boards were used in making paper models of the various cubes and they were used in composing some arrangements to check for the effectiveness of the cubes joined with slight sections

attached to one another and a brief section attached to some sub-sections of other cubes. Sections to hold beautifying elements and symbols were also critically studied.



Plate 3.5: Prototype of a single unit of the Cave Ant's Container

3.4 Symbolism

Over some period of time, man has depended on various symbolic elements to communicate. A symbol is a mark or a diagram that represent information in a given context. The name 'Symbol' was derived from the Greek word 'Symbolon' meaning "to throw together", literally "coincidence". Symbols have included Adinkra symbols, Alphabet, Emblem, Font, Glyph, Icons, Logos, Punctuations, Symbol rate, Typography, Numerals etc. The Greeks have had timeless civilization through Cycladic and Minoan which dates from prehistory. Their art through ancient period to contemporary period have had immense influence on art all over the world. One of their major influences is seen through their ancient style of writing known as the

hieroglyphics. The standard Egyptian hieroglyph is captured in 26 categories of the Gardener's Sign List, which are about 700 individual signs. It is also stated by research according to Wikipedia (2011) that the writings of Ancient Egypt is to use some of the Gardener Sign Categories to focus on specific major use signs.

Developing symbols for *The 16th Chapter Ceramic Vase* was based on sights and discretions. Various patterns have been developed to shower passion and to communicate the endurance of the moving millipede. Through trial times, superior power guides and protects the arthropod even when it is doubtful about itself.

The Cave Ant has had much civilization through hard work and it has contributed to the generation of signs as languages. In the work *The Cave Ant's Container*, it is shown by the artist, various directional symbols which have been developed for the ant colony who through perseverance have toiled to construct their magnificent pot. These symbols are developed from the arrow sign which is a universally accepted symbol for direction. The path on which worker ants travel to search for clay and other materials for the construction of their hills have had influence in the generation of 'The Ant's Directional Symbols' developed by the artist. The symbols have included in specifics the stable ants, the judges, the philosophers, peace makers, truants, loaders, righteous paths, tizzies, and the workaholics.

3.5 Preparation of Materials

3.5.1 Tools used in the preparation of materials.

Below is a list of some tools used by the researcher in preparing clay for this project.

• Pug mill

• Wheel barrow

• Spade

- Polythene sheet

3.5.2 Preparation of clays for the production of the Multi-sectional Decorative Pots.

Several pottery communities and potters make pots by pounding clay to homogeneity before using them for their products. Most of the clays are allowed to age before they are used for production. The researcher used some slight advancement (machinery) in preparing his clay for production of his artefacts. The methods however, are still basic procedures which could be used by both studio and traditional makers in spite of the machinery used.

The dry clay was soaked in water and covered with polythene sheet for two days to loosen up as shown in plate 3.6. A spade was used to convey the soaked clay from the pit into the wheel barrow and it was transferred onto a large table in the preparation room. Bits of clay were sent into the pug mill while it squeezed the lumps and drew down homogenous bars of clay. The clay comes in cylindrical bar as a result of the round die which serves as the outlet and the distance between the outlets of the pug mill to the ground. The clays were then packed into plain polythene sheets to prevent them from drying and to allow them some time to age.



Plate 3.6: Soaked Clay



Plate 3.7: Processing clay with pug mill



Plate 3.8: Processed clay bars

Plate 3.9: Packing clays into polythene sheets

3.6 Building the 16th Chapter ceramic vase.

3.6.1 Constructing the base of the Moving Millipede

A ball of clay was kneaded to expel air pockets and the process was done till all the needed materials were prepared.



Plate 3.10: Kneading the Afari clay.

The kneaded clay was shaped into a rectangular block. It was placed on a sack board and two guide sticks were placed along its sides. A rolling pin was used to spread the clay evenly till the heights of the guide sticks were attained. The width of the wooden guide sticks determined the thickness of the clay slab. Series of the rolled slabs were

joined together to form a single long span of slab which measured seven feet and ten inches. It was allowed some time, about four hours to reduce some amount of physical water by laying it on a flat sheet of wood.



Plate 3.11: Rolling the Afari clay

A plan of the design was drawn onto the slab using a marking tool. The pattern was drawn in the opposite reflection of the actual plan (reflection at positions 180°C and 270°C). The negative areas of the slab was cut out and kneaded to get a ball of clay for other purposes. This process could be done between the soft to leather- hard states but in the leather- hard state water is sprinkled on the cut out portion to make it suitable for kneading.

On the longest side of the shaped slab, a line was drawn horizontally to divide the curved slab into two sections labelled A and B. A tailor's tape measure was used to mark seven inches (7") ~~on the~~ straight angle on the slab while the curved areas reduced in length. This was done to both sides A and B. A line was drawn to connect opposite lines and the divisions were made to attain sixteen (16) segments.

Balls of clay were kneaded and rolled into slabs using 1.2 cm thick guide sticks. Slabs were marked and cut with three inch (3") interval and they were left to almost leather-

hard (preferably about 18% of physical water). The edges to be joined were scoured and slip was applied on their surfaces. A similar process was applied to the cut out base which had the plan and both ends were gently joined. The joints were mended with coils and blended to the surface of the slab. The process diminished the joined section, produced a firmer joint and resisted cracks and separations which usually develop around the joined sections. The process was repeated until the whole edge of the initial rolled base slab was covered with the 3" slabs.



Plate 3.12: Building base with 3inch slabs.

From the rear of the built wall, the initial marked sections on the base was then projected onto the enclosed wall to ascertain the sixteen divisions. A line was drawn to project the marks from base to the top. The markings were made on both sides. On curved areas, the measurements seven inches tend to reduce and adjustments were done on these areas (measurement varies from five to seven inches). The marks were projected parallel to one another. Between every projected line, one inch was marked to both left and right directions making the initial projected line the mid- point.

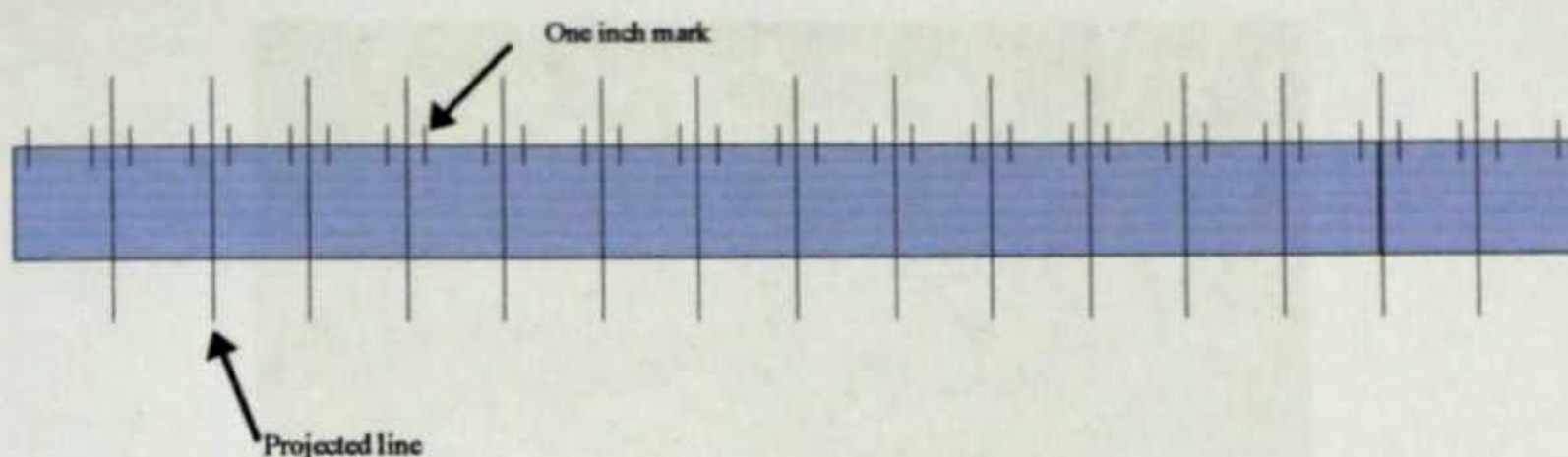


Figure 3.3: Dividing base sections.

A semi- circle was drawn between points two and five, six and nine, ten and thirteen and so on. The mid-points were located between points three and four, seven and eight, eleven and twelve and so forth. In between points three and four, seven and eight, eleven and twelve and so forth. Two and a half inches were marked vertically between points A and B.

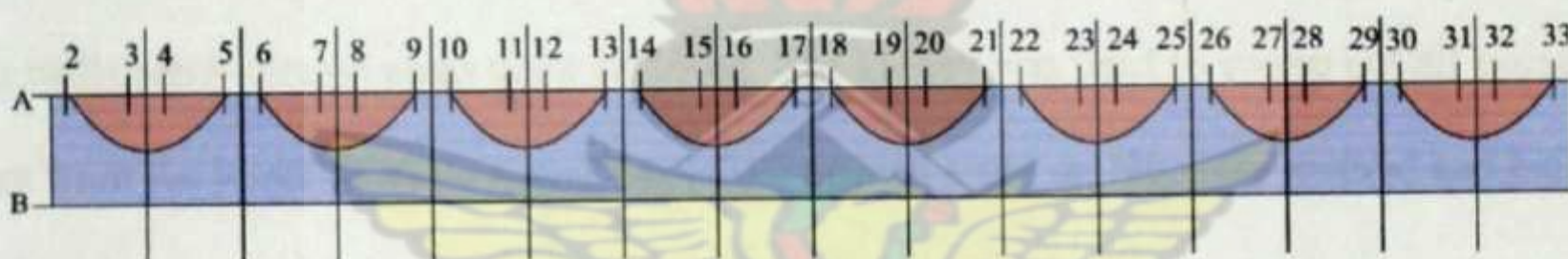


Figure 3.4: A plan showing points at which curves were constructed.

The process was done on both sides. It was necessary to apply these markings while is leather- hard. A knife was used to cut along the drawn semi- circles to half of the thickness of the slab.



Plate 3.13: Shaping base curves

The half-way-cut slabs were gently pushed towards the inside of the base and they were scored and fill with coils of the same clay composition. The process was repeated till all the walls semi- circled areas were enclosed. The kidney was used to sweep out all excess clay from the joints to attain a neat edge. The opened areas on top were scoured and built with slabs to completely get the whole piece sealed.



Plate 3.14: Sealing curves

The same process was repeated until the last space was closed. The piece was then cut into four different segments so as to be able to turn the whole piece upwards and then they were joined again to form a single piece after they were turned.



Plate 3.15: Finished base

The work was allowed an hour to lose some moisture and it was put in plain polythene sheets to prevent it from drying and made sure that there was no means that air could easily run into the bags.

3.6.2 Building the sixteen (16) segments

Using Afari clay, slabs were rolled and left to a leather-hard state. They were then packed in transparent polythene sheets. Plain polythene were much preferred because coloured bags especially black polythene sheets will cause slabs to dry quickly; They absorb heat. Three segments of the covered base were opened and starting from the second segment, slabs were cut to desired sizes. Because of the rise and curvy nature of individual vase, the slabs were cut according to their heights as indicated in the drawing below.

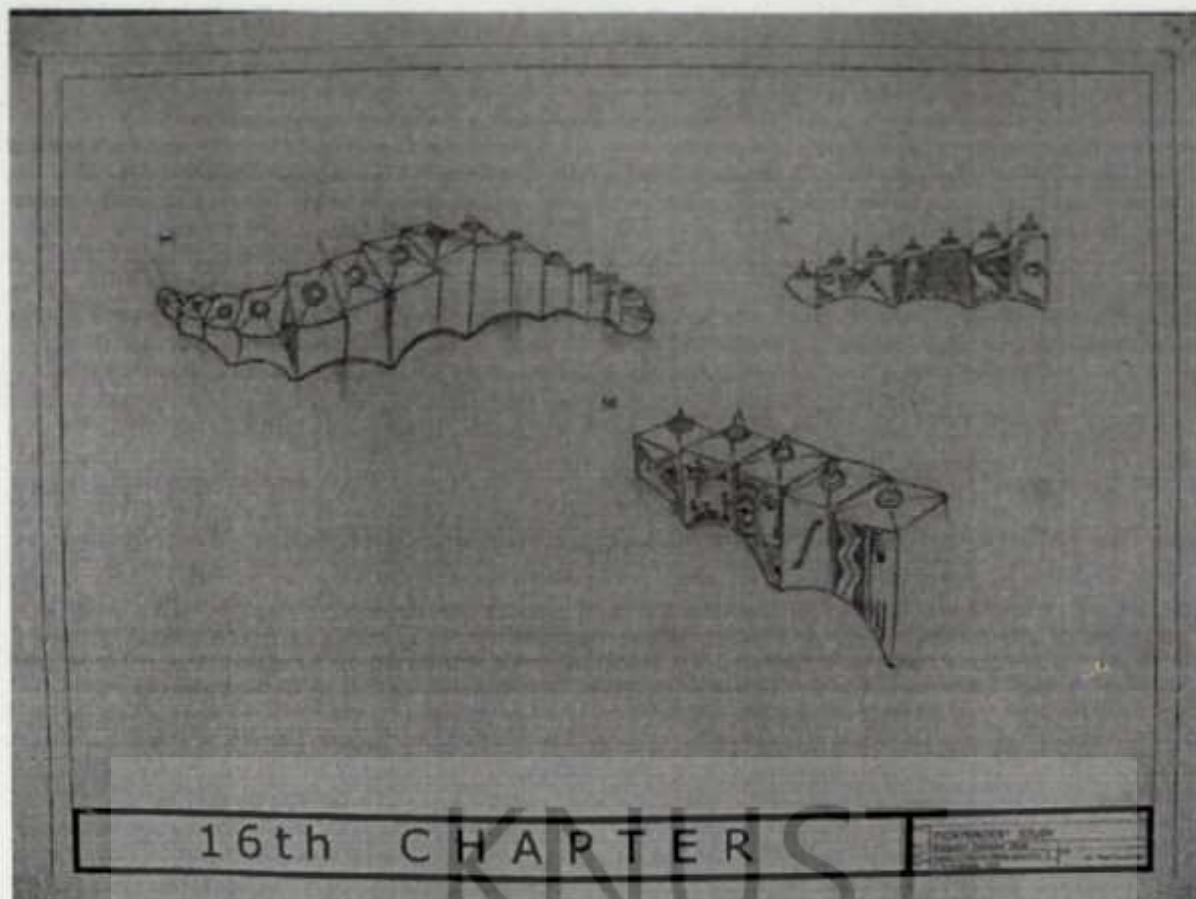


Figure 3.5: A drawing of the 16th Chapter

The slabs for the second vase started with a rectangular slab measured seven inches by five inches by half an inch. The two areas to be joined were scored and slipped. Slabs were joined and sealed at the joint with a 0.3mm thick coil. The leather-hard state of the slabs enabled the manipulation of the slabs to achieve a curve. The hand was used as the first shaping tool regardless of the method used. In respect to the design, three segments were built after the starting point (i.e. sections two, three and four) and the artist moved onto the other half and begun to build from the extreme end eliminating section sixteen (section fifteen, fourteen and thirteen). This enabled him to get the appropriate curve for the middle vases (sections eight and nine). It is shown in plates 3.16 and 3.17.



Plate 3.16: Building segments

Carefully, the remaining sections were constructed continuing from section five to section eight and from section twelve to section nine. In a situation where the height allows the shoulder of a sectional vase to become wide, an adjustment was made since the shoulder of each vase was subjective to the height it raised.



Plate 3.17: Closing curved segments

A square rule was used to mark and cut out triangular slabs to seal the top portions of the vases. The angles depended on the dimension of each side of an open area. A conical like joint was hopefully attained. The procedure was repeated till all tops of the various sections were covered with the slabs. A circle was drawn on each of the

converging points and cut openly with a knife. A repeated procedure was used for all sixteen segments.



Plate 3.18: Creating pot's shoulder

Washed Afari clay was used to throw necks of all the sixteen sections. The necks were scored and the slip enabled its joining. The joints were further sealed with coils. The rim of each section was measured and lids were thrown on the potter's wheel for the respective necks trimmed after leather-hard and fixed unto each section of the sixteen necks. Patterns were drawn onto the surfaces of each of the sixteen sections of the vase using a pencil. The knife-shaped modelling tool was used to draw through the already drawn patterns to provide thicker outlines. The individual patterns expressed emotional feelings.



Plate 3.19: Drawn patterns on the decorative pot

The patterns were subjected to different colour regions. Iron oxide was mixed with water to make a paste and a sable brush was used to apply the mixture onto the surfaces that demanded bright red as shown in the plate above.

Areas covering reddish brown were unpainted since the Afari clay at 1100°C provided the colour scheme. White slip was used to coat the areas that demanded white colour and a yellowish composed glaze was used to paint areas that required dark brown effect.



Plate 3.20: Drying the decorative vase

The *16th Chapter* ceramic vase in the green state was allowed to dry slowly by loosely covering the piece with plain polythene sheets for twenty eight (28) days.

3.7 Constructing the Scribbled Branch Pot

Building with coils is one of the fundamental procedures of making ceramic artefacts since the birth of the profession. The *Scribbled Branch Pot* was made according to the following procedures.

3.7.1 Creating hollow coils for the Branch Pot

Preparation of clay was done similar to that used for the construction of the *16th Chapter* ceramic vase. A Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) pipe of diameter (1inch) was put on the slab and the slab was rolled around the pipe about 280° . The two ends were cut at opposite angles and scored. Slip was then applied and the opposite angles were joined to form a single unit. Coiling an Afari clay slab around a PVC tube generated natural cracks on the surface of the hollow coil



Plate 3.21: Creating the hollow coil

A coil with diameter 0.3cm was put on the joint and smeared to the surface of the rolled slab to achieve an effective joint. The tube was then gently removed from the slab to achieve a hollow coil.

3.7.2 Creating varied forms with hollow coil

Immediately the PVC tube was isolated to create a coil, the coil was then subjected to gradual pushing of its ends to various angles to create varied forms for construction.



Plate 3.22: Pushing towards the inside to create a semi- circled form



Plate 3.23: Varied forms produced

3.7.3 Building with the hollow coils

First, a review of the design was done to allocate the varied forms needed to build a complete section. A rubber was spread on a table and two straight hollow coils were joined to form a single unit. A semi- circled hollow coil was then attached to one of the ends to provide a turnover up and another to achieve a turn on the base of the

constructional coil vase. Various additions including ones with slight twists on both ends, smaller semi- circled pieces were all added according to the design. Other forms were also attained by cutting two different shaped hollow coils and joining them to acquire a desired form for construction.



Plate 3.24: Building the coil pot

Joints were all sealed using 0.3 cm coils leaving cracked surfaces untouched for their beauty. Small amount of Afari clay was rolled and used to create thorns on some areas of the branch pot.



Plate 3.25: A complete section of the scribbled branch pot

3.7.4 Application of Sodium Silicate

To create rust effect, 62ml of Sodium Silicate was poured randomly onto the surface of the branch pot in leather hard state. This was done to create the antique nature of creeping branches as they lie on the ground with harsh conditions of rain and sunlight. The brush was also used to apply 120ml amount of sodium silicate to the openings of each hollow pot to ascertain the effect of sweat and drops.



Plate 3.26: Pouring random sodium silicate

3.7.5 Drying the Scribbled Branch pot

The branch pot was slow dried in plain polythene sheets. It was loosely covered to allow slow movement of air to circulate. After ten days of slow drying, the plain polythene sheets were removed to allow rapid air around the branch pot.



Plate 3.27: Drying the branch pot

3.8 Building the Cave Ant's Container

3.8.1 Cutting respective slabs for cubes formation

Series of slabs were rolled and were allowed some time to attain leather-hard. The following dimensions were used to cut out squared slabs. They were 3.0inches, 3.5inches, and 4.0 inches, 5.0 inches, 10.0 inches and 12.0 inches respectively. The edges of the slabs were straightened using a long rule and a knife.



Plate 3.28: Straightening slab edge

The square rule was used to determine the 90° angle by placing the short side on the already caught section and a line drawn along the other side of the square rule to achieve the angle and the exceeding section of the slabs were packed in a container.



Plate 3.29: Determining the 90° angle

Points were marked onto the clay slab and a rule was used to join points. A knife was used to cut through the marked lines. The hand remained stiff on the rule during the cutting of the slab so as to attain accurate tiles for construction.



Plate 3.30: Cutting slabs for cubes

Each dimension was cut and stored in separate transparent polythene sheets to prevent slabs from drying.



Plate 3.31: Packing slabs into polythene sheets

3.8.2 Building cubes

Joining slabs to form a cube requires six (6) equal square slabs. Four hundred and sixty-three (463) cubes were made for the construction of the Cave Ant's Container. Beginning with the making of the cubes, a 5inch squared tile was put on a flat board and a rule was placed along the edge of the tile preferably, about 1.3cm away from the

edge. At an angle of 45° , a knife was used to cut all four edges of the tile. This process was repeated until all square slabs were reshaped.



Plate 3.32: Cutting angles at the edge of the slab

With the help of a metal fork, the edges were scored and slips were applied on each tile and five of them were joined together.



Plate 3.33: Forming cubes

Coils with diameter 0.5cm were used to seal the joints which were created within the box and smaller coils (mostly 0.3mm) were used in sealing outer joints.



Plate 3.34: Coils for sealing the inside of the cubes

The last slab was also scored and applied with slip and added to the sides to complete the cube. A scraper was used to clean the surfaces of the boxes.



Plate 3.35: Cleaning the surface of the cube

A $30\text{cm} \times 5\text{cm} \times 1\text{cm}$ wooden bar was used to 'beat' the sides of the cube to achieve accurate angles and a siphon was used to level and texture the six surfaces. They were afterwards packed in plain polythene sheets. The procedures were repeated until all other sizes of slabs were made into cubes.



Plate 3.36: Finished cube

3.8.3 Incising motifs on the surfaces of the cubes.

A border was first drawn on one side of the cube using a rule and a pencil. A sharp knife was used to cut at opposite angles through the drawn patterns to create depth on the surface of the cube.



Plate 3.37: Incised surface with motif

The process was done randomly on all cubes with the exception of the 10.0in, 12.0in and 3.0in cubes. The remaining cubes were all incised with a border pattern excluding the 10.0in and 12.0in cubes. The border pattern was made up of two parallel squared lines with two of the inner lines with curves.



Plate 3.38: Incised border pattern

3.8.4 Structuring with cubes to form the Cave Ant's container

Outline A was drawn on a plain flat board using white chalk.



Plate 3.39: Outline A

A transparent polythene sheet was used to cover the drawn pattern. The transparent bag enabled the researcher to see the drawn pattern and it also covered the base of the to-be- constructed pot to prevent it from rapid drying.



Plate 3.40: Indicating section AB

The area AB served as the position of the 10inch box. This was the section that would serve as the container for both natural and artificial flowers and bamboos for decoration.



Plate 3.41: Position of the 10inch Cube

Cubes such as the 5.0in, 4.0in, 3.5in and 3.0in were used respectively for the construction of the various segmented pots. From the extreme end a 4inch cube was used to start the construction of The Cave Ant's Vase. The cube was held close to the side of the 10inch cube positioned at area AB. Cube 3.5inch was then positioned on top of the initial cube with a section of its body fallen with the area of the 4.0inch cube. The intruding section on the initial cube (4.0inch) was marked with a cutting pin

and a knife was used to cut the section off to allow cube 3.5inch to join 4.0inch to form a base for their section. The next cube to be joined was placed temporary onto the angled cube and a marking tool was used to draw the area onto the receiving cube.



Plate 3.42: Mark-out of the next cube to be joined

A knife was used to cut the surface of the receiving cube about 3mm to identify the location and lock the incoming cube. One centimetre (1cm) within the pattern drawn for the incoming cube was marked away from the outline of the points and the remained shape was cut out to create a space for holding. The area of the incoming cube which joins unto the receiving one was also subjected to the same process but there was a transfer of hole to the top to facilitate a continuous channel of the space for holding.



Plate 3.43: Creating space for holding

Slip was applied to both surfaces and they were gently pressed to join well. Thin coils (about 0.2mm thick) were made to seal the joints and a modelling tool (knife shaped type) was used to clean excess portions created by slip and continue with other additional cubes. Using the artist discretion, the final design was still observed.



Plate 3.44: Effective joining of cubes

Specific regiment of cubes were caught on wider surfaces and joined in vertical line to serve as the channel to hold specific items for beautification. These included 3.0inches, 3.5inches, and 4.0inches cubes, predominantly displayed in random angles to cover spaces created during the formation of the containing section of the vase. When the height had reached as expected and determined by the artist, the top of the last joined cube was left opened as the space run through the pot. This was to enable decorating element (such as branches, flowers, coloured straws etc) to be put to the inside of the pot. A slab was put on the edge of the opening to serve as the pot's rim.



Plate 3.45: Construction of Outline A

3.9 Multi-sectional arrangement of the decorative pots

The segments of the 16th Chapter ceramic vase were divided in five sections. In arranging the various segments of the Scribbled Branch Pot, each sectional vase was built leaving two open areas and one was turned up for holding of decorating element. Hollow coils were pushed slightly to the inside of already built section and it was used to start a new section for continuity. In other instances, the other remained hollow entry was built on a finished hollow branch to create an illusion of single unit.



Plate 3.46: Creating the illusion of single unit.

In the Cave Ant's Container, all cubes forming a single segment were joined with slips to form a single unit. A next segment was constructed by placing a cube onto or

beside the already finished segment without joining with slip and its components (group of cubes for the segment) joined onto one another with slip. They were arranged in a manner where they could stand prior to stability and yet feel like mixed up with the previous segment. The process of constructing within Outline A was still scheduled and four segments of pots were constructed adapting to the previous style of construction although there were slight changes in angles and placement of cubes as vases were duly constructed. The position of the incised section of the cubes played specific function in the construction since the designer wanted areas to have influence on aesthetics. They directed towards the observer. When construction was done at Outline A, Outline B was drawn on the platform on which construction was being made.



Plate 3.47: Continuing with Outline B

White chalk was used to draw out outline depicting the position of the larger cube for planting natural floral plant and area to be occupied by the remaining cubes. A continuous process was used in composing the remaining segments of the piece while there were minor changes to their positions and locking system.



Plate 3.48: Continuing the Arrangement

Plate 3.49: Complete composition

3.10 Firing and Finishing of the Multi-sectional Decorative Pots

The *16th Chapter* piece was then unassembled after drying and packed into an electric kiln for a single firing. It was allowed to fire to a temperature of 1100°C. It was allowed two (2) days to cool and when the inside kiln reached 250°C, the dumper was opened to an approximate angle of 32° to facilitate rapid cooling. After assembling the pieces, Lacquer was applied onto the whole body of the vase. This was to reduce the brightness of the white colour regions and to make the bright red regions fast. The lacquer will also prevent fungi from growing around the piece when subjected to harsh weather conditions.



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Plate 3.50: *The 16th Chapter* (2010), 86" x 29"x 6" electric fired (1100°C), contemporary ceramic pot, glaze, slip, iron oxide and lacquer finished. Piece produced by *Frederick E. Okai*.

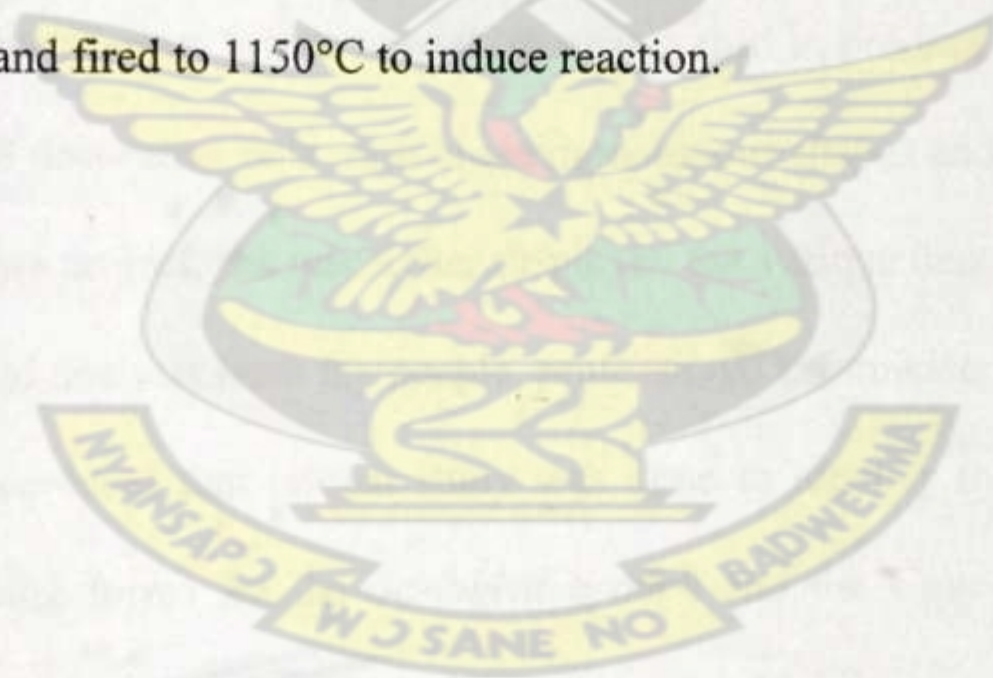
After three (3) weeks of drying the *Scribbled Branch* pot, the physically combined water was reduced to a minimum point at which the hollow tubes became vulnerable to breakage. They were packed in the kiln and fired to a temperature of thousand degrees Celsius (1000°C).



Plate 3.51: Fired *Scribbled Branch* Pot

After Bisque firing, 260 kg of manganese was mixed with 520 ml of water and a 3.5 inch brush was used to paint manganese to induce antiquity. The base areas were then blended with a paste of iron oxide and 50ml of sodium silicate was poured onto the surface of the hollow coils randomly. They were then loaded into the kiln and fired to 1100°C to make the applied materials permanent on the coils.

Drying the Cave Ant's Container was one that required critical attention since it entailed numerous cubes with some hiding in the bosom of others. They were allowed twenty-one (21) days to dry and they were uninstalled from the top to spread them for easy movement of air within all segments. After another three weeks of drying, they were then packed into the kiln and fired bisque to 1000°C. Manganese was applied onto the surfaces covered with motifs and wet foam was used to wipe the surfaces leaving the dented surfaces covered with the manganese. They were again packed into the electric kiln and fired to 1150°C to induce reaction.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Evaluation of Pot shapes

Shapes developed by potters in producing ceramic pots have gone through enormous transformations yet runs through a single lineage of circular-like production and this research work aimed at improving the production of decorative pots. Over the years, pots have functioned as a ready used item which served as a once needed item and so was subjected to dirty treatment. Their shapes were made to serve this purpose and so intricate forms were highly not needed. Although round forms are interesting, pot shapes were highly noted to be stuck to this shape and so any other shape away from the core form has been highly noted out of the group.

In this era of contemporary art movement, there is a shift in product designing and so the production of decorative pots must elude monotonous shapes and comply with the status quo. In this project, the researcher displayed the various decorative pots made for evaluation and analysis from lay people, professional ceramicists and other artists. The evaluation revealed that critical study was done to identify the natural objects used in developing forms for the *Scribbled branch* and the *Cave Ant's Container* while others also felt otherwise. Their decorative appeal however was undeniable by most of the critics since they sought to feel amazed with the movement of form and the uniqueness in style of execution especially the 16th Chapter ceramic vase and the *Cave Ant's Container*.

The development of forms out of natural objects and human activities are means of abridging the gap between ceramic sculpture and decorative ceramic pots. It is a means that seeks to capture reality and meaning into the artistry of pots production

and therefore makes it vital for the product to fit into modern means of production. It may be seen as chaotic and going contrary to the known but with time observers will come to know the essence of modern art and realise that the subject goes beyond the essence of line, colour, shape, rhythm, texture and harmony.

An experiment was conducted by the researcher where several numbers of cubes were put together to function as a decorative pot and according to some, the time and effort put together to form the piece was too much for a pot. In this regard, it is understandable how people perceive some shapes for pots and decorative pots as a whole; that they only come in simple forms forgetting about the functions they serve.

Shapes such as spiral and cones could be used for decorative pot forms to express an artist emotion whereas the prime objective of the pot still remains as fundamental.

According to Hopper (2000), once the basic needs became evident, forms were developed and made to serve them. His research explains that the periodic transformation of pot forms have evolved around the basic need for the object hence more complex shapes for decorative ceramic pots. An experiment was conducted by the researcher where a pot made for carrying keys and mobile phones was altered to a different shape and yet it still served the purpose for which it was made. Refer to plate 2.1 in page 12 for reference. The altered piece remained as a pot adding extra aesthetic appeal to the product as well as making it more suitable to admiration.

Altering pot forms and merging different forms to make a single unit as a pot defines the beauty of decorative pots and hence reducing the monotony of decorative pot forms. This is evident in Plate 2.3.

4.2 Methods of Producing Decorative Pots

Both the studio and the traditional potter have been producing their pieces via throwing, slab building, coiling and casting. These forming methods have been used individually and sometimes, combinations of two or more techniques have been used in production.

The potter's wheel which was developed in Mesopotamia centuries back assists the potter in producing vibrant and eloquent pieces. Pot shapes produced using the potter's wheel has a sense of uniqueness in their forms which are predominantly circular forms that portray an image of completeness. The researcher used this technique in producing the necks and lids for the *16th Chapter* ceramic vase, the *Rites of Passage* in plate 2.3 and the altered pieces in plates 2.1 and 2.2. The used technique of production helped to bring out the craftsmanship in afore listed pieces giving them a quest for critical observation. This however, was revealed through an outdoor of pieces for criticism and it was evident when observers sought to ask questions about them prior to the remaining sections which were introduced as slab construction. While throwing is subject to circular forms, altering thrown pieces tend to reduce the monotonous appearances of forms made using the technique.

Making flat sheets of clay are basically slabs in pottery and they are mostly used in producing intricate and basic forms. Slabs are used for making ceramic sculptures and pots, and they produce flat and round surfaces. Although the traditional potter is mostly stuck with pinching and coiling for production, the studio ceramicist readily constructs his pieces with slabs. As evident in this research, the researcher adapted the slab building technique for the productions of the *16th Chapter* and the *Cave Ant's Container*. In both pieces, the researcher brought out a style of his own in the constructions. In the movement of the *16th Chapter* there were varied techniques such

as the amount of water available to subject a flat sheet of clay to curve and remain still- the rise and fracture of individual segment. As an experienced studio ceramicist, it is critical to master the craft of handling slab since there are more ways of making forms using the slab building technique. The *Cave Ant's Container* on the other hand is a master of time and dedication. The researcher used the basic principle of making a cube and introduced practical time and effort to bring life and creativity. To some it is a sonnet of despair; a rhythmic construction with hopeless effort.

Over the years, ceramic decorative pots have been in single layered construction due to the shapes and forms they have taken. A primal change to the construction of decorative pot by the researcher has impeded the monotony in style and has caused diversity to the construction mechanism of the product. Although slabs could be used for forming simple forms, it is also a variant to complex and subtle shapes. An observation made by critics remarked that looking at the various displayed pieces one could not state whether they were complex or simply made. They posed a blend between the two which made the wares more appealing to the eye and thus unable to choose from complexity and simplicity. In this view, the practical dimensions taken by the researcher in executing the various pieces although technical seem easily apprehending. Constructions of the various pieces mounted a technical dimension especially the *Cave Ant's Container* which revolved around a more complex and sophisticated approach even in its arrangements. This is shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.



Figure 4.1: Technical arrangement of segments

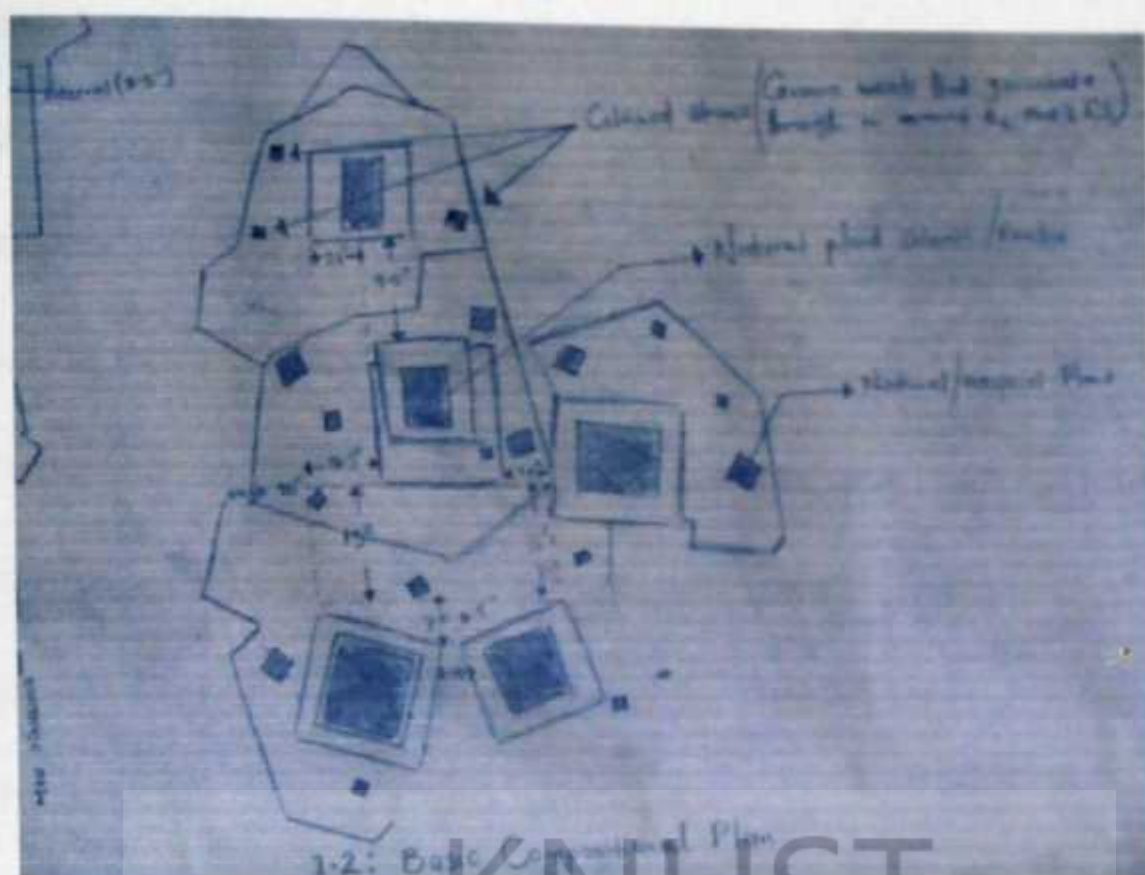


Figure 4.2: Basic compositional plan

Coils are made by rolling clay to form a rope-like strand. Coils have been used by the studio potter in building small, medium and large sized potteries. According to Glenn et al (2002), coil construction is the basic technique for much sculpture, especially when used in combination with pinching and slabs. Building with coils provides limitless technique in building ceramic sculptures. However, coil constructions have had different working approaches. Building with coils solely depends on the object to be made and the intension of the studio potter about surface finishing. Finishing the surface of a coil work is one of the critical choices that one indulges when forming. Coils could be finished by merging the surface of the coils to behave as a slab work-flat surface, and it could also emerge as rings as coils are joined unto one another. Various mechanisms have been adopted by the modern potter in making coils. According to Peterson (2003), coils can be made by rolling on a flat surface or between palms or by extrusion with a machine. As reviewed by Sakyi (2006), extrusion is a fundamental shaping process for ceramics. Producing coils using both manual and mechanical extruders have been the potter's choice in today's pottery

making. It has been efficient: it limits the time for production and has also provided definite sizes of coils needed; this has been achieved through the use of a die as an aid for out letting coils. The die does not remain as part of the extruder. It is an essential tool that must be fabricated for the particular coil to be produced.

However, handmade coils can be used by the studio potter in building pottery. Handmade hollow coils are subject to uniqueness. Considering the aesthetic appeal of coiled pieces, hollow coils are no exception to the strata. In this research, hollow coils were made by rolling covering a tube with sheets of clay and they were taken out off by means of gradual pulling of the tube. The researcher joined series of coils in mastering the outcome of *The Scribbled Branch Pot*. The form however portrays decency in craftsmanship while there is a debt to imagination. According to Quinn (2007) in forming with coils, shape does not have to be symmetrical, which is why coiled forms are often organic, and very sculptural.

4.3 Decorative Pottery (Appreciation and Criticism of Samples of Multi-Sectional Decorative Pots)

4.3.1 The 16th Chapter ceramic vase

The researcher used the Afari clay for the construction of the 16th Chapter ceramic vase because of the physical properties of the material. The Afari clay is highly in sand and that makes it practically better for such a piece. The amount of sand in the material helped the twisted paths to stand still and made it suitable for a base as such to be feasible. The piece is titled the 16th Chapter ceramic vase because of the sixteen varied sections of the piece and the Chapters are associated to the segments. The number 16 is significantly related to love and since the millipede as the centre of inspiration deserved to be loved as the researcher had been inspired; the theme for the piece was developed as such.

The 16th Chapter ceramic vase is a millipede abstracted in form to create series of ceramic vases put together as one. The nature of its legs accounted for the construction of its base to allow free passage of air beneath and portrays a gesture of strength and weakness as it is perceived. It generates a built-in energy which is shown through the movement of the segmented sections of the ceramic vase. A systematic rise and fall of the various sixteen sections of the vase accounts to the energetic posture of the ceramic piece since it attracts care and attention from the viewer. It is fictional to imagine that vases should be in circular-like forms, like any art form, expression of ideas is permissive only if it is bounded by the elements and principles of design. According to Morawski (1974) expression is widely reputed to be an aspect of the work of art which is as mysterious and elusive as it is attractive and compelling. Solemnly, the expressions created with clay, a primary material found on earth, provided a fertile ground for the ceramic artist to express his emotions through the medium like the painter does with his colours.

The multi-sectional component of the piece is seen in the unification of five (5) compatible of pieces which combine to form a single unit. The Adam and Eve locking mechanism was adapted to this piece. However a subtraction or omission of a single section deprive the piece its sense of unity and leaves it restrained to incompleteness. The multi-segmented feature in the piece allows easy packing and movement since it could be taken in bits.



Plate 4.1: The 16th Chapter Ceramic Vase.

4.3.2 The Cave Ant's Container

Decorative potteries are pottery items made purposely for aesthetics. They beautify space and add a quality of satisfaction to the eye when perceived. The method used in executing the *Cave Ant's vase* was an advent of time and imagination since it still holds the basic formation of a cube but when perceived, bring forth to the mind a consensus of mutual satisfaction. In this regard, the honesty of the researcher was challenged in the production of the *Cave Ant's Container*. It is evident when critics pronounce the modernity in the productions of the various decorative pots and remark that "vases are highly decorated with African patterns and the representation of motifs using the incision techniques tend to add solemnity to pieces"

The artist was inspired by ants in developing his form for the *Cave ant's Container*. "Ants are social insects of the family Formicidae and, along with the related wasps and bees, belong to the order Hymenoptera. Ants evolved from wasp-like ancestors in the mid-Cretaceous period between 110 and 130 million years ago and diversified after the rise of flowering plants" (Wikipedia, 14th April 2011).

The *Cave Ant's Container* is a piece that required determination, charisma, hard work and interest. The attitude of the artist was challenged due to the various processes and techniques required in producing the out-numbered series of cubes. This as part generated the strength of the art work captured in the realms of time, a pre-requisite of ingenuity. Time as a factor plays a vital role in pursuing great adventures and thus we are cautioned by the worker ant to exercise steadfastness in our chosen profession and as artists, great change deserves the outmost of time. In the view of the researcher, contemporary decorative pots may take couple of days to get them done and the duration set will worth the results. It is of high indulgence that the construction of decorative pots could take a dimension whereby many can attend to the call and exhibit a sense of great craftsmanship to help eliminate the monotony in decorative pots production.

Contemporary, ceramic pots should be diversified in form, style and beauty. A careful planning of an idea through inspiration, concept, sketching, drawing and prototyping could help yield interesting and beautiful pieces for decoration. As an artist, the illusion that was set through optimum analysis and sketching, and the availability of the idea in physical product provided a sense of happiness as the imaginary came to light. The artist was also inspired by nature through the wonderful mountains which have an asymmetrical outline and an unprecedented distribution of curves coupled with heights. This was factored in case studying the elementary segments of the *Cave*

Ant's Container Inspiration was also gained through the genre of man's activities; the artist was inspired by an uneven distribution of some randomly packed concrete pavement bricks.

In an assessment made by professional ceramicists (J. K. Amoah and Adu Darko), it was noted that there was the introduction of interesting shape for a decorative pot which employed a cubic representation of the ant hill and although the style, there was still the representation of the artist intentions. From this observation it is clear that the representation of nature in an idea development does not necessarily mean a mark of the exact representation. The artist was grasped with the psychological result of perception and learning and reasoning, an extension of understanding behaviour and mental processes. Inspiration was bounded with mental reasoning and this was recorded in the studying and transformation of sources into representation and analysis.

Contemporary ceramics cut across time, style and cultures yet in a domain of its own. The representation of varied cube sizes into a single unit remarks the authenticity of this piece. *The Cave Ant's Container* is a piece that sounds the modernity in ceramic pots and defines the African concept of art, a representation of symbols. The researcher's work was inspired by both African and Western representations. The original symbols developed by the artist cannot be overlooked while the authenticity of these symbols on the ~~surfaces~~ of the cubes remains remarkable. Philosophically, the concepts behind the piece arouse a sense of speculation concerning nature and the expressions from the artist makes him mystique.

The *Cave Ant's Container* has been designed to serve many purposes such as providing places with large reception and lounges the adequate large size pot as a fitting, which will make use of bigger area which needs to be served the purpose. It

has been constructed to the satisfaction of being able to reduce or increase in size when necessary and also has a sense of appeal with respect to beauty. It has been designed to hold bamboos, natural and artificial branches, metal poles, coloured straws, both artificial and natural plant; if not an all-in-all decorative pot, a multi-purpose decorative pot. The structure if dismantled individually can as well serve the functions of sculpture and pots.



Plate 4.2: The Cave Ant's Container

4.3.3 The Scribbled Branch Pot

The *Scribbled Branch Pot* however, mastered the making of hand-made hollow coils using tubes. The construction involved a careful handling of the material (Afari clay) made into a coil for the build up of the master piece. The act of handling the hollow coil with natural cracks on its surface was a skill as any temper with the hand on the surface could seal the texture hence a careful building approach; perhaps, the

automatic sense of timeline in production where the artist is limited to the speed of construction. Making and shaping hollow coils into diverse forms demands complete craftsmanship. The artist was interested in the idea of texture and strength and its ability to communicate through touch. Some branches call for curiosity from its observers with its appearance and movement and sometimes the stem they are connected. Therefore it is of no excuse when the researcher was moved by the branch of a creeping plant to inspire this wonderful piece.

According to Dr. Nortey (Department of Industrial Art, KNUST), it is amazing how a simple studio technique was used to bring out a piece of this nature. The practise sought to bring out innovative approach to the formation of decorative pot in a more diversified manner. The artist was gripped with the effect of rust and slimy as he sought to portray a resemblance of the original look of an aged creeping plant in a slum. It was remarked by some critics that the effect however displayed a rusted metal which made the piece highly delusional to a ceramic pot made with clay. The *Scribbled Branch Pot* has been designed to hold extra decorative elements such as bamboo branches, coloured straws and metal poles for beautification.



Plate 4.3: The Scribbled Branch Pot

4.4 Multi-sectional Installation

This section reveals the practical analysis of the multiple segments of individual project. It explains the effectiveness of the multi-sections with respect to stability, arrangement and creativity.

In the construction of the *16th Chapter*, the 'Adam and Eve' locking system was used in interlocking segments within the work together. This technique however showed that without one part of the segments, there will be a missing link among the rest of the piece. In arranging the *16th Chapter*, the locking system even helps to know the individual position of each segment. In that, the 'Adam and Eve' locking provide both positive and negative ends and when missed can be easily determined by a positive to positive ends or likewise.

In arranging the *Scribbled Branch*, there are several means of putting sections together. They can be arranged in accordance to the original construction or can be arranged to the consumers' discretion. The multiple segments however, provide convenience in placing pieces at varied points because of the round-lock it possess. The space for locking equals the circumference of the hollow coil and thereby allowing segments to interlock one another. The *Scribbled Branch* displays a continuity of the hollow coil as it interlocks one another.

The *Cave Ant's Container* however, displays a sit-on locking approach. This is achieved when a flat surface of an object rest on another flat surface for continuity. The locking mechanism of the *Cave Ant's Container* provides complexity in its structure thus it involved forty-three (43) different sections. The position for each section is made prior to the construction and has been labelled in a diagram. Refer to plate 4.1 in page 69 of this book. Although the structure in the diagram comes tough, careful reading into the blue print provides adequate procedures in attaining the complete formation of the *Cave Ant's Container*. In the light of uncertainty, a casual arrangement of segments can result to the effective functioning of the piece hence a decorative ceramic pot.

4.5 Finishes

This part of the chapter four gives an analytical study of some finishes that are used by some traditional potters and studio ceramicists in finishing their pots and the researcher's development and experiment with finishing techniques.

Finishing is an integral part of pottery and many traditional and studio ceramicists have adapted to some in enhancing their pieces. In the traditional way of improving the aesthetic of pots, potters in the region solely depend on incision and smoking as finishing for their pieces. Leather-hard pieces are incised with patterns to make wares

beautiful and bisque pieces are smoked to attain soot to enrich the beauty of their pots. The studio ceramists however have achieved quality finishing through the application of glazes and other ceramic materials. The researcher however went through series of test sampling to achieve the varied finishes used in this project.



Plate 4.4: **Wisdom Vase** (2010), 19.5 inches in height, hand built with slabs and thrown, 1100°C fired, Iron oxide, sodium silicate and manganese finished. Piece produced by *Frederick E. Okai*.



Plate 4.5: **Burial Urns** (2011), 11 and 10 inches in heights, wheel thrown, 1150°C fired, manganese oxide and carbonate. Piece produced by *Frederick E. Okai*.



Plate 4.6: Marco (2009), 4 inches in height, wheel thrown and altered, 1150°C fired. Kaolin and manganese finished. Piece produced by *Frederick E. Okai*.



Plate 4.7: Tame (2009), 5 inches in height, altered thrown form, 1150°C. Sodium silicate finished. Piece produced by *Frederick E. Okai*.



Plate 4.8: Nomad Circus (2010), 4 inches in height, electric fired to 1150°C, kaolin, manganese and glaze finished. Piece made by *Frederick E. Okai*.



Plate 4.9: **Cubist** (2011), 6 inches in height, electric fired (1150°C), manganese and glaze finished. Piece produced by *Frederick Ebenezer Okai*.



Plate 4.10: **Obese** (beauty with pride). 2010. Slips and glaze finished. Piece by *Frederick Ebenezer Okai*



Plate 4.11: **Bump Pot** (2011). Wheel thrown and altered, lacquer finished. Produced by *Frederick E. Okai*

As an artist, the ability to make good use of available materials to produce a work of art provides a style that recognizes you to a finish. In this research, the available materials used in finishing the various pieces were iron oxide, sodium silicate, manganese oxide, glaze, lacquer and slips. Samples of varied finishing were carried

out to ascertain suitable finish for the three different projects- the 16th Chapter ceramic vase, the *Scribbled Branch Pot* and the *Cave Ant's Container*.

The above plates were various tested finishes for this research. Plate 4.4 holds a combination of iron oxide, manganese oxide and sodium silicate. Application of sodium silicate and iron oxide was done in green state and the application of the manganese was done after bisque firing. This finish was used in enhancing the *Scribbled Branch Pot*. Plate 4.5 uses manganese oxide, manganese carbonate and glazes as its finish. All materials were applied on both pieces after bisque firing. Plate 4.6 however, employs the use of kaolin, sodium silicate and manganese oxide. Kaolin was mixed with sodium silicate to a paste and it was applied on the piece at leather-hard state before drying for firing. The manganese oxide was applied on the ware after bisque firing for a second firing was done.

Plate 4.7 has an application of only sodium silicate and the piece was fired once at 1000°C. Plate 4.8 however combines the use of the following materials: 'Fosu' clay, manganese oxide and glaze. After the altered piece had attained leather-hard, Fosu clay was mixed with water and was used to coat the inside of the thrown piece. It was then burnished in the inside where there was the Fosu clay and allowed to dry for firing. Glaze was applied to the surface of the Fosu clay and the outer surface of the piece was coated with the mixed manganese oxide. It was then ready for second firing to enable glaze and manganese fast on the piece.

Plate 4.9 involves the use of glaze and manganese oxide. This finish was aimed at enhancing the *Cave Ant's Container*. Manganese oxide was used to coat the motif area of the piece while the glaze was used to again coat the overall surface of the piece. In plate 4.10 the materials used were engobe, iron oxide, sodium silicate and manganese. The researcher used the engobe while the piece was leather-hard and the

iron oxide was mixed with the sodium silicate to make a paste, and a brush was used to paint the mixture on the piece while still leather-hard. The glaze was also applied leather-hard and a single firing technique was used in firing the piece at 1100°C. Plate 4.11 employed the lacquer finishing technique. A combination of the materials used in Plates 4.10 and 4.11 were used in finishing the 16th Chapter ceramic vase.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The first objective of this project was to develop design concepts from natural and artificial scenes. This however, was seen in the generation of forms for the three project pieces- the *16th Chapter*, *Scribbled Branch* and the *Cave Ant's Container*. The *16th Chapter* ceramic vase had his design concept from a moving millipede. The *Scribbled Branch* had its concept developed from a creeping plant which lain in the midst of stagnant water with the effect of decaying. On the other hand, the *Cave Ant's Container* developed its concept from the magnificent structure built by worker ants and an uneven arrangement of cement bricks. The systematic development of concepts from the above sources greatly influenced the form for the various decorative pots.

The second objective of this research aimed at exploring alternate means of producing large decorative pots through assemblage. Making large size pottery is efficient even when the size of the kiln is smaller with respect to the piece to be produced. This remains understandable. Hitherto this research has dealt with the system of producing large decorative pots adapting the multiples of sections to formulate a singled piece. Due to this mechanism, the researcher has been able to produce three varied pieces using the multi-sectional approach and the pieces include: the *16th Chapter*, *Scribbled Branch* and the *Cave Ant's Container*.

Most ceramic decorative pots are characterised with monotonous forms. It was the objective of the researcher to produce decorative pots using geometrical forms. As evident in this research, the artist, in the *16th Chapter* combined various shapes in

achieving its form. They included triangles, squares, rectangles, circles and semi-circles. In the quest of producing the *Scribbled Branch*, the artist used cylindrical forms in attaining the structure, whereas in the composition of the *Cave Ant's Container*, there were combinations of cubes and squares. Various forms put together provide outstanding forms for decorative ceramic pots.

The study has emphasised the effective understanding of pots and its functions as a decorative element and has focused on the means of eluding the conventional pot forms by educating us on other means of acquiring forms for pots to reduce monotony in their shapes. It also broadens the knowledge about pot shapes in contemporary practices. Simple forming techniques were investigated and experimented to come up with simple but unique forms as decorative pots using both natural and artificial scenes, and their multi-sectional approach in constructing huge pieces using smaller sized kilns provided style and diversity. The findings will be useful for educational purposes.

5.2 Conclusions

In providing adequate information on the techniques and forms on making decorative pots, the researcher used the qualitative research design and employed descriptive and experimental research approach in gathering data from some traditional potters and studio ceramicists. Findings obtained included the lack of knowledge about decorative pots. This was evident when pottery makers' in the Afari community sought to confuse the water pot for decorative pot. Some gave the information that "a pot is a pot and could be used for anything depending on the user". This refutes the essence of the cooking pot and eating pot since their form is significant to their use.

In an encounter with some pot makers' it is very difficult to provide different forms for decorative pots since its development and production require extra effort in the processes. Time as a factor limits the development of new forms for decorative pots thus the development of complex and intricate forms.

In studio practice, multi-sectional production of pots are mostly limited to functional pottery such as teapot since its handle and spout cannot be thrown at the same time. However, huge pieces which require bigger kilns are mostly reduce in size to fit into the available kiln equipment for firing. This is due to complex procedure some multi-sectional pieces tend to arise as a result of installation. Although there are available means of firing huge pieces such as the open air firing technique, there is huge loss of energy and in the process of using a less smaller electric kiln, multi-sectional procedure of constructing proves efficient. In gathering information on the means of producing decorative pots in multiple section, it was noted by the researcher that the knowledge of multi-sectional production of huge pieces amongst artists were limited since their ideas about multi-sectional production were scanty.

Decorative pot forms remain monotonous since the aesthetic knowledge about them is mostly limited to the patterns on the surfaces. To other artists who produce pots, applying different forms of decoration on the surfaces of similar pots bring diversity. However, the pieces become monotonous.

Decorative pots remain versatile in providing adequate beautification for homes, lobbies and public spaces and their potential size as fitting require multi-sectional approach in their productions. Their forms can be developed from nature.

5.3 Recommendations

Out of the research findings and conclusions drawn, it is recommended that:

Traditional and studio potters should inspire their decorative pot forms with natural objects as used in this research. Various natural objects are endowed with wonderful forms and they could pose a positive reflection to our decorative pots. There should be an education on the objective of a decorative pot and the difference between it and ceramic sculpture to help students and potters capture the essence in producing outstanding forms for their pieces. Time should not be a hindrance to ceramicists in producing original shapes for decorative pots. In pursuing intricate forms from nature, we may be caught in the realms of consuming time but it will worth on the end product.

Multi-sectional means of producing pieces should be encouraged so as to produce huge pieces for outdoor display. Bodies could be prepared and used for the construction of outdoor decorative pots and with the absence of them, single clays such as the Mfensi and Afari clay can be used to make them and displayed at places where they will not be subjected to harsh weather conditions.

Simple studio forming techniques such as slab building, pinching, coiling and casting could be used to make wonderful pieces by blending two or more. Both the traditional potter and studio ceramicists can use available simple finishes and also use a combination of some to enhance his decorative pottery.

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